LeTourneau University

Institutional Definition and Standards of Faculty Scholarship

Mission Statement of LeTourneau University (selected portions)
LeTourneau is a comprehensive academic institution, offering undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education, and setting standards of excellence in engineering, technology, the liberal arts, business, aeronautical science, education, and the sciences. These programs are distinguished by an approach that provides students with the pure intellectual excitement of learning, coupled with real life problem solving opportunities. At the core of all programs is an emphasis on developing communication and critical thinking skills. This integrated philosophy of education extends to all aspects of student life at LeTourneau, providing tangible opportunities for intellectual, spiritual, emotional, social, and physical development. . . . the University is mindful of the need for service and Christian witness in the broader community and throughout the world. LeTourneau serves its community through research and by responding to the need for educational programs to adult students at off-campus sites and educational centers . . . . In addition, our university encourages the faculty and staff to serve as role models in spiritual, personal and professional growth.

Statement of Intent
The purpose of this document is to provide clarity and definition of faculty scholarship at LeTourneau University. In making special effort to define scholarship within this university’s context and in harmony with its mission, the document is not attempting to address or minimize other components of faculty life and vocation which are also integral to the evaluation of faculty success. The document also assumes that faculty and administrators will work together in partnership to acquire the appropriate resources to accomplish a scholarly endeavor.

Motivation for Faculty Scholarship at LeTourneau University
LeTourneau University seeks to encourage, stimulate, support and reward faculty scholarship because it helps us to fulfill our mission statement, our vision statement, the consensus of best practices established by the academy, and our calling from God. This attitude toward faculty scholarship is also consistent with current policies in place at LeTourneau University.

- LeTourneau University’s mission statement advocates faculty scholarship
  - Engaging in scholarship is an “… approach that provides students with the pure intellectual excitement of learning, coupled with real life problem solving opportunities.”
  - Some forms of scholarship will allow “LeTourneau [to serve] its community through research”
  - Engaging in scholarly work allows faculty members to “serve as role models in . . . professional growth” for their students.

- LeTourneau University’s vision statement claims “Every Workplace, Every Nation” as our mission field. Through our God-enabled academic achievements, we shoulder the responsibility to be part of the broader academic community and, thus, are called to bear witness to the academy.

- Consensus of Best Practices
  - There is a growing consensus among predominantly undergraduate institutions that the educational mission of a university is enhanced when its faculty are actively engaged in scholarship, especially in joint faculty-student scholarly endeavors, which benefit both the faculty and the students.

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The reputation of a university and its ability to compete in the marketplace are enhanced by the dissemination of scholarly work by its faculty.

- **University Calling** - As faculty at an evangelically-based university, we are called to use the intellectual and disciplinary talents with which God has blessed us as instruments to redeem the fallen world—in all its forms—to and through Christ.
- **The LeTourneau Faculty-Staff Handbook** states that one criterion of annual faculty evaluation is scholarship.
- **Scholarship enhances the educational mission of LeTourneau University.** While the immediate content of scholarly study and classroom teaching content may not coincide, engagement in scholarly work should energize and enhance teaching and broaden opportunities for student learning in the context of the Christian mission and vision of LeTourneau University.
- **While excellence in faculty scholarship should be recognized by the university, it must not come at the expense of quality teaching within the classroom.**

**Definition of Faculty Scholarship at LeTourneau University**

Scholarship consists of four elements: 1) the act, 2) the documentation, 3) the dissemination, and 4) the appraisal. All four elements are required for scholarship submitted as part of the faculty review process. Faculty scholarship at LeTourneau University is defined broadly in agreement with the Boyer model as summarized in this document. Research is only one of many types of Scholarship. Although the application of a Christian worldview may yield unique insights, no distinction between scholarship and “Christian scholarship” is sought at LeTourneau University. Scholarship must meet all of the following criteria:

- It represents a faculty member’s creative, documented, and departmentally assessable contribution to his or her discipline, demonstrating to the satisfaction of peers that high performance standards have been met.

- The work is formally reviewed in some manner. Acceptable forms of peer-review range from external to internal review by qualified academic or professional individuals.

- The work is disseminated in a public forum which extends beyond the classroom. Appropriate forums include but are not limited to university-wide colloquia, regional or national meetings, peer-reviewed academic or professional publications, and peer-accepted works published for the general public.

- It meets the **Standards of Faculty Scholarship** (see Page 5).

To ensure sufficient flexibility while maintaining the integrity of the evaluative process, each department (or school) will develop and maintain, in harmony with this document, a written description of: 1) the types of acceptable scholarship, 2) appropriate means of dissemination of scholarly products, and 3) the types of peer review that are most common and valued within their disciplines, recognizing that external review typically has higher merit, as well as, 4) a sense of the trajectory of a productive scholar in his or her discipline at a primarily undergraduate institution like LeTourneau University. The description must be approved by the Executive Vice-President for Academic Affairs, in consultation with the Associate Vice-President for Scholarship and Research, and the Dean of the School before it is used as a standard for evaluation of faculty in that department (or school).
Examples of Faculty Scholarship

