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What is Scholarship?

Rod Janzen, editor

Introduction

Fifteen years ago, Ernest Boyer wrote the influential book *Scholarship Reconsidered*.¹ In it he suggested that we broaden the way in which “scholarship” is defined, in order to recognize not only those who do original research (what Boyer called “the scholarship of discovery”) but also faculty members who are involved in three other scholarly arenas -- what Boyer referred to as the scholarship of integration, application and teaching.² Boyer decried the minimal amount of knowledge about the teaching and learning process and saw the need to expand the domain of investigation. (A related study, *Scholarship Assessed*, was issued in 1997.³)

Boyer’s own experience in higher education was wide ranging—from teaching at a small Brethren in Christ institution (Upland College) in southern California, to U.C. Santa Barbara and Princeton. Boyer also served as Chancellor of the State University of New York and as the United States Commissioner of Education.

Following Boyer’s publication, the American Association for Higher Education requested responses from various discipline-based professional organizations (such as the Joint Policy Board for Mathematics and the American Historical Association). These statements were published in two volumes, in 1995 and 2000, respectively.⁴ The groups were not in complete agreement on how to break down the different scholarship categories. But they did show consensus on six general “scholarship” features: In their view, anything worthy of this designation had to:

- require a high level of discipline-related expertise
- break new ground, be innovative
- be capable of replication or elaboration
- show the possibility of being documented
- go through a peer-review process
- have significance or impact.⁵

Simultaneously, here at Fresno Pacific, then-Academic Vice-President Howard Loewen and other administrators and faculty members were also thinking and talking about different notions of scholarship. In 1995, Loewen sent faculty members a copy of a treatise he enthusiastically entitled, “A Manifesto for Educational Research at Fresno Pacific College.”⁶ Loewen’s communiqué noted, among other things, that “the need for research underlines the provisional nature of knowledge.”⁷ He recommended that scholarly activities at Fresno Pacific College (later “University”) be tied to the institution’s *Idea*⁸ statement.

The graduate school faculty retreat at Casa Pacifica that same year incorporated the research definition agenda. In addition, during the 1995-96 and 1996-97 school years undergraduate/graduate faculty seminars focused attention on this issue. After this, formal university-wide conversations about research and scholarship went into a cruising mode, although the Graduate School continued to provide significant funding for faculty attendance at professional conferences, while Undergraduate Dean Stephen Varvis was successful in substantially increasing financial support for college faculty to do the same.

There is no question that Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* has had major influence on higher education. While some lament the movement away from pure research, most welcome the new insights and wider view of the demanding intellectual work of faculty members. Among comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges, renditions of the four categories of scholarship are well ensconced within faculty handbooks. Only research universities have been slow to consider these new definitions.

In the past two years Christian educators have also been introduced to a number of important books that discuss the relationship between scholarship and different faith traditions. Two of these are Douglas Henry and Bob Agee's *Faithful Learning and the Christian Scholarly Vocation* and Douglas and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen's *Scholarship & Christian Faith: Enlarging the Conversation*.⁹ This is another significant area for discussion.

But this monograph focuses on scholarship interpretations through four essays, each of which discusses one of the Boyer scholarship definitions, and gives specific attention to what these interpretations might mean for the work of faculty members. In this regard I begin with a reflection on the scholarship of discovery with David Alan Thompson providing a brief response from the perspective of a science professor. This piece is followed by articles by Patricia Anderson (the scholarship of application), Michael Kunz (the scholarship of integration) and Stephen Varvis (the scholarship of teaching).