Establishing External, Blind Peer Review of Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Within the Disciplines

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Colleges and universities face growing pressure to reward multiple forms of scholarship in order to align their missions with faculty roles and rewards. This chapter proposes that disciplinary societies develop templates, processes, and criteria for external, blind peer review of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) in order to provide a reliable and valid way to judge the quality of faculty SoTL work. Although SoTL requires support from faculty development programs and other interdisciplinary SoTL forums, it will continue to be viewed as evidence of teaching excellence rather than scholarship until discipline-based external, blind peer-review processes are established.

In the novel, *Catch-22*,

Yossarian lay in the hospital with . . . a pain in his liver that fell just short of being jaundice. The doctors were puzzled by the fact that it wasn't quite jaundice. If it became jaundice they could treat it.

If it didn't become jaundice and went away they could discharge him. But this just being short of jaundice all the time confused them. (Heller, 1961, p. 7)

Like Yossarian, colleges and universities are caught in a Catch-22 with regard to the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) because they do not yet have a reliable way to judge its quality. On the one hand, SoTL is increasingly supported as valuable and important to the mission of colleges and universities. On the other hand, because colleges and universities do not know how to reliably determine whether or not SoTL is *good* scholarship (that is, judged as on par with peer-reviewed research), they are unable to integrate SoTL in meaningful ways into the most important faculty reward system—tenure and promotion. By necessity, faculty faced with full plates focus their energies on those activities they know will be rewarded (Rice, 2005a, 2005b). As Weimer (2006) pointed out, it is reasonable to believe that many faculty do not pursue SoTL because they do not see the work as being rewarded or recognized, and “they do not view it as a viable path to professional advancement” (p. 6). Faculty know it is important to be good teachers with strong service records, but when the day of reckoning comes, it is still research publications that count. However, if colleges and universities are to successfully address growing concerns about their institution’s relevance to society, they need to embrace transformative change in tenure and promotion criteria. At present, reward structures recognize discovery research as evidence of scholarship, and they need to explicitly recognize all forms of scholarship identified by Boyer (1990): discovery, integration, application, and teaching. Indeed, when Boyer set forth this paradigm, his intent was to make it possible for colleges and universities to tap the full range of faculty talents in order to align missions with reward systems, thus allowing educational institutions to better meet their commitments to students (teaching), communities (service), and discovery (research) (Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997).

Shulman (2000b, p. 105) predicted that by 2005 “there will be a fundamental recognition at colleges and universities that good teaching requires serious investigation and learning,” and its inclusion in the expected repertoire of scholarly practices will

replace SoTL's present status as an add-on. Although SoTL has certainly received much of the support Shulman predicted in the form of teaching academies and faculty development programs, little progress has been made regarding changes in reward structures governing tenure and promotion (Lueddeke, 2008). As was the case prior to Boyer's (1990) reconceptualization of scholarship, the majority of colleges and universities still apply scholarship standards that primarily value discovery research. Thus, SoTL is still viewed primarily as an add-on in the sense that it counts more as evidence of excellent teaching than of scholarship. The authors posit that once colleges and universities have reliable and valid methods for judging the quality of SoTL, they will be empowered to revise reward structures governing tenure and promotion in order to count SoTL as scholarship. This chapter proposes that disciplinary societies develop templates, processes, and criteria for external, blind peer review of SoTL in order to accomplish this goal.

Definition of SoTL and Related Terms

The terms *excellent teaching*, *scholarly teaching*, *scholarship of teaching*, and *SoTL* must be clearly defined in order to establish context for this proposal. First, it is necessary to understand that excellent teaching is not the same as scholarly teaching or SoTL. Excellent teaching, or teaching effectiveness, has long been a valued faculty role and is usually defined and measured via presentation of course materials, student evaluations, peer-classroom observations, and other supportive documentation. Faculty collect evidence of their teaching effectiveness and place it in teaching portfolios and personnel action documents. Excellent teachers often give presentations and publish articles (both peer reviewed and otherwise) that provide teaching tips and advice based on personal experience (Witman & Richlin, 2007). Witman and Richlin point out that although this advice is often useful, it is not the same thing as SoTL because there is no way for a reader to judge the quality of the advice. Scholarship of teaching, first conceptualized by Boyer (1990), is defined by Glassick and colleagues (1997) as "teaching [that] initiates students into the best values of the academy, enabling them to comprehend better

and participate more fully in the larger culture” (p. 9). Further, these researchers identify six criteria that exemplify scholarship of teaching: 1) clear goals, 2) adequate preparation, 3) appropriate methods, 4) significant results, 5) reflective critique, and 6) effective presentation. Therefore, teaching is scholarship when a teacher frames a problem related to student learning, reviews related literature, devises a suitable method to investigate the effect of teaching strategies, gathers and analyzes evidence, and reflects on what he or she learned about teaching and student learning.

