

Scholarship Standards

Department of English

Start Date: Spring 2021 (approved by Faculty Affairs spring 2021)

End Date: Unspecified

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT POLICY ON FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP

Adopted 4/2006, Revised 4/2018

I. SCHOLARSHIP IN THE DISCIPLINE OF ENGLISH

While there is no nationally recognized accrediting organization for English programs, the Modern Language Association (MLA) and the Association of Departments of English (ADE) periodically issue policy recommendations for member departments. The report of the MLA's Task Force on Evaluating Scholarship for Tenure and Promotion is due out in 2006.

The most highly prized kind of scholarship in the discipline of English is the scholarship of *discovery* (for critics and scholars) and *creation* (for poets and writers). The scholarship of *discovery* includes original research on literature, criticism, and theory. The scholarship of *creation* includes original poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. In most four-year institutions, the scholarship of discovery/creation is deemed necessary for tenure.

In addition to the scholarship of discovery/creation, the discipline values the scholarship of *teaching* (e.g., publishing a textbook or an article on pedagogy) and *application* (e.g., editing a journal or organizing a conference). The scholarship of *synthesis*—specialists addressing audiences of nonspecialists as well as research in other disciplines—is not valued as highly as it deserves to be. In most four-year institutions, these three kinds of scholarship are not usually deemed sufficient, by themselves, for tenure.

The primary products of the scholarship of *discovery* are articles published in scholarly journals and books published by academic presses or trade publishers with academic divisions. The primary products of the scholarship of *creation* are poems, stories, and essays published in literary journals and magazines as well as books of poetry, collections of short stories or essays, novels, and works of nonfiction published by academic presses or trade publishers. The discipline recognizes a hierarchy of venues for publication: ELH, for example, is a more prestigious journal than *Renaissance*; *The Antioch Review* is more prestigious than *The Antigonish Review*.

A variety of lesser scholarly products are also valued in the discipline. For example, bibliographies, encyclopedia entries, and book reviews (usually written at the request of an editor) are regarded as contributions to the discipline. Conference papers (whether submitted or invited) are also regarded as contributions to the discipline. However, these kinds of products are not usually deemed sufficient, by themselves, for tenure and promotion.

The most widely recognized standard for tenure in departments of English at research universities is the “book plus” standard: one book plus a number of substantial articles or creative publications. Many comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges, on the other hand, accept a number of substantial articles or creative publications as sufficient for tenure. The Chair of English at Drake

University, for example, reports that his department considers four to six substantial, well-placed articles as sufficient for tenure.¹

II. SCHOLARSHIP AND THE MISSION OF THE SPU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

The SPU English Department has long been a “teaching first” department, and we expect to continue this tradition for the next five years and beyond. At the same time, we recognize that university professors need to be active scholars who understand the traditions and current trends of the discipline. We also understand that a relatively high departmental standard of scholarship is necessary if we are to be one of the premier undergraduate English departments in the CCCU and among small comprehensive universities in the Pacific Northwest.

Accordingly, we expect each full-time faculty member (.75-1.0 FTE) to pursue the scholarship of discovery or creation on an ongoing basis. Some will choose to devote all of their scholarly time and energy to this kind of scholarship; others will choose to divide their efforts between this kind of scholarship and the others, such as that of application or synthesis. While we recognize that scholarly productivity will ebb and flow over the course of an academic career, we regard an average of one published article or creative work (e.g., an essay, a short story, a few poems) every two years as a reasonable goal.* A typical creative essay, short story, script, or set of three or more poems would be equivalent to a refereed journal article. A typical original book (scholarly monograph, novel, collection of essays, short stories, or poems) would be equivalent to about five refereed journal articles.

*According to the US Department of Education’s 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF-04), fulltime faculty at private PhD-granting institutions average 3.6 refereed or juried publications every two years. At MA- and BA-granting private institutions, in contrast, the two-year average is 0.9. Among humanities faculty at all 4-year institutions, public and private, the two-year average is 1.7; in the natural sciences, by contrast, the average is 4.1.

III. STANDARDS FOR TENURE AND PROMOTION IN THE SPU ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Tenure

A record of continuing growth and productivity as a scholar: minimally, the equivalent of at least two peer-reviewed articles representing the scholarship of discovery or creation.

Promotion

Associate Professor 1: A record of continuing growth and productivity as a scholar: minimally, the equivalent of at least two peer-reviewed articles representing the scholarship of discovery or creation.

Professor 1: A record of continuing growth and productivity as a scholar: minimally, the equivalent of at least two peer-reviewed articles representing the scholarship of discovery or creation since promotion or appointment to Associate Professor.

¹ *ADECH-L@WWW.MLA.ORG, 28 Jan. 2004

In addition to providing copies of their publications, candidates for tenure and promotion are encouraged to obtain at least two letters of recommendation from peers in their field outside the university who are familiar with their scholarship. The Department may also solicit opinions from external evaluators who are not personally acquainted with the candidate.