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# Tips for Constructing a Promotion and Tenure Dossier that Documents Engaged Scholarship Endeavors

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## **Abstract**

The growth of the community engagement movement in higher education over the past 2 decades has resulted in more faculty member interest and practice in engaged scholarship. As more institutions value this work, faculty members are looking for ways to enhance the effectiveness of their engaged scholarship dossiers for promotion and tenure. This article summarizes content from a workshop on strengthening the engaged scholarship dossier offered by the author in a variety of venues. The author provides an overview of the engaged scholarship dossier context, explains why a focus on documenting engaged scholarship is important, outlines four steps for documenting engaged scholarship in the academic dossier, and lists best practices for faculty members building their engaged scholarship dossiers.

## **Keywords**

Extension and Outreach

## **Disciplines**

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## **Comments**

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# **Tips for Constructing a Promotion and Tenure Dossier that Documents Engaged Scholarship Endeavors**

Nancy K. Franz

## **Abstract**

The growth of the community engagement movement in higher education over the past 2 decades has resulted in more faculty member interest and practice in engaged scholarship. As more institutions value this work, faculty members are looking for ways to enhance the effectiveness of their engaged scholarship dossiers for promotion and tenure. This article summarizes content from a workshop on strengthening the engaged scholarship dossier offered by the author in a variety of venues. The author provides an overview of the engaged scholarship dossier context, explains why a focus on documenting engaged scholarship is important, outlines four steps for documenting engaged scholarship in the academic dossier, and lists best practices for faculty members building their engaged scholarship dossiers.

## **Introduction**

Faculty members increasingly show interest in embracing and documenting outreach and engagement work as part of their academic journey (Glass, Doberneck, & Schweitzer, 2011). Many, however, struggle with ways to document their efforts when preparing for promotion and tenure (Franz, 2009a). Although the literature on engaged scholarship holds tips and tools for faculty members (Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Glassick, Huber, & Maeroff, 1997; O'Neill, 2008), it has not been synthesized in a readily accessible way. To fill this gap, this article summarizes content from a workshop on strengthening the engaged scholarship dossier offered by the author in a variety of venues. The author provides an overview of the engaged scholarship dossier context, explains why a focus on documenting engaged scholarship is important, outlines four steps for documenting engaged scholarship in the academic dossier, and lists best practices for faculty building their engaged scholarship dossiers.

## **Why Focus on Documenting Engaged Scholarship?**

Scholars and practitioners have been calling for an expansion of the definition of engaged scholarship beyond service or

academic citizenship for more than a decade (*Finkelstein, 2001; Glassick et al., 1997*). Service or citizenship activities alone are no longer deemed the predominant currency in higher education for accountability-related faculty outreach work with communities (*Church, Zimmerman, Bargerstock, & Kenney, 2003; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Kellogg Commission, 2000*). In fact, in recent years, there has been a movement to focus on engagement of higher education with communities (*Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010*).

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*“Service or citizenship activities alone are no longer deemed the predominant currency in higher education for accountability-related faculty outreach work with communities.”*

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One of the motivations promoting better documentation of engaged scholarship is the push for higher education to increase relevance with society in general, and communities in particular (*Calleson, Jordan, & Seifer, 2005; Colbeck, 2002; Committee on Institutional Cooperation, 2005; Holland, 2001; Glassick et al., 1997; Kellogg Commission, 2000*). In conjunction with this movement, scholars have asked that the higher education community more fully examine the scope of scholarship and how it is carried out (*Boyer, 1991; Diamond & Adam, 1995; Driscoll & Lynton, 1999; Glassick et al., 1997*). As a result, institutions of higher education have taken a number of actions, including developing definitions of engaged scholarship, expanding promotion and tenure standards, and implementing measures to more fully include engaged scholarship in the promotion and tenure process (*Braxton & Del Favero, 2002; Calleson et al., 2005; Church et al., 2003; Glass & Fitzgerald, 2010; Michigan State University, 2000; UniSCOPE, 2008*).

Individual faculty members as well as department and institution-level leaders are pushing for better ways to document engaged scholarship. They point to the need to

- make service, outreach, engagement, and engaged scholarship less vague, more inclusive, and more systematic across disciplines and units;
- clarify the faculty time commitment to institutional missions (*Driscoll & Lynton, 1999*); and
- acknowledge that the roles of technology are changing how faculty work is defined and evaluated (*McInnis, 2002*).

Today, faculty members are asking for clarification of engaged scholarship expectations. Higher education leaders are identifying sources of data for evaluation of engaged scholarship, and are clarifying the purposes and uses of this data (Paulson, 2002). Moreover, professional associations are more fully describing their parameters for engaged scholarship (Diamond & Adam, 1995).