Over time, it has become apparent that an understanding of scholarship of teaching required further clarification. Witman and Richlin (2007) point out that the scholarship of teaching “contains within it two separate systems: *scholarly teaching* and the resulting *scholarship* that reports its results” (p. 2). The scholarly teacher analyzes evidence of student learning, reflects on his or her teaching, and subsequently invites peer collaboration and review (Trigwell, Martin, Benjamin, & Prosser, 2000). Scholarly teaching becomes scholarship when it is made public. Shulman (2000a) explains it this way: “We develop a scholarship of teaching when our work as teachers becomes public, peer-reviewed and critiqued, and exchanged with other members of our professional communities, so they, in turn, can build on our work. These are the qualities of all scholarship” (p. 49).

The addition of *learning* to the oft-used phrase *scholarship of teaching* denotes that the focus of SoTL is not just on teaching, but it also carries an implied focus on discovering more about how teaching methods relate to students’ acquisition of learning outcomes. This chapter focuses specifically on SoTL because it represents the product of scholarly teaching that can be evaluated by peers.

An overview of a faculty member’s evolution from scholarly teaching to SoTL presents the reader with a frame of reference. Consider that a line of SoTL, much like discovery research, develops over time. Also recognize that a faculty member’s SoTL starts small, with general questions about how to improve teaching effectiveness and student learning. For teaching to become scholarly, the faculty member follows four steps: 1) conducts a thorough examination of the literature related to disciplinary teaching and student learning, 2) develops methodology and investigates the question(s), 3) analyzes results related to student learning

outcomes, and 4) engages in reflection. SoTL requires two steps beyond scholarly teaching—"putting the results into the context of what others have done (the literature) and dissemination through presentation and publication" (Witman & Richlin, 2007, p. 2). SoTL can be critiqued using the criteria for scholarship described by Glassick and colleagues (1997).

The Problems of Relevance and Time

Times have changed, and institutions of higher education can no longer afford to remain unresponsive to public demand for high-quality, relevant education. The Kellogg Commission (1999) made a strong case that the work of universities today is quickly becoming irrelevant, as specialized disciplines increasingly fail to respond to real-world problems. The Commission argued that by becoming "engaged institutions," universities can "redesign their teaching, research, extension and service functions" (p. 9). However, faculty are already stretched to the limit and asking them to do more is becoming problematic. Former Cornell University president Frank Rhodes (2001) points out that it is not surprising faculty cannot do everything they are being asked, and that it is still research, not great teaching, mentoring, or service that is receiving reward and recognition. He concludes that "perhaps the greatest surprise is that, given these competing distractions, so many faculty members continue to exhibit such devotion to their students" (p. 25). Recently, a number of experts have argued that embracing SoTL as scholarship is increasingly imperative and no longer a choice (Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Lueddeke, 2008; O'Meara & Rice, 2005; Weimer, 2006).

Shulman (2000a) presents the rationale for embracing SoTL from three perspectives: professional, pragmatic, and policy. The most important reason for engaging in SoTL is that it is part of faculty professional responsibility. Although professors are obligated to add to the core of disciplinary knowledge, "we also assume the responsibility for passing on what we learn through teaching, social action, and through exchanging our insights" (Shulman, p. 49). Although not all faculty need to be engaged in SoTL in order for a discipline to develop a better understanding of effective and relevant educational methods, as more faculty do

engage in SoTL, quality of teaching and student learning will continue to improve. Responsive, effective teaching is not a simplistic, intuitive process—understanding what works requires serious scholarship, the same as discovery research. Yet many professors have had little, if any, training in effective teaching methods, and few find they have adequate time to address their teaching in a scholarly manner. However, the Kellogg Commission (1999) report states, higher education “can and must do better” (p. 3), and we “must be organized to respond to the needs of today’s students and tomorrow’s, not yesterday’s” (p. 10).

