

Recognizing excellence in Community–Engaged Scholarship:

Guidelines for Promotion and Tenure Decisions

Prepared by the Office of Community-Based Research

University of Victoria

“A university’s values are most clearly described by its promotion and tenure policy and by the criteria used to evaluate faculty members” (Conrad Weiser et al. 2000)

University of Victoria’s Vision: We aspire to be the Canadian university that best integrates outstanding scholarship, inspired teaching and real-life involvement. As members of a diverse and dynamic leaning community, we challenge one another to become thoughtful, *engaged citizens* and leaders, prepared to contribute to the betterment of a rapidly changing global society.

Rationale for Rethinking Promotion and Tenure Policies

Civic engagement creates new challenges for recognizing excellence in scholarship, teaching, and service and requires thoughtful consideration by each department, school, or program of how these challenges are being met or could be met in their promotion and tenure policies. As our vision states, civic engagement requires us to consider audiences both within and outside of academics. It values community engaged scholarship, teaching and service. There are many models now available for recognizing excellence in community engagement in promotion and tenure guidelines. We hope that the general guidelines outlined below and references will be helpful to departments considering these challenges.

1. Scholarship

Community engaged scholarship (CES) involves discovery, integration or synthesis, and application of knowledge in ways that connect it to understanding and solving pressing social, civic and ethical problems or to aesthetic or celebratory projects (informed by Boyer 1990)

Policy Recommendations : RPT policies and practices can recognize and value community-engaged scholarship for example by:

- 1) **Valuing peer-reviewed contributions to the field.** Evaluations of community-engaged research include a balanced portfolio of publications directed at academic audiences as well as other professional or creative activities.
- 2) **Subjecting an expanded range of professional products and creative activities to evaluation** by targeted users of these materials (e.g. published academic materials, government reports, reports to aboriginal communities, program manuals, publications for users, newsletters, educational pamphlets, documentaries, videos, patents, artistic creations and productions)
- 3) **Valuing interdisciplinary perspectives and diversity** Community-engaged scholarship can reach across disciplines (e.g. science, social sciences, medicine, arts, and humanities) and methodologies (including basic research, applied research, service-oriented research, and community based or participatory action research. It is often interdisciplinary and team-based may involve multiple authors. Roles of authors need to be made explicit and considered in the evaluation process.

- 4) **Valuing knowledge transfer and exchange by identifying** specific knowledge users and promoting their engagement in the production and dissemination of knowledge. The roles of faculty in these teams need to be made explicit and considered in the evaluation process.
- 5) **Seeking and utilizing an expanded range of reviewers of the quality, significance, and impact of faculty work** from targeted users (academic peers, government officials, NGOs officers, aboriginal community leaders, conference participants, academic and community awards, community members, patients, youth etc.) Individuals can provide written evaluations of the work or be involved in RPT committees as external members of a review board, or form an enduring body for review of community-engaged research.
- 6) **Recognizing appropriate time lines** that relate to differences in methodologies of community engaged scholarship.

2. Teaching

Community engaged teaching includes transmitting, transforming and extending knowledge within and beyond the classroom setting through teaching, mentoring, and other curricular activities that service communities within or outside of the university.

Policy Recommendations: RPT policies and practices can recognize and value community-engaged teaching for example by:

- 1) **Valuing diverse teaching contributions** to not only to classroom teaching but also mentoring, capacity building and knowledge transfer activities (public workshops, public presentations, participation in expert panels, government committees) outside of the classroom.
- 2) **Valuing excellence in the development of innovative curricula**, course syllabi, software, media and teaching methods, which improve learning within and outside of the university. Recognizing efforts to integrate community and university training opportunities.
- 3) **Valuing supervision** of service learning, student research, and other creative activities.
- 4) **Recognizing and supporting professional development** related to teaching.

3. Professionally Related Service is generally recognize in current faculty evaluations, including service to the university community through contributions to university, department and program governance, committees and activities that are central to the operations of a university. Professional contributions to disciplinary and interdisciplinary are also valued (for example, peer reviews of grants and publications, membership in and contributions to professional associations, professional and editorial boards, etc.). These service efforts are no less valued by the recognition of service that is part of community-engagement.

4. Community Outreach

Community engaged outreach includes activities that contribute to the definition of resolution of problems or issues in society (locally, nationally or internationally), promising innovations as well as literary, aesthetic or celebratory activities. While these activities are frequently recognized as service activities, there is a growing movement to recognize excellence in outreach as part of core faculty responsibilities. **The creation of a separate category for evaluating these responsibilities itself values and recognizes their importance.**

Policy Recommendations: RPT policies and practices can recognize and value community outreach where appropriate to faculty members' responsibilities for example by:

- 1) Valuing faculty involvement in activities that work to solve relevant social problems and issues locally, nationally or internationally or make substantial contributions to public policy.
- 2) Recognizing faculty roles in literary, artistic, celebratory or integrative actions that promote university and community collaborations and connections and enrich the artistic and cultural life of a community.
- 3) Value knowledge transfer activities that promote the use of research based knowledge outside of the university.

Resources:

Since 1996 Portland State University has been using a statement of policies and procedures that values and incorporates community-engaged scholarship, teaching, professional service and community outreach. Their detailed recommendations can be seen at:
https://stage.www.pdx.edu/media/o/a/oa_pt.pdf

See also a FACULTY TOOLKIT at: <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/toolkit.html>