

# **TEACHING SCHOLARSHIP SERVICE**



## **Descriptions, Expectations and Peer Evaluation for Retention, Promotion, Tenure, and Merit**

**From**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

The University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point University Handbook contains very general statements on the institution's expectations for faculty achievements in teaching, scholarship, and service for purposes of making personnel decisions. By way of this booklet, the Chancellor and Provost/Vice Chancellor give an institutional interpretation to each of these statements. These interpretations set the university's minimum performance and peer evaluation expectations for faculty.

Each academic department is responsible for having personnel guidelines that give the department's interpretation of these general statements, and which set performance and peer review expectations at least as high as those communicated in this booklet. Each department is also responsible for specifying the relative importance of teaching, scholarship, and service in the evaluation process preceding a departmental recommendation on retention, tenure, and promotion.

Since teaching is the primary faculty responsibility at UWSP, the Chancellor and Provost/Vice Chancellor normally put the greatest importance on this performance area in personnel reviews.

The next most important performance area normally is scholarship; therefore, a positive tenure or promotion review requires first and foremost that the candidate present a continuing record of teaching ability at least at the norm of the department AND a continuing and growing record of scholarly achievements.

Though the performance area of service is important to positive personnel reviews, a strong record in it normally will not compensate for the lack of continuing, positive records of achievements in teaching or scholarship. Similarly, it is not likely that a strong record of scholarship will compensate for the lack of a continuing positive record of achievements in teaching.

Of course, exceptions can be made to the relative importance given to these three performance areas. Exceptions are arranged through individualized performance objectives which are described briefly in the next section of this booklet.

## **BACKGROUND:**

In Fall 1992, the University of Wisconsin Board of Regents approved policies directing UW campuses to meet specified criteria for tenured faculty review and development, consideration of teaching and teaching-related scholarship in personnel decisions, and systematic evaluation procedures for faculty and academic staff. Among the specific directives is that all individuals who evaluate performance have "...completed appropriate training provided through the vice chancellor's office."

As a result of the Regents' action, UWSP's Provost/Vice Chancellor presented for campus reaction in 1993-94 a draft document titled "Peer Evaluation of Faculty for Purposes of Retention, Tenure, Promotion, Merit." Following a number of workshops with department chairs, departmental personnel committee chairs and others, that document was finalized in July 1994. It included material sufficient to meet the Regents' directive for training prior to engaging in peer evaluations of teaching scholarship and service.

In February 1995, the Faculty Senate approved a proposal from the Provost/Vice Chancellor to replace the term professional disciplinary growth with the term scholarship in the University Handbook and to describe it more broadly by identifying its characteristics rather than giving examples of it. The intent of this change was to redirect the focus of scholarship on improving and facilitating teaching. In an accompanying document, departments were encouraged to include in their departmental personnel guidelines as evidence of scholarship those activities which have as their principal focus improving and facilitating teaching. It also provided guidelines for peer review of these activities.

Finally, in May 1996, the Faculty Senate adopted a revision in the description of General Educational Service as it appears in the University Handbook. It was revised to avoid an overlap with the description for scholarship as it had been changed the previous year. An accompanying document also provided guidelines for peer review of service activities.

These three documents (peer evaluation, scholarship and service) have been edited into a single document for this booklet, which sets the university's minimum performance and peer evaluation expectations for faculty. Each academic department is responsible for having personnel guidelines that give the department's performance and peer review expectations in these three areas that are at least as high as those communicated in this booklet. Once approved by the appropriate dean, they serve as the basis for conducting peer reviews for purposes of retention, promotion, tenure and merit.

For individual faculty members, however, the department's list of performance areas (or objectives) may be modified with one or more specific individualized performance objectives. Individualized objectives must be approved in writing by the department, department chair, dean, and vice chancellor before the candidate begins work toward accomplishing them. For faculty having individualized objectives, their written statement needs sufficient detail to allow for a fair and consistent evaluation. All evaluations on behalf of a specific candidate must be based upon the approved objectives.

The possibility of developing individualized objectives affords academic units the flexibility to recognize differences in performance expectations among faculty in the same department. Therefore, not every faculty member's performance criteria need to be identical to every other faculty member's criteria in the department.

For example, for some fixed period of time specified in the colleagues' individualized objectives, one faculty member may invest his/her time in teaching and traditional research activities with no responsibility for departmental service, while another may focus his/her time entirely on teaching and developing an advising system for the department. In another period of time, these faculty, with the approval of their colleagues, dean and vice chancellor, may channel their energies into other projects. In short, while everyone has scholarship and service obligations over the course of his/her career, with individualized objectives, the same level of commitment to each obligation need not be expected year-in and year-out.

