

Reconsidering *Scholarship Reconsidered*

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There is a strong general feeling in this country that the university is failing. Particular universities may be said to have their strengths, but the university as an institution is under attack from a broad spectrum of critics (Sinott & Johnson, 1996). Consider the titles of the following recent books, all published in the past ten years:

Killing the spirit: Higher education in America (Smith, 1990)

ProfScam: Professors and the demise of higher education (Sykes, 1988)

The moral collapse of the university (Wilshire, 1990)

How professors play the cat guarding the cream (Huber, 1992)

Even allowing for the idea that some of the attacks are baseless, still the question of why diverse segments of society have become emotional critics of this institution remains.

And what are some of these criticisms? The following statements drawn from Sinnott and Johnson (1996) provide a sampler:

- The university no longer seems grounded in the real world *or* the world of ideals
- The university is no longer serving intellectual progress adequately
- It is not serving students adequately
- It does not work well for other of its consumers, that is, other public and private institutions, or the public as a whole
- Universities seem to cost too much for too little
- The university has not been able to meet changing cultural demands or to address problems of its role in conflicting social class, race, and gender differences

Let's assume for a moment that some of this criticism is warranted. What might we do to respond to this discontent?

I agree with Sinnott and Johnson (1996) that a good place to start is with the observation that all participants in the current debate about universities can -- even if they agree on nothing else -- probably agree on the following as the fundamental aim of the university:

The goal of a university is to enhance the *personal* and *general* growth of knowledge.

If we accept that proposition, then I think we might also agree that the way that we think about knowledge and the *growth* of knowledge is likely to be closely related to plethora of criticisms of the university.

Enter Ernest Boyer.

Upon completing his 1987 work, *College: The Undergraduate Experience in America* (Boyer, 1987) Boyer recognized that one of the most crucial issues bearing on the quality of higher education in America was how we thought about the proper work of faculty, how we defined the responsibilities and the rewards. The challenge, as he saw it, in improving the undergraduate educational experience -- and we could add, the graduate educational experience -- was to define the work of faculty in ways that would enrich, rather than restrict the quality of campus life.

Boyer's 1990 work *Scholarship Reconsidered*, subtitled *The Priorities of the Professoriate* (1990), put forward a conceptual framework aimed at taking steps to respond to the deluge of criticism by refining our understanding of the work of faculty. Building on ideas that had emerged from many campuses in the 70s and 80s, he sought to

enlarge our perspective on what "counts" as a contribution to knowledge. He viewed as counterproductive the prevailing conceptual framework in which basic research was viewed as the preeminent and most essential form of faculty activity, with other types of work, such as conveying of knowledge to students and applying knowledge, being viewed as functions that grew out of or flowed from research but were not actually a part of it.

In place of this hierarchical model, Boyer sought to introduce a more dynamic understanding in which the rigid categories of teaching, research, and service would be broadened and more flexibly defined. His first move in this argument was, of course, to jettison the term *research* in favor of the term *scholarship*. I think that change was a desirable move at that point in the national dialogue about these issues, but one which, for reasons I will explain in a few moments, has served its purpose and can be discarded without doing harm to Boyer's basic ideas.

The new conceptual framework he proposed posited a four-fold typology of scholarship: the scholarship of discovery, the scholarship of integration, the scholarship of application, and the scholarship of teaching.¹ We must recognize that this scheme offers what Max Weber called "ideal types" and that a particular line of scholarly work or record of accomplishment may entail activity on more than one front.

The scholarship of discovery comes closest to what is meant when academics speak of research -- the commitment to knowledge for its own sake, to freedom of inquiry, to following in a disciplined fashion an investigation wherever it may lead. We also have to acknowledge that after World War II the term *research* came to have

¹ The following discussion of the four types of scholarship is drawn from Boyer (1990) pp. 15-25.

additional connotations and became associated with -- even identified with -- quantitative methodology, external funding, and a certain narrowly defined form of publication.

The scholarship of integration was proposed to underscore the need for scholars who make connections across disciplines, placing the specialties in a larger context, illuminating data in a revealing way, and, often, educating nonspecialists. Integrative scholarship is intended to encompass disciplined -- and we might say, playing on different connotations of the word *discipline*, "multidisciplined" -- work that seeks to interpret, to draw together, and to bring new insight to bear on the products of the scholarship of discovery.

