



Summer 2015, Vol. 101, No. 3

[Buy Print Copies](#)

Search Periodicals

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [Overview](#)
- [Flying Blind into America's Global Headwinds?](#)
- [From the Editor](#)
- [Global Learning: Key to Making Excellence Inclusive](#)
- [The Decline of International Studies: Why Flying Blind Is Dangerous](#)
- [Belonging: The Gateway to Global Learning for All Students](#)
- [The Role of Faculty in the Transformation of AAC&U: A Personal Essay](#)
- [With Dante in Hell on 9/11: "That Day We Read No Further"](#)
- [Active Learning and Educated Hope: College and Prison Partnerships in Liberal Education](#)
- [Advancing Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure: A Roadmap and Call for Reform](#)
- [Reevaluating Teaching Evaluations](#)

Advancing Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure: A Roadmap and Call for Reform

By: KerryAnn O'Meara, Timothy Eatman and Saul Petersen

Despite the precipitous increase in nontenure-track faculty appointments, the promotion and tenure process continues to operate as a central "motivational and cultural force in the academic lives" of many faculty members.¹ As a part of larger reward systems, the promotion and tenure process reflects institutional values, aspirations, privileges, and power structures. Virtually every campus enacting serious change with regard to curricula, technology, globalization, learning, or retention must also face the implications for promotion and tenure. Yet while faculty members want to (and should) be recognized and rewarded for their efforts, many express frustration that promotion and tenure systems have not caught up with institutional priorities, changes in the dynamic nature of scholarship, or the aspirations of the emerging guard of academic citizens.² It often escapes those who complain, however, that the power to change promotion and tenure policy rests to a great degree with the faculty.

In 2010, we began collaborating with campus teams interested in reforming their institutions' promotion and tenure guidelines in order to define, assess, document, and reward engaged scholarship. Although there have been many good definitions of engaged scholarship, we use the one established by the New England Resource Center for Higher Education. "The scholarship of engagement (also known as outreach scholarship, public scholarship, scholarship for the common good, community-based scholarship, and community engaged scholarship) represents an integrated view of the faculty role in which teaching, research, and service overlap and are mutually reinforcing, is characterized by scholarly work tied to a faculty member's expertise, is of benefit to the external community, is visible and shared with community stakeholders, and reflects the mission of the institution."³ Engaged scholars are often faculty, but could also be administrators, students, or staff involved in work that meets these criteria.

Our organizing vehicle since 2010 has been the Faculty Rewards Institute at the annual Eastern Region Campus Compact conference. To date we have hosted 41 campus teams, including 116 individual participants. We designed the daylong institute as an opportunity to share knowledge and tools and to enhance collective critical agency around campus reform related to faculty roles and rewards, with particular attention to how current promotion and tenure policies may exclude engaged scholarship and engaged faculty.

In what follows, we begin by sharing the process we use to

engage campus teams and individuals in diagnosing what is wrong within the promotion and tenure system, what they want to change, and how to make that change. Then, we share a template for studying and reforming promotion and tenure policies to ensure that they better reward engaged scholarship.

Our process: knowledge and tool-sharing, peer networks, and critical agency

Social network analysis has shown that “relationships within a system matter to enacting change.”⁴ We have found this to be true in our efforts to support promotion and tenure reform. In the next section below, we provide examples of policy language that can be used by any campus team, whether or not they participate in the Faculty Rewards Institute.⁵ The policies themselves represent a concrete form of knowledge-sharing; however, we have found that the experience of the institutes adds even greater value. The gathering together of campus teams, physically, facilitates a deeper level of knowledge-sharing and critical agency.

Campus teams apply and are selected to participate in the Faculty Reward Institute. The ideal team includes both faculty members and administrators, and is often formed at the request of a dean or provost interested in working with the team members to initiate promotion and tenure reform. Some teams focus on departmental promotion and tenure guidelines, while others focus on college or university policies. In some cases, individuals are sent by a campus to explore options for the revision of faculty roles and rewards. Before the institute, we gather information from each team or individual regarding the kinds of reform in which they are most interested. We come together and provide each campus team with an overview of the key challenges faced by engaged scholars and how engaged scholarship fits into the larger landscape of higher education policy reform (e.g., funding agencies, graduate education, and reform in promotion and tenure). This overview is informed by research we have conducted and by visits we have made over the last decade to more than two hundred institutions, providing support for engaged scholars and for efforts to reform promotion and tenure policy.

