

SCHOLARSHIP: RESEARCH, CREATIVE & PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY

THE COMMUNICATION DEPARTMENT OF BUFFALO STATE COLLEGE

(Adopted December 2005)

Scholarship holds an honored role in higher education, one that serves a dual purpose. Faculty members engage in scholarship for their own academic and/or professional development. They also contribute to the advancement of theoretical and professional knowledge and communicate this to other scholars, educators and practitioners.

In its Mission Statement, the Communication Department of Buffalo State College has defined itself as “a community of scholars serving the communication disciplines by creating new knowledge and effectively sharing existing knowledge within a community of scholars and media professionals.”

The Communication Department affirms the expectations for scholarship as set forth by the State University of New York, Buffalo State College in general, and specifically the School of Arts and Humanities. It encourages members to pursue ongoing activity leading to individual and departmental reputations for solid scholarship in relevant disciplines, particularly journalism, broadcasting, public relations, advertising, speech and rhetoric, media analysis, communication design and communication technology.

Members of the Department traditionally have seen themselves as a blend of “academics” and “professionals,” with individuals representing a diverse background of disciplines, interests, scholarly norms, research methodologies, and presentation venues. The Department embraces a policy that encourages each member to develop as a scholar according to individual interests and opportunities.

Each member of the Department is expected to develop a scholarly agenda and follow it to its logical ends. The Department expects members to link their research with teaching and to give evidence of a cohesive line of inquiry and thought rooted in their academic specialty. Because Buffalo State emphasizes teaching, the Department also considers the concepts and practices applicable to the classroom, lab and studio as legitimate for scholarly exploration.

In the following policy statement, the Communication Department uses the term “scholarship” as the overarching concept associated with research, creative activity and professional activity. The term and typology are similarly employed by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. The Department adopts the following norms and definitions as standards upon which faculty will be evaluated for purposes of hiring, promotion, tenuring, and various forms of support, reward and recognition.

RESEARCH. The types of research appropriate for the Communication Department vary, depending upon the background and interest of the individual faculty and the norm and requirements of the specific discipline. Research may be qualitative, quantitative, or a blend of each. Regardless of methodological approach, the Department encourages research and expects a clear written research agenda for new faculty members by the time of their first reappointment. Evidence of substantial and ongoing research is part of the Department’s deliberation of requests for promotion and tenure and in other personnel considerations.

Implicit in the concept of research is the presentation of new knowledge generated through the research. Because research outlets vary, the Department recognizes a hierarchy of presentation venues. Lectures, papers, speeches and presentations are useful for reappointment. Each of these can lead to (but not substitute for) more substantial scholarly output, such as book reviews, encyclopedia entries and journal articles. Uppermost in the hierarchy of scholarly products are chapters, monographs and books.

Publishing may be in print or online. In every case the Department considers the reputation, competitiveness and standards of the presentation venue, as well as innovation and quality of scholarly content. Refereed venues carry more weight than non-juried publications, and solo work generally is more valued than co-authored presentations. Competitive venues and invited participation carry particular weight. National or international outlets generally imply a higher prestige than local or regional ones. Likewise, publication in academic journals is seen as more significant than in trade magazines and other professional publications. In all cases, it is incumbent upon individual faculty researchers to provide evidence of the competitiveness, reputation, and level of standards of their presentation venues.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY. Because of the applied nature of many Communication disciplines, scholarship may take the form of creative activity rather than publication. The Department defines creative activity as an outgrowth of original academic or applied research in a venue and/or format that is more creative than traditional presentations and publications. Examples include (but are not limited to) exhibitions and shows, audio and video productions, development of graphics, creation of digital output and software, and similar creative products.

Reflecting the standards noted above for research, creative activity is subject to an evaluation of its scholarly content as well as its presentation, with greater weight given to innovative and substantial activity associated with prestigious and competitive national or international venues.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITY. Consistent with the standards of the ACEJMC, the Communication Department considers professional activity as another form of scholarship. Professional activity is described as an outgrowth of original academic or applied research generating presentation and application in a professional setting. Examples include (but are not limited to) editing projects, workshops, sponsored research, public relations or advertising campaigns, media-initiated interviews, consultancies whether paid or unpaid, and successful grant proposals, as well as the development of publications, websites, and other professional materials.

The Department makes the distinction between such research-driven professional activity and professional service – roles such as organization officer, discussion leader, speaker, committee member, manuscript reader, and judge for papers or contests. It is the difference between the roles of scholar and citizen; while the difference is not absolute, it guides the Department's evaluation of the contributions of individual faculty members in terms of scholarship versus service.

Reflecting the standards noted above for research, professional activity is subject to an evaluation of its scholarly content as well as its presentation, with greater weight given to innovative and substantial activity associated with prestigious and competitive national or international venues.