

Part 2: Scholarship and Faculty Work

Part 2 is divided into three sections:

- 1) Being scholarly: The trilogy and traditional template
- 2) Concerns, questions and debate
- 3) The need for a new model

The three sections of Part 2 examine the scope and nature of the historical context for establishing that work in the field of film and digital media can be recognized, evaluated and rewarded as a unique and specific form of scholarship and scholarly activity.

1) Being scholarly: The trilogy and traditional template

Traditionally, for more than a century at most academic institutions of higher learning, faculty members have been expected to perform a “trilogy” of activities---teaching, research and service---for the benefit of students, the academy, the community, the nation and the world (Boyer, 1990, p. 15-16). At a majority of institutions of higher learning, the trilogy of expectations remains strongly intact and singularly prioritized, but “a wide gap now exists between the myth and the reality of academic life. Almost all colleges pay lip service to the trilogy of teaching, research and service, but when it comes to making judgments about professional performance, the three rarely are assigned equal merit” (Boyer, 1990, p. 15.16).

Today, the most heavily weighted and rewarded forms of faculty activity are in the categories of discovery-based scientific research and the publication of peer-reviewed scholarly texts (Boyer, 1990). In the conventional setting, scientific research and the publication of text-based findings are what count if the faculty member has any hope of career advancement. While notable exceptions do exist, with some institutions prioritizing teaching over research or service, and others that are recognizing and rewarding creative forms of faculty work; a vast majority of

institutions continue to require that faculty engage in scientific research and publish their findings in specialized professional journals, with lesser or nil emphasis upon teaching or service (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997).

Most institutions of higher learning follow a traditional template to evaluate and assess the performance of full time faculty members, based upon the trilogy of teaching, research and service (Braxton, Luckey, and Helland, 2007); intertwined with indirect, vague, shifting, unwritten, and potentially insidious notions of collegiality (Connell and Savage, 2001). The traditional template is a set of criteria that are used at institutions of higher learning to prioritize, evaluate and judge academic scholarship and faculty performance. The traditional template has become skewed and weighted toward scientific research, away from teaching and service, emerging from an ontology that prioritizes scientism, prevailing by consensus rather than by reason and logic. The trilogy of expectations and the hierarchical nature of the traditional template form the prevailing paradigm in contemporary higher education---used to explicitly determine the nature of faculty work, the allocation of faculty time, and the trajectory of faculty career.

In most academic workplaces, including universities and other settings for higher education, faculty members aspire for job security and career advancement through the awarding of tenure, promotion, contractual renewal and other rewards---based upon their record of performance in teaching, research and service, as measured by the traditional template. Performance reviews are conducted periodically to support and encourage standards of excellence by recognizing, evaluating, and rewarding outstanding academic performance; to provide guidance to faculty members regarding professional improvement and development; and to obtain information relevant to contract renewal/extension, promotion, termination, or merit

pay decisions. Most faculty members perceive that by striving for promotion of rank, tenure and other institutional rewards they are taking necessary and positive steps to advance their professional careers. Security and successful advancement are positive indications that an individual faculty member has been accepted, respected, valuable, and valued by his/her institution. Promotion of academic rank, the awarding of tenure, or the achievement of any other institutional reward are usually accompanied by a pay raise, greater job security, a personal sense of accomplishment and achievement; and the assignment of greater responsibility in the workplace, greater respect by collegial peers, and other special, both explicit and implicit, benefits.

The implications of results from a performance evaluation are broad and serious, serving as the primary measure of a faculty member's on the job productivity; a key factor for accessing institutional grant funds and roles of power, an indicator that plots the linear nature of a faculty career, and the basis for defining other priorities that may be relevant to successfully sustaining employment as a faculty member throughout one's academic career. The locus of control for determining success or failure in the faculty evaluation process can be attributed internally or externally---to ability, effort, task difficulty, committee bias, collegial relations with administrators, good/bad luck, and so on---but the results of faculty performance evaluation directly and ultimately affect all aspects of the creative faculty member's professional career in higher education---advancement, tenure, hiring/firing, and other important benefits and rewards of the academic workplace.

