

## Toward A Scholarship of Outreach and Engagement in Higher Education

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The work of Ernest Boyer and his colleagues in *Scholarship Reconsidered* has redirected our thinking about the nature of scholarship in American universities. Although teaching represented the dominant form of scholarship prior to World War II, a large proportion of the responsibility for research in this country since that time has been granted to our research universities, a movement fueled by the establishment of the National Science Foundation in 1952. By the 1960s the perception of what constituted “real” scholarship at our leading institutions had shifted dramatically from teaching to research, with the latter faculty activity thus becoming the most highly regarded and rewarded in academia.

In 1990 in *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Ernest Boyer outlined a concept for viewing scholarship that has been part of the national conversation ever since. Boyer’s model has led to significant changes in the way scholarship is defined and viewed. In 1993 a national project was sponsored by the American Association for Higher Education and funded by the Pew Charitable Trust and William and Flora Hewlett Foundation wherein representatives from twelve leading American universities were brought together to examine and construct more fully what was meant by the “scholarship of teaching.” With the distinguished leadership of Lee Shulman, Russell Edgerton, and Pat Hutchings, this “Peer Review of Teaching” project ignited new initiatives around the country, including the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching’s establishment of “teaching academies” at institutions of higher learning across the nation.

With emphasis on peer review of teaching has come a new acceptance of teaching as a scholarly activity. Inherent in this movement has been the idea that teaching needs to be viewed as a public activity and that its planning as well as outcomes need to be studied, reviewed, and rewarded as a result of peer participation and critique. Lee Shulman has emphasized numerous times that while research is evaluated almost exclusively through peer review, for teaching the same matter has been left almost entirely to student evaluations. The question, “why is this so?” has been the stimulus for many discussions across the country over the past decade.

Thus, “scholarship of teaching” has emerged as a meaningful term in higher education today and its components are the ongoing source of much discussion and invention. When we speak of the scholarship of teaching we mean the knowledge and activity that goes into (1) the selection and design of course content, (2) the strategies used to implement a course, and (3) the assessment of student learning outcomes.

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As a result, the quality of teaching is being assessed in peer review terms much as the quality of research has been evaluated in the past. During the last decade these efforts have yielded an increase in the respectability associated with teaching at large research universities.

The American Association for Higher Education has played a key role in promoting the importance of teaching in higher education. In the early 1990s it began sponsoring an annual conference called the Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards. From about four hundred participants at the first meeting (San Antonio, Texas) this annual event has grown to a conference attracting well over a thousand each February. Stimulating and challenging discussions on all aspects of the professoriate characterize the meeting.

The Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards has rendered a significant boost to teaching in U.S. higher education; further, it has been a locus for serious discussion of public service and outreach. During the 1980s and early 1990s the late Ernest Lynton, formerly senior vice president for academic affairs at the University of Massachusetts and then Commonwealth Professor and senior associate of the New England Resource Center for Higher Education at the University of Massachusetts at Boston, began writing and speaking about the “crisis of purpose” in the American university. In his foreword to *Making Outreach Visible*, Gene Rice had this to say about Ernest Lynton and his views: “I was particularly struck by his (Lynton’s) views that many universities are striving to be what they are not and falling short of being what they could be. His special concern was with the disconnection developing between the academic knowledge generated by faculty in the university and the growing needs for applied knowledge in a society increasingly dependent on its citizen’s capital and capacity to learn. Ernest

Lynton led the way in recognizing that in order to reconnect the generating of academic knowledge to the needs of a knowledge-dependent society we would have to broaden our understanding of what counts as scholarly work for faculty and what is rewarded.”

In *Scholarship Reconsidered* the late Ernest Boyer observed that most colleges and universities have come to reject service as serious scholarship. He posited as one reason for this the fact that the meaning of service is often vague and to account for this rejection, he posited that the term “service” is often seen as ill-defined and that the activity itself is perceived as disconnected from serious intellectual work. Boyer stated: “Clearly, a sharp distinction must be drawn between citizenship activities and projects that relate to scholarship itself. To be sure, there are meritorious social and civic functions to be performed, and faculty should be appropriately recognized for such work. But all too frequently, service means not doing scholarship but doing good. To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one’s special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities.”

