

Scholarship Statement: Philosophy

September 24, 2008

Mount Saint Mary's University

The Department of Philosophy developed its definition of scholarship in a twofold context: (1) the context of reflecting on appropriate requirements for professional advancement at an institution like Mount Saint Mary's that intentionally identifies itself as a teaching institution, and (2) the context of identifying a faculty member's non-teaching activities that merit encouragement by and rewards from the institution. The department's view is rooted in the conviction that the discovery of truth and the production of knowledge are the primary bases for our existence as a Catholic university. The department characterizes scholarship as an *activity* in a way that captures what is essential to it, and at the same time, allows for disciplinary variations. Scholarship as an activity has three defining characteristics:

- (1) its aim is to contribute to a disciplinary tradition or conversation;
- (2) its results are made public through presentation, publication or exhibition; and
- (3) its audience is one's professional peers.

That a faculty member is engaged in scholarship is best and most clearly measured by his or her work for presentation, publication or exhibition as evaluated by professional peers. Such acceptance in and of itself satisfies the second and third criteria, and is *prima facie* evidence of the fact that the accepted work contributes to a disciplinary tradition or conversation. At times of evaluation, this *prima facie* evidence can be corroborated by letters from disciplinary peers evaluating a candidate's work. What constitutes a contribution to a disciplinary tradition or conversation must, of course, be determined by the specific discipline.

There are other sorts of valuable scholarly and professional activities in which faculty members engage, which should be encouraged, and for which faculty members should be recognized and rewarded. Scholarly activity, in other words, need not be scholarship to be valuable. While we do not extend our definition of scholarship to include these activities, we do recognize this additional category of scholarly and professional activities. This category reflects the fact that our activities as scholars can be devoted, for example, to summarizing and popularizing scholarly results for non-professional audiences. Moreover, scholars can provide various services that flow from their professional standing or scholarly expertise to both professional and non-professional communities. However, such scholarly activities, well done, presume scholarship in the more technical sense.

Scholarly and professional activities are subdivided into the following categories (with examples):

A. Scholarly activities:

1. Development activities (i.e. activities that develop oneself as a scholar): attendance at meetings; participation in summer seminars; taking additional courses; and so forth;
2. Scholarly discourse directed to other audiences: producing instructional materials in various media (textbooks, tapes, videos, although such materials could sometimes approach a field in such a novel way as to constitute scholarship); writing book reviews which summarize a work but do not take up issues raised by the work for discussion; writing essays and reviews for popular journals and other non-

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professional publications; delivering lectures (grounded in one's scholarly expertise) to general audiences (both on and off campus); developing curricula for use at other institutions; and so forth;

B. Professional Activities:

1. Service to the profession: participation in the activities of professional organizations (e.g. serving on committees or boards of directors or holding an office); refereeing manuscripts; serving on editorial boards; participating in tenure and promotion reviews for other institutions; judging applications for fellowships and grants; editing newsletters, journals, and books series; organizing conferences or conference sessions; moderating conference sessions; and so forth;
2. Professional service to the university or external community (i.e. service that arises out of one's status as a scholar or one's scholarly expertise): moderating summer seminars for our own faculty or for teachers of other institutions, serving on professional ethics committees; testifying before or advising governmental agencies, committees, or officers; consulting activities; and so forth.

The department recognizes that traditional scholarship is a necessary precondition for scholarly and professional activity of the sort that would positively affect decisions regarding tenure and promotion, for development activities are incomplete apart from the scholarship that is their *telos*, and other scholarly and professional activities depend on scholarship.

In affirming this approach to scholarship, the department holds that the interpretation and application of such an approach to scholarship must be made discipline by discipline and that the burden is (as always) on the candidate to make the case for considering his or her work scholarship in the traditional sense. In addition to its own evaluation of the candidate's scholarship, the department should identify qualified outside readers who agree to evaluate the candidate's work as scholarship.

The department recognizes the strong need to support faculty in their scholarly work in an academic community self-consciously focused on teaching, especially when teaching involves faculty in writing-intensive teaching. The department recognizes the challenges faculty face in balancing scholarship, teaching and service and encourages creative departmental and institutional ways of supporting such balancing.

The department supports the following understanding of scholarship and its evaluation:

1. Commitment to the mission of the university is an absolute requirement for tenure and promotion.
2. Excellence in teaching is an absolute requirement for both tenure and promotion.
3. Some traditional scholarship is an absolute requirement for tenure and promotion, and regular, sustained, and productive scholarship is a requirement for promotion to full professor. There may exist exceptional circumstances in which this requirement can be overridden. All candidates for full professor must have some new scholarship

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in the traditional sense between promotion to associate professor and the application for promotion to full professor.

4. Scholarly and professional activity in addition to traditional scholarship is a requirement for tenure and promotion, but the failure to satisfy it can be overridden by a strong record of traditional scholarship.

Date

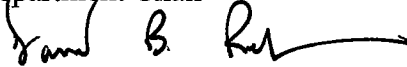
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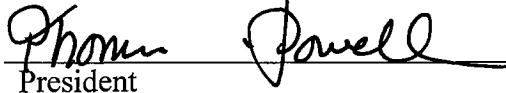
Department Chair

11/10/2008



Vice President for Academic Affairs

12/10/2008



President