Scholarship Assessed

Abstract of a Paper given by Charles E. Glassick

Scholarship Assessed:
A Special Report on Faculty Evaluation

An Ernest L. Boyer Project of
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching
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The Carnegie Foundation's report *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate* (Boyer 1990) has been well received in the United States, where it is contributing to a constructive and vigorous discussion about faculty roles and rewards. For decades American higher education institutions have been rewarding most highly the research accomplishments of their faculty. Higher education institutions remain committed to research and discovery. But in recent years they have also been reaffirming their historic mission of teaching and seeking new ways to support public engagement through integrative and applied scholarship, as well as research.

The goal of *Scholarship Reconsidered* was to move beyond the debate about "teaching versus research" as faculty priorities and give to scholarship a broader, more efficacious meaning. We propose a new paradigm of scholarship, one with four separate yet interlocking parts: the *discovery* of knowledge, the *integration* of knowledge, the *application* of knowledge, and the scholarship of *teaching*. The first two kinds of scholarship--the discovery and integration of knowledge--reflect the investigative and synthesizing traditions of academic life. The third element, the application of knowledge, moves toward engagement as the scholar asks, "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?" Finally, the scholarship of teaching recognizes that the work of the scholar becomes consequential only as it is shared with others.

Scholarship Reconsidered argues that the academy needs to encourage and reward all four categories of scholarship. The scholarship of discovery--the category that comes closest to what is meant when academics speak of "research"--should be reaffirmed. But we must also recognize that without integration, knowledge becomes pedantry; without application, knowledge becomes irrelevant; and without sharing through teaching, the continuity of scholarship is lost. If higher education is to be enriched by exchange among these different forms of scholarship, a more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar is necessary .

No one thinks this will be an easy task. How, after all, are teaching, integrative scholarship, and applied scholarship to be shared with colleagues? How can their quality be assessed?

Our own experience speaks both "to the seriousness of the problem and to the necessity for change. *Scholarship Reconsidered* was well received on many campuses that were struggling to rethink faculty roles and rewards. But the ink was barely dry when we started to get calls and letters that said, in effect: "It's one thing to give scholarship a larger meaning, but the real issue revolves around assessment."

Under Ernie Boyer's guidance, and with the help of many colleagues, we at Carnegie undertook a new report, *Scholarship Assessed*. Special note must be made of the fact that Scholarship Assessed uses a framework proposed by the late Ernest L. Boyer. This framework has been greatly enriched and expanded by the work of Mary Taylor Huber--many of the thoughts and phrases used here today are directly attributable to her. Of course, many others have contributed--most notably Ernest Lynton, who was involved in early drafts and was a close colleague of Ernest Boyer.

In my remarks today I want to focus on our central proposition: that it will be possible to take account of different kinds of scholarly activity and accord each the recognition it deserves only with agreed-upon standards of scholarly performance for all types of scholarly work.

We recognize that this isn't a new task--academics have, after all, been evaluating scholarship for years through journals, scholarly presses, granting agencies, promotion and tenure committees. So we asked, in effect, can we find standards applicable to all forms of scholarship by examining what standards are already in use?

Our inquiries got us some awkward answers: we found institutions where quantitative criteria overemphasized research and undercut scholars' achievements in integration, application, and teaching. But we also found many fine examples of qualitative guidelines from promotion and tenure committees at dozens of colleges and universities; teaching evaluations forms; and from fifty-one granting agencies; thirty-one scholarly journal editors; fifty-eight scholarly press directors. Many of these, of course, focused on discovery, but some granting agencies, presses, and journals funded or published applied work or integrated work.

At first it seemed that each marched to a different drummer--some guidelines are long, some short; some are systematic, some jumbled; many include items tailored to specific needs. For instance, the Journal of Organic Chemistry wanted to know whether compounds were adequately characterized; and the University of California Press, like many other university publishers, asks hopefully if a manuscript is "likely to be required reading in specific undergraduate or graduate courses."

But the most remarkable thing was not how much was unique but how much they had in common. In fact, our survey of standards indicated that the key to these commonalties lies in the process of scholarship itself. If this process can be defined with some clarity it can provide terms by which scholars can discuss and document almost any project, without denying either uniqueness or connection to other projects, whatever the discipline or type of scholarship. Indeed, we found it possible to identify in these lists and guidelines a set of six shared themes. All works of scholarship, be they discovery, integration, application, or teaching, seem to involve a common sequence of unfolding stages. Thus, we have found that when people praise a work of scholarship they usually mean that the project in question shows that it has been guided by these qualitative standards:

* Clear goals
* Adequate preparation
* Appropriate methods
* Significant results
* Effective communication
* Reflective critique

CLEAR GOALS

First, scholarly work, to be successful, must show clarity of goals. A well-defined purpose is critical not only in research, but also in the integration and application of knowledge, and in teaching.

