Part 2: Academic scholarship and performance evaluation of faculty work

Part 2 is divided into two main sections:

a) Terminologies for faculty work and its evaluation

b) Historical and contemporary perspective about faculty work

Part 2 discusses literature that was used to explore the historical, theoretical and conceptual roots for what constitutes scholarship by academic faculty in institutions of higher learning. The purpose is to locate artistic, scholarly, and professional work by faculty in the field of film and digital media within the broad spectrum of what is constituted as scholarship and scholarly activity.

1) Terminologies about faculty work and its evaluation

What does it mean to be a scholar? What constitutes scholarly work by faculty, according to traditional and contemporary perspectives? I look at this complex question from multiple perspectives---historical, critical, and alternative---advocating for those of us at the borders.

Today, according to Boyer (1990), "being scholarly" is synonymous with academic rank at a college or university, and with the performance of scientific research that results in publication (p. 15). According to the "dominant view, to be a scholar has primarily come to me being a researcher---and publication is the primary yardstick by which scholarly productivity is measured" (Boyer, 1990, p. 2). Scholars are perceived to be academics, conducting research and publishing papers, and then perhaps conveying their knowledge by sharing their knowledge with

students through teaching or by applying it in other social, clinical, commercial or other contexts (Boyer, 1990).

The category of research reflects only a portion of what constitutes the scholarly work performed and prioritized by faculty; so the term proposed by Boyer (1990), *scholarship*, is more indicative of the broad range of faculty activities. Boyer (1990) wrote: "we conclude that the work of the professoriate might be though of as having four separate, yet overlapping functions. These are: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application and the scholarship of teaching" (p. 16). Therefore, Boyer (1990) has clarified that research is included in the scholarly activities and priorities of faculty, but faculty priorities and activities are not limited to research. Further, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) have contextualized the powerful, negative political significance of the term, "research," implicating it with the exploitive and hegemonic legacy of colonialism and imperialism (p. 1; Smith, 1999). Therefore, as appropriate, I have opted for the terms, scholarship, faculty work and/or faculty scholarship, rather than relying on the narrower and problematic term, research.

Concerning the output of faculty work, the result of research, scholarly work, or other form of scholarship activity, Koch (1998) uses the term, "research product" (p. 1183), and I believe this term is suited to broadly include the diverse forms of output from scholarly work that emerge in film and digital media. In this dissertation I interchangeably and synonymously use the terms: scholarship, faculty work, research product, or output to signify the result of scholarship activity by faculty.

Is it better to consider the process as an *assessment* rather than an *evaluation*, or vice versa? An etymological and epistemological quagmire, a *potpourri* of connotations and denotations, bubbles to the surface when one inquires about the words, *assessment, evaluation,*

review and their many cousins. There terms are used interchangeably, but the terms are not synonymous. Using many dictionaries, online and traditional, a composite definition of assessment is: *an estimation* of the *worth, value, or quality* of a person or thing. An evaluation is: *to ascertain or fix* the *value or worth of*; *to examine and judge carefully*; to *appraise*. Assessments are intended to estimate, while evaluations ascertain, fix, examine, appraise and judge carefully. Value and worth are consistent with assessment and evaluation, but any determination about quality has disappeared as we move from assessment to evaluation. As appraisal enters the fray, by way of evaluation, there is a nearly synonymous definition with assessment---the classification of someone or something with respect to its worth. *Worth* emerges singularly as the term that reaches across the terrain of performance evaluation terminology. Evaluations and assessments are searching to determine *worth*. If performance evaluations are also assessments or appraisals, or vice versa, the one term and concept that is consistent in all cases is that each process is a test to determine worth.

Is the process of evaluation or assessment similar to a test?---perhaps the whole process can borrow its meaning from the sciences and be called an acid test, which means a decisive or critical test for worth or quality; a rigorous and conclusive test to establish worth or value. Arguably, the performance evaluation is actually an acid test to determine worth, but some other terms illustrate ethical and philosophical concerns that could emerge during the gauntlet of any acid test in the field of film and digital media:

- Overvaluation - too high a value or price assigned to something, in comparison with something else
- Undervaluation- too low a value or price assigned to something, in comparison with something else

- Pricing- the evaluation of something in terms of its potentially-fluctuating market value

- Re-evaluation - the evaluation of something a second time (or more)

Defining the performance evaluation process as an acid test that intends to determine worth would be reasonably accurate and valid in the context higher education settings as it is currently and commonly being practiced, but there will certainly be some who might not accept such direct verbiage, so I might as well revert to the terms most commonly used---performance evaluation, performance assessment, or both---because they share the purpose of determining the worth of the work being considered.

