Scholarship at James Madison University: Seeking a Common Understanding

A Guiding Document from the Faculty Research Council
2012

Introduction

James Madison University prides itself on celebrating superb teaching at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, while balancing cutting-edge scholarship and thoughtful service to the institution and greater community. JMU is unique because the faculty evaluation and reward system is tangible, yet flexible enough to allow faculty to pursue scholarly activities ranging from basic and applied research to innovative outreach and engagement. This flexibility creates a challenge of how best to manage faculty responsibilities, as the issue of faculty time is paramount to an institution of higher education.

Understanding and rewarding how faculty spend their time, in particular when engaged in scholarship and teaching research methods to students, are significant factors toward maximizing student learning and attaining institutional priorities. In addition, institutional reward systems do not always keep pace with faculty creativity, and it is recognized that incentives, in the form of modifications to the existing reward and recognition system, are needed. In this document, the Faculty Research Council (FRC) builds upon the many recent conversations taking place at JMU about how best to protect and nurture faculty creativity toward scholarship, and ensure that institutional processes and procedures keep pace with the dynamic quality of faculty teaching and research.

Background

Over the past century, James Madison University has grown from a small women's college to a comprehensive university offering undergraduate through doctoral programs. Throughout this expansion, a focus has been placed on balancing excellence in teaching with innovative research and scholarship. This balanced approach to teaching and scholarship has shaped the university, and allowed JMU to build a unique culture of scholarship that embraces cross-disciplinary collaboration in an applied fashion that fosters student learning through faculty mentorship. JMU's academic centers and institutes, listed in Table 1, showcase the inter-disciplinary foundation supporting faculty scholarship, while providing real-world research experiences for students.

The Faculty Research Council provides a forum for faculty and staff to have input relating to the policies and procedures of the University as they relate to faculty research across the disciplines. The FRC also serves as a catalyst for interdisciplinary research and sponsored projects involving different segments of the University and offers guidance as to where fellow researchers and administrators may find funding for projects through contact and information sharing.

Redefining scholarship at JMU was a major agenda item for the FRC in the 2011-2012 Academic Year. This initiative built upon University-wide discussions led by Dr. Warner (Vice President of Student Affairs) and Dr. Benson (Interim Provost) regarding academic rigor and the evolving culture of the institution. These discussions catalyzed members of the FRC to review and revise the previously published *Scholarship at James Madison University* (2003) report with an emphasis on capturing the unique role scholarship plays in the lives of the faculty.

Frameworks of Faculty Scholarship

The dimensions of scholarship are intricate and carefully constructed to those inside the academy, and sometimes puzzling to those external to higher education. In order to articulate a model of faculty scholarship that both represents the best of current scholarship, but also challenges us to examine where JMU is heading as an institution, the Faculty Research Council drew on two existing models of scholarship.

The first framework of faculty scholarship, outlined in *Scholarship Reconsidered* by Ernest Boyer (1990), recognizes faculty activity across four areas of scholarship:

- Scholarship of Discovery: activities widely considered research by most faculty and advance the intellectual climate of a campus.
- Scholarship of Teaching: activities that educate and inspire students to pursue scholarly endeavors.
- Scholarship of Integration: activities that make connections across the academic disciplines and place isolated facts into perspective.
- Scholarship of Application: activities that link research interests to our lives and contribute knowledge to society.

Boyer's descriptions of the areas of scholarship as defined above are still relevant in today's academic environment and continue to provide a baseline to evaluate faculty in the promotion and tenure process. These areas also show how the pursuits of the professoriate add value to higher education as a public good.

Informed by Boyer, members of the FRC each brought different definitions of "research," "scholarship," and "teaching" to the table. Consensus was reached that the traditional definitions of these activities did not well suit the JMU profile, as traditional models are considered to be rather constraining, with few avenues for integration or application. For example, traditional models of research and teaching do not capture how exploration (theory, research), expression of results (publication, scholarship) and practice (teaching, application) inform and energize one another.