Perhaps not surprisingly, we have come to understand the reform of promotion and tenure processes as part of a larger effort toward inclusive excellence within colleges and universities. That is, we understand the ways in which organizing practices, such as promotion and tenure, serve to privilege some groups and exclude others. For example, when engaged scholars are told they can only publish in certain disciplinary journals and those journals do not publish engaged work, a form of structural inequality has been set up that disadvantages those scholars. Susan Sturm’s work on the “architecture of inclusion” reminds us that institutional mindfulness is needed in order to identify and address these kinds of inequalities.⁶

Although the institutes have been focused on engaged scholarship and on promotion and tenure, we also have been involved in efforts related to access and opportunity for women and academic parents; faculty of color; faculty involved in interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and engaged scholarship; and contingent and professional-track faculty. Taken together, this work has shown us that, typically, the effort to reform the promotion and tenure process in order to recognize the contributions of engaged scholars results in improvements in

the work environment for everyone.

A template for reform

Any effort to reform the promotion and tenure process in order to honor engaged scholarship should begin by addressing the following five issues.

1. The need to value, define, describe, and differentiate community-engaged scholarship. When revising promotion and tenure policies to ensure appropriate regard for community-engaged scholarship, the first order of business is to affirm that the institution values engaged scholarship as part of its core mission. Following this affirmation, it is important to articulate clearly the place of engaged scholarship within the broader context of faculty work by answering the following questions: What is engaged scholarship? How is it different from traditional scholarship or community service? Why does this campus value and reward faculty members who are involved in this kind of scholarship?

The following excerpt from the faculty handbook of the University of Memphis responds to these questions, while aligning engaged scholarship with institutional mission:

Scholarship can be divided into five sub-categories: application, creative activity, inquiry, integration, and the scholarship of teaching. . . . Engaged scholarship now subsumes the scholarship of application. It adds to existing knowledge in the process of applying intellectual expertise to collaborative problem-solving with urban, regional, state, national and/or global communities and results in a written work shared with others in the discipline or field of study. Engaged scholarship conceptualizes “community groups” as all those outside of academe and requires shared authority at all stages of the research process from defining the research problem, choosing theoretical and methodological approaches, conducting the research, developing the final product(s), to participating in peer evaluation. Departments should refine the definition as appropriate for their disciplines and incorporate evaluation guidelines in departmental tenure and promotion criteria. . . .

The *outreach or public service* function of The University of Memphis is the University’s outreach to the community and society at large, with major emphasis on the application of knowledge for the solution of problems with which society is confronted. Outreach primarily involves sharing professional expertise and should directly support the goals and mission of the University. A vital component of the University’s mission, public service must be performed at the same high levels of quality that characterize teaching and research.⁷

2. The need to identify criteria for evaluating community-engaged scholarship. After it has been firmly stated that engaged scholarship is a priority, and after the issue of definition has been addressed, it is prudent to consider the criteria that will be used both to differentiate between engaged scholarship and community service and to evaluate the quality of engaged scholarship. On many campuses, some variation of the criteria recommended by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff—clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and

reflective critique—is used to judge the quality and impact of community-engaged scholarship.⁸ Often, the focus is on three key criteria by which engaged scholarship, as well as other forms of scholarship, will be evaluated: peer review, impact, and significance.