Performance objectives, whether departmental or individualized, must be sufficiently explicit to permit fair and consistent evaluation in all three performance areas. As noted by experts in faculty evaluation systems such as James O. Hammons (1987), they must be:

- Written and clearly stated
- Specific and objective
- Amenable to assessment by observation of performance or measurable results

## I. TEACHING AND LEARNING

### PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:

UWSP's University Handbook describes effective teaching as "the success of the instructor, both in and out of the classroom, in securing interest, effort, and progress on the part of the student. This includes not only direct instruction, but also formal advising and the more informal mentoring that occurs in the variety of curricular and co-curricular contexts of the university. The primary consideration is that students are stimulated to high standards of scholarship, to active interest in learning, and to effective effort toward self-improvement." (The Handbook describes the responsibilities for advising, which is considered an aspect of teaching, in Chapter 5, Section 3.)

### PEER EVALUATION OF TEACHING AND LEARNING:

A. Evaluation of the candidate's teaching materials represents one component of the colleagues' evaluation of the candidate's teaching performance. While the specifics of the colleagues' examination of these materials may vary significantly among disciplines, it must include the following three general components:

- Course content
- Course objectives
- Grading policies

In addition, where applicable, the evaluation should include

- Course examinations
- Course organization
- Quality of student achievement

B. Colleague evaluation also includes observations of teaching performance.

1. In preparation for the observation, the faculty observer must gather the following information from the candidate:

- The course objectives
- Objectives for the day of the visit

2. The faculty observer must also meet with the candidate after the visit to:

- Report on the observations
- Give the candidate an opportunity to comment on the observations and any other aspect that might reasonably have affected the instruction that day

3. The observer should attend to areas like the following during the visit (Seldin, 1984, p. 144):

- The structure and goals for the course (e.g. appropriate integration of modes of instruction; class activities tied to goals.)
- Presentation skills (e.g. eye contact; speaking rate and intensity; language usage; distracting mannerisms)
- Rapport with students (e.g. equability; student receptiveness; respect)
- Mastery of content (e.g. adequacy; currency; content sequencing)
- Listing of strengths and weaknesses in teaching performance

4. Following the observation, the faculty observer prepares a written report summarizing the observation in the context of the instructor's objectives, comments made at the meeting following the observation, and any other relevant material. This report is made available to those participating in the peer review.

C. Examination of responses to The *Student Evaluation of Course Instruction* form is also an important component of peer evaluation. (Peer reviews of instruction for merit determinations must also, at a minimum, examine responses to this form.) The *Student Evaluation of Course Instruction* (both face-to-face and online forms) and the *Student Evaluation Reporting* forms are available in the Faculty Senate Office and in the *University Handbook*, Chapter 4D.

To the extent possible, these guidelines should be followed in reviewing student evaluations:

- Cumulative ratings over several semesters/years and from a range of courses are used and caution is used in interpreting results from classes of 15 or fewer students since scores for classes of this size generally tend to be higher than for larger classes (Seldin, 1984, p. 135).
- At least 75% of the students in the class complete the form
- The scores for other faculty in the department are available for comparison purposes
- The candidate's scores are compared to departmental scores. Whenever possible, these comparisons should be made with scores for courses having similar characteristics (e.g. size; level of student) (Seldin, 1984, p.137).

## II. SCHOLARSHIP

In 1987, the late Ernest L. Boyer made this point about scholarship: "Scholarship is not an esoteric appendage; it is at the heart of what the profession is all about. All faculty, throughout their careers, should, themselves, remain students. As scholars, they must continue to learn and be seriously and continuously engaged in the expanding intellectual world. This is essential to the vitality and vigor of the undergraduate college." (p. 131)

Boyer further notes in this same reference that each professor is responsible for "...staying abreast of the profession, knowing the literature in one's field, and skillfully communicating such information to students." (p. 131)

In 1991, Boyer went on to identify four kinds of scholarship: discovery (traditional basic research); integration (research that builds bridges from the discipline to other bodies of knowledge); application (research that may solve specific societal problems and/or benefit society); and teaching (research that supports improvement in teaching and learning.) More recently, the report of the Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land Grant Universities (1999) reinforced the importance of integration, application and teaching scholarship in support of the engaged university.

