

Universities without substantial research/doctoral missions such as Tarleton nonetheless typically expect faculty productivity in research/scholarship and creative activity of varying levels and kinds. They do not as typically articulate the reasons for the expectation, perhaps assuming the expectation is sufficiently generic to not require explanation. It is useful, therefore, to revisit the origins of the expectation from time to time, if for no other reason than to encourage related dialogue of the matter on any given campus. While the statement that follows does not presume to be a definitive account of the topic, it does presume to identify some of the more salient reasons faculty in most universities across the nation and the globe are expected to regularly engage in professional activity of a scholarly nature, typically referred to as research, scholarship and creative activity.

The usual minimum requirement for tenure track appointment in a four year college or university is the terminal academic degree in an appropriate discipline, typically the Ph.D. or recognized professional degree. The terminal requirement for these degrees is the doctoral dissertation, thesis or its equivalent, a requirement intended not only to inculcate an abiding appreciation for scholarly values and endeavors, but to prepare the candidate for contributing membership in the particular academic community of scholars she or he will be joining upon graduation. It is therefore not surprising from time to time to find terminally degreed professionals in elementary/secondary education and community colleges (that do not typically require faculty hold the terminal degree) or in professional endeavors outside of education entirely, who continue to research, publish and produce scholarly works.

Research, scholarship and creative activity are an expectation of membership in a scholarly community and relied upon by the membership to perpetuate the search for truth in and further validation of, the discipline. Ultimately however, the scholarly community is not interested in pursuing research and scholarly endeavors for their own sake, but rather for the ultimate value to society and the greater good for the greater number. In short, for these reasons and others, scholarship and the production of scholarly works is something scholars do not as an end unto itself, or solely in the interests of the scholarly community, but rather in service to the larger good.

Turning now to the value of a productive scholarly agenda for individual faculty, a number of intrinsic rewards are apparent. Scholarly works recognized by one's peers are a source of personal and professional pride that can enliven and invigorate other faculty activity such as teaching and service responsibilities. It is frequently argued that faculty engaged in the production of scholarly works enhance both student interest and student learning by enabling the faculty member to remain current with new developments in the discipline and with that sense of currency, convey authentic engagement and credibility within the discipline that

students find motivating and helpful. At the extrinsic level, faculty engaged continuously in the production of scholarly works are positioned to their advantage for a variety of professional recognitions by peers and other interested parties as well as for career advancement opportunities in and outside the academic discipline. While the extent to which individuals are intrinsically or extrinsically rewarded in these and other ways varies widely, few will argue such rewards are not felt at the individual level, arguably exceeding in importance by some measure, the value of faculty scholarship to institutions.

That is not to say the value to institutions is inconsequential for it clearly is not. Universities with significant numbers or proportion of faculty actively engaged in the production of scholarly works enjoy a public and academic image that can set them competitively apart in important ways from institutions without such images. Clearly, the institution's attractiveness to prospective students, its ability to compete for quality faculty, competitive external grants and research contracts, and its overall attraction to potential donors, whether they be alumni or philanthropic in nature, are each enhanced by a faculty engaged productively and visibly in scholarly endeavor. The capacity to set an institution apart from its contemporary peers, while historically an important matter throughout higher education, is in today's economic environment, likely to become increasingly critical to the health and vitality of public universities.

While the foregoing statement ignores questions of a definitional and operational nature, it is not intended to specifically define scholarship or scholarly endeavor, or for that matter, research or creative activity. Those are matters that must be continuously discussed, articulated and sharpened by the informed dialogue of relevant faculty and administrators within any given university. Nor does the statement address the perennial question of faculty load and an appropriate balance of university expectations of the faculty regarding teaching, service and scholarship. These too, are questions that must be continuously discussed, articulated and sharpened by relevant campus persons. Those sharper articulations not being the statement's purpose, it is hoped readers will find the statement a constructive contribution to the stated purpose "to identify some of the more salient reasons faculty in essentially non-doctoral, non-research institutions are expected to regularly engage in activity of a scholarly nature...".