Guskey (2000) shows that the concept of evaluation is subtly distinct from assessment, yet these two terms are commonly and interchangeably used without regard to nuanced distinctions. Guskey (2000) writes, "Evaluation is the systematic investigation of worth and merit," implying a process that is "thoughtful, intentional and purposeful," done for clear reasons (p. 41-42). Merit and worth imply appraisal of value and judgment about achievement, and evaluations, unlike assessments, are intended to determine the value and/or merit of something, according to standards of quality (Guskey, 2000). Guskey (2000) suggests that faculty evaluations should be designed to consider both evaluation and assessment, being based upon merit and value (Guskey, 2000).

Guskey (2000) argues that merit and value are not usually considered inherent in the conventional definition of assessment, and states, "no evaluation can be completely objective, the process is not based on opinion or conjecture…Instead, it (should be) based on the acquisition of specific, relevant and valid evidence examined through appropriate methods and techniques" (Guskey, 2000 p. 42). On the other hand, assessment is any of a variety of procedures used to obtain information, is impartial and does not involve any judgment about the

merit or worth (Linn and Gronlund, 1995, Guskey, 2000). This etymological detail might seem microscopic in scale, but terminological disregard represents a basic level of ignorance that seeps into the process of evaluating faculty scholarship. Assessment is not an evaluation, and vice versa. Further, are the standards being used for evaluation of faculty research relative or absolute? Are the standards and results of evaluation simply best estimates of value or merit as determined by peers, perhaps peers who share no common knowledge base with the work and subject area under review? Guskey (2000) also posits a view that research and evaluation have a great deal in common because "both involve systematic inquiry in order to gain new knowledge, and both terms infer quantitative and qualitative methodologies to address specific questions" (Guskey, 2000, p. 44).

It is not useful to use the terms *quality*, *achievement* or any other important terms in the abstract. To conduct meaningful analyses and make practical decisions, it is necessary to talk about achievement and quality in terms of something. Vague, ill-defined terms that underpin the application of irrelevant and narrowly conceived criteria are counter-productive and exacerbate many problems that threaten faculty careers and the institutional workplace environment. The use of accurate and relevant terms to define, describe and guide the process of review, assessment, or evaluation of the scope and nature of faculty work in film and digital media is a first step in the right direction. As discussed in this section, there are nuanced and significant etymological and epistemological differences in several key terms. This is a first problem that I discovered through reading and analysis of pertinent literature---deciding and understanding what are the best terms that most accurately the task and process of work being performed by faculty and evaluated in institutional settings---using terms that most closely and consistently describe the historical and philosophical vision and mission of my inquiry.

The word, work, is used in title and text because it provides an umbrella for the different types of faculty activities essential to the arts in higher education. This umbrella is necessary because definitions of such terms as creative activity, research, scholarship, teaching, and service can be either narrow or broad. For example, when broadly defined, research can include the process of making a work of art: a search for the new is involved. When more narrow definitions based on science or humanities methodologies are applied, making art is not research, although research of scientific or humanistic types may be involved in the total art-making process. The word, work, enables respect and use of both narrow and broad definitions as institutions, organizations, and individuals may determine in specific circumstances. Whether broad or narrow, my use of the term, *work*, always indicates an intense merging of thought, skill, and emotion.

2) Historical and contemporary perspectives about faculty work

How does an historical overview relate to a literature review and to my overall inquiry? I have relied upon scholarly literature to facilitate my understanding of what is constituted as conventional research and other forms of academic scholarship, and to critically examine the nature of performance evaluation of faculty research and scholarship from historical and contemporary perspectives. My intention is to understand what have been the historical priorities that have defined faculty work in higher education.

As described in Chapter 1, faculty members in higher education are expected to perform a trilogy of work---teaching, research and service. Research, whether qualitative or quantitative, is a very important area of responsibility and accountability for faculty in higher education. From an historical perspective, traditional and conventional expectations in research have

prioritized verifiability, discovery, measurability and a hierarchy of experts and facts. However, hegemony and primacy of traditional and conventional approaches to research are being challenged by the emergence of alternative methods and new forms of outcomes from scholarly work (Four Arrows, 2008). The challenges and possibilities posed by a critical reading of literature from historical and contemporary perspectives about scholarly work have informed and enabled my advocacy for the recognition of alternative methods and outcomes---as I have sought to address the research problem and research problem of this dissertation.