Additionally, JMU has undergone a cultural shift toward community engagement at all levels: local, state, regional, national, and global. In recognition, the University received the Carnegie Classification as a "Community Engaged University" Class of 2010 for its commitment to serving and partnering with the community through measureable outreach and education programs. This engagement piece follows the writings of Boyer, whose model of scholarship specifically addresses the idea that engagement (i.e., application) should be recognized and rewarded on the campuses of higher education institutions. To quote Boyer, this means that an inherent responsibility of the U.S. higher education system is "connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic and ethical problems, to our children, to our schools, to our teachers and to our cities."

The second framework for faculty scholarship that the Faculty Research Council considered was Eugene Rice's New American University model, which goes beyond being either a teaching-focused or a research-focused institution. The "third way," articulated by Dr. Rice during a May 2011 campus visit, envisions an integrated, engaged, and networked university that is:

- Integrative/beyond differentiation,
- Collaborative/beyond hierarchy and competitiveness,

- Inclusive/beyond diversity,
- Engaged/beyond walls and silos.

Current Scholarship

In addition to these established models of faculty scholarship, the Faculty Research Council also examined current examples of scholarship from across the university. Informal conversations with colleagues on research and scholarship, and data collected through a survey of department heads (2008), revealed great differences across colleges, academic departments, and amidst individual faculty about the appropriate role and definition of research and scholarship at JMU, along with what types of work actually qualify as scholarship. As this was explored further, JMU's unique academic environment became easy to identify, but difficult to define with any precision. One common denominator, however, is the concern to protect and nurture excellence in engaged student research. To this end, the 2012 edition of *U.S. News and World Report's* "America's Best Colleges" rankings named JMU one of the best colleges for Undergraduate Research/Creative Projects, a list which included only 28 schools.

To help identify what is most valued in scholarship across the university, the Faculty Research Council examined the audit of faculty scholarship conducted by the faculty senate. All academic departments were surveyed as to their requirements for tenure and promotion. From this survey, exemplars of excellence in scholarship were selected. As presented in Table 2, there is considerable diversity in exemplary scholarship across the university.

Common and Future Ground

In the creation of this document, our intention was not to micro-manage scholarship and its evaluation. Rather, our belief is that departments, in the context of their college environment, are the best location for this activity.

The Faculty Research Council seeks to support an invigorating academic environment where faculty are encouraged in their teaching and in their intellectual lives to grow, to create, and to challenge the frontiers of knowledge and understanding. Scholarly activity at JMU must continue to support the dedicated, innovative teaching that has made JMU such a remarkable academic undergraduate institution. As the culture of scholarship grows and evolves, the academic community will support partnerships between ideas and application, teaching and research, thought and action. Members of the JMU community are active participants in shaping the knowledge perimeters of the future, not only by creating new knowledge through teaching and research, but by the creative integration of existing disciplinary perspectives into new windows of opportunity. Scholarship provides a platform to communicate the excitement of thought, research and application to our students, and involve them in the world of discovery and commitment that brought us here in the first place.

Thus, following the lead of Boyer, Rice, and the Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement, the Faculty Research Council proposes a broad description of scholarly activity at JMU, hoping that the inclusion of the varied forms of scholarship will foster an environment where faculty can appreciate good works from any and all disciplines at JMU:

1. Scholarship of Discovery (research, theory, creation) is reflected by or within:
   a. Activities such as: laboratory, clinical, and field investigations, library and special collections investigations, grant writing, and studio activities.
   b. Free inquiry that generates original and unique knowledge.

     c.   Effective communication of findings in recognized professional venues: publications, conferences, shows, and performances.

     d.   Effective communication and implementation of findings in teaching and application settings.

2. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is reflected by or within:
   a. Systematic reflection or study of teaching and student learning made public.
   b. Innovative pedagogies; effective use of technology where appropriate.
   c. Opportunities for undergraduate and graduate research through faculty mentorship.
   d. Staying current in one's field, in addition to emerging teaching methods, such as active learning, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, etc.

