

**Policies and Procedures Supporting
the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Research University
Executive Summary
Research Universities Consortium for the Advancement of the
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (RUCASTL)***

The Research Universities Consortium for the Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (RUCASTL) of the Carnegie Campus Cluster initiative provides the following document as a framework for discussions and deliberations in developing policies to support faculty work in the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). The underlying assumption supporting this work is that: To the extent that research universities are committed to (1) promoting student learning and (2) contributing to the knowledge base through research, there should be support, recognition, and rewards for faculty who choose to contribute to the knowledge base involving how to promote student learning. These linkages have already been recognized and identified as best practices by regional accrediting commissions and disciplinary professional groups.

All faculty at a research university would be expected to engage in scholarly teaching, i.e., teaching which is reflected and grounded in the best practices and empirically validated practices which promote student learning. Building on this, the scholarship of teaching and learning in the research university is defined as systematic examinations of issues about student learning and instructional conditions which promote that learning (i.e., building on previous scholarship and shared concerns), which is subjected to blind review by peers who represent the judgment of the profession, and, after review, is disseminated to the professional community. *“The scholarship of teaching and learning must be held to the same standards of rigor, relevance, peer review, and dissemination as other forms of disciplinary research and creative activity. It also must bring the same levels of rewards.”* (RUCASTL Group, 2003). University policies, formal and informal, determine the extent to which faculty are recognized and rewarded for scholarly work in this area.

Elements of promotion and tenure policy which would support SoTL include:

- Explicit statements in university, college, and departmental policies in which SoTL is identified as an accepted option for documenting scholarship.
- Policies include provisions to include external reviewers whose expertise is SoTL, when appropriate.
- Policies include provisions for a full range of faculty (including tenure track of various ranks as well as non-tenure track faculty) to engage in SoTL work.

Although policies on promotion and tenure are central to recognizing and rewarding faculty who engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning, the effectiveness of any policy depends on its context with other policies and practices:

- Policies on annual review and merit pay, pre-tenure and post-tenure review, workload considerations, sabbatical leaves, and course release recognize the validity of SoTL.
- Policies which describe teaching and learning emphasize documenting student learning as the primary component in determining teaching effectiveness.
- Policies providing recognizing SoTL in IRB policies and institutional grant programs.

* RUCASTL is a Carnegie Academy Leadership Cluster and includes: Indiana University, Arizona State University, Georgia State University, Howard University Graduate School, Iowa State University, Michigan State University, National Communication Association, Northwestern University, Ohio State University, University of British Columbia, University of Illinois, University of Maryland, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, University of New South Wales, and University of Wyoming.

Policies and Procedures Supporting the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in the Research University

The following recommendations are the result of the discussions and contributions of members of the Research Universities Consortium for the Advancement of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (RUCASTL) of the Carnegie Campus Cluster initiative. The recommendations are intended to provide guidance and support to faculty and administrators wishing to recognize and reward faculty achievements in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at research universities (as well as masters and undergraduate institutions). At the heart of such policies are those which delineate requirements and procedures for promotion and tenure. We recognize that issues of promotion and tenure in research extensive universities vary across institutions and differ from other types of institutions of higher education. We offer these proposals as a framework for discussions and deliberations.