The Johns Hopkins University Press, in its review of a scholarly paper, asks: "What is the author's goal?" The journal, *Environmental Science and Technology*, asks: "Is the basic question to be addressed clearly stated?"

About teaching, we also found a strong emphasis on goals. One instrument asks: "Did the professor clearly state the objectives of the course?" Another wants to know: "Did the proposed objectives agree with those actually taught?" At the University of Kentucky, professors being reviewed for promotion and tenure are asked to submit a brief, reflective statement that sets forth their philosophy and objectives as a teacher.

Our conclusion, then, is that in measuring the effectiveness of scholarship, these questions should be asked: "Has the scholar defined, with clarity, his or her objectives?" "Is the purpose of the project stated in a clear and useful way?"

ADEQUATE PREPARATION

Scholarly work also requires the professor to be professionally well prepared. Whether engaging in discovery, integration, application, or teaching, the scholar must bring the wealth of knowledge, depth of experience, and combination of resources the project needs.

In the documents we examined, adequate preparation is identified repeatedly as one of the most basic and important for scholarly work of all kinds. In research, success depends on the scholar's being well versed in the literature. The University of Alabama Press, for example, asks this question of reviewers: "Does the scholarship appear current?" The University Press of New England asks: "Is the author in command of both primary sources and the standard secondary literature of the field?"

Teaching, too, can and should be judged on the basis of preparation. One evaluation instrument we looked at asks: "Did the instructor display a clear understanding of the course topics?" and "Was the instructor well prepared for each class?" Another asks: "Were class materials well prepared?" And Kansas State University, in measuring teaching, asks for "depth, breadth, and understanding of subject matter."

Without question, those engaged in service, in what we call the scholarship of application, clearly must be judged in part on the way they draw upon resources, not only from their Own disciplines but also from practitioners in the field. The Foundation for Child Development, which supports applied projects, wants to know about "the capacity of the applicant organization, including the qualifications of prospective staff, for realizing the project's objectives." The Mott Foundation wants to know: "Does the applicant have the leadership and staff competence to carry out the project, or the ability to secure those essential resources?"

In summary, all sources we examined agreed that adequate preparation is a standard of excellence for all scholars, regardless of their work.

APPROPRIATE METHODS

As a third standard, scholars must use appropriate methods, a yardstick that can and should be used in all aspects of academic work.

The University of Iowa Press, in judging a scholarly manuscript, asks this question: "Is the scholarship adequate in terms of methodology?" The journal *Physical Review Letters* expressed it

this way: "Is the work scientifically sound?" The journal *Child Development* asks reviewers to consider "the formal design of the research," that is, its methodology.

In teaching, of course, methods and procedures make all the difference--from the logic of the syllabus to pedagogical procedures to evaluation. One teacher evaluation instrument we looked at asks: "Were the methods of evaluating student work fair and effective?" Another wants to know: "Was the amount of material the instructor attempted to cover appropriate?" At Clemson University, students are asked whether "the course was presented in a logical sequence."

To put it simply, in evaluating scholarship we must ask: "Were the methods and procedures appropriate to the project?"

SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

This leads to the fourth standard. In our new report, we conclude that any act of scholarship ultimately must be judged by the significance of its results. In the case of research, this standard has long been viewed as a core dimension of the scientific method.

I admire the directness of the University of Hawaii Press when it asks: "What has the author accomplished?" The University of Arizona Press wants to know if the manuscript "makes a significant contribution to the field." And the *Journal of Physical Chemistry* asks if the manuscript has "extremely important results."

The scholarship of application-service-also must be judged by outcomes. At the University of Illinois, peers are asked to comment on the extent to which a college's service activity has made a substantial contribution that is "recognized by others." Teaching, too, must in the end be judged not by process but by results. And the evaluation forms we studied ask students questions that clearly seek to measure the significance of the results of teaching: "Was your interest in the subject stimulated by this course?" "Did you improve in your competence due to this course?" "Did you learn something you consider valuable?"

