Guidelines for the Consideration of Non-Traditional Forms of Scholarship in the RTP process for the Faculty of the College of Education

The CSU Chancellor’s Office is clear that a primary charge of the Colleges/Schools of Education is to improve the quality of learning for all K-12 students through the credentialing and professional development of the K-12 certificated workforce. Therefore the reward structure for the CSU College of Education faculty thought the Retention, Tenure, and Promotion (RTP) system should demonstrate consistency with this priority.

Background

ARTP Policy (S98-8) encourages colleges and departments to develop guidelines to supplement and clarify university policy. According to a memo (11/21/97) from AVP/Faculty Affairs Peter Lee, the guidelines may include descriptions of non-traditional scholarship that meet college definitions of scholarship. The COE Personnel Committee was charged by Dean Dolores Escobar to address the following: 1) should nontraditional forms of scholarship be defined for the College RTP process; 2) if so, how should such scholarly activity be documented; and 3) how should the scholarly work be evaluated?

The Committee began its work by reading the Executive Summary of Scholarship assessed: Evaluation of the professoriate (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997). In addition, individual members read and reported on Scholarship reconsidered; Priorities of the professoriate (Boyer, 1990) and Serving on promotion and tenure committees: A faculty guide (Diamond, 1994).

The Committee discussed the kinds of non-traditional scholarship in which COE faculty are currently engaged. We discussed how these forms of scholarship might be documented and evaluated. Our discussion also included the distinction between and relative merit of individual and collaborative efforts.

Collaborative team teaching might also provide opportunities for scholarship. Teaching is typically a solitary activity. Groups of teachers may get together to support one another and share ideas, but they rarely work together (collaboratively) to design, teach, and jointly critique a lesson (Stigler, 1997. Roland Barth had likened American teachers to a group of preschoolers engaged in a parallel play. According to Barth, in such a profession, a lack of meaningful discourse with other professionals can have disastrous effects. He believes that successful teaching is a mixture of art and craft honed through experience and what better way than through collaboration with colleagues. In adopting these guidelines, the College of Education is encouraging and rewarding true collaborative team teaching as an example of action research.

We also examined the induction and mentoring procedure in the College relative to RTP. The mentoring in the College is uneven, and the information provided varies according to the individual providing it. Involvement with K-12 schools is encouraged, but faculty are advised to engage in traditional forms of scholarship until they have gained tenure. Collaboration is
encouraged, but faculty are advised to engage in individual pursuits, resulting in single-author publications, to ensure a positive tenure decision. If the college values collaboration, then scholarship done is collaboration with university peers or with K-12 practitioners should be valued in RTP decisions.

Proposal

I. Overview of the Unit

The College of Education faculty collectively ground their teaching, research, and service in a knowledge base of reflective practice in a context of community reflection. With nearly 80 FTE tenure/tenure-track faculty in four academic units (Child Development, Educational Leadership, Special Education, and Teacher Education), the College is engaged in supportive partnerships to serve a community of culturally diverse children, youth, and families by pursuing scholarly and reflective inquiry and promoting, enhancing, and increasing access to a quality, lifelong education. Faculty, staff, and graduates are compassionate professionals who interact in ethical ways and are mindful of these roles and responsibilities in a democratic society.

II. Effectiveness in Academic Assignment

No supplements or clarifications recommended at this time.

III. Scholarly or Artistic or Professional Achievement

In the College of Education many forms of scholarship are valued and recognized by faculty, including basic and applied research and the scholarship of teaching. What follows in this document is the College’s attempt to capture the emergent and creative avenues for scholarly achievement in the discipline. Faculty particularly note caveats in this emerging discussion: nothing should deter an individual working alone on research; and a variety of approaches to collaborative action research should be valued. What follows below is a conceptualization of general criteria of scholarship and its presentation.

1. The activity requires discipline-related expertise.

   The narrative describing the activity should include the discipline-related expertise of the candidate.

2. The activity breaks new ground, is innovative.

   The narrative should provide a theoretical framework for the activity and indicate how the activity extends previous work (the candidate’s own or that
of others) or initiates a new model. Although it can be considered a form of scholarship, replication of a currently existing model is less valued in these terms than activity that is innovative.

3. The activity can be replicated or elaborated.

To be replicable, the activity must not be individual or situation specific, and, to be replicated, must have broader implications. It must also be documented and disseminated. Elaboration can consist of further description, and should offer additional dimensions to activity meaning and implication.

4. The work and its results must be documented.

For the purpose of the RTP process, documentation is essential. The candidate may document through formal evaluation, outside review, etc.

5. The work and its results can be peer-reviewed.

An outside reviewer should be asked to evaluate the activity and its results. The evaluation would include the process, whether the goals of the project were met, whether the project was innovative, and what significance or impact was realized.

6. The activity has significance or impact.

For the purpose of the RTP process, documentation is essential. The candidate should include a faculty essay and/or external review.

A. University-School Partnerships

A major component of Education faculty responsibility is interaction with the community in which the University exists. Collaboration amongst faculty members and K-14 practitioners in field-based settings, such as university-school or college-school or district partnerships should be accepted as a form of scholarship. This scholarship should be demonstrated in ways consistent with the points above.

B. Collaboration That Results in a Product

The same criteria that apply for university-school partnerships apply when a collaboration results in a product, such as a technical report, website, or journal article. A defining aspect of the collaboration could be a presentation at regional, state, or national conferences, as well as at SJSU, e.g., a presentation at the Dean’s Multicultural Education
Reception. The person preparing the dossier should reflect in writing on the role each party played in the collaboration.

C. Other Forms of Scholarship

The College of Education recognizes a variety of forms of scholarship, including action research, narratives, autobiographies, and ethnographies. Such scholarship should be accepted for the RTP process.

IV. Requirements and Expectations for All Candidates in the Unit

   No supplements or clarifications recommended at this time.