

Memorandum

To: Faculty Executive Committee
From: Robert Reimer, Chair Faculty Employment Status Committee (FESC)
Date: March 30, 2011

RE: Faculty and Community-Engaged Scholarship: Recommendations from the Faculty Employment Status Committee

UNC Charlotte and Engaged Scholarship

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte has an important role to play as the state's urban research university. Opportunities for scholarship that investigate and transform the community around us are endless; UNC Charlotte maintains a commitment to addressing the economic, social, and cultural needs of our region.

In addition to a growing national movement to formally incorporate community-engaged scholarship at all levels of institutions, UNC Charlotte has heard the call from other constituencies, as well. In 2008 UNC Charlotte was named to the list of institutions with the Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement. According to the Carnegie Foundation, this classification:

“...describes the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”ⁱ

Similarly, the UNC Tomorrow initiative set forth by former UNC president Erskine Bowles acknowledges the need for University of North Carolina institutions to be leaders in developing stronger partnerships between the institutions and the community outside the institution:

- The UNC Tomorrow Commission recommended that campuses “develop a strategic plan for scholarly public service on each campus that is detailed and specific in definition and scope.”ⁱⁱ
- Public input regarding UNC Tomorrow stated that the resources and expertise of UNC faculty should be used to address important community and statewide issues, as well as apply and translate research and scholarship more directly to broader constituencies focused on identified needs.ⁱⁱⁱ

At a time when institutions more than ever are expected to make relevant their areas of research, and are looked to as the leaders from which new initiatives, ideas, and changes in our world can occur, the time is now to make explicit the institution's commitment to scholarship that engages with the world around us.

Recommendations: The following four recommendations come as seconded motions from The Faculty Employment Status Committee (FESC), whose members are Ryan, Ribarsky, Bird, Elliott, Thomas, Kropf, Gilmore, Leeman, Sanders and Reimer (Chair).

Motion 1. The FESC recommends the following language be incorporated in the current Academic Personnel Procedures Handbook (Section VI.C: Areas of Performance to be Reviewed)^{iv} to integrate community-engaged scholarship within the institution and particularly as a core component to the criteria used in reappointment, promotion, and tenure decisions.

Section VI.C

The areas of performance in which a faculty member is reviewed for reappointment, promotion, and conferral of permanent tenure are: 1) teaching, advising, curriculum and instructional development; 2) scholarly research, creative, community engagement and other professional activities; and 3) service to the University, the public, and the profession. The criteria for evaluation for tenure and promotion should be interpreted broadly enough to include an individual's professional engagement with the community in areas of teaching, research, and service. As required by Section 3.1 of the [Tenure Document](#), the assessment of the candidate's performance in each of these areas addresses at least the following: (a) the faculty member's demonstrated professional competence; (b) potential for future contribution to UNC Charlotte; and (c) institutional needs and resources. ***To say that professional activities and contributions in teaching, research, and service have been reviewed****, refereed, or the equivalent means that they have been evaluated by peers, professionals, and beneficiaries beyond the immediate department and college, and that the activities engage issues of significance and/or utility in the field. Such activity reflects an individual's direct involvement in the broader marketplace of ideas and applications pertinent to one's scholarly work and signifies that one's contributions to teaching, scholarly inquiry, creative endeavor and/or community involvement are substantial and are being recognized as such.

*section in bold italics was amended by FEC on 4-4-11

Motion 1 should be seen in the framework of what follows: When reviewing each of the areas of performance, it is essential that at the department, collegiate and university-level community-engaged scholarship is seen as crossing the boundaries of the reappointment, promotion, and tenure categories of teaching, research, and service; it is not a "4th thing" or only a component of service. This philosophy is echoed by the University of North Carolina General Administration:

"UNC should lead the campuses in a refinement and adjustment of the tenure, promotion, and incentive system to place greater value on faculty involvement and engagement in applied research and outreach that will enhance the state's competitiveness without decreasing support for teaching, basic research and scholarship."^v

The following provide examples of community-engaged scholarship within teaching, research, and service.

- Working with CMS or other regional school system, faculty individual helps develop a unique curriculum for a particular discipline. Program's outcomes are documented and disseminated.
- Faculty individual undertakes statistical study with community organization on the effectiveness of its programs for use in improving services.
- Faculty individual curates a major exhibition for local art museum, including identifying art works, preparing accompanying catalog and perhaps audio guide.
- Leading an international symposium
- Creating a documentary and curricular resources
- Creating a community theater
- Developing programs linking youth, professional artists, and scholars in a series of collaborations
- Documenting the buildings and artifacts of a distinct population's experience in the U.S.
- Building a network of course programs offering a college-level humanities curriculum for low-income adult
- Developing and implementing a program evaluation for a community agency or institution
- Facilitating strategic planning process with community stakeholders and drafting a strategic plan to guide community change efforts
- Completing a comprehensive literature review for a community organization's decision making process

Motion 2. The FESC recognizes that community-engaged scholarship will be best supported when institutional structures are in place to make it so. To that end, we recommend the consideration of capacity building opportunities to help provide support mechanisms across campus for engagement scholarship. We propose the creation of a community-engaged scholars program at the junior faculty level to provide tools and support for those new faculty who intend to make engagement a core part of their portfolio. Such a program would provide tools for helping tenure-track faculty translate this important work into the necessary mechanisms for support they will encounter during their review. A program would also help to connect those individuals who are engaged with this work and provide opportunities for collaboration on symposia, articles, and other projects.

Motion 3. The FESC proposes the funding of an award that mirrors the existing award for teaching (Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence).

Motion 4. The FESC recommends that a Faculty Fellow in the Office of Academic Affairs or similar position be dedicated to implementing advances in community engaged scholarship at UNC Charlotte.

ⁱ The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2011). Classification Description. Retrieved February 27, 2011 from: http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/descriptions/community_engagement.php?key=1213.

ⁱⁱ UNC Tomorrow (nd). Highlights of UNC Campuses' Responses to the Needs of North Carolina: Outreach and Engagement. Retrieved February 27, 2011 from: http://www.northcarolina.edu/nctomorrow/UNCT_Highlights_-_Outreach_Engagement.pdf.

ⁱⁱⁱ UNC Tomorrow (nd). UNC Tomorrow Listening: Listening Forum Summary. Retrieved February 27, 2011 from: http://www.northcarolina.edu/nctomorrow/UNC_Tomorrow_Listening_Forum_Comments_Summary_-_Charlotte.pdf.

^{iv} UNC Charlotte (nd). Academic Personnel Procedures Handbook: Section VI.C: Areas of Performance to be Reviewed. Retrieved February 28, 2011 from: http://provost.unc.edu/epa/handbook/chapter_VI.htm#C

^v UNC (2009). Innovate Collaborate Accelerate: The UNC Vision for Innovation and Technology Development. Retrieved February 28, 2011 from: http://www.northcarolina.edu/research/initiatives/tech_transfer/Innovate-Collaborate-Accelerate.pdf.