SoTL is also pragmatic. It allows a faculty member to integrate teaching and scholarship roles in interesting, relevant, and efficient ways (Stevens, 2007). Undertaking a SoTL research agenda can help faculty address the full plate syndrome by allowing them to strategically integrate the roles of teaching and scholarship. For example, a new assistant professor with a strong interest in excellent teaching could plan a SoTL research agenda early in his career if he had confidence that his work would count as scholarship when he applies for tenure and promotion. At present, new faculty are often well advised not to spend too much time on teaching or service because it will be research publications that count—they are told SoTL can wait until after tenure (Stevens & Wellman, 2007).

SoTL provides policy benefits to educational institutions as well. For example, accreditation bodies now insist on audits that include evidence of student learning outcomes and continual curricular improvement in order to ensure that students are receiving a high-quality, relevant education (Shulman, 2000a). Shulman points out that quick-and-dirty, off-the-shelf approaches to learning outcomes assessment are rapidly becoming unacceptable. He notes that “this kind of work cries out for a vigorous scholarship of teaching and learning engaged by discipline and field-specific scholars of teaching” (p. 51). In addition, Shulman contends that the viability of colleges and universities is threatened if they do not provide the type of education students need. Unless colleges and universities hold themselves accountable to quality, relevant education, they will find themselves less competitive in a free market economy that provides increasing opportunities for students to enroll in distance learning via for-profit providers.

In sum, we argue that SoTL is important to institutions of higher education, but until faculty are sufficiently rewarded for SoTL, they will not have resources to do it adequately. As O'Meara and Rice (2005) point out:

Colleges and universities will not be able to genuinely recognize and reward multiple forms of scholarly work unless faculty have confidence in the integrity of the institution's mission, aspiration and goals, and values. The definition of scholarship, accordingly, must be aligned with the basic institutional mission and the various forms of scholarship—whether discovery, teaching, integration, or engagement, must be rewarded in ways that encourage faculty members to contribute to the fulfillment of institutional goals as well as their own disciplinary aspirations. (pp. 11–12)

Some have expressed concern that rewarding multiple forms of scholarship will diminish the value of discovery research, but as Rice (2005b) points out, while campuses have been debating ways to support and reward multiple forms of scholarship, there has been a concurrent increased emphasis on scholarship of discovery; its prestige remains unthreatened and undiminished. Therefore, those who worry that discovery research will have less support have little to worry about. The authors contend that the time is right to look at SoTL in a new way that will enable colleges and universities to regard it as scholarship.

The Proposed Solution

Dialogue has produced numerous documents, articles, models, and active scholarly teaching communities built on Boyer's (1990) concept of SoTL (Glassick et al., 1997; Healy, 2000; Hutchings, 1996, 1998; Kreber, 2002; Lueddeke, 2008; Quinlan, 2002; Shulman, 1993; Theall & Centra, 2001; Trigwell et al., 2000). Several colleges and universities (Indiana University at Purdue University Indianapolis, Texas A&M University, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse) and foundations (Carnegie Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation) are currently conducting SoTL projects. Some disciplines accept and publish SoTL (for example, natural sciences and professional studies), and in "others it is not yet broadly accepted" (for example, social

sciences and humanities) (Witman & Richlin, 2007, p. 14). There are also several multidisciplinary journals that publish SoTL, including the *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (IJ-SoTL), *The Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* (JoSoTL), and the *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching* (JECT). Further, the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) is an initiative of the Carnegie Foundation, designed to develop and support SoTL (Carnegie Foundation, 2007). However, although many colleges and universities already count SoTL to the degree these scholarly efforts result in peer-reviewed journal publications, most of these journals have low citation rates (Braxton, Luckey, & Helland, 2002), and their value to faculty varies substantially by discipline and university.

All of these efforts are essential for the development and dissemination of SoTL, but something else is needed for SoTL to be considered solid enough for faculty to stake their tenure and promotion on it. Because there is little question that the external, blind peer-review process used for discovery research plays a critical role in tenure and promotion decisions, the authors believe that external, blind peer review of SoTL can provide the impetus educational institutions need to count SoTL as scholarship.