The following excerpt from “Guidelines for College Faculty Personnel Reviews,” a set of policy guidelines developed by the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Massachusetts Boston, offers an example of clearly articulated criteria for evaluating scholarship:

The measure of what is productive scholarship is that it is judged to be creative, rigorous, and valuable after being publicly scrutinized by professional peers. . . . Evidence of scholarly work in almost every field will include written documents (articles, chapters, and books as well as evaluation reports, grant proposals, etc.) or other products (computer software, videos, etc.) that show:

- deep theoretical underpinnings relevant to the current state of the discipline and its related fields;
- rich conceptualization of some aspect of the field’s problems/issues/questions and of how particular areas of inquiry and activity might be relevant to addressing them;
- an approach to scholarly inquiry/applied scholarly activity that is well justified, coherent, and appropriate to the goals of such inquiry or activity;
- analysis, synthesis, model-building, or otherwise making sense of what is being learned for this endeavor;
- with whatever has been learned, some sense of its implications and what real difference it might make to the work that goes on in relevant settings.⁹

3. The need to consider what constitutes documentation and evidence. One of the major challenges faced by engaged scholars concerns how and where to publish their scholarship; not all community-engaged scholarship results in peer-reviewed journal articles. This is similar to the challenge faced by the many artists whose scholarly activity is manifest in performances and exhibitions. Engaged scholars can benefit from policy language that acknowledges a diversity of dissemination mechanisms and that recognizes a range of acceptable scholarly products. In revised promotion and tenure guidelines, potential products of engaged scholarship are named and valued. These may include reports and studies, workshops, broadcasts, artistic and creative exhibits and performances, websites, diagnostic services, technical reports, and site plans.

The following excerpt from the “Guidance for Faculty: Tenure and Promotion” published by the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro demonstrates how policies can be crafted to overcome this challenge:

To be recommended for permanent tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, it is generally expected that a faculty member will have published a combination of eight articles, books, book chapters, knowledge building and dissemination websites, research monographs, and/or technical reports and non-academic reports resulting in implementation or meaningful impact on public policy. The reputation, quality, and impact of the publications are

paramount. As a rule, juried articles, books, and book chapters are weighted more heavily. But, other forms of knowledge building and dissemination can rise to the same level with contextualization. Review usually occurs in the sixth year of appointment. Early reviews for the granting of permanent tenure with promotion to Associate Professor are granted only in exceptional circumstances and must be approved by the Department Chair and Dean. Previous publications may be considered with a reduced tenure clock and will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Because this is a field that builds strength from community engagement, collaboration, and multi-disciplinary work, jointly authored publications and presentations with other academics and external community leaders and partners are highly valued. Peace and conflict studies is multi-disciplinary; therefore, joint publications have equal value to solo publications. On joint publications, order of authorship is not weighted. Faculty may publish in peace and conflict studies journals, journals in related fields that are in line with the faculty member's area of study, and in multidisciplinary journals, which may reach a wider audience.¹⁰

4. The need to make peer review more inclusive. The peer review process presents another struggle for many engaged scholars. Often, the best reviewers of engaged scholarship operate outside the college or university; many are not faculty members. To overcome this challenge to recognizing and rewarding engaged scholarship, it is helpful to consider whether the peer-review process is inclusive of community partners and faculty members with expertise in engaged scholarship. Reform in this area should address the need to include community and public partners from outside academe, along with colleagues within a faculty member's field who also do engaged scholarship. Policy language should clearly specify how such reviewers are to be chosen as well as what they may review and evaluate.

The promotion and tenure policy of the Morgridge College of Education at the University of Denver exemplifies the desired clarity:

Internal evaluation of the quality and impact of the candidate's scholarship by the Appointments, Promotion and Tenure Committee is supplemented by letters and critical reviews from nationally recognized experts in the candidate's discipline, and, when appropriate, nationally recognized leaders in the field of the institutionalization of community engagement, service-learning, professional outreach and service. When appropriate, candidates may select reviewers from settings outside the academy. These Community Peer Reviewers may include educators, psychologists, and librarians working in public policy and other applied settings; key community partners who are not academics by training, but who are experienced consumers of applied research and use academic scholarship for policy or organizational ends. Community Peer Review is appropriate to assess: 1) the effectiveness of collaborative research methods; 2) the impact of applied research on publics; and/or 3) the overall professional outreach and service to the community or organization. Such review should be used as part of the overall review of candidates' work and in conjunction with traditional criteria and reviewers.