### Engaged Scholarship as the Foundation for an Engaged Scholarship Dossier

To help faculty members, promotion and tenure committee members, and administrators appropriately create and evaluate effective engaged scholarship dossiers, the author developed a table that delineates the differences between approaches to engagement and scholarship. As shown in Figure 1, each approach to scholarship is differentiated by the degree of engagement and scholarship activity practiced by the faculty member, and is categorized as service, scholarship, engagement, or engaged scholarship.

		SCHOLARSHIP	
		LOW	HIGH
ENGAGEMENT	HIGH	<p><b>Engagement</b></p> <p>Exchange of knowledge and/or resources in reciprocal partnerships for mutual benefit</p>	<p><b>Engaged Scholarship</b></p> <p>Engagement with communities that integrates scholarship in the process</p>
	LOW	<p><b>Service</b></p> <p>Expert presentations to groups</p> <p>Participation in internal committees</p> <p>Participation in professional associations</p>	<p><b>Scholarship</b></p> <p>Original intellectual work communicated and validated by peers</p>

Figure 1: Characteristics of Engagement and Scholarship

#### Service: Low Engagement and Low Scholarship

Most higher education institutions require or prefer that faculty members provide service for particular groups. This work often gets documented as expert presentations to groups, participation on institutional committees, or membership in

professional associations. Such service usually results in minimal public engagement, and tends not to support scholarship (Finkelstein, 2001; Glassick et al., 1997).

### **Scholarship: Low Engagement and High Scholarship**

On its own, scholarship is usually defined as original intellectual work that is communicated to and validated by peers (Norman, 2001). It is often expressed as articles published in peer-reviewed journals, peer-reviewed presentations and posters, or juried creative works. This approach usually does not include community engagement since the focus is solely on scholarship.

### **Engagement: High Engagement and Low Scholarship**

Engagement represents a reciprocal partnership between faculty members and community partners involving an exchange of knowledge and resources for mutual benefit (Carnegie Foundation, 2011). This may include service-learning, engaged research, community-based participatory action research, or other projects conducted with partners. The main focus is on the public aspects of the work.

### **Engaged Scholarship: High Engagement and High Scholarship**

Engaged scholarship combines the principles of scholarship and engagement. In this approach, faculty members engage with communities and integrate scholarship into the process. Examples of engaged scholarship include working with community members to produce reports or to change policy, students presenting posters in academic venues about service-learning experiences, and faculty members writing about engaged scholarship work for scholarly audiences (Barker, 2006; Calleson et al., 2005; Committee on Institutional Cooperation, 2005; Glass et al., 2011; Michigan State University, 2000; UniSCOPE, 2008).

For faculty members to present effective engaged scholarship dossiers to promotion and tenure committees, the engaged scholarship approach is the most compelling, and requires that faculty members understand the similarities and differences of all the approaches to scholarship and engagement in order to articulate the benefits and impacts of their engaged scholarship. Engaged scholarship faculty members must document the two-way

relationship in academic and public partnerships to demonstrate a beneficial legacy.

## **Engaged Scholarship: Promotion and Tenure Resources**

Since 1996, a variety of resources have been developed to help faculty members better understand how engaged scholarship is defined, measured, and communicated. The following resources can help faculty members as they plan for and prepare their promotion and tenure dossiers.

- Barker, D. (2006). Five emerging practices in the scholarship of engagement. In D. Brown & D. Witte (Eds.), *Higher Education Exchange* (pp. 64–72). Dayton, Ohio: Kettering Foundation.
- Calleson, D., Jordan, C., & Seifer, S. (2005). Community-engaged scholarship: Is faculty work in communities a true academic enterprise? *Academic Medicine*, 80(4), 317–321.
- Campus-Community Partnerships for Health. (2011). *Transforming communities and higher education*. Retrieved from <http://depts.washington.edu/ccph/>
- Colbeck, C. (2002). *Evaluating faculty performance* (New Directions for Institutional Research, No. 114). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Diamond, R., & Adam, B. (1995). *The disciplines speak: Rewarding the scholarly, professional, and creative work of faculty*. Washington, DC: American Association of Higher Education.
- Driscoll, A., & Lynton, E. (1999). *Making outreach visible: A guide to documenting professional service and outreach*. Washington, DC: American Association for Higher Education.
- Jordan, G., Hage, J., & Mote, J. (2008). A theories-based systemic framework for evaluating diverse portfolios of scientific work, part 1: Micro and meso indicators. In C. Coryn & M. Scriven (Eds.), *Reforming the evaluation of research* (New Directions for Evaluation, No. 118, pp. 7–24). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- National Review Board for the Scholarship of Engagement. (2011). *The scholarship of engagement online*. Retrieved from <http://scholarshipofengagement.org/members/index.html>
- O'Neill, B. (2008). Promotion, tenure, and merit-based pay: 15 keys to success. *Journal of Extension*, 46(4). Retrieved from <http://www.joe.org/joe/2008august/tt2.shtml>
- UniSCOPE Learning Community. (2008). *UniSCOPE 2000: A multidimensional model of scholarship for the 21st century*. University Park, PA: UniSCOPE Learning Community.