Discipline-Based External, Blind Peer Review

One way to validate the quality of SoTL is to establish external, blind peer-review processes specific to SoTL within the disciplines. According to Shapiro and Coleman (2000), "peer review is the bedrock of the evaluative process and can best ensure that the quality and standards of the scholarship meet the standards of the academic community" (p. 987). Blind peer review is standard practice in the majority of scholarly journals when reviewing manuscripts. This review system involves reviewers from outside one's institution but within one's discipline, allowing reviewers to be drawn from a pool of individuals with recognized expertise in the areas most closely related to one's scholarship. Given that good scholarship must demonstrate adequate preparation (that is, understanding of the relevant literature) and significant results, it takes a reviewer intimately familiar with the discipline to make a qualified judgment.

The significance of peer review of SoTL is gaining increasing recognition. In 1991, the University of California strongly advocated for a peer-review process of teaching scholarship and stated that "if the scholarship of teaching is to be restored to its proper place, it follows directly that peer evaluation of teaching must be pursued with the same level of enthusiasm and dedication now afforded peer evaluation of research" (p. 11). Several accreditation bodies have followed suit by adopting broader definitions of discipline-based scholarship in order to capture teaching and service as viable fields of research. For example, the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (1999) has defined *scholarship* in nursing as "those activities that systematically advance the teaching, research, and practice of nursing through rigorous inquiry" (p. 6). Also, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (2005) provided specific language to include SoTL in their revision of accreditation standards: "A generalized categorization of intellectual contributions includes contributions to learning and pedagogical research, contributions to practice, and discipline-based scholarship" (p. 23).

However, the use of an external, blind peer-review process for SoTL is virtually absent in the literature, and the majority of dialogue has been limited to examining internal review processes. An external peer review that is discipline-based and blind minimizes issues related to confidentiality, anonymity, and reciprocity (Malik, 1996). External peer review has the advantages of increasing the number and quality of reviewers and allowing greater range of expertise. Although the Clearinghouse and National Review Board (2002) provides an avenue for faculty to pursue external review of scholarship of engagement, which can be integrative across teaching, research, and service, these reviews are not blind and results are not made public. Recognizing that blind peer review has long been the standard for judging the quality of research, and because the question of judging the credibility and quality of SoTL is at the heart of the debate concerning whether SoTL is evidence of excellent teaching or scholarship, external, blind peer review of SoTL is needed.

External, blind peer review of SoTL should be housed within the disciplines (Braxton et al., 2002; Healy, 2000; Huber, Hutchings, & Schulman, 2005; Malik, 1996; O'Meara & Rice, 2005). Healy provides two reasons: 1) most academic staff have a

primary allegiance to their subject or profession and their allegiance to the university is secondary, and 2) there is a strong perception among academic staff that there are significant differences among disciplines in what academics do and how activities are valued. Weimer (2008) counters the argument to positioning SoTL within the disciplines with two points: 1) placing scholarship within the disciplines narrows the potential audience, and 2) a good deal of reinvention occurs because many instructional issues and teaching methods transcend disciplines. The authors concur with Healy and others, that discipline-based review is the best approach and suggest that Weimer's concerns can be addressed by ensuring reviewers' expertise and use of electronic publication venues. Although it would be up to each discipline to determine portfolio content, evaluation standards, review procedures, and a public forum in which to share SoTL, the following sections elaborate on existing practices and present a template that disciplines can build on for developing an external, blind peer-review process for SoTL. The questions one might ask at this point include, What would the discipline-based peer reviewers evaluate? If not a journal article, then what?

The SoTL Portfolio

A SoTL portfolio provides one viable answer. A portfolio is, arguably, the most useful format because SoTL requires a kind of "going meta" in which faculty frame and systematically investigate questions related to student learning—the conditions under which it occurs, what it looks like, how to deepen it, and so forth—and to do so with an eye not only to improving their own classroom but to advancing practice beyond it (Shulman & Hutchings, as cited in Huber et al., 2005, p. 37).

