

## SCHOLARSHIP: WHAT REALLY OUGHT TO COUNT?

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### ABSTRACT

Marketing education, among all university endeavors, faces serious challenges from within and outside academe regarding its vision of the scholarly activities of professors. Adoption of a broader and more effective conceptualization of scholarship including discovery, integration, application and teaching is proposed. The need to value a variety of scholarly contributions is discussed.

### INTRODUCTION

Defining the central task of university education and, more specifically, of university professors has been the subject of a wide and long-standing debate. The catch-all categories of professorial life, namely teaching, research and service, do not share universal appeal in describing what we do, nor what we ought to be doing. There is considerable rancor among us about what counts as scholarship (research) and about the relative emphasis put on any one of the three aspects, seemingly at the expense of the other two. We are torn in very personal ways in this stressful role conflict issue.

Increasingly in recent times, some of us are being asked to do a better job of teaching and service with no offsetting reduction in research expectations. While simultaneously, those of us on more traditionally teaching-oriented campuses have been asked to do more research with no mitigation of teaching and service loads. In either case, we seem to be caught in the classic organizational problem of requiring A, while rewarding B.

The crux of the matter is what we and our interested-publics value. The question of what we ought to value and our need for mutual respect for diversity in scholarship is forcefully taken up in Boyer's Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate. This paper is a response to Boyer's call for a renewed vision. While the issues addressed here are not new to marketing educators, they are profoundly important and merit a revitalized enthusiasm for constructive interaction.

Differences of opinion exist among marketing educators, yet there seems to be a natural proclivity among us to be responsive to our publics, especially our students. On this basis we may be interested in adopting Boyer's larger vision of the role of teaching, research and service in the academy. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to encourage us marketing educators to rethink the question: "What really ought to count?" It is indeed a call to arms.

### PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOLARSHIP

There is a long-standing belief among marketing educators that active scholarship is necessary for being an effective educator, more specifically that research informs teaching. That important point is not in question here. The issue at hand is what to do about the apparent shift in the balance of emphasis toward a narrow conceptualization of scholarship, namely research, at the expense of teaching and service. Over time it appears that research, teaching and service have become increasingly disconnected from each other, resulting in conflicting professional pursuits and politically divided "camps" within the academy.

#### The Role of the Professoriate

Faculty have appropriately been viewed as the core of the academy. Current moves to improve educational quality, to globalize and to develop sensitivity to cultural diversity have largely focused on faculty development as examples of the centrality of faculty to the success of these endeavors.

The problem, as we are all probably too keenly aware, is that our role definition has shifted over time. Historically, faculty were considered effective when they were teaching and mentoring students well. In modern times, however, this relational model of faculty life has given way to an individualized, scholastic model. This shift in professorial role can also be seen in the shift from undergraduate education to specialized graduate education. Some have even been led to a view of the professorial role which excludes students altogether. This seems to be an unacceptable conceptualization for more than a handful of us. To "profess" suggests that there is

someone who will hear and is called to respond to the message.

The paradox in perspective on higher education and the professoriate is that we in academe have valued the discovery of new knowledge and the freedom to pursue personally interesting questions, while society has expected higher education to equip its members for productive lives. No doubt basic research is important, but educating a "mass" audience has been the social mandate.

### The Role of Scholarship

Scholarship has similarly undergone a transformation. Historically, it was devoted to discovering and integrating new knowledge, making it useful for a broad spectrum of people in responding to social problems. Our definition of scholarship has narrowed to be refereed publications where the peer in peer review usually means other narrowly specialized academics. Being learned has become synonymous with being narrowly specialized as opposed to being capable of bringing a breadth of insights to bear on important problems and meaningfully communicating those insights with others. How many of us have heard the complaint that academic journals are filled with academic minutia that has meaning for only a handful of other academics?

We in business schools have generally followed this same path, while other professional schools, medicine for example, have kept a larger view of acceptable forms of scholarship valuing practical application and service as well as the creation of new knowledge. We have let ourselves become inwardly oriented and have reinforced this orientation in our reward systems.

### Driving Forces for Change

There are many forces for change at work today. Boyer recounts strong evidence of rising job dissatisfaction among faculty noting strongly negative evaluations of the academic publishing requirements even at large, research universities. Countless articles and editorials in both the general and business press clearly show the swelling tide of dissatisfaction with higher education among business executives, politicians and students.

