



## **Imagining America Regional Meeting**

September 11, 2009

### **Dominican College of Blauvelt**

- 1) What is the discussion of tenure and promotion on your campus, particularly in regards to public scholarship? What stage of planning or implementation has your institution reached?

While public scholarship can be used for an application for tenure or for promotion to the assistant professor rank, the College has insisted upon traditional “scholarly productivity”-- usually defined as two or more peer reviewed published works-- for promotion to the associate or full professor levels. The result has been a relatively small number of faculty at the associate or full professor level.

Eight years ago, Dominican’s Promotion and Tenure Committee, with the President’s support, brought before the full faculty a proposal that “innovative institutional research and analysis, program and/or grant proposals, or other studies of significance to the College” also be considered for promotion to these higher ranks. This proposal was voted down partly due to its vague language (“innovative” and “significance”), but mainly due to the question of how to judge the quality of such work. Without traditional external review, the opponents of this proposal argued, the criteria for advancing to the higher academic ranks would be watered down. This proposal was voted down by the faculty.

The current Promotion and Tenure Committee has been considering bringing forward to the faculty another proposal, one that takes into account Boyer’s model of scholarship. This would ideally take public scholarship into account. Due to a series of retirements and the creation of new positions over the past several years, the outcome of such a vote may be very different than it was eight years ago. There has been growing support for such a measure on the departmental level as well.

- 2) Who are the key individuals and groups that are talking about or working on promotion policies for engaged faculty members? What institutional domains do they represent (for example, department, chair and program, college, central administration, governance)? What, if any, off-campus networks are involved (such as national associations, community partners, foundations)?

Any change to the promotion and tenure policy would come from through the Promotion and Tenure Committee, and the conversation to date has been largely limited to this group. Since this committee has one representative from each of the College’s six academic divisions, however, a proposed change could conceivably begin on the departmental or divisional level. The College is currently working with a consulting firm, the Stevens Group, to revise and further develop its policies and procedures. We have asked the Stevens Group to send us various

promotion and tenure policy templates for consideration. In initial discussions with this group, they expressed some surprise regarding Dominican's insistence on the importance of traditional peer-reviewed publications as the sole measure of scholarship. Any suggestions adopted from the Stevens Group's recommendations would need to go through the usual approval process, culminating with a faculty vote and both the President's and Board of Trustees' approval.

- 3) What is the role of the department chair in changing tenure/promotion policies? Are you finding ways to support the chairs charged with hiring, mentoring, and evaluating public scholars?

Again, any proposal coming from a departmental chair would need to be brought to that chair's representative on the Promotion and Tenure Committee. No separate policies or procedures currently exist for hiring, mentoring, and evaluating public scholars.

- 4) What aspects of your campus efforts would you be willing to share at the Imagining America working meeting on September 11? How would this benefit other campuses?

Any of the above information may be shared with the rest of the workshop participants. Since Dominican is really just beginning to focus more on public scholarship, we hope to be able to learn from the best practices of the other institutions present.