Faculty members have also found the following journals as possible venues for publishing about their engaged scholarship endeavors.

- *Australian Journal of University Community Engagement* (<http://nla.gov.au/nla.arc-56869>)
- *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* ([www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/00091383.asp](http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/titles/00091383.asp))
- *Community Development Journal* ([www.comm-dev.org/index.php/publications](http://www.comm-dev.org/index.php/publications))
- *Community Works Journal* ([www.communityworksinstitute.org/cwjonline/](http://www.communityworksinstitute.org/cwjonline/))
- *Gateways: International Journal of Community Research and Engagement* ([epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ijcre](http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/ijcre))
- *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* ([www.ijova.org](http://www.ijova.org))
- *Innovative Higher Education* ([www.uga.edu/ihe/ihe.html](http://www.uga.edu/ihe/ihe.html))
- *International Journal of Public Participation* ([www.iap2.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=381](http://www.iap2.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=381))
- *Journal for Civic Commitment* ([www.mesacc.edu/other/engagement/Journal/](http://www.mesacc.edu/other/engagement/Journal/))
- *Journal for Community Engagement and Higher Education* ([www.indstate.edu/jcehe](http://www.indstate.edu/jcehe))
- *Journal for Community Engagement and Scholarship* ([www.jces.ua.edu](http://www.jces.ua.edu))

- *Journal for Higher Education Outreach and Engagement* ([www.jheoe.uga.edu](http://www.jheoe.uga.edu))
- *Journal of Extension* ([www.joe.org](http://www.joe.org))
- *Metropolitan Universities Journal* ([muj.uc.iupui.edu/](http://muj.uc.iupui.edu/))
- *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning* ([ginsberg.umich.edu/mjcs/](http://ginsberg.umich.edu/mjcs/))
- *Partnerships: A Journal of Service-Learning and Civic Engagement* ([www.partnershipsjournal.org/index.php/part](http://www.partnershipsjournal.org/index.php/part))
- *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, and Action* ([www.press.jhu.edu/journals/progress\\_in\\_community\\_health\\_partnerships/](http://www.press.jhu.edu/journals/progress_in_community_health_partnerships/))
- *Science Education and Civic Engagement: An International Journal* ([www.secej.net](http://www.secej.net))

## **Four Steps for Documenting Engaged Scholarship in the Academic Dossier**

Faculty members can take four steps to prepare an effective engaged scholarship dossier. These include (1) mapping their efforts, (2) determining the impact to be measured, (3) collecting and analyzing data, and (4) telling their engaged scholarship stories.

### **Step 1: Mapping Engaged Scholarship Efforts**

Early in their careers, faculty members begin planning for the promotion and tenure process. They should map the main points to be recorded in their dossiers. The maps should include a situation or problem statement that clearly addresses why the faculty members' engaged scholarship is important, the inputs needed to address the issue or problem, the outputs or activities that will take place and their audiences, the intended outcomes or impact from the work, and the assumptions and external factors that affect the work.

Three main methods tend to be used by faculty members to map their engaged scholarship path: text, concept maps, and logic models. Information on concept maps can be found at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept\\_map](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concept_map), and logic models at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/LMfront.pdf>.

## **Step 2: Determining Impact to Be Measured**

In this step, faculty members should articulate the type of impact they hope to have in their work with community partners. The impact could focus on products created from education activities, or research efforts that show impact on individuals and communities. The faculty members may also want to document their own performance as instructors or researchers or the performance and quality of their programs, teaching, or research.

During this step, potential impact questions should be determined and their effects over 3–5 years measured. Possible questions include: What new knowledge was discovered, developed, or disseminated? What did participants learn? How have participant aspirations or motivations changed due to the program? How have participants changed behavior due to the program, or how do they intend to? How have economic, environmental, or social conditions changed due to their efforts?

