**Proposed Community Engagement Language**

**to be included in Rewards Structure at WSU**

**Purpose**

The goal of this document is to: 1) articulate the gaps and tensions in the promotion and tenure process as they relate to rewarding community engagement as a form of teaching, scholarship, and service at Weber State University; and 2) provide suggestions for addressing these gaps in policy documents. This document is meant to act as a guide or reference for committees working to revise college tenure documents to include community engagement.

**Context**

In 2008, Weber State University became one of only 311 institutions of higher education in the nation to receive the prestigious Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement because our faculty members collaborate with the community in teaching, scholarship and service. These community engaged faculty are upholding WSU’s mission which states, “through academic programs, research, artistic expression, public service and community-based learning, the university serves as an educational, cultural and economic leader for the region.”

This community engaged mission of the university, however, is not explicitly cited in the university-wide promotion policy and shows up sporadically in college tenure policies. According to policy alone then, Weber State University does not appear to reward faculty for their community engaged work in teaching, scholarship and service cited in our university mission. Herein lies a tension between what the institution says it does, and what it rewards faculty for doing.

This tension points to a gap between university policy and campus practice. Many faculty are clearly engaged in the community and encouraged to record their community engaged activities in teaching, scholarship and service on the university-wide autobiographical form used to summarize faculty accomplishments for the review process. Yet, those community engaged activities are not reflected in promotion and most tenure criteria. Some college tenure documents are developing some criteria for community engaged teaching and service in particular, but this is creating yet another tension as promotion and tenure criteria are becoming less and less consistent with one another.

The current tensions between policy and practice in teaching, scholarship and service as they relate to community engagement are outlined below. Each section includes suggestions for addressing these tensions with revisions to current tenure and/or promotion policies. As a common reference point, WSU’s campus-wide definition of community engagement is provided here:

*Community engagement describes the collaboration between Weber State University and our larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity*.

A full description and modes of community engagement facilitated at WSU can be accessed under Center for Community Engaged Learning in the course catalog section “Engaged Learning and Interdisciplinary Programs” <http://catalog.weber.edu/preview_entity.php?catoid=6&ent_oid=1825&returnto=982>.

**Community Engagement in Teaching**

Although not explicitly stated in promotion and only explicitly stated in two tenure policies at Weber State University, community engaged learning pedagogy has been recognized and rewarded in practice as innovative teaching. Explicitly including community engaged learning pedagogy in WSU’s definition of teaching in promotion and tenure policies would accurately reflect campus practice.

The recognition of community engagement in teaching can be addressed by including language in the definition of teaching that 1) recognizes teaching occurs in many contexts inside and outside the classroom, and 2) specifically cites community engaged learning within the list of acceptable activities indicating it is an equally valued teaching modality.

*Sample language*

*(slightly modified from S&BS revised Tenure Document)*

Teaching is simply defined as any transfer of relevant knowledge or skills from faculty to students, irrespective of context, medium, process, or outcomes (e.g., whether or not it results in a grade).  Teaching activities include, but are not limited to: classroom instruction, laboratory sections, field work or field trips, on-line instruction, and a variety of advisory, supervisory, or sponsorship roles including community engaged learning, undergraduate research, student clubs and organizations, events, and programs.

**Community Engagement in Scholarship**

There are two forms of community engaged scholarly work that need explicit recognition in the rewards structure:

* research on community engaged learning pedagogy to improve teaching and learning through the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), i.e., publishing articles, making presentations, conducting studies of courses, conducting workshops, etc.; and,
* community research involving collaboration with community partners to produce scholarly products of benefit to the community that are representative of co-created knowledge between academics and community partners resulting from outreach and partnerships (e.g., technical reports, curriculum, research reports, policy reports, publications, etc.).