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

As a fifth standard, all scholarship requires good communication. Lee Shulman, of Stanford University, has elegantly argued that teaching must become "community property," that ideas must be shared. I would add that good communication means not just good teaching but scholarship in all its forms. All scholarship must become "community property" through effective communication.

The point is most obvious, of course, when it comes to teaching. The evaluation forms we studied are full of questions such as these: "Did the instructor speak with good expression?" "Did the teacher explain course material clearly?" "Did the instructor introduce stimulating ideas?" "Was he or she dynamic?"

But it is equally important that the scholarship of teaching be communicated to colleagues as well as to students. In this spirit, we agreed with those colleges and universities who take as an indicator of excellence in teaching the sharing of innovative instructional materials and methods through formal publications, conferences, and seminars, as well as through informal means.

Service, too, requires this standard. The University of Georgia, for example, in its "Guidelines for Faculty Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure," says the effectiveness of public service should be based, at least in part, on "the quality and impact of the written documents produced." And of course the criteria scholarly presses and professional journals use always include effective communication. Cambridge University Press simply asks: "Is the manuscript well written?" The University Press of Kansas wants to know: "Is the writing style effective?" The American Mathematical Society says: "Papers must be written clearly," and then adds this fascinating comment: " At least the referee should be able to understand them without undue pain." It also says that the paper must be of interest to an appropriate number of readers, not just to the authors, students, and a few colleagues, which suggests the view that the intended audience of scholarship should be broad. In this spirit, Kent State University Press asks: "Would there be interest in this book beyond its specialized field?"

I suggest that scholarship in every form is a public act, and while some work is quite specialized, it must, in the end, be known and understood by many others. Forty years ago, Robert Oppenheimer, speaking at the 200th Anniversary of Columbia University, said: "It is proper to the role of the scientist. . .that he try to bring the most honest and intelligible account of new knowledge to all who will try to learn." Scholars, quite simply, must communicate well.

REFLECTIVE CRITIQUE

Our final standard is that scholarly work should be accompanied by reflective critique. In discovery , integration, application, or teaching, the scholar thinks about his or her work, seeks the opinions of others, and develops his or her learning over time.

Reflective critique is not as common in our sources as the other standards, although it is recognized in university guidelines for judging research and teaching. Duquesne University, for example, cites as an indicator of effectiveness in scholarship: "Significant self-development activities, such as internal faculty development grants, that lead to increased research and publication effectiveness." Frostburg State University counts as a criterion for outstanding professional development the undertaking of "a series of courses, workshops, and the like which lead to the development of a new area of expertise."

Insightful reflection begins with self-conscious practice, which continues after a project is done. This is especially important in teaching. One of the specifications of teaching ability at Old Westbury College, for example, is "the ability to respond positively to criticism." Frostburg State wants to know if the teacher "is self-critical: asks for and values the opinions of peers regarding teaching methods." Regarding professional service, it is surely significant that virtually all funders of applied projects ask that proposals contain an appropriate plan for evaluation.

Careful evaluation enriches scholarly projects by enabling the old ones to better inform the new. Indeed, the quality of reflective critique, though least often recognized in the evaluation of scholarship, may be the most important of all.

The six yardsticks of excellence I've described apply to all forms of scholarship. Within these common criteria are endless variations as the standards are applied in different ways to various disciplines and various types of scholarship. Still, it's hard to imagine any scholarly work worthy

of the name that did not meet these standards, which define, I believe, the core of excellence for all academic work.

Now, hopefully, a common language about scholarship will emerge---0ne that cuts across the disciplines and across the institutions. Perhaps at least with that common language will come a true community of learners.

STANDARDS

Clear Goals:

* Does the scholar state the basic purposes of his or her work clearly?
* Does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable?
* Does the scholar identify important questions in the field?

Adequate Preparation:

* Does the scholar show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field?
* Does the scholar bring the necessary skills to his or her work?
* Does the scholar bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward?

Appropriate Methods:

* Does the scholar use methods appropriate to the goals?
* Does the scholar apply effectively the methods selected?
* Does the scholar modify procedures in response to changing circumstances?

Significant Results:

* Does the scholar achieve the goals?
* Does the scholar's work add consequentially to the field?
* Does the scholar's work open additional areas for further exploration?

Effective Communication:

* Does the scholar use a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work?
* Does the scholar use appropriate forums for communicating work to its intended audiences?
* Does the scholar present his or her message with clarity and integrity?

Reflective Critique:

* Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work?
* Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique?
* Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?