Boyer (1990) and many others have raised and debated some of the most important questions and issues that affect faculty careers in institutions of higher learning today. About twenty years have passed since Boyer (1990) and Rice (1990) developed groundbreaking theories that advocate change in faculty priorities and reform in educational institutions, but the challenges and questions they posed remain unresolved. Boyer (1990) proposed that faculty work consists of four distinct yet interrelated domains

- The scholarship of discovery

- The scholarship of application

- The scholarship of integration

- The scholarship of teaching through the sharing of knowledge

Rice (1991), like Boyer (1990), divides scholarly work into four components:

- The advantage of knowledge: original research

- The integration of knowledge: synthesizing and reintegrating knowledge, revealing new patterns of meaning, and new relationship between the parts and the whole.

- The application of knowledge: professional practice directly related to an individual's scholarly specialization.

- The transformation of knowledge through teaching: including pedagogical content knowledge and discipline-specific educational theory.

Throughout this dissertation, the question of what is constituted as faculty work in the field of film and digital media is considered to inform a response to the subsequent question of recognizing and evaluating such work in a performance evaluation. These questions compel a review of Rice (1991) and Boyer (1990) as starting points, followed by study of the works of several other key scholars (Diamond, 1993, 1999; Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2002; Braxton, 2006; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997). Ultimately, my purpose is to discern a historical context while expressing the unique and diverse characteristics of faculty work in film and digital media, and to mold a conceptual model that reflects the values and language of this particular field.

In the past few years, in a few university settings, reforms have been envisioned and implemented, moving gradually toward acknowledgement of the breadth and diversity of faculty work in creative fields (Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2007; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997; Diamond, 1993; Diamond, 1999). Data reflects such a change, and an implicit resistance to change, in the publications of academic institutions, for example, in faculty handbooks, university by-laws, mission statements, and other official institutional statements. It is not uncommon these days to find that a typical university faculty handbook will state a gumbo of expectations that implicitly draw from the four-part model of Boyer (1990) and/or Rice (1991), making statements that addresses the trilogy of expectations for teaching, research and service: for example…the University defines the term scholarly activity as: scholarship directed toward new discovery, investigations resulting in *creative and artistic expressions*, the evolution of

novel and more effective teaching methodologies and materials, and the integration and application of new methodologies in the profession. In Chapter 4 it is demonstrated that most faculty in the field of film and digital have no awareness at all of the new model of faculty scholarship that has been proposed by Boyer (1990), nor do they seem to have awareness of other theoretical bases for ontological change pertaining to performance evaluation of faculty work---despite their nearly unanimous recognition of the research problem in their institutional workplace.

A body of literature has emerged in response to Boyer (1990) and Rice (1991) that has critically examined issues relating to the research problem and the research question from historical and theoretical perspectives (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Glassick, Huber and Maeroff, 1997; Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2002; Braxton, 2006; Diamond, 1993; Diamond and Adam, 2000). This literature has facilitated contextualization and depth of understanding about contemporary issues that converge in the research problem and research question---the recognition and evaluation of faculty work in the field of film and digital media during performance evaluation.

The priorities and social issues confronting the academy in contemporary times, such as the problems and questions about the recognition and evaluation of faculty work as examined in this dissertation, are profoundly different than matters faced by the academy in the previous times. In earlier times, being scholarly and notions of "scholarship…referred to a variety of creative work carried on in various places, and its integrity was measured by the ability to think, communicate and learn" (Boyer, 1990, p. 15). Over the past few hundred years of higher education in the United States, research as a faculty activity "remained the exception rather than the rule. The principal mission at most of the nation's colleges and universities continued to be

the education of undergraduates" (Boyer, 1990, p. 18-19). Boyer (1990) argues that the hegemony of the today's prevailing paradigm, including the prioritization of scientific research methods and text-based publications, has not always been *de rigueur* for faculty scholarship.

From the late 1940s onward, knowledge in educational institutions came to be defined according to the values and conventions of a modernist, rational approach to science based on logical positivism and empiricism. As the twentieth century saw the development of visual culture through a succession of representational technologies—photography, narrative and documentary film, medical and scientific imaging, television, video, virtual realities, and so forth—"visuality" developed as a way to describe how seeing is culturally framed in technologies, communities, and institutions. Visuality is formed at the intersections of visual media, sensory perception, and power. Images are an important channel through which ideologies are remediated and onto which ideologies are projected (Sturken and Cartwright, 2001. p. 21). In the modernist perspective, knowledge is thought to consist of theoretically organized constructs and propositions, logically derived and empirically tested, that can explain and predict phenomena. Such knowledge is stable, cumulative, decontextualized, and generalizable. Throughout the post-WWII period and up to the present day, as discussed in Chapter 1, faculty members have been expected to successfully perform a traditional trilogy of work---scholarly research, teaching and in providing services to their school and community---- and the trilogy of work continues strongly intact and prioritized at a majority of institutions of higher learning.