Research on community engaged pedagogies (as well as other pedagogies) has been rewarded in practice at Weber State University even though it has not been explicitly cited as scholarship in promotion and tenure policies in the past (except for in the College of Education tenure policy). Explicitly including the scholarship of teaching and learning in the definition of scholarship communicates more clearly to faculty that this form of scholarship is valued and rewarded at Weber State University and brings campus policy in line with already existing campus practice.

Community research has not been explicitly cited as a form of scholarship in promotion or tenure policies at Weber State University and is generally not rewarded in practice. The current definition of scholarship at WSU focuses on scholarly products and measures the value of those products in terms of significance to academic peers and disciplines. A definition of scholarship that is inclusive of community engagement would 1) expand the list of acceptable scholarly products to include reports or products created for the use of community or government entities; 2) consider the impact of the research in terms of it’s influence and ability to inform policy- and decision-making in relevant groups/institutions; and 3) recognize the equal value of all forms of scholarship. Furthermore, a review process of scholarship that is inclusive of community engagement would encourage evaluation of the scholarly products by individuals from both inside and outside the university.

*Sample Language*

*(slightly modified from S&BS revised Tenure Document)*

The candidate is expected to produce scholarship.  Weber State University encourages many types of scholarship including, but not limited to, research to generate knowledge and information to advance a discipline(s) or field(s) of study, scholarship to improve teaching and learning, and research involving collaboration with community partners to produce scholarly products of benefit to the community. All types of scholarship will be given consideration by the Rank and Tenure Committee based on their merit.  It is the candidate’s responsibility to document the significance, impact, and quantity of their scholarship.

Significant scholarship is judged as such by peers, and impactful scholarship influences and informs policy- and decision-making in relevant groups/institutions.  A candidate producing notably significant or impactful scholarship may require fewer items to receive a given rating than would otherwise be required.  Evaluation committees and candidates are encouraged to obtain independent evaluation of scholarly work from within or outside of the university to assist in establishing the relative merits of the candidate’s scholarship.  The following list of scholarly work is not exhaustive.

* Publication of books or articles or chapters subject to peer review and formal acceptance processes.  It is the candidate’s responsibility to make the case that a particular publication is peer-reviewed, to establish the significance of the publishing forum, and to document the extent of his or her contributions to a jointly authored publication.
* Unpublished works that are currently undergoing the peer-review process.
* Peer-reviewed grants that are in and of themselves scholarly work.
* Service as editor or assistant editor of a scholarly journal that involves the production of scholarly work.
* Delivery of scholarly papers or posters at academic meetings.
* Publication of book reviews.
* Non-peer reviewed scholarly products such as unpublished manuscripts, self-published works, research reports, and publications for general audiences.
* Community research reports or presentations of findings (e.g. technical reports, research reports, policy reports, publications, etc.).

**Community Engagement in Service**

“Professionally related community service,” to quote PPM 8-11, section G., is clearly part of Weber State’s faculty rewards structure now and in the past. Both policy and practice reflect faculty being rewarded for their outreach and engagement in the external community.

The sample language below more clearly defines external communities and constituencies and provides some examples of professionally related community service. Adopting such language more clearly connotes the importance of service to external communities and helps faculty who are engaged in such activities know their work is valued at Weber State University.

*Sample Language*

*(slightly modified from S&BS revised tenure document)*

The candidate is expected to provide professionally-related service.  Professionally-related service includes activities that sustain the university and enable it to carry out its mission, contributes to the function and effectiveness of the faculty member's profession and discipline, and reaches out to external communities and constituencies, such as government agencies, business, private for-profit, and not-for-profit organizations. All levels of service, whether at the institutional, community, or professional levels, will be given consideration based on their merits by the committee.  Service to the institution is expected of all faculty.  It is the candidate’s responsibility to document the quality, quantity, and significance of these activities, and any leadership roles that they may have fulfilled. Service to the community must be professional in nature and utilize the candidate’s area(s) of academic expertise and may include activities such as speech-making in the area of the candidate’s expertise, membership on boards, consulting, publishing in the popular press, advising to avocation groups, and participating in seminars or workshops.