While all of the above will be considered in evaluating scholarly activity, inevitably some additional evaluation will occur by the committee and by outside reviewers both as to type, amount, and quality of scholarly activity. The quantity and quality of research and creative activity ought to reflect clearly that the candidate has a recognized area of scholarly expertise that extends across academic, practice, and community settings and a pattern of focused interest, and should be in accordance with negotiated responsibilities.¹¹

5. The need to value local impact. The question of whether impact on the local community is accorded the same credibility as international, regional, and national impact is essential, because the issue of impact is always a major factor in the evaluation of candidates for promotion and tenure. Accordingly, it is important for policy guidelines to articulate the value of local partnership development and to make it clear that local impact is as important as international impact—and at all ranks. Because funding sources are often considered in research-focused institutions and in STEM fields, it is also helpful to signal acceptance of various kinds of funding sources as evidence of impact. Otherwise, faculty members may be disadvantaged for attracting practice-oriented foundation grants, for example, rather than federal research funding.

The call for nominations for Auburn University's annual Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach incorporates an inclusive description of impact: "Describe observed impacts and/or explain any unobserved impacts that can be expected based upon other research and theory. Identify direct and indirect beneficiaries. How has the outreach benefited the target clients, the nominee's department, and discipline? Provide any quantitative statements (program data, comparative indices, economic impact, etc.) illustrating impact."¹²

Changing our reward systems: A call for reform

Before conferring the "engaged institution" designation, the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement now requires institutions to provide evidence that engaged scholarship is recognized and rewarded. This represents much progress, and many colleges and universities are currently at some stage in the process of reconsidering faculty roles and rewards. However, persistent factors continue to inhibit the pace of reform.

Research shows that, even at institutions that are among the most engaged in their local communities, reform of tenure and promotion guidelines has not accomplished much more than the incorporation of definitional and valuing language.¹³ Moreover, reform efforts at most institutions have not addressed the issues of peer review, impact, or documentation, nor have they addressed the need for new arrangements to support interdisciplinary and engaged scholars (e.g., memoranda of understanding). And very few policy guidelines address the unconscious bias known to exist in the evaluation of engaged scholarship and engaged scholars in the process of peer review.¹⁴

We need to find ways to overcome the cynicism of those administrators and faculty members who believe that it is simply too hard to reform the tenure and review process or who wonder whether doing so would really make a difference, either because of the increasing number of nontenure-track

appointments or because of the difficulties involved in assessing the outcomes of any promotion and tenure reform. There are many natural allies who desire the kind of academic reward system reform that would support engaged scholarship. For example, many chief diversity officers seek reform in promotion and tenure in order to reward faculty work that improves access to their institutions and social justice for underrepresented groups. Many national organizations engaged in science education and outreach seek new ways to have this work “count” in reward systems. Critics of the metrics used to measure the impact of faculty research are also natural partners for reform.

As such, our challenge and call to those who want to reform their reward systems is to find allies and partners locally and nationally. A robust network is needed both to share ideas and concrete examples of reform that are being put in place and to better support engaged scholarship. We very much believe the saying, attributed to the poet June Jordan, “we are the ones we have been waiting for.”¹⁵ And with all the changes occurring in the professoriate and higher education today—the time has never been better for us to show up and make this kind of a difference.

To respond to this article, e-mail liberaled@aacu.org, with the authors' names on the subject line.