Next, faculty members should determine the methods of engaged scholarship they plan to use. These may include engaged pedagogy (i.e., course-based service-learning projects), internships, deliberation, participatory action research, public information network development, study circles, civic skills literacy for public participation, or other methods. Faculty members not familiar with methods of engaged scholarship should refer to the aforementioned engaged scholarship journals.

Once the types of impact and impact questions are determined, faculty members should document the scholar-peers products and community products that will be produced from their efforts. Table 1 shows the portfolio of products resulting from a 3-year community-based participatory action research project on how farmers learn. Peer products may include articles, conference posters, presentations, abstracts and proceedings, or grants and competitive contracts. Applied products may include curricula, guides, technical assistance, or policy development. Community products may include forums, workshops, newsletters, websites, presentations, reports, designs, or displays.

Table 1. Examples of Products Developed and Disseminated from a “How Farmers Learn” Research Project

Product Type	Title	Audience
Article	Consistency and Change in Participatory Action Research: Reflections on a Focus Group Study About How Farmers Learn	<i>The Qualitative Report</i>
Article	Farmer, Agent, and Specialist Perspectives on Preferences for Learning Among Today's Farmers	<i>Journal of Extension</i>
Article	How Farmers Learn: Implications for Agricultural Educators	<i>Journal of Rural Social Sciences</i>
Article	A Holistic Model of Engaged Scholarship: Telling the Story Across Higher Education's Missions	<i>Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement</i>
Article	Meeting the Educational Needs of Women Farmers in the 21st Century	<i>Journal of Extension</i>
Article	How Farmers Learn	<i>Innovations</i> (general audience), college alumni publication
Article	Meeting the Educational Needs of Sustainable Agriculture Producers	<i>Journal of Extension</i>
Conference Presentations	American Evaluation Association (Denver), Virginia Biological Farmers (Richmond), Virginia Cooperative Extension Pesticide Safety Education Conference (Roanoke), Professional Agriculture Workers Conference (Tuskegee)	Program evaluators, farmers, agriculture educators
Agricultural Educator Inservice	Virginia Extension dairy agents and specialists, Virginia Extension agricultural agents and specialists, Virginia Extension agents program evaluation workshop, North Carolina A&T agents, specialists, administration, and staff, Arkansas Extension Staff Conference, Tennessee Extension Staff Adobe Connect	Agriculture educators, farmers
Fact Sheet	<i>Dispositions of Tennessee Farmers for Learning Online</i>	Extension agents and specialists
Fact Sheet	<i>Lessons Learned from Year One</i>	Project researchers
Fact Sheet	<i>Reaching Agricultural Producers Through Effective Newsletters</i>	Agriculture educators
Fact Sheet	<i>Using Hands-on Learning to Educate Producers</i>	Agriculture educators
Fact Sheet	<i>Why Do Producers Attend or Do Not Attend Extension Meetings</i>	Extension agents/specialists
Literature Review	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education</i>	Researchers
Logic Model	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Agriculture Education</i>	Researchers
Posters	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Agriculture Education</i>	General campus audience, Virginia Biological Farmers, Center for Undergraduate Teaching and Learning, Graduate Research Conference, Professional Agricultural Workers Conference
PowerPoint	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education</i>	Agriculture Administrators and Educators
Report	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education Executive Summary</i>	Agriculture educators and administrators, farmers
Report	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education Funder Report</i>	Funding directors and stakeholders
Report	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education Full Report</i>	Agriculture educators, administrators and farmers
Report	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education Full Report with Transcripts</i>	Funder, researchers, select stakeholders
Report	<i>How Farmers Learn: Improving Sustainable Agriculture Education Wiki</i>	eXtension users
Report	<i>Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Faculty Report</i>	College administrators

### **Step 3: Collecting and Analyzing Data**

Five methods are most often used to collect data to determine the impact of a faculty member's work: case studies, observations, focus groups or individual interviews, secondary data, and surveys or questionnaires. A variety of methods should be used to triangulate the results.

Data analysis for engaged scholarship often includes community partners in the process. The involvement of partners in the project can provide important nuances in the analysis that a faculty member alone would not discover (*Franz, 2009b*). One group of engagement scholars suggests that community partners participate in varying degrees in each phase of a research project, including defining the research question, designing the research project, data collection, data analysis, and using the findings (*TRUCEN, 2007*).

### **Step 4: Telling the Engaged Scholarship Story**

For successful promotion and tenure, faculty members must adeptly tell their engaged scholarship story to a wide variety of people (*Franz, 2001 a, 2011 b*). This requires removing disciplinary jargon and being clear and concise in describing engaged scholarship endeavors. Three elements are key to effective engaged scholarship:

- the relevance of the issue or problem addressed;
- the faculty member's and community partner's responses to the issue or problem; and
- the results of the effort, and the future plans based on those results.

