UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS LIBRARIES
LIBRARY FACULTY

Tip Sheet Regarding Scholarship

The Personnel Document dated 9/12/2000 is in force. It states: "Job performance is the most important component of a Librarian's contribution to the university and is therefore given the greatest weight in tenure decisions. Tenure may not be recommended unless accomplishments in all three categories are considered satisfactory by the Tenure Committee

Library faculty members play important roles in the University's progress toward the goal of being "a nationally competitive, student-centered research university serving Arkansas and the world." The first three sources cited at the end of this tip sheet provide information about this climate of growth in which an integrated faculty scholar "infuses the fruits of his or her research or scholarship in presentations . . . publishing, teaching or service innovations and presentations in journals or equivalent outlets . . . [and, finding ways that] scholarly presentations and professional development experiences may be incorporated into services offered to faculty and students."[1] In short, the best scholarship for library faculty invigorates our services to patrons and contributes to the progress of the University and the profession.

Tenure-track library faculty members are expected to engage in research, scholarship or other creative activity as a significant part of their assigned work at the University. Depending upon the faculty member's responsibilities, this effort must be defined in the faculty member's annual statement of duties and responsibilities and is generally 15 percent of the assigned workload.

Evaluating scholarship accomplishments is a complex process for which we (and numerous other university libraries across the country) have found no short cuts that would yield meaningful results. There are several issues and many opinions related to this topic. To assist tenure-track faculty in their career development, pertinent issues are summarized below.

1. The dossier must present evidence of a sustained commitment to scholarship and a progressive record of research accomplishments. As soon as possible after initial appointment and in consultation with the immediate supervisor, tenure-track faculty should prepare a plan for research and scholarly activity.

2. Traditionally, the refereed journal article is considered to be one desirable component of faculty scholarship because it represents an accomplishment whose value has been "proven" through the rigor of pre-publication peer-review and communication through an established journal. In general, any works that undergo considerable scrutiny before dissemination (for example by referees, editorial boards, anthology editors, etc.) or other significant review/critique by peers are considered of highest value.

3. Any description of scholarship, professional innovation, and creative activity communicated through exhibits, recitals, performances, or other media must clearly outline research components of the preparation and presentation of the work and peer review it received. Preparing highly competitive, peer-reviewed grant applications may demonstrate achievement

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[1] Smith, Bob. "Integrated Faculty Scholars: You Will Find Them in University Libraries." *All Things Academic* 6:1 (December 2005) http://libinfo.uark.edu/ata/v6no4/integratedlibrarians.asp (accessed June 21, 2006)

in scholarship when fully documented with details of scholarship required to complete and submit the application. The percentage of the candidate's contribution to the grant application and/or execution effort should also be included.

4. The performance of library faculty members is enhanced by insight gained from engaging in research and creative processes, and therefore scholarship that evolves from performance areas may be of particular value. However, librarians may possess subject expertise gained from formal study or from professional practice in the interdisciplinary aspects of their jobs; these areas of expertise may also lead to valuable research projects.

5. The dossier must provide more than an enumeration of articles, papers, etc., as given in the vita. It should include a description of the significance/impact of each accomplishment—and when appropriate—the reason why the research was presented in a particular format or genre (e.g., scholarly article, presentation, performance) and the nature of the peer review or critique the research received.

6. For work presented as evidence of scholarship that results from joint effort, a description and percentage of the candidate's contribution to the joint effort must be provided in the dossier.

From the University Libraries Personnel Document (dated Sept.12, 2000. Section IV. A. 2. b. pages 7 and 8):

   b. Research, publication, and other creative activity

Legitimate research and scholarly or creative activity in the field of librarianship is characterized by at least one of the following traits: 1) it makes a substantial and original contribution to the practical or theoretical knowledge of our profession or other disciplines; 2) it demonstrates professional competence in formulating questions, accessing and evaluating appropriate source materials, and articulating findings in accordance with established scholarly standards; 3) it demonstrates a disciplined effort to develop and apply one's artistic or creative abilities; 4) it shares expertise gained at this institution through formal communication so that others may benefit from our insights. The following definitions are used in evaluating the evidence submitted in the candidate's dossier:

   (1) Satisfactory: There is a body of completed scholarly or creative work that informs or enhances the professional performance of the librarian. Such work may be manifested in traditional or electronic format and may include but not be limited to:

      a) Original research: books, chapters in books, articles in professional journals, papers presented at conferences, authorship of grants reflecting original research.
      b) Secondary research: edited works, original annotated bibliographies, anthologies, collected works, grants reflecting secondary research.
      c) Work evaluating the scholarly contributions of others: editorial board responsibilities, editorship, book reviews, serving as a juror of creative or scholarly works
      d) Creative activities: exhibits, software development, instructional innovations, musical performances or compositions, etc.
      e) Complementary research: presentations, exhibits, public presentations, including workshops, seminars, speeches, poster sessions, in-house reports, newsletter columns, formal classroom instruction requiring prior preparation, creation of tools that may be used by library professionals, course work which contributes to the enhancement of job performance or leads toward an advanced degree in any field.

   (2) Unsatisfactory: There is little or no evidence of scholarly or creative endeavors. No completed products resulting from scholarly or creative endeavors are available, or those that are available are of inadequate or insufficient quality.

Selected **related sources**:

Rutledge, Reynie and Bob Smith. "The 2010 Commission and Raising the Bar." *All Things Academic* 7:2 (May 2006). http://libinfo.uark.edu/ata/v7no2/2010.asp (accessed June 21, 2006)

Smith, Bob. "Integrated Faculty Scholars: You Will Find Them in University Libraries." *All Things Academic* 6:1 (December 2005) http://libinfo.uark.edu/ata/v6no4/integratedlibrarians.asp (accessed June 21, 2006)

Numerous articles published in *All Things Academic* "Volumes 1–5 Cumulation" http://libinfo.uark.edu/ata/cumulation/content.pdf (accessed June 21, 2006)

"Academic Librarianship and the Redefining Scholarship Project." American Library Association. 1998. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/whitepapers/academiclibrarianship.htm (accessed June 9, 2006)

Black, William K. and Joan M. Leysen, "Scholarship and the Academic Librarian," *College & Research Libraries* 55, 3 (May 1994): 229–41. (MAIN Z671 .C6)

Lener, Edward F.; Bruce Penecek, and Susan Ariew. "Raising the Bar: An Approach to Reviewing and Revising Standards for Professional Achievement for Library Faculty." *College & Research Libraries* 65, 4 (July 2004): 287–300. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crljournal/crl2004/july/lener.pdf

Mitchell, W. Bede and Mary Reichel, "Publish or Perish: A Dilemma for Academic Librarians?" *College & Research Libraries* 60, 3 (May 1999): 232–43. http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlpubs/crljournal/backissues1999b/may99/mitchell.pdf (accessed June 9, 2006)

"Your Research Coach." A program sponsored by ALA ACRL for "academic librarians seeking assistance with research and scholarly projects that can lead to publication or presentations. It helps by matching them with an experienced "coach," who can offer advice, support and suggestions to improve the chances for success." http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/acrlsections/collegelibraries/collprogdisc/researchcoach.htm (accessed August 30, 2006)

Palmer, Pamela and Chris Matz, "Promoting Writing Among Nontenured Faculty." *College & Research Libraries News* 67 (June 2006): 372–74.