# **Scholarship and Excellence in Extension/Engagement**

# Guidance for faculty, department heads and promotion committees

## Conceptualized by the Extension Council

## Purdue Agriculture

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Scholarship demonstrated by academic works is a key expectation of University faculty. Scholarship can be accomplished in all missions of the Land-Grant University but is typically best understood and accomplished in the research/discovery paradigm. The scholarship of Extension/Engagement is less understood and can be a source of confusion for faculty with Extension/Engagement assignments as well as their peers who assess their scholarly progress through the promotion and tenure process. The purpose of this document is to contextualize and expand the understanding of scholarship and the scholarly works of Extension/Engagement.

## Purdue University has clearly articulated expectations of faculty in the promotion process. Provost Randy Woodson (Purdue Guidelines on Faculty Promotion, August 1, 2008) states:

## The tasks of University faculty members are to acquire, discover, appraise, and disseminate knowledge. They should communicate this knowledge and the manner of its acquisition or discovery to their immediate community of students and scholars, to their profession, and to society at large. Service to the institution, the community, the state, and the nation constitutes an important mission of University faculty members. As an institution of higher education with a commitment to excellence and a diversity of missions, Purdue University values creative endeavor, research, and scholarship; teaching and learning in its many forms; and engagement in its many forms, including extension and outreach for example. To be considered for promotion, a faculty member should have **demonstrated excellence and scholarly productivity** in at least one of these areas. Ordinarily, strength should be manifest in more than one of these areas.

## It is clear that both excellence and scholarly productivity are important expectations of Purdue faculty. Also note that engagement and Extension are specifically articulated in this message.

Effective Extension/Engagement efforts develop products and programs that address important issues and result in changes in behavior or practice. These products and programs may compose the scholarly works Extension specialists are expected to develop over the course of their career. Our intent is that Purdue Agriculture faculty will be successful in Extension/Engagement scholarship and program excellence, and address the needs of the people of Indiana, the U.S. and the world.

**Scholarship and Excellence in Extension/Engagement**

Extension professionals are expected to transform research-based information into products that people can use to enhance their lives or livelihood. Examples of products are publications, websites, curricula, videos, decision-support tools and other creative works. When these products are clearly based on research and their format encourages use, they may be deemed scholarly. A simple listing of products, however, does not satisfy the definition of scholarship. These products must be provided in ways that people can use. And, that use results in learning and the confidence to choose different behaviors or practice. Consequently, Extension/Engagement scholarship, at the highest level, involves the delivery of scholarly products and a relevant assessment of the impact of that effort. With this in mind, the following statement defines Extension/Engagement scholarship:

Scholarship in the Extension/Engagement context is the creation, delivery and assessment of timely, unbiased, science-based educational materials and programs that address relevant, critical and emerging issues. It should empower people in ways that result in desired outcomes, informed decisions and/or improved quality of life.

Note: Extension/Engagement scholarship emanating from a highly integrated research/Extension program is particularly noteworthy.

Extension/Engagement programs that meet this definition are considered scholarly. In addition, scholarship can be demonstrated for specific components of Extension/Engagement programs. For example, creative and/or innovative methods of needs assessment, delivery or assessment could be deemed scholarly.

Excellence is an overall measure of program effectiveness. The highest level of excellence is the creation of transformational learning experiences that are so important and so valuable that people are empowered to make informed decisions that enhanced the public good. Excellence is demonstrated by program accomplishment and impact as well as recognition by peers.

In Extension/Engagement, scholarship and excellence can be demonstrated in a variety of ways. A few examples include:

* Publication of appropriate, peer-reviewed products that impact target specific audiences (Extension journals, web-based information and decision-making tools, books, numbered Extension publications, etc.).
* Technology transfer tools that provide demonstrated value to targeted clientele (newsletters, blogs, websites, etc.).
* Innovation and creativity when developing and delivering Extension programs that promote informed decisions.
* Funding (grants, fee revenue, donations) appropriate to the project or target audience.
* Project or program collaboration that demonstrate impact at regional, national or international levels
* Adoption of program materials by others (state-wide and nationally/internationally)
* Presentations, invited by peers or clientele, at state, regional, national or international venues (appropriate to rank)
* Invited publications or review articles
* Regional/national/international leadership
* Grant review panels
* Editorial boards
* Awards and recognition

Extension/Engagement faculty who pay attention to the key elements of Extension/Engagement programming should enhance their program effectiveness and have a framework to document accomplishments. Promotion documents that clearly describe process and scholarship provide a sound basis for the assessment of excellence.

**Extension/Engagement Section of a Promotion Document**

A promotion document is an opportunity for the faculty candidate to clearly communicate scholarship and program excellence. A simple list of outputs (publications, workshops, websites, etc.) does not effectively communicate Extension/Engagement scholarship and program excellence. Members of primary or area promotion committees may not be familiar with Extension/Engagement work. It is the candidate’s responsibility to communicate a clear and compelling story that describes the issue, the strategy, the accomplishment and the impact of their work. Promotion documents that do not communicate program impact are unacceptable. The following sections can provide valuable evidence of scholarship in Extension/Engagement programming and help the candidate “tell their story”:

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| **Section in the document:** | **Question or point to be addressed:** |
| 1. Issue identification | Why is this issue important? |
| 1. Review of the science | What science is available to underpin this effort or what gaps need to be addressed by research? |
| 1. Statement of objectives or hypotheses with outcomes clearly identified | What is the intended result of this work? |
| 1. Educational products developed or enhanced | What creativity or innovation can be demonstrated? |
| 1. Resources acquired | Demonstrate entrepreneurism in developing and delivering programs. |
| 1. Delivery methods | Why was this method selected? |
| 1. Effectiveness evidenced by impact assessment | Did this work make a difference for the target audience? |

Keep in mind that this document is an opportunity to demonstrate scholarship and accomplishment such that program excellence is evident.

Letters:

Letters from peers will be solicited by the Department Head per College of Agriculture guidelines. Additional letters from clientele or partner organizations that document the impact of the faculty candidate’s work on the organization can be included in the document as evidence of effectiveness.