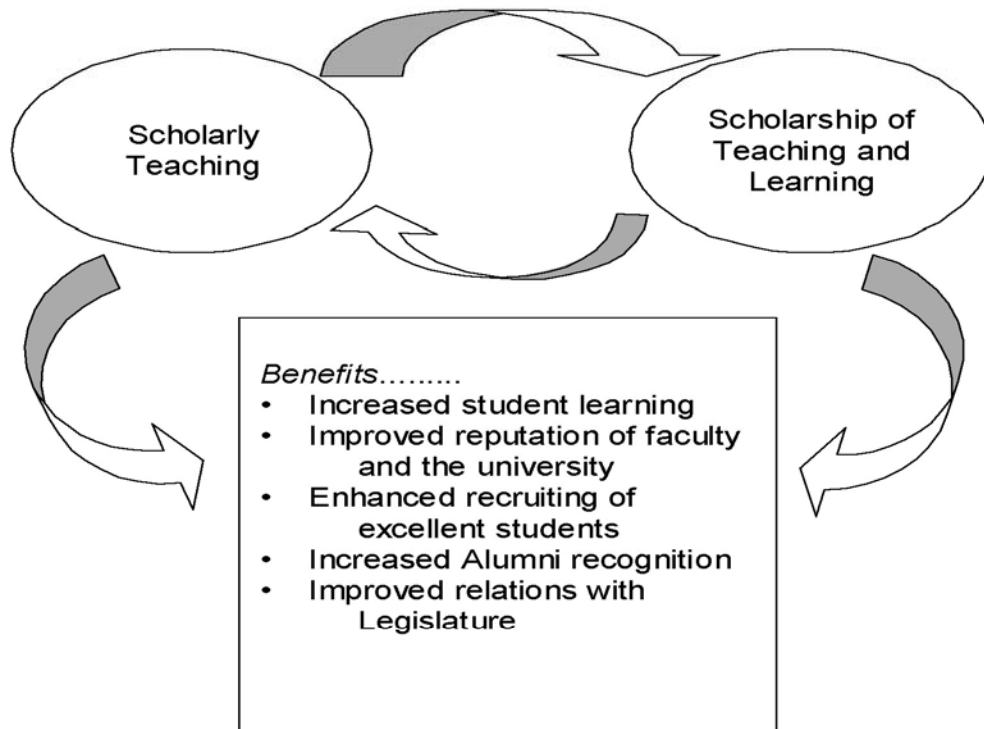
“The very nature of a research university places a special emphasis on scholarship. It is through generating and disseminating new knowledge that research universities define their unique qualities” (Bass, 1999).

There is a set of basic assumptions on which our work is based:

- Every faculty member should engage in scholarly teaching because of its centrality to the university’s mission.
- Although all faculty should engage in scholarly teaching, not all faculty need to engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning. Those who do, though, are contributing to the discovery of knowledge about teaching and learning in higher education. See *Appendix A*
- The evolving body of research on learning has fostered new forms of inquiry into teaching. By better informing teaching, the scholarship of teaching and learning enhances student learning.
- While the scholarship of teaching and learning may be an important part of the promotion and tenure process, the scholarship of teaching and learning should not displace high quality scholarly teaching in annual performance reviews and in promotion and tenure decisions.
- The scholarship of teaching and learning extends across all disciplines. However, the various genre of scholarship are primarily defined by ones discipline.
- To engage in the scholarship of teaching and learning, faculty members need policies that support and reward this work at the department, college, and university levels, and opportunities to disseminate their scholarship through disciplinary societies.
- Parallel policies which recognize and reward scholarly teaching are also needed.

The relationship between Scholarly Teaching and the Scholarship of teaching and learning is shown in the graphic below which was developed by RUCASTL.

Scholarship of Teaching and Learning at Research Universities



Scholarly Teaching... focuses on student learning and “is well grounded in the sources and resources appropriate to the field.” *Lee Shulman, President, Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*

Scholarship of teaching and learning... ultimately improves student learning and occurs when “our work as teachers becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of our professional communities so they, in turn, can build on our work. these are qualities of all scholarship.” *Lee Shulman*

Defining the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

A definition of scholarship is an essential first step. "For an activity to be designated as scholarship," argues Pat Hutchings (1998) of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, "it should manifest at least three key characteristics:

“It should be public”... Dictionary definitions all include the concept that public involves the concern for the people as a whole rather than a more narrow individual concern. As such, one would expect scholar based in teaching and learning would address

“public” concerns about issues of teaching and learning that are shared by a community of faculty. Also, a public endeavor is an open as opposed to a closed activity. “Teaching as community property” helps to capture this concept.

...susceptible to critical review and evaluation,... For the research university, peer review means a double-blind review by peers selected by the discipline for their expertise (i.e., reviewers). It is through the judgment of well-qualified peers who judge that a work will contribute to the discipline (e.g., accept it as meeting the standard for the publication) that faculty contribute to the knowledge base of their discipline.

...and accessible for exchange and use by other members of one’s scholarly community. Traditionally, the publication and dissemination of one’s work by one’s profession provides the documentation of its contribution. That contribution of a work of scholarship is often assessed by the reputation of the publication in which it appears, the publication’s rejection rate, and breadth of national/international dissemination. It is reasonable to expect that SoTL work, as an evolving field, might be disseminated in alternative formats beyond the traditional journal article. As such, the tension between traditional, accepted forms of exchange and novel and, perhaps, more effective alternative dissemination should be balanced between maintaining the expectations of the discipline and the effectiveness of innovation.

