

Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education

Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 5

2006

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Timothy D. Norton
Oral Roberts University

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Recommended Citation

Norton, Timothy D. (2006). Reviewing *Scholarship Assessed*. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning for Christians in Higher Education*, 1(1), 14-16.

Retrieved from http://digitalshowcase.oru.edu/sotl_ched/vol1/iss1/5

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Reviewing *Scholarship Assessed*

Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate
By Charles E. Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene I. Maeroff
Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, Copyright 1997. 130 pages.
ISBN 0-7879-1091-0. \$25.00

by Timothy D. Norton, Ed.D.

“It is the scholarship of teaching that keeps the flame of scholarship alive” (p. 2). With these words, Ernest L. Boyer, in the prologue to *Scholarship Assessed*, highlights the emphasis of teaching as research reminiscent of his first approach to this topic in the Carnegie Classic, *Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professorate* (1990). Boyer identifies four kinds of academic activity—the scholarship of discovering knowledge, the scholarship of integrating knowledge, the scholarship of applying knowledge, and the scholarship of teaching. Glassick, Huber and Maeroff take these four traditional activities of academics and evaluate them by noting those common features held by each and determining that “the key to these commonalities lies in the process of scholarship itself” (p. 24). It is the scope of this process and the subsequent assessment of scholarship it demands that is the focus of *Scholarship Assessed*. For the community of scholars that is the university, this book offers a review and analysis of the place for the scholarship of teaching and learning and for its credibility as an integral part of the academic’s research endeavor.

Beginning with a historical framework, Glassick et al. review the traditional mission of the colonial college and identify it as one whose emphasis is teaching. With the onset of the 19th century, the mission shifts to one of service to an ever-enlarging nation. Near the end of the century, complemented by the European—particularly German—university tradition of research, the mission of the “work of investigation” (p. 7) begins to demonstrate, though in a relatively small way, its effect on scholarship. It is not until the end of the Second World War that research solidifies itself as the predominate demonstration of scholarly endeavor and becomes the cornerstone both for faculty recognition and university renown. This threefold chord of teaching, applied scholarship (service), and research—with research being the strongest bind—gives the modern academy its clarity of purpose.

Glassick et al.—in stating that differing standards of evaluation for teaching, service, and research no longer represent a clear case of erudition—recognize that defining the common essentials of faculty performance benefits from the establishing of a more unified vocabulary. By drawing from numerous diverse sources of information (including documents on university guidelines for hiring, promotion, and tenure; responses from grant organizations, editors and directors of scholarly journals; and a number of university presses), a coherent picture of shared elements in the process of evaluation takes shape. A common sequence of events holds true for all activities praised as works of legitimate scholarship. These standards (a) clear goals, (b) adequate preparation, (c) appropriate methods, (d) significant results, (e) effective presentation, and (f) reflective critique—although certainly familiar terms in the academy—collectively provide a powerful conceptual framework for evaluation.

To define these standards of scholarship, Glassick et al. ask the following questions:

1. Clear Goals—Does the scholar “state the basic purpose of his or her work clearly,” “define objectives that are realistic and achievable,” and “identify important questions in the field” (p. 25)?
2. Adequate Preparation—Does the scholar “show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field,” “bring the necessary skills to his or her work,” and “bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward” (p. 27)?
3. Appropriate Methods—Does the scholar “use methods appropriate to the goals,” “apply effectively the methods selected,” and “modify procedures in response to changing circumstances” (p. 28)?
4. Significant Results—Does the scholar “achieve the goals,” “add consequentially to the field,” and “open additional areas for further exploration” (p. 29)?
5. Effective Presentation—Does the scholar “use a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work,” “use appropriate forums for communicating work to its intended audiences,” and “present his or her message with clarity and integrity” (p. 32)?
6. Reflective Critique—Does the scholar “critically evaluate his or her work,” “bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to his or her critique,” and “use evaluation to improve the quality of future work” (p. 34)?

Though recognizing the difficulty inherent in defining intellectual processes, Glassick et al. hold that “confidence in the assessment of scholarship depends on using standards that are appropriate to the full range of scholarly work” (p. 35) and that these standards allow for such an opportunity.