The current University Handbook statement on scholarship reads: “Activities which are clearly defined, use methods and procedures appropriate to the task, are documented and available to the academic community for review and comment, have disciplinary and/or pedagogical value, and reflect a level of expertise/creativity expected in higher education.”

### **CRITERIA FOR SCHOLARSHIP:**

The University Handbook description of scholarship specifies six criteria that activities must meet in order to be regarded as evidence of scholarship. The activities must:

1. Be clearly defined
2. Require a level of expertise that reasonably could be expected of a university faculty member
3. Use methods and procedures appropriate to the task
4. Be well-documented
5. Be available to the academic community for review and comment
6. Have disciplinary and/or pedagogical value

Clearly, traditional, discipline-focused research and publication activities satisfy the description of scholarship and these criteria. However, pedagogical scholarship and other scholarly activities that support the greater engagement of the university may also constitute scholarship when they fulfill the six criteria listed above. Some departments might decide that activities **such as** the following may be considered:

- Conducting and reporting on pedagogical research
- Developing and testing of an innovative approach to a given topic
- Consulting
- Preparing and submitting a grant proposal to an outside agency
- Writing a laboratory manual used only on this campus
- Serving on a panel on curriculum at a national meeting (note that simple attendance at such a meeting would not meet the criteria for acceptable scholarship)
- Applying one's academic expertise to discipline-related issues at the local, state or national level
- Involving undergraduate, as well as graduate, students in activities that develop research skills and lead to presentations and publications
- Exhibiting one's work
- Performing public recitals
- Serving on a research panel

## **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOLARSHIP:**

Within the context of scholarship as described by Boyer in the above reference and the six criteria presented in the University Handbook description for this performance area, each department is expected to work with its respective dean to identify activities which its faculty may present as evidence of scholarship. (Some disciplines may find the work on scholarship by their professional organizations useful in identifying scholarly activities that are in keeping with the description and criteria presented here.) For each activity identified, the department will determine how its quality will be assessed **before** any faculty engage in the activity. For example, if a department determines that grant writing is an appropriate scholarly activity, it must determine how the quality of the work will be judged **before** any member of the department submits a grant writing activity as scholarship. It is expected that the rigor of peer review will assure the campus' academic community of the validity of this process.

When reviewing a candidate's record of scholarly achievements in preparation for making a personnel decision, peers need to recognize that there are substantial differences in the amount of effort and level of expertise required to complete various scholarly activities. While each of two different activities may help a faculty member stay current in the discipline, one may take much more effort to complete. For example, the effort required to prepare a laboratory manual for a new course or to do original choreography is likely to be greater than what is required to serve on a conference panel to discuss general issues related to the curriculum.

The impact of a candidate's scholarly activities on the discipline and/or on teaching performance also needs to be considered in personnel reviews. Therefore, peer evaluation of a colleague's scholarly activities must take into account the quality and significance as well as the quantity of the achievements. Departmental recommendations forwarded to the Dean and Provost/Vice Chancellor should clearly indicate the results of the candidate's peer review of scholarship in the context of the six criteria identified above.

## **REFEREED VERSUS NONREFEREED SCHOLARSHIP:**

Over the last several decades, many institutions of higher education have come to rely on the outcome of a **competitive** peer review process (i.e. refereed) as the test of a candidate's record in the area of scholarship. Of course, refereed scholarly activities that are accepted by a professional organization in a candidate's field of study should normally not require significant additional scrutiny before that information is used by the peers in the department to support a positive personnel recommendation.

A candidate preparing his/her file for peer review, of course, will include scholarly activities that have been accepted for presentation/publication following a competitive review process. The candidate also may include as evidence of scholarship activities that have neither been accepted through nor presented for a competitive review process. These activities, to be considered as scholarship, must be carefully reviewed by the candidate's peers and judged on their merits according to criteria agreed to by members of the department. Departments are encouraged to gather these peer reviews from among their colleagues on other campuses and from related departments on the UWSP campus.

## **A COMMENT ON SERVICE:**

Traditionally, the use of one's academic expertise in service to the community or to the individual's professional organization has been credited to the service category for personnel decision-making purposes. However, as noted above, within the context of our extended definition of scholarship, activities like this may be credited to the scholarship category provided, of course, they are identified as such in the department's personnel guidelines and they satisfy the six criteria listed above.