Boyer thought that the distinction between the scholarship of discovery and the scholarship of integration could best be understood by the types of questions posed by people engaged in each of these forms of activity. Those engaged in discovery ask "What is to be known? What is yet to be found?" Those engaged in integration ask, "What do the findings mean? Is it possible to interpret what's been discovered in ways that provide a larger, more comprehensive understanding?" I think Boyer was justified in highlighting a distinct form of integrative scholarly activity, but it's hard for me to imagine anyone engaged in the scholarship of discovery who isn't also concerned about what his or her findings mean. Clearly, the idea of *meaning* itself has different meanings, which warrant exploration. Nonetheless, we know what Boyer was getting at. We can recognize outstanding examples of integrative scholarship, exemplars of synthesis, when we read them -- works marked not only by integrative insights, but also by high literary quality. Illustrative of the genre are by Lewis Thomas, Oliver Sacks, and Stephen Jay Gould.

The idea of the scholarship of integration leads us to consider the textbook as a potential contribution to knowledge, a form of integrative scholarly activity. Clearly, *some* textbooks do advance knowledge. My personal example of such a work -- a part of my academic coming of age -- was Roger Brown's social psychology text of 1965. This was a textbook that did not simply catalog findings, but rather brilliantly synthesized and critiqued the main lines of research in the field. I'm sure each of us has our own examples of similar text books that serve as models of integrative scholarship.

The third term in Boyer's typology is the scholarship of application. In using this term Boyer is attempting to reframe the idea of "service." As typically used, service covers an endless number of activities -- sitting on committees, advising student clubs, participation on community boards, involvement with one's disciplinary or professional organizations. Obviously, service in and of itself is not scholarship. The trick is to develop a shared understanding of what would constitute scholarly service.

As a result of the national dialogue about the roles of faculty, progress is being made toward understanding the circumstances in which "service" becomes the "scholarship of application." Notable among publications exploring this issue are Ernest Lynton's monograph *Making the Case for Professional Service* (Lynton, 1995) and the University of Wisconsin's guide to documenting and evaluating excellence in what they term "outreach scholarship" (Outreach, 1997).

According to Boyer, a key question with respect to the scholarship of application is "How can knowledge be responsibly applied to consequential problems?" Consistent with Boyer, most discussions of the scholarship of application presume a flow of knowledge from university to the outside setting. But the scholarship of application is not only a

matter of taking what we in universities know and applying it to problems in the world. For one thing, as Donald Schoen (1995) has convincingly argued, the world -- what we sometimes call the real world -- is messy. From the moral high ground occupied by many of us in the university, problems lend themselves to solution through the use of research-based theory and technique. In the swampy lowlands that constitute the real world of practice problems are typically confusing and incapable of easy technical solution. But these messy problems are the problems that most need to be addressed. What one encounters in the world are not so much problems, but problem situations, marked by conflicting values, uncertainty, complexity, and uniqueness. It's at best naive and at worst misguided to think in terms simply of the *application* of knowledge to real world problems. Implicit in this conceit is the notion that practice is instrumental, consisting in adjusting technical means to ends that are clear, fixed and internally consistent -- what Schoen calls the belief in "technical rationality." It just might be that the world of practice is not simply a setting for the application of knowledge, but also for its generation. When it comes to the scholarship of application we might ask not only how practitioners can better apply the results of academic research, but also what kinds of knowing are already embedded in competent practice. This perspective gives a new twist to what constitutes the object of study when one engages in the scholarship of application.

The final term in the Boyer typology is the scholarship of teaching. At UIS the notion of the scholarship of teaching has taken on a redemptive, quasi-religious cast. At times, it is brought forward as a reflexive response to the obligation incumbent on all faculty to engage in scholarship. It's as if some have looked at their own or their colleagues' records of performance and seen outstanding teaching evaluations, creative

course assignments, laudatory letters from students, evidence of great caring on the part of the faculty member, but little in the way of a record of scholarship. So the argument has gone that here we have an example of a person who engages in the scholarship of teaching.

I believe this is a mistaken understanding and undercuts precisely what Boyer trying to accomplish. If the scholarship of teaching is to mean anything it must be distinguished from teaching *per se*. Boyer himself noted that the scholarship of teaching must be more than the transmittal of knowledge, but must in some way transform and extend it as well (p. 24).

To gain clarity about the scholarship of teaching it is useful to make another distinction. Not only should *teaching* be distinguished from the *scholarship of teaching*, but so should a particularly desirable form of teaching -- what we could call *scholarly teaching* -- be distinguished from the scholarship of teaching. We should *all* be scholarly teachers, that is, teachers who read; teachers who remain current with our fields; teachers who can transform the complex concepts of our disciplines into terms that can be understood by the students we teach. But we do not all elect to carry out our scholarly agendas by engaging in the scholarship of teaching.