It is important to realize that the scholarship of application (or of engagement, as we have now come to call it) is not unidirectional. As Boyer pointed out, knowledge is not always discovered first and then applied. Sometimes the very act of application leads to new insights, methods, policies, theories and practices that contribute directly to the scholarship of discovery and integration. Clearly, the processes involved in application and engagement bring a more concrete and fluid aspect to the broad understanding of scholarship by demonstrating the dynamic interplay among all its components.

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*Scholarship does not reach its ultimate value until it is shared with the sponsoring public*

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After Ernest Boyer’s death, Charles Glassick and associates finished the companion book to *Scholarship Reconsidered*, titled *Scholarship Assessed*. In this important 1997 publication the specific elements of scholarship were examined and six shared themes emerged for judging the quality of scholarship—be it discovery, integration, application, or teaching. Whether one is “doing research” or “teaching” or “engaging in outreach,” there are standards for measuring the quality of these scholarly efforts. For example, all scholarly work should be based on clear goals, adequate

preparation, and the use of appropriate methods that then lead to significant results. After results are obtained the scholar finds ways to present his or her findings to an appropriate audience. In the end, the work of a scholar is critiqued, reflected upon, and eventually improved during subsequent efforts. The key elements of this process and major questions that are often asked are presented in Figure 1 in a list based on the work of Glassick, Huber, and Maeroff.

The key to all work that is to qualify as scholarship, therefore, is that it be communicated to and reviewed by peers. As Lee Shulman has stated in general terms, the beauty of scholarship is that once it is produced it is given away—free. But a crucial key is that whatever the discovery is made, the great concept taught, or the new principle applied, the scholar acknowledges in a painstaking and thorough way the foundations on which his or her work rests. This all happens when we document our work and make it public. One of the major reasons that both teaching and public service have not always qualified as scholarship in the past is the failure to acknowledge appropriate sources from which the ideas were drawn and the failure to document the work and thus make it public for all to view and critique.

With this brief background the question now becomes, how do we change the culture in higher education to more fully appreciate, recognize, and reward serious scholarship in engagement and outreach? And why tie this to the work of the Institute of Higher Education? The explanation entails answering two other questions: “What is the study of higher education?” and “What do scholars in the area of higher education actually do?”

The Institute of Higher Education at the University of Georgia is a teaching, research and service unit dedicated to the study of higher education. It reports directly to the vice president for instruction, with close coordination with the vice president for public service and outreach.

The faculty of the institute specialize in various fields such as law, finance, instruction, program planning, assessment, faculty development, leadership and governance, and institutional research. In each of these specialty areas courses are taught to graduate students, fundamental research is conducted, and various service and outreach activities occur every day. One of the major missions of the Institute is to help further integrate the concept of public service, outreach, and what we are now calling “engagement” into the fabric and culture of the contemporary American university.

## **Figure 1: An Outline of Major Criteria and Questions From *Scholarship Assessed***

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### **Clear Goals**

*Questions to be asked about all types of scholarly work:*

- 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**

*Questions to be asked:*

- 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**

*Questions to be asked:*

- 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**

*Questions to be asked:*

- 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 Presentation**

*Questions to be asked:*

- 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**

*Questions to be asked:*

- 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?

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Source: C. E. Glassick, M.T. Huber, and G. I. Maeroff. 1997. *Scholarship assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

With the Institute of Higher Education as an “academic home” for the newly structured Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, it is hoped that these endeavors will be strengthened and more fully grounded in the principles so eloquently described by Ernest Boyer, Ernest Lynton, Gene Rice, Charles Glassick, Lee Shulman, and the many other national figures who have spoken and written about this area of American scholarship. As we move forward to complete the cycle of events that qualify academic work as scholarship, we see this journal helping to close the gap that has often been the difference between “scholarship” and “good deeds.” A journal that allows fellow practitioners and scholars in this area to document their work, make their results public, and provide opportunities for peer critique, enables us to move closer to a time when engagement and outreach can take its rightful place alongside discovery, integration and teaching as an authentic areas of scholarship. This forum where Glassick’s “significant results,” “effective presentations,” and “reflective critiques” can become community proper and stimulate further national conversation will place all who associate with this effort in a better position to carry forth more boldly the notion that scholarship does not reach its ultimate value until it is shared with the sponsoring public.

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