In the words of the RUCASTL group, “The scholarship of teaching and learning must be held to the same standards of rigor, relevance, peer review, and dissemination as other forms of disciplinary research and creative activity. It also must bring the same levels of rewards.” (2003)

Crafting the language for scholarship of teaching and learning policy development in research universities

Developing the SoTL Language

Ideally, explicit policy statements to recognize and reward faculty achievements in SoTL would seamlessly be part of an institution’s promotion and tenure policies. It is important that such language be in multiple policies, from the institutional umbrella commitment to recognize SoTL work to the P&T documents of the various colleges and departments. As one moves from the institution to the college level and ultimately to the department level, the role of the individual discipline becomes increasingly important in defining scholarship. The most desirable wording would specify SoTL as an option for faculty to document their scholarship. The impact of including SoTL language is to expand the scope of faculty members’ disciplinary inquiry and foster acceptance of others in their own discipline to include issues of students’ learning. To the extent that a discipline equates scholarship with research, it is reasonable to expect SoTL work to be research-based. If the discipline views scholarship as a broader array of products (peer-reviewed position papers, reviews, etc.), SoTL work might produce more diverse products as contributions to the knowledge base. To the extent that policies governing faculty workload permit individual faculty to select areas of emphasis (e.g., a greater emphasis on teaching than scholarship), SoTL should be available as an option to complement

faculty's focus on teaching for those choosing to do so. For example, the recent article on SoTL by David Pace in the *American Historical Review* represents a different genre of scholarship than an educational psychologist's research into the effects of a collaborative learning procedure on learning and motivation.

The framework for developing SoTL language in a research university is often drawn from the institution's mission statement and strategic plan (O'Meara, 2005). The converging of the institution's explicit commitments to (1) educate its students and (2) contribute to knowledge base through its research agenda creates the context for SoTL activities which contribute to the research knowledge base about student learning.

Policy on external reviewers

The role of external reviewers is a critical part of the promotion and tenure process. Policies which support the recognition of SoTL should also have provisions to include external reviewers who are familiar with scholarship on issues of teaching and learning in higher education rather than only include external reviewers grounded in the traditional disciplinary scholarship. The American Sociological Association, for example, has compiled a list of its members from which a university might draw SoTL external reviewers. Reviewers for SoTL should meet the same standards as reviewers for disciplinary scholarship, i.e., hold the appropriate rank, be from a peer (or better) institution, and have a record of scholarly work. When the external review is focused on scholarly activities, the reviewers should include persons who have demonstrated competence in SoTL research as well as persons who have done disciplinary research. In cases in which the external review also focuses on teaching, external reviewers with credentials in scholarly teaching should be included.

Impacts of faculty roles

Ideally, policies on SoTL would be an option for all faculty—tenure-track as well as providing an avenue for non-tenure track faculty to be promoted. A policy on SoTL written primarily of non-tenure track faculty might be considered a step in the right direction, but such a limited application risks diminishing the credibility of this form of scholarship.

In addition to being designated as tenure-track or non-tenure track, individual faculty typically perform differentiated roles within a department. Often these roles are formally negotiated (e.g., the proportion of one's effort that is dedicated to teaching, scholarship and service). Policies at all levels should provide for consistency and compatibility between standards for review and faculty's contracted levels of responsibility for teaching.

Related policies that might be effected

The impact of policies which recognize and reward SoTL are most effective when included in a broad array of related policy statements, including, pre-tenure reviews, post-tenure reviews, workload considerations, annual faculty evaluations and merit pay decisions, decisions about sabbatical leaves, and course release decisions. For example, if faculty members are given credit for the developmental process of starting research

programs within the discipline (procuring equipment, testing protocols, running pilot investigations, etc.) the same credit given to faculty who commit to investigate student learning and requires a period of time to investigate a new body of literature and evaluate instruments and protocols beyond what are traditionally used in the discipline.

One of the most important supportive policies can be on how teaching effectiveness is evaluated within a college or university. If, as with many universities, teaching is judged primarily by student perceptions of teaching effectiveness, there is little incentive for faculty to attempt to capture evidence of student learning. On the other hand, if evidence of student learning is suggested as additional information, perhaps as part of a teaching portfolio, or, better yet, evidence of student learning is required in order to document teaching effectiveness, efforts at SoTL provide a natural payoff for faculty to more carefully examine evidence of learning.

Even the way in which teaching is described or defined in faculty policy can impact the acceptance of SoTL. If, for example, faculty teaching is described in a teacher-centered manner (e.g., teaching is the act of disseminating content...) little support is provided for documenting student learning or the subsequent analyses of learning that might be part of SoTL. On the other hand, the language used by universities to describe teaching and learning and related policies and practices related to that language have been evolving into a more learner-centered definition of teaching (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The shift from teaching to learning provides a natural foundation for SoTL work.