Although it is the undisputed right and obligation of any employer to evaluate the quality of an employee's performance on the job, it is difficult to imagine that any person enjoys, likes, or thrives on the experience of being judged. Data in chapter 4 shows that problems do emerge

when important, specific and unique aspects of work by faculty in the academic field of film and digital media are not recognized during performance review and evaluation. Faculty in the field of film and digital media who attempt works of synthesis, explore interdisciplinary territory, or speak to non-specialists, are still at a disadvantage in comparison with faculty scholars who follow the conventional path (Boyer, 1990; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997). Evaluation systems for recognizing faculty performance in many academic institutions of higher education are too narrowly focused, and data revealed in chapter 4 facilitates the development of a useful recommendations in chapter 5 that are intended to meet an unmet need. Individual faculty in the field of film and digital media require a unique and relevant model that can be used at the departmental, college and university levels for recognizing and evaluating their artistic, scholarly and professional work. Boyer (1990) wrote:

...according to the dominant view, to be a scholar is to be a researcher---and publication is the primary yardstick by which scholarly productivity is measured...(instead) all dimensions of academic work, not just research, should be valued by the academy (p. 2).

Data in chapter 4 supports the argument that artistic, scholarly and professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media is not fairly or fully recognized because performance evaluation systems are too narrowly focused upon the priority of text-based publication and scientific research; and many performance evaluations are being framed by vague, unwritten or improvised criteria. In the words of one professor:

At our university, everyone is expected to do conventional research. I'm in the arts and not only is there no money for research, but the entire process seems oddly out-of-phase with how quality in my field is and should be measured (Boyer, 1990, p. 33-34).

Data in chapter 4 illustrates that work in the field of film and digital media can be motivated, developed and produced for intrinsic and extrinsic reasons, and is unique and distinct from conventional forms and expectations of research output in many ways.

2) Concerns, questions and debate

The trilogy and the template for evaluating faculty work have been thoughtfully questioned and vigorously debated for many years, yet this narrow paradigm seems to prevail, and in some corners is vigorously defended (Braxton, Luckey, and Helland, 2007; Richlin, 2001). Wait and Hope (2009) list a number of questions that have been debated, including:

- What evidence can be provided that the world of higher education (including the field of film and digital media) is structured, operates or is organized conceptually in ways that makes the conventional proposed approach more effective than an alternative?
- How can it be proven that putting results in a measurable form will lead to improvement in student learning, or to advancement and innovation in a particular field?
- What proof is there that all quality in every dimension of life can be engineered through the application of large-scale assessment systems, or that the larger and more centralized the assessment system, the higher the quality will become?
- How is it possible to call for a deeply integrated system of standardization so that results can be compared, and at the same time call for innovation or a climate of innovation (p. 17-19)?

Further, in the context of this research, can it be proven that if a program is fashioned to support the unique and specific aspects of work in the field of film and digital media that the institution and the credibility of its programs of study will fall behind or be compromised in some way?

Unfortunately, in practical terms, faculty seldom are permitted an opportunity to ask such questions, especially not to proponents of large, centralized institutional systems.

The trilogy and the traditional template have been criticized for being too dependent upon the axioms of positivism, and for an explicit expectation that scholarly work should only appear as text-based publications and dissemination to specialist readers (Boyer, 1990; Diamond, 1993). The positivism of the traditional template has been explicitly criticized for marginalizing alternative or unconventional scholarship approaches and activities, and implicitly disallowing recognition of faculty work output in a wide range of academic fields, including film and digital media (Boyer, 1990; Jacobs, 2008; Bukalski, 2000).