3. Scholarship of Integration is reflected by or within:
   a. Cross-disciplinary conversation, partnerships and alliances about discovery, teaching, and application.
   b. Creation of new courses, programs, and disciplines through these integrated partnerships.
   c. An environment that encourages risk-taking and innovation in scholarship, teaching and application. This would include departments creating merit and reward systems that recognize faculty who stretch the boundaries of their disciplinary training and who are making original contributions to human knowledge and community.
   d. Integration of discovery and teaching by encouraging undergraduate and graduate research.

4. Scholarship of Engagement is reflected by or within:
   a. Collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.
   b. Faculty who utilize civic engagement to explore the frontiers of knowledge, integrate ideas, connect thought to action, and inspire students.
   c. Projects and outreach activities that address inter-disciplinary problems that meet both the mission and objectives of the University, and societal needs, ranging from the local to global community.
   d. Partnerships and alliances that bring campus life in closer collaboration with the community, reflecting a commitment to the larger social good.

Importantly, these four areas of academic excellence are not static or isolated identities for faculty. Rather, as Figure 1 from O'Meara and Rice emphasizes, overlap among the areas is central to the model. No single faculty member or department has to achieve all things equally, nor at all times. Faculty will rotate among areas as their interests and life energy carry them, knowing that JMU values their intellectual daring and flexibility, and their steadfast commitment to undergraduate and graduate achievement. In fact, the interconnectedness of these areas is embodied within JMU and central to our academic culture. JMU is outstanding precisely because we have created an academic environment where faculty can be proud of the integration of discovery, teaching, application and thoughtful citizenship through engagement. By encouraging departments and colleges to recognize and nurture this unique environment, and by striving to better articulate and strengthen our ideals, James Madison University will continue to assume national prominence as a champion of innovative, thoughtful undergraduate and graduate education.

Table 1. Centers and Institutes

1. Alvin V. Baird Attention and Learning Disabilities Center
2. Center for Applied Medicinal Research
3. Center for Assessment and Research Studies
4. Center for Conflict Analysis and Intervention
5. Center for Constructive Advocacy and Dialogue
6. Center for Economic Education
7. Center for Entrepreneurship
8. Center for Environmental Health and Safety
9. Center for Faculty Innovation
10. Center for Health and Environmental Communication
11. Center for Innovation in Engineering Education
12. Center for Instructional Technology
13. Center for International Stabilization and Recovery
14. Center for Materials Science
15. Center for Physical Activity and Wellness for Underserved Youth
16. Center for Professional Development
17. Center for Sport Psychology
18. Center for STEM Education and Outreach
19. Center for Valley and Regional Studies
20. Furious Flower Poetry Center
21. Gilliam Center for Ethical Business Leadership
22. Institute for Energy and Environmental Research
23. Institute for Infrastructure and Information Assurance
24. Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services
25. Institute for National Security Analysis
26. Institute for Stewardship of the Natural World
27. Institute for Visual Studies
28. Institute of Certified Professional Managers
29. JMU Art Education Center
30. JMU Lifelong Learning Institute
31. Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization
32. Logic and Reasoning Institute
33. Mahatma Gandhi Center for Global Nonviolence
34. Morrison Bruce Center
35. Motivation Research Institute
36. Shenandoah Valley Partnership
37. Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center
38. Shenandoah Valley Technology Council
39. Statistical Consulting Center
40. Training/Technical Assistance Center
41. Virginia Center for Wind Energy
42. William R. Nelson Institute for International and Public Affairs
43. Young Children's Program

Table 2. Summary of Exemplary Scholarship from Faculty Senate

This list was produced by Tammy Castle of Justice Studies, and is a summary of the data Faculty Senate gathered regarding excellent or outstanding scholarship across colleges at JMU:

1. Books:
   a. Textbooks and textbook revision
   b. Author or co-author of other academic books
   c. Editor for book
   d. Book chapters and monographs
   e. Entries in major reference works
   f. Book reviews
   g. Technical reports or other equivalent

