

Department of Sociology Standards for Excellence in Scholarship

Professional Scholarship in the Context of Sociology

Because of its breadth as a discipline, there exists a diverse array of scholarship to be encouraged among the faculty of the Department of Sociology. Among the types of scholarship discussed in the Faculty Handbook (discovery/creation, teaching, application, and synthesis), there are a variety of ways in which these are manifested.

Discovery/creation. This scholarship tends to take the form of original research (either quantitative or qualitative) contributing to theory development with the discipline of sociology. As stated in the Faculty Employment Handbook:

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 directed towards 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.

The department encourages the use of both primary and secondary data in these pursuits. Data need not be collected for the purpose of the present project. The ultimate goal of this research is the publication of one's findings. Thus, while conference presentations and presentation in panel discussions are valuable in demonstrating one's research agenda, they do not qualify as a publication or as an indicator of scholarly excellence.

Teaching. This category of scholarship relates to research into various pedagogies for use in the classroom (striving to be a good teacher does not constitute the scholarship of teaching), and to publication of results in a peer reviewed and publicly accessible scholarly journal. (e.g., *Teaching Sociology*) so that other scholars teaching sociology can benefit from the activity of the scholar. As stated in the Faculty Employment Handbook:

The scholarship of teaching must not be confused with ongoing study of one's discipline, which is expected of all faculty. This specialized scholarship, which only some faculty will pursue, involves sustained inquiry into teaching practices and students' learning in ways that allow other educators to build on one's findings. Scholarship of teaching is directed toward other teachers, in one's field and beyond. Venues for its products will range from conference and workshop presentations to professional journals and books.

Application. Within the context of sociology, this scholarship refers to the application of previous sociological theories, methods, and findings to specific problems in group, organizations, or church settings.

The scholarship of application must, in turn, 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 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 application in business and industry.

While the scholarship of application may be aimed at benefiting those in organizational settings outside academia, the primary product of the scholarship of application for faculty in the Department of Sociology is still *publication*. As a result, working as a consultant, while valued for the service it provides for the community, does not qualify as scholarly activity in the Department of Sociology.

Synthesis. This refers to the accumulation of previous specific scholarly work in the discipline and developing more general conclusions for theory building. Often, this will also take place by synthesizing/integrating scholarly work from sociology with that from other disciplines. The Faculty Employment Handbook states that,

[T]he scholarship of synthesis 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. At Seattle Pacific we place a particular value on that scholarship of synthesis which investigates the relationship of Christian theology and tradition to particular disciplinary issues. 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.

While various types of scholarly work take place and venues may vary, all these are expected to result in work published in peer-reviewed journals or editor/peer reviewed academic books. Other activities, such as participating in an outside grant, might qualify, provided the outcome is peer-reviewed and published in a publicly accessible format. These outlets would include virtually any peer-reviewed academic journal. Since sociology is such a broad discipline and the department encourages collaborative work with other faculty both within and without the discipline of sociology, publication of one's scholarly work need not be in sociology's general or specialty journals only.

The Contribution of Scholarship to the Mission of the Sociology Department

Scholarly activity is vital to the identity of the faculty in the Department of Sociology. As such, the department highly values the scholarly work of our faculty. The undergraduate curriculum, while serving the needs of our students, is structured around the scholarly expertise of our faculty. Because scholarly activity offers such a strong contribution to the intellectual vitality for our undergraduate curriculum and faculty life within the department, faculty are required not only to have published prior to tenure and promotion, but also to demonstrate an ongoing trajectory for future work.

Criteria for Evaluating Scholarship and Scholarship Trajectory in the Department of Sociology

Minimum requirements for Tenure and Promotion to Associate Professor:

- 1) One scholarly publication (peer reviewed and publicly accessible) prior to tenure promotion to Associate Professor.*
- 2) A clear and promising trajectory which gives credible evidence that scholarly productivity is part of the faculty member's professional identity which will continue in the foreseeable future.

Minimum requirements for promotion to Professor:

- 1) A minimum of two scholarly publications since promotion to Associate Professor.*
- 2) A scholarly trajectory which continues to give clear evidence that scholarly productivity is vital to the faculty member's professional identity.

*The Department of Sociology values and strongly encourages collaborative work and co-authorship. Thus, single authorship and co-authorship qualify equally as scholarly activity.

Faculty publications in the following areas qualify as meeting the departmental criteria for scholarship:

--Authorship (or co-authorship) of published articles in peer-reviewed and publicly accessible academic journals.

--Authorship (or co-authorship) of book chapters in editor reviewed and/or peer reviewed academic books.

--Authorship (or co-authorship) of editor reviewed and or/peer reviewed academic books.