Barthes (1977) described positivism as “the epitome and culmination of capitalist ideology” (p. 143), and Diamond (1993) observes that the institutional prioritization of published, scientific research output, and its reliance upon the traditional template has meant “service, teaching, and creativity are risky priorities for faculty members seeking promotion or tenure at many institutions” (Diamond, 1993, pp. 6-7). Diamond (2002) observes that the faculty performance review process is “no easy task” (p. xiii), while Diamond and Adam (2000) observe that “faculty, department chairs, academic deans, and administrators perceive existing promotion and tenure practices as problematic,” and have referred to the systems for performance evaluation and rewards as a “gauntlet to be negotiated” by faculty (Diamond and Adam, 2000 p. 1). With assessment criteria in flux from institution to institution or even department to department, an faculty member must insecurely feel around for the way forward, working intuitively through the maze-like system for reward and advancement in an academic institution--with no real guarantee or ultimate promise of success.

Concerns about the traditional template and its focus upon scientism are not discipline-

specific in the university setting. Controversy extends throughout a wide range of domains and contexts, and each discipline has its own specific concerns and problems (Diamond, 1993b; Diamond and Adam, 2000). Essentially, there are very few institutions of higher learning that are ready to abandon the entrenched status quo to look for better alternatives (La Pelle, 1997). Debate and dissatisfaction are evidenced even in the private sector of business, where numerous studies have shown:

...both employees and managers are dissatisfied with performance evaluation systems that are in place at this time, that they generally do not improve performance, and that new systems designed to fix the problems with the systems they are replacing do little to improve matters (La Pelle, 1997, p. 2).

As illustrated in chapter 4, data shows that research findings about performance appraisal systems, work that examines what practices have positive outcomes and what practices have negative outcomes, have not found their way into practice. In other words, research has not informed an improved practice (La Pelle, 1997). The conventional body of literature about performance appraisal pays little attention to Deming's (1986) claim that "many performance evaluation processes in use cannot work to improve motivation, performance, and teamwork, that are sometimes harmful, and often de-motivate even high-performing individuals" (La Pelle, 1997 p. 4). Today, the ontology of the trilogy and its template is enforced and sustained by uncompromisingly normative expectations and rigid administrative policies; giving way to ever narrowing and less predictable standards that are meant more to limit access than to ensure accomplishment (Euben, 2005).

3) The need for a new model

Boyer (1990) argues that faculty scholarship is a complete range of possibilities and intellectual activities, allowing for discovery, integration, application and the sharing of knowledge through teaching to coalesce into action; and that faculty should be recognized for the full range of their activities and performance. Boyer (1990) is not arguing for greater balance between teaching and research in the faculty reward structure, but “his argument calls for ascribing scholarly legitimacy to the full range of academic work---work defined by application, discovery, integration and teaching” (Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 1997, p. 13). Boyer (1990) proposed that scholarship consists of *four domains*---discovery, application, integration and the sharing of knowledge through teaching. Boyer (1990) wrote:

Surely, scholarship means engaging in original research. But the work of the scholar also means stepping back from one’s investigation, looking for connections, building bridges between theory and practice, and communicating one’s knowledge effectively.

Specifically, we conclude that the work of the professoriate might be thought of as having four separate, yet overlapping, functions. There are: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of integration; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of teaching (p. 16).

If all faculty members were willing to be uncritical subjects to the trilogy of faculty work that is narrowly skewed toward scientific research and text publication, and were compliant in accepting the conventional-yet-unevenly-balanced traditional template for evaluating faculty performance, then the research problem and research question that are posed by this dissertation would be without meaning and would be irrelevant for further inquiry. However, literature

demonstrates that some fellow-members of the community of faculty scholars at institutions of higher learning are compelled to resist the status quo---and not content, willing or suited to be continually marginalized. Data in chapter 4 shows that faculty members are not content to follow and subject themselves to the expectations of the traditional template as it currently stands. Chapter 4 demonstrates and chapter 5 argues that the time has come to reconsider the scope, nature and meaning of constitutes scholarship and scholarly work by faculty; building a more inclusive and broadly-conceived model, and considering ways by which the faculty reward system can be significantly improved (Boyer, 1990).