In documenting scholarship, Glassick et al. recognize that not all scholarly activities fit easily into the traditional cap and gown model. In addition to books and journals addressed to colleagues, they indicate that such documentation as the inclusion of public lectures, museum exhibits, radio and television interviews, and magazine articles are appropriate. They also recognize that former students, clients, nonacademic authorities, and practitioners in the field constitute a reasonable body of credible reviewers in spite of their not being “the stuff around which departmental evaluations usually revolve” (p. 38). With this array of presentations and evaluations they suggest a “professional profile” be part of the assessment process in order to apply appropriately the proposed set of standards to a body of scholarly work. The compositional elements of such a profile are a statement of responsibility (p. 43), a biographical sketch (p. 43), and selected samples of scholarly work (p.44).

The Statement of Responsibility (p. 43) is a scholar’s defining of his or her activities that he or she agreed to or hoped to accomplish. This provides a means of establishing a basis for judging the scholar’s work and helps to balance the evaluation by weighing commitments. This allows for a more accurate assessment in that a heavier load in one area, such as teaching, would necessitate a less demanding accomplishment in the service or research areas. It is in this statement that the scholar also has the opportunity to reflect upon his or her overall pattern of work as well as plans for the future.

The Biographical Sketch (p. 43) demonstrates the scholar’s activities in the quantitative sense of the term. Here is where the more traditional elements of university evaluations fit. Documentation of teaching effectiveness, such as courses taught (with the number of students served and a description of the course along with course syllabi and student evaluations), is appropriate for inclusion as part of the criteria. It could also include acquired research grants and

contracts, proposals approved, journal editing, book reviews, honors and awards, professional travel, conferences attended, and those activities that are particular to the given institution. Such a sketch gives a detailed and useful demonstration of the scholar's activities and accomplishments.

The Selected Samples of Scholarly Work (p. 44) is a reflective essay highlighting specific examples of the individual's scholarship with the intent of demonstrating "the distinction between the minor professional outreach activities in which a faculty member might be engaged, and the specific, substantive projects that can serve as principle units of assessment" (p. 45). The essay speaks to the proposed standards by addressing goals, preparations, methods, results, presentations of the projects, as well as self-critique and notations of development.

Once formulated, accuracy in reporting is paramount. This can be accomplished as the scholar includes evidence, such as samples of student work, considerations taken from student evaluations, comments from collaborating colleagues, along with those evaluations not gathered by the scholar but submitted by department chairs or committee heads. In this way an evaluation of teaching, service, and research allows each to stand as co-equal demonstrations of faculty scholarship. Glassick et al. add that the consideration of the scholar's demonstration of the character traits of integrity, perseverance, and courage further ensure the attainment of a truly proper assessment.

When an institution establishes these assessment criteria, it is necessary that the campus community demonstrates its trust in the process. As faculty see "that the institution honors the range of scholarship that supports its mission and that appropriate standards are in fact used" (p. 50), the goal of scholarship and its advancement will effectively center around policies that provide for collaboration involving each segment of the academic community. Not desiring to present a formula but rather a vocabulary for ongoing debate, Glassick et al. believe that in *Scholarship Assessed* they offer an opportunity for "the scholar at each college or university to determine what is the most appropriate for their institution to ensure that scholarship, in whatever form it may take, meets high standards of rigor and quality" (p.67).

In this ongoing study of the professoriate, the Carnegie Foundation supplies the scholar with an affirming view of teaching and its relationship to the other foundation stones of service and research while solidifying the idea of scholarship as one that includes a fully orb'd presentation and evaluation of the role of the professoriate. *Scholarship Assessed* calls upon the academic community to continue to renew the vitality of learning by broadening its understanding of the scholarship of teaching.

References

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Dr. Timothy D. Norton is an associate professor in the graduate School of Education at Oral Roberts University. His teaching and research interest focus on the history and governance of higher education. He has taught in elementary, middle, and high schools, and in both undergraduate and graduate departments over the past 33 years. He graduated with a B.A. from Oral Roberts University; an M.A. from Regent University; and an Ed.S. and an Ed.D. from The College of William and Mary in Virginia. He also holds membership in several professional societies including Kappa Delta Pi International Education Honor Society, The National Association of Scholars, The Society of Christian Philosophers, and the Oklahoma Association of Scholars. Dr. Norton can be reached at tnorton@oru.edu.