



Boyer's Model of Scholarship

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Faculty Development Series

The appropriate role of the professoriate has been a topic of ongoing debate in higher education. As different types of educational institutions have emerged, the focus of scholarly pursuits and their relative value to the organization have evolved. This module examines how Boyer's model of scholarship can be used to clarify and balance roles of college faculty.

Expanded Definition of Scholarship

Boyer (1997) proposed an expanded definition of "scholarship" within the professorate based on four functions that underlie the *Profile of a Quality Faculty Member*: discovery, integration, application, and teaching. He argues that, within this framework, all forms of scholarship should be recognized and rewarded, and that this will lead to more personalized and flexible criteria for gaining tenure. He feels that, too often faculty members wrestle with conflicting obligations that leave little time to focus on their teaching role. Boyer proposes using "creativity contracts" that emphasize quality teaching and individualized professional development. He recommends that this model be based upon the life patterns of individuals and their passions.

The first element of Boyer's model, discovery, is the one most closely aligned with traditional research. Discovery contributes not only to the stock of human knowledge but also to the intellectual climate of a college or university. He stresses that new research contributions are critical to the vitality of the academic environment, and that his model does not diminish the value of discovery scholarship.

The second element, integration, focuses on making connections across disciplines. One interprets one's own research so that it is useful beyond one's own disciplinary boundaries and can be integrated into a larger body of knowledge. He stresses that the rapid pace of societal change within a global economy have elevated the importance of this form of scholarship.

The third element, application, focuses on using research findings and innovations to remedy societal problems. Included in this category are service activities that are specifically tied to one's field of knowledge and professional activities. Beneficiaries of these activities include commercial entities, non-profit organizations, and professional associations.

Finally, Boyer considers teaching as a central element of scholarship. Too often teaching is viewed as a routine function and is often not the focus of professional development. Many professors state that they are primarily interested in teaching, but they feel that their institutions do not value or reward excellence in teaching (Borra, 2001). The academic community continues to emphasize and assign high value to faculty members' involvement in activities other than teaching (Royeen, 1999).

Table 1 **Boyer Model of Scholarship**

Type of Scholarship	Purpose	Measures of Performance
Discovery	Build new knowledge through traditional research.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing in peer-reviewed forums Producing and/or performing creative work within established field Creating infrastructure for future studies
Integration	Interpret the use of knowledge across disciplines.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing a comprehensive literature review Writing a textbook for use in multiple disciplines Collaborating with colleagues to design and deliver a core course
Application	Aid society and professions in addressing problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serving industry or government as an external consultant Assuming leadership roles in professional organizations Advising student leaders, thereby fostering their professional growth
Teaching	Study teaching models and practices to achieve optimal learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advancing learning theory through classroom research Developing and testing instructional materials Mentoring graduate students Designing and implementing a program level assessment system

Implementing Boyer's Model

In the last decade, many institutions and accrediting organizations have attempted to address concerns of external stakeholders by implementing changes based on Boyer's model (*Changing Expectations of Higher Education* and *Efforts to Transform Higher Education*). Russell Edgerton (DeZure, 2000) classified changes inspired by Boyer's work by compiling data from over 50 colleges, and statistics from the American Association for Higher Education's New Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. Edgerton identified three primary areas of activity: setting new expectations for faculty roles, redesigning the process of evaluating performance, and rethinking the way faculty are recognized and rewarded. He observed fundamental changes in campus climates, including broad-based discussions about the role of teaching and reinforcement by faculty rewards systems. Funding agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts and Humanities, have begun to follow suit by expanding programs that explicitly improve teacher preparation, curriculum development, and learning infrastructure.

Massy, Wilger, and Colbeck (2000) also identified commonalities among departments who maintain a supportive culture for all forms of scholarship. They conducted more than 300 interviews of faculty from varied types of institutions (research universities, doctoral-granting institutions, and liberal arts colleges) and from a cross-section of disciplines. Based on their assessment, they identified three main factors that contribute to faculty isolation and fragmentation:

- Fragmented communication patterns interfere with the way faculty communicate with one another about undergraduate education.
- Tight resources limit opportunities and strain relationships.
- Attempts to create environments that encourage faculty interaction are undermined by current reward systems.

They also identified several following commonalities among departments who maintain a supportive culture for all forms of scholarship:

- Faculty interact frequently, fostering a healthy awareness and respect of diverse qualities possessed by colleagues.
- Decisions are made by consensus: all faculty members have the opportunity to be involved.
- There is a sense of generational equity: senior and junior faculty are viewed as equals.
- Peer assessment is perceived as a source for growth.

- They ensure workload equity: all faculty teach the same number of classes, and an equitable mix of levels, ranging from introductory courses to service courses and advanced seminars.
- Course rotation systems familiarize all faculty with the entire curriculum.
- Faculty value students evaluations and use them periodically to improve curricula and instruction.
- Incentives for research, service, and quality teaching are balanced.
- Effective department chairs are viewed as playing a critical role.

Concluding Thoughts

Balanced focus on all forms of scholarship is necessary to meet the demands of the information age as well as escalating expectations of institutional stakeholders. Often this is distorted by perception that the scholarship of discovery (i.e., research) offers the best opportunity to generate new funding sources and prestige. Celebrating and rewarding all forms of scholarship on an equal playing field needs to be a top priority of anyone in a leadership position in higher education, from presidents, chancellors, and boards who set policy and allocate resources, to tenure committees that mold behavior of new faculty, to senior faculty who model explicit and implicit expectations associated with their job descriptions.

References

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