Notes

1. KerryAnn O’Meara, “Inside the Panopticon: Studying Academic Reward Systems,” in *Higher Education: Handbook of Theory and Research*, ed. John C. Smart and Michael B. Paulsen, vol. 26 (New York: Springer, 2011), 162.
2. See Timothy Eatman, “The Arc of the Academic Career Bends toward Publicly Engaged Scholarship,” in *Collaborative Futures: Critical Reflections on Publicly Active Graduate Education*, ed. Amanda Gilvin, Craig Martin, Georgia M. Roberts (Syracuse, NY: Graduate School Press, Syracuse University, 2012), 25–48.
3. “Lynton Award for the Scholarship of Engagement for Early Career Faculty,” New England Resource Center for Higher Education, accessed August 12, 2015, http://www.nerche.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=375:ernest-a-lynton-award-for-early-career-faculty&catid=25&Itemid=68.
4. Alan J. Daly, *Social Network Theory and Educational Change* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2010), 2.
5. For the purposes of this article, we have limited the number of examples; however, the authors would be glad to provide additional examples upon request.
6. See Susan P. Sturm, “The Architecture of Inclusion: Advancing Workplace Equity in Higher Education,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Gender* 29, no. 2 (2006): 248–334.
7. University of Memphis, 2014 *Faculty Handbook* (Memphis, TN: 2014), 60, 63.
8. See Charles E. Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene I. Maeroff, *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).
9. “Guidelines for College Faculty Personnel Reviews,” College of Education and Human Development, University of

Massachusetts Boston, revised and approved May 2002,
http://cdn.umb.edu/images/college_education/GuidelinesforCollegeFacultyPersonnelReviews.doc.

10. "Guidance for Faculty: Tenure and Promotion," Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, revised and approved November 2013,
<http://hhs.uncg.edu/wordpress/cps/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2013/04/Peace-Studies-PT-Nov-2013-1.pdf>.

11. "Promotion and Tenure Policy," Morgridge College of Education, University of Denver, May 18, 2009,
http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/pdf_files/APT_policy_Final_May_18_2009.pdf.

12. Royrickers Cook, "Auburn University Award for Excellence in Faculty Outreach Call for Nominations," January 7, 2015,
http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/documents/2015_Award_for_Excellence_Faculty_Outreach_Nomination_Form.pdf.

13. See John Saltmarsh, Dwight E. Giles Jr., KerryAnn O'Meara, Lorilee Sandmann, Elaine Ward, and Suzanne M. Buglione, "Community Engagement and Institutional Culture in Higher Education: An Investigation of Faculty Reward Policies at Engaged Campuses," in *Creating Our Identities in Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, ed. Barbara E. Moely, Shelley H. Billig, and Barbrar A. Holland (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2009), 3–29; John Saltmarsh, KerryAnn O'Meara, Lorilee Sandmann, Dwight Giles Jr., Kelley Cowdery, Jia Liang, and Suzanne Buglione, *Becoming a Steward of Place: Lessons from AASCU Carnegie Community Engagement Applications* (Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 2014).

14. See KerryAnn O'Meara, "Change the Tenure System," *Inside Higher Education*, January 13, 2014,
<http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2014/01/13/essay-calls-reform-tenure-and-promotion-system>.

15. Peter Levine, "Who First Said 'We Are the Ones We Have Been Waiting For?,'" Blog for Civic Renewal, March 9, 2011,
<http://peterlevine.ws/?p=6105>.

KerryAnn O'Meara is professor of higher education, affiliate faculty in women's studies, and director of the ADVANCE Program at the University of Maryland College Park. **Timothy Eatman** is associate professor of higher education at Syracuse University and faculty codirector of Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life, a consortium of universities and organizations dedicated to advancing the public and civic purposes of humanities, arts, and design. **Saul Petersen** is executive director of New Jersey Campus Compact.

Select any filter and click on Apply to see results

About

- [Strategic Plan & Goals](#)
- [Membership](#)
- [Manage Account](#)
- [AAC&U Donors](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)

Meetings

- [Annual Meeting](#)
- [Network Meetings](#)
- [PKAL Events](#)
- [Summer Institutes](#)

Research & Publications

- [Publications](#)
- [AAC&U News](#)
- [Liberal Education](#)
- [Diversity & Democracy](#)
- [Peer Review](#)
- [Research](#)

Programs & Partnerships

- [LEAP](#)
- [Programs](#)
- [Partnerships](#)

Press

- [Press Releases](#)
- [AAC&U in the News](#)
- [Sources & Experts](#)

Give to AAC&U



Contact
AAC&U
1818 R Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
[\(202\) 387-3760](tel:(202)387-3760)