Finally, the extent to which a university's research office recognizes and supports SoTL plays a role in the likelihood that faculty will systematically investigate aspects of students' learning. SoTL work is promoted when it is included within the scope of internal research grants and research initiative funding from the university's research office and if the Institutional Review Board (IRB) works to facilitate approval of university classroom research projects.

Of course, university policies operate at several levels: A formal level at which policies are written and discussed by colleagues and published for all to read and at a private level (i.e., shadow policies) which define how departments and individual faculty interpret, accept and implement what is written.

External language that supports SoTL

Regional Accrediting Groups

Promotion and tenure policies which include SoTL do not stand in isolation. Documents and policies outside the university provide the framework to help support SoTL. For example, five of the six regional accrediting agencies have language in their accreditation handbooks that either explicitly or implicitly promote SoTL. Knowing about the support of accrediting agencies for SoTL work can help more universities forward in their acceptance of the scholarship. For example New England Association of Colleges and Schools, in their revised Accreditation Handbook (effective January, 2006) specifies:

Scholarship and Research

5.19 All faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. Scholarship and instruction are integrated and mutually supportive.

The North Central Association of Colleges and Schools requirements include the following:

- *Supports scholarship. Criteria Three and Four draw attention to the fact that scholarship, in the multiple forms defined by Ernest L. Boyer (Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, 1990), is the lifeblood of higher learning. Students need to understand the role and purpose of scholarship as a means of organizing and transmitting knowledge. Scholarship may involve pure or applied research engaged in by all types of students and faculties at all types of organizations. **Faculties concerned about effective teaching ought to be supported in their understanding of the scholarship of teaching.** Organizations that value discovery and creation of knowledge by faculty and students create environments to support research. They also integrate recognition of the accomplishments of students and faculties into the organizational culture. (bold type added)*

Examples of other wording from regional accrediting groups are included in Appendix B.

Disciplinary Societies

Another external source of support for SoTL language is the guidance provided by disciplinary accrediting bodies within various professions, teaching, nursing, law, etc. For example, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) included specific language supporting “pedagogical research” in the January 2005 revision of its accreditation standards.

Portfolio of Faculty Contributions

*A generalized categorization of intellectual contributions includes contributions to **learning and pedagogical research**, contributions to practice, and discipline-based scholarship. (p. 23)*

- ***Learning and pedagogical research** contributions influence the teaching-learning activities of the school. Preparation of new materials for use in courses, creation of teaching aids, and **research on pedagogy** all qualify as Learning and pedagogical research contributions. (p. 24; bold type added)*

Basis for Judgment

- *Maintenance of knowledge and expertise supports faculty performance through an appropriate balance, given the school’s mission, through contributions over the past five years in all of the following areas:*
 - *Learning and pedagogical research*
 - *Contributions to practice*
 - *Discipline-based scholarship (p. 39).*

Such wording provides leverage for schools and colleges of business recognize, reward and support faculty scholarship in SoTL.

Conclusion

Policies which change how faculty's work is recognized and rewarded don't stand in isolation. Such policies are effective when developed in a context of supportive policies involving how faculty work in teaching is defined, how teaching is evaluated, and how merit pay, access to sabbaticals, and support for research are aligned with doing the scholarship of teaching and learning. Most regional accrediting groups recognize and several disciplinary professional organizations encourage SoTL activities as good practice. Furthermore, as political scientists proclaim "All politics are local", academics are advised that, "All policies are local". That is to say, the closer a policy which promotes the scholarship of teaching and learning in the promotion and tenure policies is to the individual department (and individual faculty member), the more likely it is to impact faculty priorities.

References

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Appendix A
Comparison of scholarly teaching and scholarship of teaching and learning

	Scholarly Teaching	Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
Anchored in literature of teaching and learning	X	X
Emphasis on documenting student learning	X	X
Teaching and learning as community property		X
Work is peer-reviewed		X
Evidence of outcomes is disseminated through professional outlets		X

Appendix B
Wording from Regional Accreditation Associations which refer to Scholarship related to Teaching and Learning

Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
Standard 10 Fundamental Elements of Faculty

... “recognition of appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning, research, and service;”

Optional Analysis and Evidence

...”evidence of faculty productivity in the scholarship of teaching as well as in **discipline-specific research** and scholarship and in the creation of knowledge, consistent with the institution’s mission” (bold type added)