Moving through distinct and various historical "moments" in the era since World War II, the expectations of faculty work have skewed away from teaching and service, and moved toward the advancement of scientific research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 27; Boyer, 1990).

According to Boyer (1990) and others, scientific research and the publication of research papers

have become prominent and prioritized in the current climate of higher education, and this has

significantly influenced how faculty members allocate their time (Diamond, 1993). Success for

a faculty member is largely based upon one's productivity in scientific research and text-based

publications, with a much smaller percentage of weight being allocated to performance in

teaching and service (Boyer, 1990). Since World War II, as science and technology increasingly

have become identified with progress and national interest(s), supported by massive and

expanding grant funds from governmental and private sources, scientific research as a model for

faculty work began:

> to spread exponentially and to colonize the academy as a whole…teaching became less
>
> well rewarded, and service---which had been once a proud tradition of extending
>
> knowledge beyond the campus---came to mean little more than being a good citizen,
>
> lending a hand when committee work need to be done (Glassick, Huber and Maeroff,
>
> 1997, p. viii, p. 7).

During this time period the prime focus of faculty in higher education changed from teaching

and service to basic scientific research, and "from student to professor, from the general to the

specialized, and from loyalty to campus to fealty to profession" (Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff,

1997, p. 8). Therefore, it continues to be important to ask, what is the meaning of research and

how do institutions of higher learning define what constitutes research inquiry?

The conventional notion of research connotes an endeavor in which scholars

"intentionally set out to enhance their understanding of a phenomenon and expect to

communicate what they discover" (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005, p. 4). The traditional and

conventional understanding is that "research must a) enhance the scientific community's

understanding of a phenomenon, or contribute to the body of knowledge, and b) research must communicate what was discovered in the new study to the scientific community" (Levy and Ellis, 2006). Research and research inquiry---in both qualitative and in quantitative contexts---have long been focused upon positivism and the discovery of empirical truth. Truth has been defined, according to this empiricist-positivist epistemological perspective, as "the accurate representation of an independently existing reality" (Smith and Hodkinson, 2000, p. 412-413). Empiricism, drawing upon an Aristotelian philosophical perspective, is a theory of knowledge that claims its representations to be true, objective and accurate. Empiricism suggests that "objects and phenomena have essence or identity: they are things in their own right…also, essential phenomena are free from contradiction---they are either one thing or another" (Bleakley, 2004). The search for empirical truth is accomplished through the application of proper (recognized and accepted) procedural methods that presumably enable the knower to accurately and objectively convey a description of reality.

Positivism, as evidenced in quantitative and qualitative scientific research, perceives "a reality out there to be studied, captured and understood," and is an approach that prioritizes the isolation, measurement and quantification of phenomenon, to allow for the verification and generalization of findings (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000 p. 14). From the positivist-empiricist perspective, the senses are mere conduits that allow for the entry of knowledge and ideas. As discussed in Chapter 4, aspects of positivistic-empirical methods of inquiry are consistent with the approach, scope and nature of artistic, scholarly and professional work by faculty in film and digital media. However, when compared with the "creative and interpretive" approach of qualitative research methods, including artistic and other creative works, the priorities and approach of positivist-empiricist, scientific, and quantitative research methods seem remote and

inferential, with the potential of silencing important voices that struggle to be heard (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p 16). Positivist values in qualitative research explicitly discourage ambiguity in the likeness of truth, and discourage any expressions of emotionality, personal responsibility; and de-emphasize an ethic of caring, praxis, multi-voiced perspectives, and creative dialogues (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000, p. 34). In academia, generally, scientism, positivism-empiricism and realist representations remain as the prevailing and dominant ontology, while the use of the personal/*self* as the primary source of data is skeptically considered to be (at best) a marginal alternative (Holt, 2003; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

Following Boyer (1990) in defining scholarship more broadly than the traditional view that emphasizes only discovery-based research inquiry, Braxton, Luckey and Helland (2002) describe the parameters of scholarship as a continuum (Braxton, Luckey and Helland, 2007, p. 90). One end of the continuum can be characterized by the traditional template, with the prioritization of scientific research, appearing in the form of publications in formal, peer-reviewed journals that are judged favorably or unfavorably as proper scholarship (Braxton, Luckey, and Helland, 2007; Richin, 2001). On the opposite end of the continuum, far away from the expectations of the traditional template, Braxton, Luckey and Helland (2007) place unspecified "scholarly activities", work that is performed by faculty members on a day-to-day basis, including activity that does not necessarily appear in text or other conventional forms at all (p. 90). Such work, action or performance "may be judged as scholarly if disciplinary knowledge and skill are used in performing this activity" (Braxton, Luckey, and Helland, 2007, p. 90).