SoTL, like scholarship of engagement, involves a kind of action research, extended into a faculty member's classroom practice, which is made available to peers in order to invite dialogue, as well as innovation in practices (Huber et al., 2005). Thus, SoTL differs from scholarship of discovery, and a SoTL portfolio provides a suitable format for its presentation. Notably, those working on establishing peer review for scholarship of engagement reached similar conclusions (Diamond & Adam, 1995, 2000; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999).

Faculty development programs and other SoTL forums have important roles to play in facilitating the development of faculty members' scholarly teaching by providing needed resources, support, and formative feedback. The scholarly teacher would be a candidate to compile a SoTL portfolio and submit it for discipline-based external, blind peer review once he or she has completed one or more SoTL projects. The review, tenure, and promotion process could incorporate the resulting evaluation as evidence of scholarship, the quality of which has been judged by peers. Using this model, discipline-based external, blind peer review of SoTL can be designed to complement (not duplicate) educational institutions' existing tenure and promotion criteria.

Bernstein (1998) argues that while a teaching portfolio focuses on teaching, a course portfolio involves both teaching and learning. Hutchings (1998) echoes this argument stating, "the course is a powerful unit of analysis for documenting teaching because it is within the course that knowledge of the field intersects with knowledge about particular students and their learning" (p. 14). Cerbin (1996) explains that course portfolios are . . . intended to be a coherent explanation about the nature and quality of teaching—explaining what the instructor intends to accomplish with students; the methods used; and the results of the experience in terms of students' learning, thinking, and development. The course portfolio establishes connections between goals, methods, and outcomes (p. 5).

Alternatively, a SoTL portfolio could systematically assess student learning outcomes in a disciplinary degree program. In this case, the scholar would investigate what the students should be learning within the discipline and subsequently investigate how well they are learning it. Curricular modifications based on student learning outcomes assessment would be implemented and evaluated over time to determine how to deliver the best possible education.

Although Cerbin (1996) states that the course portfolio is equivalent to a "scholarly manuscript . . . a draft, of ongoing inquiry" (p. 53), the presentation and format of the portfolio is as diverse as the number of disciplines within higher education (Huber, 1998). This wide range of formatting possibilities poses a potential concern regarding consistency of SoTL evaluation. Given that most disciplines are familiar with the five sections of a

thesis (that is, introduction, literature review, methodology, results, and discussion), this format provides a recognizable template for disciplines evaluating SoTL and can accommodate many possible portfolio design approaches. Although the format of a course portfolio is important for communicating with a disciplinary audience, the identification of criteria from which to assess the course portfolio is the critical element of validating SoTL.

Glassick and colleagues (1997) articulated questions for each of the six evaluation criteria (see Table 16.1). These questions are being used as evaluation criteria for proposal submissions in refereed journals and other venues (for example, *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning* and the Clearinghouse & National Review Board for The Scholarship of Engagement). The first five evaluation criteria parallel the five sections of a thesis, and the sixth criterion (effective presentation) suggests, among other venues, the preparation of a portfolio. Thus, adoption of Glassick and colleagues' framework provides a reliable evaluation scheme for evaluating SoTL.

We propose that each disciplinary group establish portfolio and evaluation guidelines. Based on the criteria in Table 16.1 and existing portfolio models, it seems probable that a SoTL portfolio could be compiled and presented using submission guidelines from a scholarly journal (that is, twenty pages following the American Psychological Association guidelines). The references in this and other SoTL articles (Bernstein, 1998; Cerbin, 1996; Diamond & Adam, 1995, 2000; Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Hutchings, 1998; Kreber, 2002; Quinlan, 2002; Shulman, 1999; Trigwell et al., 2000; Weimer, 2006) include many resources to assist discipline-based groups in this process.

Issues in Developing a Discipline-Based, Blind Peer-Review Process

In addition to issues of portfolio design, the peer review of SoTL is not devoid of issues related to the reviewee, reviewer, and the review itself (Hutchings, 1996; Kreber, 2002; Paulsen, 2002). Hutchings (1996) identified five issues regarding peer review. In discussing these issues, the viewpoint of a discipline-based, external, blind peer review will be used. The notion of external review

is not intended to replace internal peer review, which provides an important formative role in SoTL, but to build onto existing supports in order to conceptualize an external review process for judging the quality of SoTL.