New England Association of Colleges and Schools

Proposed Standard: Scholarship and Research (effective January, 2006)

5.19 All faculty pursue scholarship designed to ensure they are current in the theory, knowledge, skills, and pedagogy of their discipline or profession. The institution defines the scholarly expectations for faculty consistent with its mission and purposes and the level of degrees offered. **Scholarship and instruction are integrated and mutually supportive.** (bold type added)

North Central Association of Colleges and Schools

• **Supports scholarship.** Criteria Three and Four draw attention to the fact that scholarship, in the multiple forms defined by Ernest L. Boyer (*Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate*, 1990), is the lifeblood of higher learning. Students need to understand the role and purpose of scholarship as a means of organizing and transmitting knowledge. Scholarship may involve pure or applied research engaged in by all types of students and faculties at all types of organizations. **Faculties concerned about effective teaching ought to be supported in their understanding of the scholarship of teaching. Organizations that value discovery and creation of knowledge by faculty**

and students create environments to support research. They also integrate recognition of the accomplishments of students and faculties into the organizational culture. (bold type added)

Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges

P. 64 Scholarship is systematic study of a chosen subject characterized by a high level of expertise, originality, critical analysis, significance, and demonstrability. Through scholarship, which may entail creation, application, synthesis, or transmission of knowledge, faculty acquire and sustain their expertise, thereby contributing to the validity and vitality of their teaching. **Faculty scholarship is necessary to maintain effective instruction in all institutions of higher education.** It also provides students the opportunity to observe and develop an understanding of scholarly activity.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools

No references found.

Western Association of Colleges and Schools

p. 6 Focusing on Educational Effectiveness

Organizing for Learning "...faculty recruitment, development, **scholarship in support of improved teaching and learning**, rewards, and incentives;" (bold type added)

p. 22 Scholarship and Creative Activity

Criteria for Review

1. In what ways do the institution's policies and administrative procedures encourage and support scholarship, instructional innovation and creative activity (e.g., policies on faculty workload and reward, research, funding, professional development programs, etc.), as well as learning about pedagogy and learning theory?

2. **To what extent are scholarship, research, and creative activity linked to the improvement of teaching and learning?** (bold type added)

Appendix C Disciplinary Accrediting Groups

American Association of Colleges of Nursing

Excerpts from *Position Statement on Defining Scholarship for the Discipline of Nursing* (1999)

Scholarship of Teaching

The scholarship of teaching is inquiry that produces knowledge to support the transfer of the science and art of nursing from the expert to the novice, building bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning (Boyer, 1990). This scholarly approach supports the development of educational environments that embrace diverse learning styles, and increasingly, places the focus of education on the learner (Edgerton, 1997). Within nursing, the scholarship of teaching increases the effectiveness of the transfer of discipline-specific knowledge, and adds to deeper understanding of both the discipline

and pedagogy. The scholarship of teaching is conducted through application of knowledge of the discipline or specialty area in the teaching-learning process, the development of innovative teaching and evaluation methods, program development, learning outcome evaluation, and professional role modeling.

Knowledge of the discipline or specialty applied in teaching-learning includes innovations that demonstrate the knowledge of the faculty member in relation to teaching (such as authorship of textbooks or other learning aids), technology application, and theory building in the teaching-learning assessment context.

Development of innovative teaching and evaluation methods includes research in teaching strategies, course development and outcome evaluation, curricular and faculty evaluation innovations, research related to the knowledge and pedagogy of nursing, and creation of innovative learning environments that support diverse groups of students.

Program development and learning outcome evaluation includes the development of outcomes assessment programs, accreditation reports, grant proposals for educational programs, disciplinary and interdisciplinary programs, and educational evaluation models.

Professional role modeling includes the mentoring of students and novice faculty, leadership roles in curriculum and instruction, development of programs for lifelong learning, and leadership in shaping educational policy.

National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education

Modeling Best Professional Practices in Scholarship

Target

Professional education faculty demonstrate scholarly work related to teaching, learning, and their fields of specialization. They are actively engaged in inquiry that ranges from knowledge generation to exploration and questioning of the field to evaluating the effectiveness of a teaching approach. (p. 34)

Scholarship is broadly defined and extends beyond traditional research and publications. Scholarly inquiry may include application of knowledge, interpretation or integration of current research findings in new settings, and **rigorous and systematic study of pedagogy**. All scholarly inquiry includes submission of one's work for professional review and evaluation. (p 37, bold type added).