

Comments from the Faculty of Professional Studies Faculty Council on “Scholarship” May 2011

Faculty worked in discussion groups to review the documents provided by Sylvie Murray and Noam Weinberg. The following is a summary of comments made:

- We need to find broad definitions of scholarship that will be inclusive rather than exclusive. These definitions need to capture the breadth of work that is taking place across the institution. (What constitutes scholarship in one discipline might not be the same for another). Professional programs sometimes are looked down upon because the scholarship work done by faculty is not “strict scientific research.” However, there is recognition that the distinction needs to be made between professional development and scholarship [or are they the same]?
- How scholarship is demonstrated and evaluated is critical to the conversation. How will **rigour** be applied so that different forms of scholarship are given a fair chance? A number of ways of evaluating scholarship needs to be explored e.g. portfolios, peer review etc.
- Will revenue generating scholarship be more recognized within the institution?
- Since we have been labeled a teaching intensive institution, will scholarship then include work that is primarily related to enhancing effective teaching?
- With regard to the suggestion of peer review for faculty’s performance in the areas of teaching, scholarship and service, the question was asked: What is the definition of peer? Who will decide on the peers who will be involved in the review process? Will these peers come from the particular Faculty or will they come from across the institution? Will there be some way of ensuring that peers are cable of conducting the evaluation reviews?
- The question of how service becomes a part of the conversation and what weight it holds in terms of performance review is one to be seriously considered.
- In the promotion of scholarship, we should not lose sight of our focus on teaching. We should explore what supports need to be put in place to foster good teaching at the same time that we try to support scholarship. We need to promote a culture that is a

strong “teaching culture” notwithstanding the importance of engaging in scholarship and service.

- There are still lingering questions around what constitutes scholarship that need to be addressed.
- There still seems to be tensions surrounding the weighting of scholarship as compared with teaching [and service].
- Service is very significant to the Professional Studies programs since these programs are connected to their communities. [Most of our programs have Advisory Committees made up of experts from the community]. Activities such as membership on Boards, working in the field, liaising with community agencies etc. allow for bringing back critical knowledge into the classroom to enhance the learning experience. Can there be a connection between service and scholarship? Are teaching, scholarship and service separate and distinct from each other?
- The conversation on defining and finding ways to evaluate scholarship needs to continue. The work by Boyer, [and Sylvie’s commentaries] give us a start but there are other perspectives to be explored. We should also be looking at best practices in other institutions, particularly those institutions which have faced similar challenges like us moving from a College to a University and having to deal with rank and tenure as tied to performance in the various areas of teaching, scholarship and service.

The works of Sylvie and Noam have provided food for thought and our faculty are willing to engage in the on-going discussions that need to happen.