The first issue concerns the individual being reviewed. Traditionally, teaching has been a private exchange between an individual faculty member and students. Going public with one's teaching can be unsettling to a junior faculty going up for tenure and promotion. One strategy to minimize this apprehension is to institute an external, blind peer review. This process ensures anonymity, which reduces the potential for negative feelings between colleagues. In addition, faculty seeking a review should understand that the SoTL external, blind peer-review process focuses on the scholarship, not the individual's teaching; this may lessen feelings of vulnerability related to opening the door to one's teaching.

A second issue involves establishing standards and operationalizing the concepts of SoTL. In the years since Boyer's (1990) publication, much progress has been made regarding definitions and evaluation criteria (Glassick et al., 1997; Huber & Hutchings, 2005; Trigwell et al., 2000; Weimer, 2006; Witman & Richlin, 2007). Implementing a discipline-based external, blind peer review for SoTL will allow for consideration of ways that student learning differs by discipline (for example, studio arts, sociology, and medicine). Even with the wealth of information currently available, members of each disciplinary group will want to familiarize themselves with a broad base of SoTL literature (both within and outside the discipline) in order to draw on best practices and codify the criteria to be used in their review process. Thus, a discipline-based approach will allow for emphasis on evaluation of the most relevant teaching methods and assessment of student learning outcomes as they relate to each particular discipline.

Identifying qualified peers to evaluate SoTL is a third issue that affects the review process. The authors propose that the lead individual (serving in a capacity like that of a peer-reviewed journal editor) would select reviewers for a particular SoTL portfolio based on their expertise in the discipline and teaching literature used in the SoTL project. The authors further suggest that a SoTL review team should have representative expertise in three areas:

1) an understanding of SoTL (in general), 2) disciplinary content expertise, and 3) teaching and student learning literature. Although housing the review process within the discipline follows the accepted model for peer review of discovery research, thus ensuring content expertise, disciplinary review boards may want to recruit reviewers with expertise in teaching and student learning literature from outside the discipline. Other issues related to reviewers concern confidentiality, anonymity, potential conflict of interest, bias, and reciprocity (Centra, 1993; Chism, 1999; Hutchings, 1996). Basing external peer review within the discipline can broaden the pool of reviewers beyond the educational institution to a national (and even international) scope. Selecting peers to do the external review from a larger pool decreases the likelihood of reviewers recognizing an individual's work, even when it is presented anonymously. The use of reviewers external to the university also keeps the focus on the scholarship and not instructional delivery. Anonymity would be ensured using similar processes to those used for journal submissions.

Hutchings (1996) notes a fourth issue—evaluation methods. What artifacts are included? How do you organize and communicate the evidence? What criteria will the evidence be evaluated against? Is there a limit to the volume of evidence that may be submitted? The answers to each question will have a resounding “it depends,” as each discipline will have to determine the content and evaluative criteria for SoTL portfolios. Ideally, a discipline would want an external, blind peer-review process that limits evaluations to specific format, criteria, and documentation while maintaining flexibility that allows for a wide range of SoTL to be assessed. A proposed portfolio format using Glassick and colleagues' (1997) scholarship framework provides guidance for all disciplines (see Table 16.1). As soon as one discipline establishes an external, blind peer review of SoTL, others will be able to draw on their model. In 2007, the Society of Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE) established a two-year pilot program to design and implement a blind peer-review process for SoTL (Stevens & Wellman, 2007; Stevens, Wellman, DeGraaf, Dustin, Paisley, & Ross, 2007). Other disciplines can benefit from the results of this pilot, which is scheduled to begin soliciting SoTL portfolios in 2009.

Table 16.1. Scholarship Evaluation Questions*Clear Goals*

1. Does the scholar state the basic purposes of his or her work clearly?
2. Does the scholar define objectives that are realistic and achievable?
3. Does the scholar identify important questions in the field?

Adequate Preparation

1. Does the scholar show an understanding of existing scholarship in the field?
2. Does the scholar bring the necessary skills to her or his work?
3. Does the scholar bring together the resources necessary to move the project forward?

Appropriate Methods

1. Does the scholar use methods appropriate to the goals?
2. Does the scholar apply effectively the methods selected?
3. Does the scholar modify procedures in response to changing circumstances?