## **III. GENERAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE**

The University Handbook states: "General educational service is the acceptance and fulfillment of professional responsibilities outside the classroom, e.g., participation in organizations related to the discipline, acceptance of professional responsibilities within the university or community, etc." The types of service activities in which faculty members engage reflect the nature of their appointments, their training and experience, as well as identifiable needs of the campus and the external community. This leads to diverse forms of interaction by faculty members with individual clients, industries, agencies, government entities and other constituencies. One vital aspect of educational service is its relationship to the mission of the unit or the institution and to the faculty member's academic or professional experience. Service activities must fulfill the mission of the unit/institution through utilization of faculty members' academic and professional expertise. Service activities are related to scholarly activities in that they both require utilization of faculty members' academic and professional expertise. At UWSP, service activities are distinguished from scholarly activities by the fact that the latter must meet the six criteria listed in the Scholarship section of this booklet.

At UW-Stevens Point, educational service might be manifest through such activities as:

- Service to professional organizations
- Student recruitment
- Committee work
- Technology transfer
- Service through university clinics or laboratories
- Public policy analysis
- Evaluation of programs
- Service as an expert witness
- Technical assistance for such activities as local stage productions
- Exhibition support for area art galleries
- Providing consultation services to elementary and secondary programs
- Development/fundraising work

## **GUIDELINES FOR GENERAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE:**

In making personnel decisions, departments will use the following criteria in assessing a faculty member's service contributions:

1. Quality of the service work
2. Impact of the service work
3. Dissemination of the service contribution as expressed through scholarship
4. Interaction with a community of scholars

## 5. Integration of teaching, scholarship and service

Well-stated cases should be based on an overall record of service activities, where there is evidence of the following outcomes:

- A beneficial impact attributable at least in part to the application of relevant and up-to-date knowledge to real-world problems, issues or concerns addressed by the service contribution (examples: favorable effects upon public policy or upon professional, agricultural or business practice)
- Honors, awards and other special recognition such as commendations that have been received in the execution of service
- Election to office or undertaking important service to professional associations and learned societies, including editorial work or peer reviewing for a national or international organization, as related to public service
- Selection for special public services outside the state and invitations to give talks within the faculty member's field
- Election or appointment to departmental or institutional governance bodies or to academic policy or procedure development committees
- Participation in professional associations and presentation of papers related to educational service
- Membership on Systemwide committees or task forces

### **PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS FOR GENERAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE:**

Departments vary in the emphasis they give to institutional service activities and those they consider significant. Therefore, it is important for faculty to understand departmental expectations in this area and design appropriate activities with personnel evaluation and the demands of promotion/tenure review in mind. Early in the review process, faculty should seek clarity on the following:

1. Department/unit expectations concerning the kinds of service activities that are encouraged
2. Approaches to documenting service contributions (e.g. letters of commendation, listing of accomplishments, etc.)
3. Performance criteria for service at the department and college levels.

Questions to be considered in evaluating the quality of service contributions at the unit/department levels and the institution/community levels include:

#### Unit/Department Levels

- In what areas has the department established a history of quality in service?
- In what ways do the department's faculty members appropriately interact with practicing professionals or meet agency and industry needs for technical information and education?
- What types of service activities are encouraged as part of the department mission?
- What balance does the department expect faculty members to maintain among teaching, scholarship and service while working toward tenure?

#### Institution/Community Levels

- Do the service efforts draw upon the faculty member's disciplinary or professional expertise?
- Do the activities represent potential new interpretations and applications of knowledge for use in specific settings?
- Is there potential for the activities to generate new research questions or make more understandable the current body of knowledge?
- Does the outreach activity make an impact on issues like public policy, on the improvement of practice among professionals (including K-12 educators), or on those involved in agriculture or business?

On occasion, activities that are reported on a candidate's vita as service are financially compensated (e.g. contractual, stipend, honorarium, etc.). If such service activities are likely in a particular department, its personnel guidelines should be clear on the relative value of compensated and uncompensated activities.

Educational service should be visible and significant. Assessment of quality must include evidence of excellence, innovation and impact. Some of the most compelling evidence of the impact of one's service contributions to professional improvement can come from professional colleagues in the field.

#### **IV. DOCUMENTATION**

Ultimately, peers will be presented with documentation for each of the candidate's performance objectives. Before peers are given this documentation for review, it is essential that the candidate has been given every opportunity to include all the materials specified in the department's personnel guidelines and in the performance expectations specified in the candidate's individualized objectives. As the candidate must have every opportunity to make the documentation complete, peers have the right to expect that the documentation includes all material necessary to make an informed decision on the candidate's performance. Therefore, departments are encouraged to review their personnel guidelines to make certain they contain a mechanism that provides reasonable assurance to the candidate and the peers that the documentation will be complete when it is made available for review.

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