The two extremes of the continuum as established by Braxton, Luckey, and Helland (2002), with the traditional template on one side and its comparable opposite, an alternative

view, on the other side, prompts a subsequent question: What is in the middle? Defining and

describing the middle ground provides a useful referential context for deeper understanding of

both extremes of the continuum. Braxton, Luckey, and Helland (2002) suggest that:

> Schulman and Hutching's view (1998) on the essential characteristics of scholarship
>
> hold middle ground on this continuum. They outline three such characteristics: the work
>
> must be public, amenable to peer review, and in a form that allows for exchange and use
>
> by members of the academic community (p. 90).

Braxton, Luckey, and Helland (2002) further suggest that "unpublished publicly observable

outcomes of scholarly activity within the four domains of scholarship, if in an appropriate form

for exchange and peer review," would meet the threshold for what constitutes the middle group

of scholarship, but leave open the question of whether or not art and creative works, such as film

and digital media productions, should be placed on the same continuum as conventional research

scholarship. Most literature about faculty performance evaluation in higher education implicitly

infers or implies that faculty scholars do not, should not or would not choose to deviate very far

from expectations of the traditional and the conventional hierarchy in higher educational settings,

and thereby makes implicitly discourages faculty scholars from the pursuit of artistic or other

creative work as a form of scholarly work.

Advocacy for a more broad view of scholarship has been raised by many scholars,

asserting the theoretical possibility that creative and alternative research output, including that

which emerges in film and digital media, could possibly be *more comprehensive* in scope than

conventional scholarship output, as it reaches beyond the domain of discovery to the domains of

application, integration and/or public outreach/teaching (Boyer, 1990; Williams-Rautiola, 2001,

Colbeck, 2006; Bukalski, 2000). Work in film and digital media can overtly demonstrate the

domains of application, teaching and integration---in addition to discovery. The idea that faculty

work can discover, apply and/or integrate knowledge, ideally moving toward engagement with

the public (audience), and that such research and output should be valued on its own particular

and unique merits, not just on its adherence or resemblance to dominant, conventional

requirements can be supported by Boyer and others (Boyer, 1990; Rice, 1988; Glassick, Huber,

and Maeroff, 1997; NASAD, 1997; Bukalski, 1990). The idea that the sharing of knowledge

through teaching, one of Boyer's four domains, including scholarly teaching and the scholarship

of teaching, can be inherently creative activities has been supported by many others (Postman,

1971; Friere, 1997; Friere, 1998; Palmer, 2007; Cajete, 1994; Jacobs, 2008).

Consistent with Boyer (1990), and opposed to the conventional view that the trilogy of

categories factory work are separated and distinct activities, Diamond (1993c) describes the

nature of faculty work, with resonance and particular relevance to the work of faculty in the field

of film and digital media, as a process of "interrelated efforts" and "interrelated activities" that

involve aspects of discovery, application, integration and the sharing of knowledge through

teaching (p. 2). However, it is possible that interpretive preconceptions, biases, and other

skewed attitudinal perceptions about the scholar's or artist's work, personal values, approach,

qualities and other characteristics can become ambiguously merged with the evaluator's

expectations and judgments about faculty work and its degree of creativity, originality and

scholarship---possibly explaining in part why faculty work in the field of film and digital media,

and in many other fields and disciplines, can remain unrecognized as scholarly work, or least (or

at best?) not allowed to pass without some controversy, debate or other form of resistance (Holt,

2003).

A critical approach to the reading of historical and theoretical literature has deepened my awareness of the significant shift in faculty and institutional priorities over time until the present day, characterized by a singular emphasis upon scientific research that is discontinuous with the trajectory of history in American higher education (Boyer, 1990; Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Further, I recognize that the approach of qualitative research inquiry has historical, antecedent origins, not formed without precedent or in isolation from other approaches (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000; Vidich and Lyman, 2000). Establishing an historical framework about research inquiry, scholarly work, scholarship and other related ways of knowing and doing by faculty is assuring and helpful as I move to define what should be recognized during a review of faculty performance; and as I try to build a broad and relevant body of knowledge that facilitates my ability to position myself and my scholarly efforts as I write in a scholarly and personalized way.