

# Tired of Talking Past One Another: A Framework for Holding Constructive Conversations about Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure

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# Challenges about Engaged Scholarship (ES)

Conversations about engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure often devolve into arguments among faculty members—with individuals talking past one another.

Criticisms include:

- ES lacks quality and rigor; it is not “real” scholarship.
- All faculty will be required to do ES.
- All faculty will be required to ES in the same way.
- ES will not count (or will count against me) in RPT.
- If I make tenure as an ES, I will not be able to get a job at another college or university.

# Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy Through Dialogue



***Dialogue is an intentional process for inquiry that brings people together to discover their way into new understanding about an issue.***

***Dialogue is not a discussion or a debate.***

- **Suspend assumptions**, fixed positions, and importance of being right
- **Inquire** about others' positions and perspectives by asking questions and listening deeply
- **Advocate** for what we really believe by revealing the reasoning for our ideas
- **View one another as equals**, peers, co-contributors to the emerging shared understanding

# Scholarship

Outreach and engagement activities are scholarly; that is, they are both informed by theory and evidence based practice and the source of new knowledge and practice. The merit of scholarly outreach and engagement activities should be evaluated by clear standards of rigor and quality, just as other forms of scholars are judged in the academy.

- What counts as scholarly outreach and engagement in your discipline, department, and college?
- What criteria do you use to judge its quality?

# Language

Language associated with outreach and engagement varies by discipline; that is, the ways of describing scholarly outreach and engagement are wide-ranging, including translational research, service learning, public humanities, civic engagement, university-community partnerships, etc.

- How are outreach and engagement activities described in your discipline, department, college, and university?
- What words do you commonly use to refer to outreach and engagement activities?

# Degree of Collaboration

Faculty members collaborate with their community partners in a variety of ways; that is, sometimes faculty scholarship may be described as highly engaged—with community partners collaborating at all stages of the scholarship—and other times faculty scholarship may be responsive to the community but engaged in a more limited way. This range in the degree of engagement reflects elasticity in collaboration—with faculty members making appropriate choices given the community, the context, the research problem, etc.

- How do you describe the different degrees of community engagement faculty members in your discipline, department, and college are involved in?

# Community

Scholarly outreach and engagement activities contribute to the public good of a variety of communities beyond the campus; that is, faculty partner with different kinds of communities, such as those defined by geography, circumstance, identity, kin, affiliation, faith, or profession.

- What communities are natural partners for faculty members in your discipline, department, college, or university to collaborate with?

# Type of Activity

Faculty members collaborate with the public through different types of activities; that is, faculty may partner with communities through research (such as applied research or community based research), teaching and learning (such as service-learning or non-credit instruction), service (such as technical assistance, expert testimony, diagnostic services), or economic development (such as patents, licenses, new business ventures).

- What are the common types of scholarly outreach and engagement activities in your discipline, department, and college?



# Scholarly Products

Scholarly outreach and engagement activities generate a range of scholarly and public products or artifacts; that is, the evidence of engaged scholarship takes the form of peer-reviewed journal articles and conference presentations as well as other forms of scholarly work product (such as technical bulletins, evaluation reports, public performances, websites, DVDs, or workshops).

- What are the acceptable forms of scholarly outreach and engagement in your unit?

# Motivation

Faculty members are motivated to collaborate with the public on scholarly outreach and engagement for a number of reasons; that is, faculty members may be motivated because it advances practice in their field, supports student learning and development, gives back to a community they have connections to—to name a few reasons.

- What are the common reasons faculty are motivated to pursue engaged scholarship in your discipline, department, college, or university?
- How do these different motivations shape scholarly engagement?

# Integration

Scholarly outreach and engagement activities are integrally connected to faculty responsibilities; that is engaged research, instruction, service and commercialized activities may be viewed as part and parcel of faculty members' responsibilities and not as separate or added-on activities. In addition, there is often an interplay between engaged scholarship and a faculty member's other institutional responsibilities.

- In your discipline, department, college, or university, how do faculty integrate their engaged scholarship with the rest of their responsibilities?

# Career Stage

Faculty participation in scholarly outreach and engagement activities changes over the career span; that is, faculty members collaborate with communities in different ways as assistant, associate, and full professors.

- How do individual preferences and departmental (or disciplinary) expectations for faculty involvement in scholarly outreach and engagement change over time in your discipline, department, and college?

# Support

Faculty members improve their engaged scholarship through conversation, collaboration, and reflection with other engaged scholars; that is, faculty members learn from one another the techniques needed to collaborate effectively and respectfully with their public(s), the strategies for publishing engaged scholarship in peer-reviewed journals, and other community and academic skills needed to be successful engaged scholars.

- Where do faculty members in your department find other engaged scholars to sharpen their engagement skills with and from?

# Conversation Cards

## 1. Card Sort

- Small committee may use cards to organize and frame department (or other small unit) conversation
- Decide which topics will be easily agreed upon, not sure, and definitely contested.
- Intentionally begin department conversation with the easier issues, introduce and practice principles of dialogue
- Build group practice of talking and listening respectfully to one another before moving on to the more difficult issues.



# Conversation Cards

## 2. Carousel

- Large group technique for sharing ideas without having a direct conversation about them
- Write the conversation card questions on the top of a blank piece of newsprint. Put the newsprints around a room with markers at each station.
- Divide the group up into smaller groups and have them start at one newsprint. Write their responses to the questions. After a short time, have the groups rotate around the room, stopping at each newsprint, reading what was written by others, and adding their own comments.
- Rotate through all of the questions and have each group return to their original newsprint to see what everyone else has written.
- Newsprints can then be given to a committee to summarize and/or used with a prioritizing exercise for the whole group.

# Conversation Cards

## 3. Other ideas

- Let us know how you used the conversation cards to maximize active learning/dialogue and to minimize difficult discussions about engaged scholarship in promotion and tenure.





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