The new AACSB accreditation standards [Evans 1991] can also be counted as a force for change in that schools of business are being asked to value teaching more heavily and to ensure that teaching, research

and service are interconnected and contributing to the accomplishment of the school's mission. As part of this shift in standards, we are being encouraged to move away from a solely functional or disciplinary worldview in curriculum structures. As a result, matrix organizations wherein the business disciplines are jointly brought to bear on contemporary business issues such as cultural diversity, globalism and technology are being adopted by many leading schools.

### An Enlarged Perspective

Boyer proposes a reconstruction of our concept of scholarship in which four types of scholarly activity are identified and valued. The four types of scholarship are: discovery, integration, application and teaching.

The research activities of modern academics aimed at publication of new knowledge corresponds with the scholarship of discovery. Marketing educators' pushing the frontiers of knowledge about consumer behavior is an example of this type of scholarship. In the enlarged view of scholarship, such research is preserved as a highly important facet of university life. It is not singled out as the only source of valuable contributions, however.

Integration oriented scholarship seeks to attach meaning to research findings and place those results within a broader context. Drawing connections across streams of thought is the backbone of such scholarship. It is by nature inter-disciplinary. This form of scholarship is particularly appropriate for marketing educators. Indeed, much of our discipline's heritage is based on translating and integrating knowledge from other fields to construct insights into the problem of bringing suppliers and demanders together efficiently and effectively.

Bringing theory into practice and practice into theory constitutes the scholarship of application. The service of making knowledge useful for resolving the problems of life for individuals and organizations is the heart of application. Seen in this way, service is NOT synonymous with university committee obligations or civic activities. Marketing educators have many opportunities to address important problems and make a difference in the lives of people through this form of scholarship. Even consulting can be considered scholarship, following a medical school model of practicing the craft.

Teaching as scholarship is the active engagement of knowledge so that both student and teacher are transformed in some meaningful way for their development as persons. It is not just holding classes, but consciously developing ways to effectively communicate knowledge so that students, in particular, are challenged to be learned persons who can make a contribution to organizations and society. Writing texts, developing software, creating study guides and preparing effective lecture presentations are included in the scholarship of teaching. Peer review and sharing of these materials can validate their contribution.

Boyer calls for mutual respect for the contributions of each form of scholarship. Further, he argues that the decision to engage in the any of these forms needs to be considered in light of a univerty's mission. Certainly, none of us can do all these things equally well, nor are all institutions equally suited to all of them. Table 1 summarizes Boyer's view of the mission match of these four types of scholarship with various types of higher education institutions.

TABLE 1  
Suggested Scholarship Activity  
by School Type

Community College	A	T
Liberal Arts College	I	T
Comprehensive University	I	A T
Research University	D	T
Professional School	I	A T

D = Discovery  
I = Integration  
A = Application  
T = Teaching

Teaching is proposed as being relevant to all institutions, while discovery is more appropriately (but not solely) the domain of the larger, research universities. Marketing educators in professional schools of business are encouraged to emphasize integration, application and teaching.

## IMPLICATIONS

We will have to overcome the considerable power of inertia to accomplish any meaningful reconstruction of our role as marketing educators. There are many barriers to change, not the least of which is the way we recognize each other and value our different contributions. We will have to give up our parochial views that researchers are covered with guided ivy and that those who can't, teach.

Our reward systems will have to reflect that a variety of scholarly activities are valued. We will have to come to grips with the tough question of defining quality work without resorting to a simple counting of articles placed in a select list of publications.

Our curricula will need to promote integration, application and teaching. We will have to genuinely believe that we are co-learners with colleagues and students.

## CONCLUSION

Can we afford a narrow understanding of scholarship, given the rapidly changing boundaries of knowledge domains and the interdependencies of peoples in a world filled with significant challenges to the human species? The answer must be an unequivocal NO. So, what can we do about it?

We can take a stand in favor of a more inclusive and mutually accepting view of scholarship. We can seek to address the really important questions of life among ourselves, our students and other constituencies. In doing so, we do not compromise our integrity, giving up our expectations for quality work. Indeed, we cannot tolerate shoddy work whether in discovery, integration, application or teaching. If our understanding of rigorous scholarship depends on a narrow definition of what really counts, then we have fallen prey to a professional myopia which may eventually lead us to personal despair and to a declining contribution to the well-being of our society.

## REFERENCES

- Boyer, Ernest L. 1990. Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.
- Evans, John P., et al. 1990. The Final Report of the AACSB Accreditation Project. St. Louis, MO: AACSB.