Significant Results

1. Does the scholar achieve the goals?
2. Does the scholar's work add consequentially to the field?
3. Does the scholar's work open additional areas for further exploration?

Effective Presentation

1. Does the scholar use a suitable style and effective organization to present his or her work?
2. Does the scholar use appropriate forums for communicating work to its intended audiences?
3. Does the scholar present her or his message with clarity and integrity?

Reflective Critique

1. Does the scholar critically evaluate his or her own work?
2. Does the scholar bring an appropriate breadth of evidence to her or his critique?
3. Does the scholar use evaluation to improve the quality of future work?

Source: Reprinted from "Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate" by C. Glassick, M. Huber, and G. Maeroff. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Copyright 1997 by Jossey-Bass. Adapted with permission.

A fifth issue related to peer review is time. Although Hutchings (1996) identified time as the greatest obstacle to advancing SoTL and implementing a peer-review system, the authors contend that external, blind peer review of SoTL will help resolve the time issue. At institutions where reward structures value primarily discovery research, faculty have to make time to labor over research, often at the expense of other responsibilities, such as teaching and service. Once SoTL can be externally blind peer reviewed, it will be easier for institutions to recognize SoTL as scholarship, and then faculty will have incentive to pursue SoTL research agendas. Institutions of higher education will benefit as well; when more faculty find time to engage in SoTL, institutional missions will be realized to a fuller extent. Thus, external, blind peer review of SoTL will help, not exacerbate, the full-plate problem.

Weimer (2008) brings up a sixth issue by raising concerns about positioning SoTL within the disciplines. Specifically, she notes that “lessons learned in one field are relearned in another and that collective information never becomes a coherent knowledge base,” and “also lost are unique research designs and forms of inquiry developed within the disciplines” (Weimer, p. 2). Thus, there are two seemingly conflicting needs: 1) the need to house the evaluation of SoTL within the disciplines (for reasons previously mentioned) and 2) the need to share SoTL among disciplines. We present the following thoughts for further discussion of this concern. Electronic venues for SoTL publications are increasingly popular (for example, IJ-SoTL, JoSoTL, and JECT), and disciplinary associations implementing external, blind peer review of SoTL will likely be selecting electronic venues for publicizing quality SoTL portfolios (that is, those that meet preestablished criteria). Search engines, such as Google Scholar, will provide easier access to SoTL housed within the disciplines. The Carnegie electronic venues have the potential to facilitate interdisciplinary access as well.

Conclusion

Although there are valid concerns for a discipline-based external, blind peer review of SoTL, “submitting work . . . for anonymous refereeing by unknown peers is still one of the best tests of

scholarly credibility in the academic world" (Roberts, 1999, p. 15). We have already addressed a number of challenges and concerns related to SoTL: faculty do not have time for SoTL because they are already overloaded; SoTL cannot be evaluated in a rigorous, credible manner; SoTL is not going to be adequately supported or rewarded; and, valuing SoTL as scholarship would diminish the value of discovery research. One might then ask, Would implementing discipline-based external, blind peer-review processes for SoTL be a case of putting the cart before the horse? Should the disciplines wait until more colleges and universities include SoTL in scholarship criteria for tenure and promotion? The authors contend the time to act is now. All the pieces are in place. There is wide recognition of the need to reward multiple forms of scholarship, models for external, blind peer review of discovery research can be adapted for SoTL, and many examples for portfolio content and evaluation criteria have been developed and tested. What remains is to put the pieces together. Once disciplinary associations provide leadership by implementing external, blind peer-review processes for SoTL, colleges and universities will be able to take the next steps. Together, we can embrace this opportunity to take a transformative look at faculty roles and rewards to the benefit of students, faculty, and educational institutions. The consequences of failing to do so will become greater, not less, over time. The concerns raised by the Kellogg Commission (1999) about the work of universities today quickly becoming irrelevant need to be taken seriously. Perhaps it is time to remember that a crisis foretells both danger and opportunity. The opportunity is upon us to correct "the growing mismatch between the responsibilities that most colleges and university faculty members undertake on a daily basis" (Shulman, 2000b, p. 5) by instituting external, blind peer-review processes for SoTL within the disciplines.

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