The critical turn in defining the scholarship of teaching is taking one's teaching as the object of a sustained course of investigation. As with other programs of investigation, the scholarship of teaching in one way or another needs to result in a publicly examinable product because the hallmark of all scholarly activity is that the work be public and amenable to evaluation. We members of the scholarly community would need to be able to respond to and assess the scholarship of teaching in a manner analogous to that which

we use to assess the scholarship of discovery. Moreover, the scholarship of teaching, to truly be a form of scholarship, should feed back into and generate other types of scholarship. In the very act of attempting to transmit knowledge, momentum should be created for further acts of discovery, integration, and application.

Many of our colleagues around the country have been working on the seeming paradox of taking teaching, which in a sense is a private activity, and devising ways to make it public; that is, developing peer review of teaching in much the way that a manuscript for an article or a book would be reviewed by one's peers. Please note: What is involved in these efforts is not classroom visitation. Rather, peer review of teaching implies that a scholar poses a question about a course or set of courses, attempts to answer that question through systematic investigation and documentation, shares the results of the investigation with peers in the discipline, and receives feedback from them. The most prominent effort along these lines has been supported by a Pew Foundation grant to the American Association of Higher Education for AAHE's Peer Review of Teaching Project, in which strategies for review of teaching by scholarly peers were developed at sixteen campuses and in twenty-five disciplines (Hutchings, 1998, February).

As these comments about the scholarship of teaching make clear, broadening the definition of scholarship impels us toward developing ways to assess the types of activities encompassed in the typology. The matter of assessment is at the leading edge of the national conversation about scholarship (see, for example, Braskamp & Ory, 1994, for a review of this literature). This conversation reached an important milestone last fall, with the publication of the companion volume to Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered*, a

work, by Charles Glassick, Mary Huber, and Gene Maeroff, entitled *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997) The book proposes a general model for the evaluation of all forms of scholarly activity, a model which will undoubtedly emerge as a conceptual framework as significant as Boyer's four-fold typology of scholarship. The model proposes that *any* form of scholarship can be evaluated according to six criteria: clarity of goals, adequacy of preparation, appropriateness of methods, significance of results, effectiveness of presentation, and the presence of reflective critique. I am impressed with the power of the idea that irrespective of the type of scholarship, the approach to assessment is fundamentally the same. This idea has the effect of reuniting what we might have thought of as separate, and of sharpening the distinction between *teaching* and the *scholarship of teaching* and between *service* and the *scholarship of application*. The report provides questions pertinent to each of the six criteria which could be used to organize and focus the assessment of any form of scholarship. For example, in terms of the last criterion, *reflective critique*, the questions are: "Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work? Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique? Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?"

I want to return for a moment to the matter of the labels we attach to faculty work. Discussions of the Boyer model lead to passionate debate about the use of the terms research and scholarship. At our campus it's a matter of deeply-held principle that we speak of scholarship, not of research. I think that in 1998 it's time to allow the term research to be restored to pride of place. In *Scholarship Reconsidered* Boyer asserts that we should remind ourselves of how recently the term research entered the vocabulary of

higher education, asserting that the term was first used in the 1870's by reformers who wished to make Cambridge and Oxford not only a place of teaching, but also a place of learning. He noted that scholarship was the term used in earlier times, referring to a variety of creative work and he thought that substituting the term scholarship for research would advance the cause of reforming the university. However, checking the OED, a somewhat different story is revealed. *Scholarship* in the sense of the collective attainments of scholars does indeed have a long lineage, with the first use of the term in this sense going back to 1589. *Research*, though, far from being a Johnny-come-lately has a long, distinguished history of its own. By the early 1600's people understood the term *research* to mean a course of critical or scientific inquiry; an investigation directed to the discovery of some fact by careful consideration or study of a subject. The ideas of a "course of inquiry" and "careful consideration or study of a subject" are as germane to the scholarships of application, integration and teaching, as they are to the scholarship of discovery. Therefore, based on this etymological excursus, I'm ready to call all that we do in the scholarly arena *research*.²

I began with the observation that universities are under intense criticism from society. Because the goal of enhancing the *personal* and *general* growth of knowledge is central to what universities are about, prevailing conceptions of the way we should

² In reviewing an earlier version of this paper, Professor Richard Palmer of MacMurray College, noted that the English word *scholarship* can be traced back to the Greek word *scholium*, meaning interpretation and, more specifically, marginal annotations. Palmer suggests that the phrase "working with knowledge," reflecting the German *Wissenschaft*, might be preferable to either *research* or *scholarship*.

"grow" knowledge -- to use a little business speak -- are likely to be intimately connected with the societal discontent about higher education. By acknowledging our obligation as faculty members to engage in scholarship, but by simultaneously enlarging our perspective of what constitutes the legitimate knowledge-generating work of faculty -- whether we call it scholarship or research -- we will do much not only to benefit individual scholars and their students, but also to benefit society as a whole.

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