- Publishing scholarly books, refereed articles, learned or invited papers.
- Contributing in the areas of one's expertise (e.g., presentations) at professional meetings or at more public secular or Christian forums.
- Publishing materials for the general public which interpret scholarly work in the light of one's discipline or specialty.
- Reading/presenting self-authored papers or posters at scholarly conferences.
- Designing assessed curricular projects that utilize reasoned structure and current developments or creatively apply one's professional expertise.
- Providing academic consulting services from one's professional competencies, provided that services can be peer reviewed, if it involves creative reflection and meaningful dissemination.
- Receiving peer-reviewed grants and awards that recognize one's scholarship.
- Participating in proprietary research provided that documentation is submitted to ascertain the level or quality of the research, such as patent applications, patent disclosures, and written evaluations by supervisory personnel.
- Consulting activity – provided that sufficient documentation is available for peer-review.
  - Serving as a principal evaluator on a community agency grant.
- Conducting seminars or workshops in the area of one's professional expertise.
- Serving as a peer reviewer for scholarly publications when such review contributes to the scholarly merit of the reviewed work.

Examples of Preliminary Scholarly Activity

Faculty who are in the early stages of a scholarly pursuit will receive recognition for essential preliminary work, provided that these activities are part of the faculty member’s agreed upon written plan for scholarship. Some examples of such formative steps include the following:

- Attending conferences, workshops, or seminars
- Collecting preliminary data
- Reviewing the literature
- Completing graduate coursework and/or a graduate degree program

Professional Activity

Activities conducted solely to maintain academic or professional competencies are not considered scholarly activity. However, some professional activities that do not fully satisfy the definition of faculty scholarship may be recognized as scholarly contributions due to their role in promoting scholarship within the broader academic community and at LeTourneau University. Schools/departments are expected to determine if such activities are acceptable forms of faculty scholarship within their respective disciplines. Some examples include the following:

- Serving as organizer or moderator for a scholarly conference
- Serving in an elected office in a scholarly or professional organization
- Providing leadership in learned societies or educational organizations
Domains of Faculty Scholarship

Built upon


**Scholarship of Discovery**
The scholarship of discovery is what academics have traditionally meant when they speak of original research. It involves the creation, discovery, or advancement of new knowledge by means of the tools and disciplined practices of one's academic field. We understand this type of scholarship to include producing new bodies of creative material in the literary, visual, and performing arts. It also occurs during consulting work as academics interact with professionals to expand a field of knowledge. Scholarship of discovery is primarily directed toward one's peers in the discipline or profession. The primary venues for its products include peer-reviewed academic journals or conference presentations, public exhibitions or performances, university presses, and professional adjudication panels.

**Scholarship of Integration**
The scholarship of integration focuses investigation on possible connections within and across disciplines. This can be done in a variety of ways, such as: by reviewing the current findings of an entire field and highlighting the pattern that emerges, by conducting interdisciplinary and collaborative work, or by articulating a larger vision by which isolated facts in one's field can be conveyed to non-specialists. All of these efforts attempt to overcome the isolation and fragmentation of academic disciplines, as well as their often perceived irrelevance for contemporary civic and church life. The audience for scholarship of synthesis includes both the academic world, across the scholarly disciplines, and the general public. In keeping with this broad audience, its products will find a range of appropriate venues.

**Scholarship of Application**
The scholarship of application should not be confused with the service role of faculty offering consultation on the existing state of knowledge in their field. This scholarly enterprise is devoted specifically to investigating how existing knowledge in one's field can be responsibly applied to new problems. This type of scholarship is particularly appropriate in, though not limited to, the professional schools. Scholarship of application is directed both to the immediate setting of the issues addressed and, through the scholarly product which results, to one's peers as an instructive example. Venues for its products run the gamut from professional journals and conferences to adoption for actual applications in business and industry.

**Scholarship of Teaching**
The scholarship of teaching must not be confused with ongoing study of one's discipline, which is expected of all faculty to maintain currency in one's teaching fields. Excellence in teaching is expected of all faculty and should be highly valued and rewarded. However, excellence in teaching is not the same as the scholarship of teaching. This scholarship involves sustained inquiry into teaching practices and students’ learning in ways that allow other educators to build on one's findings. Like all other forms of scholarship, the scholarship of teaching requires formal documentation, formal review, public dissemination, and assessment. The assessment audience for the scholarship of teaching is academic faculty peers, which may be internal or external to the university, as deemed professionally appropriate. Appropriate venues for dissemination of findings may include university colloquium presentation, conference presentation, publication, or other applications.
According to *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate*, scholarship should include clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. Of particular note, *Scholarship Assessed* expresses that the scholarship of teaching is more than excellent teaching by implying that it also entails practices that lead to new understandings on the part of the scholar and that are subject to peer review. A paraphrased summary of Glassick’s Standards, which apply to the four domains of scholarship, follows.

**Clear Goals**

- Are the basic purposes of his or her work stated clearly?
- Are the defined objectives realistic and achievable?
- Are important questions in the field identified?

**Adequate Preparation**

- Does the work 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 necessary resources to move the project forward?

**Appropriate Methods**

- Are the methods used appropriate for the goals?
- Were the selected methods applied effectively?
- Were procedures modified in response to changing circumstances?

**Significant Results**

- Were the goals achieved?
- Did the work add consequentially to the field?
- Did the work open additional areas for further exploration?

**Effective Presentation**

- Does the presentation use an effective style, and is it organized effectively?
- Are the forums appropriate for communicating the work to the intended audiences?
- Is the message clear, and does it show 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?
- Is evaluation used to improve the quality of future work?