2. Academic Journals:
   a. Peer-reviewed journal articles in state, regional, national, or international academic journals
   b. Edits a state, regional, national, or international academic journal
   c. Serves on editorial board for state, regional, national, or international academic journal
   d. Publication of art in scholarly journal
   e. Publication of articles with student collaborators
   f. Article reviews

3. Conference Presentations/Workshops:
   a. State, regional, national, or international paper presentations
   b. Workshops which require original scholarly/creative achievement in preparation
   c. Gallery talk/serve as juror
   d. Clinical demonstration projects
   e. Invited lectures or visiting speakers
   f. Organizing and presiding over panels
   g. Peer seminars

4. Performance, Shows, Theatre:
   a. Directs, performs in, or otherwise contributes creatively to artistic performances on a state, regional, national, or international level
   b. Publishes or distributes works such as scripts or plays or other creative works on a state, regional, national, or international level
   c. Choreographs, directs, performs in, or otherwise contributes creatively to performances that demonstrate quality as evaluated by professionals and peers
   d. Maintains consistent and continual direction of a resident performing company that exhibits substantial increases in artistic quality
   e. Music performances of outstanding quality
   f. Performance or composition of sound recordings for commercial distribution

5. Exhibitions:
    a. Art exhibition at a prominent venue, including museums, galleries, art centers, or alternative spaces
    b. Solo or small group exhibitions, juried or invitational
    c. Exhibitions that require a significant number of new works, such as a retrospective
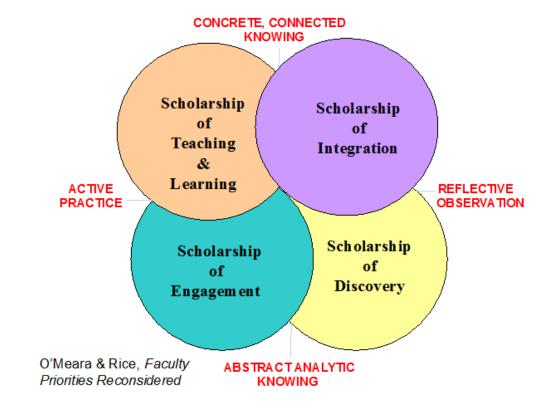   d. Critical review of exhibition in newspaper or magazine

6. Grant Activity:
    a. Receive research grant at state, regional, national, or international level
    b. Grant proposals
    c. Government or foundation contracts

7. Other:
    a. Post-doctoral fellowship or other course work beyond appropriate degree
    b. Develops knowledge or expertise through consulting work
    c. Recognized awards, prizes, fellowships, or residencies
    d. Research on pedagogy/innovative strategies in pedagogy/auxiliary teaching materials
    e. Directed student research/theses
    f. Professional development
    g. Development of instructional software, computer programs, or applications
    h. Development of clinical practice innovation
    i. Publication of articles/newsletters to lay audiences
    j. Authorship of accreditation or other comprehensive program reports
    k. Maintain credentials/professional licenses
    l. Consult for professional media organizations

Figure 1. A Broader, More Integrated Understanding of Scholarly Work

CONCRETE, CONNECTED KNOWING

Scholarship of Teaching & Learning

Scholarship of Integration

ACTIVE PRACTICE

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

Scholarship of Engagement

Scholarship of Discovery

O'Meara & Rice, *Faculty Priorities Reconsidered*

ABSTRACT ANALYTIC KNOWING

Dedication

The Faculty Research Council would like to dedicate this document in memory of Dr. John B. Noftsinger, Jr., who passed away on November 10, 2011. Dr. Noftsinger was a founding member of the Faculty Research Council, and as the Vice Provost for Research and Public Service, oversaw the activities of the FRC. Throughout a career that spanned more than 20 years at JMU, John passionately served his alma mater by leading a number of research and scholarship initiatives, including co-authorship of the original *Scholarship at JMU* report. As a mentor, countless students, faculty members, and staff at JMU and other institutions benefited from his thoughtful guidance and advice. As a friend and colleague, he was never short of a warm greeting or a five-minute hallway conversation about family, Dukes football, or an idea on how JMU could turn people's dreams into reality.

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