This formula may be familiar to faculty members since it is often used for news releases and annual reports.

### **Dossier Review Criteria and Contextual Factors**

Several sets of engaged scholarship review criteria have evolved over time. The first set of criteria that all faculty members should review are those provided by their own institution. Then the faculty member should examine more general engagement criteria. These might include Glassick et al.'s (1997) criteria of evidence of clear goals, adequate preparation, appropriate methods, significant results, effective presentation, and reflective critique. A faculty member may also consider Diamond and Adam's (1995) criteria for a high level of discipline-related experience, which includes breaking new ground or innovation, the ability to replicate or elaborate, documentation, peer review, and significant impact.

In addition to stated criteria for promotion and tenure, faculty members must consider their local context in determining how to design, implement, and document their engaged scholarship. They need to keep in mind how their institutional and departmental mission, methods of assessment, and strategic plan fit their work; the nature of their academic appointment (i.e., percentage of time designated for teaching, research, and outreach); and the intended contribution to the discipline. Some faculty members have also found that recruitment, promotion, and tenure “decisions rest on values and judgments, not on measurement or clear expectations” (Fairweather, 2002, p. 97).

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## **Best Practices for Building an Engaged Scholarship Dossier**

A review of the literature and the author’s experience working with promotion and tenure committees has led to the identification of best practices for conducting engaged scholarship, and for assembling engaged scholarship.

### **Best Practices for Conducting Engaged Scholarship**

- Start engaging with community partners early. Building relationships and successful projects and products takes time.
- Ensure ongoing documentation of engaged scholarship efforts to track changes or consistency over time rather than just capturing information at one or two points in time. Create a documentation file system to collect and organize dossier information and artifacts as they occur to more easily reconstruct the engaged scholarship process.
- Align engaged scholarship with discipline, department, campus, and national priorities to make the faculty member’s contribution clear. Know that if department and institutional requirements and values are different, you will have to address both.

- Select dossier support mentors to learn the specific criteria, processes, and norms used for promotion and tenure reviews. Get to know your dossier reviewers and their expectations for the tenure and review process and dossier.
- Publish and present engaged scholarship in a variety of significant academic and community venues early and often. Maximize your efforts by meeting more than one goal for each activity.
- Select service roles carefully and translate them to scholarship opportunities whenever possible in order to demonstrate the value in everything you do. Bridge gaps between tenure expectations and the actual daily duties of a faculty member.
- Be aware of and manage what influences faculty scholarly work (i.e., assignments, rewards, time, resources, personal priorities, performance review, promotion and tenure documents, culture, writing).

### **Best Practices for Assembling Engaged Scholarship**

- Write the engaged dossier for a general academic audience rather than a lay audience to enhance the credibility of the engaged scholarship. The dossier needs to be organized so the reader can easily see all academic standards being addressed.
- Focus on the unique faculty role in the engagement work as well as the results of that work instead of simply reporting activities conducted by the faculty member or community partners. Demonstrate the disciplinary, departmental, community, national, and international niche to which you belong.
- Describe both process and product impacts of engaged scholarship, and describe their significance for academia and communities. Provide a new or innovative approach to engaged scholarship and effectively communicate it. If engaged scholarship took place but there were no peer-reviewed publications, other scholarship should be described.
- Clearly articulate the intellectual question or working hypothesis behind the engaged scholarship to

determine scholarly and engagement relevance. Link current and past engaged scholarship with a future engaged scholarship agenda to illustrate a clear trajectory for your work.

- Follow directions, including expected format for the dossier, and write it well. The promotion and tenure committee should not have to edit format, grammar, or other unprofessional writing. Write confidently but not arrogantly. Refrain from exaggerating, padding, or overstating efforts.

Faculty members will find that following these best practices will serve them well in the promotion and tenure process.

## Conclusion

Since the early 1990s, the growth of community engagement in higher education has resulted in more faculty interest in, and practice of, engaged scholarship. As more institutions of higher education value this work, faculty members are looking for ways to enhance the effectiveness of their dossiers for promotion and tenure. The tips and tools provided in this article will help faculty members in this pursuit. Faculty and staff members who have used these tips and tools report anecdotally to the author that they have stronger confidence in meeting the challenges of promotion or tenure, and increased success in gaining promotion and tenure. Formal research, however, should be conducted to determine the specific impacts of these tips and tools on the promotion and tenure process.

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## About the Author

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