

[COLLABORATIONS]

## Engaged Scholarship and Faculty Rewards: A National Conversation

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Throughout the nation, stakeholders in higher education are having critical conversations about the value of engaged (or public) scholarship in the university of the twenty-first century. They are raising important questions about universities' traditional cultural values and the types of knowledge recognized by

faculty rewards systems, including: What is public scholarship, and why should faculty pursue it? How can we deepen our understanding of the overlapping dimensions of teaching, research, and service? How can we evaluate the activities of engaged scholars and incorporate their work into faculty rewards systems?

In fall 2005, Imagining America: Artists and Scholars in Public Life (IA)—a national consortium of over eighty institutions committed to enhancing the university's civic work through the arts, humanities, and design—launched a concerted effort to address these and other compelling questions with its Tenure Team Initiative on Public Scholarship (TTI). Initiated under the leadership of national cochairs Nancy Cantor (president and chancellor of Syracuse University) and Steven D. Lavine (president of CalArts), the TTI extends IA's vision of public scholarship in higher education to the realm of faculty rewards. In May 2008, IA released a national report based on the project, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University*. IA director Jan Cohen-Cruz is now leading the consortium in a robust action phase to disseminate and respond to findings from the report and to facilitate the creation of affinity groups for this work.

### Institutional Support for Public Scholarship

IA defines public scholarship as scholarly or creative activity that joins serious intellectual endeavor with a commitment to public practice and public consequence. It includes:

- Scholarly and creative work jointly planned and carried out by university and community partners;
- Intellectual work that produces a public good;
- Artistic, critical, and historical work that contributes to public debates;
- Efforts to expand the place of public scholarship in higher education, including the development of new programs and research on the successes of such efforts.

The TTI works through both persuasion and policy to create a climate in higher education that embraces public scholarship and practice. Unfortunately, academic public engagement is often a risky early career option, particularly for women and faculty of color. Faculty will be able to fully pursue civic engagement within their professions only when appropriate reward systems, including tenure and promotions policies, support this work. By incorporating engaged scholarship into a scholarly continuum that recognizes many professional pathways, institutions can allow faculty and students to participate more fully in public scholarship.

The TTI is comprised of two primary groups 1) the Tenure Team, composed of key campus and disciplinary-association leaders (including AAC&U President Carol Geary Schneider) and 2) consulting scholars and artists who have crucial expertise in specific areas. Participating individuals come from multiple sectors (including academic faculty, higher education administration, and foundation leadership) and are deeply grounded in the work of humanistic knowledge and artistic creation. As IA director emerita Julie Ellison reflects, TTI participants “bring the imagination, flexibility, and range that an undertaking like this needs” (Imagining America 2008).

The TTI's recent report, *Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and*

### Recommendations from “Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University” (2008):

1. Define public scholarly and creative work.
2. Develop policy based on a continuum of scholarship.
3. Recognize the excellence of work that connects domains of knowledge.
4. Expand what counts.
5. Document what counts.
6. Present what counts: use portfolios.
7. Expand who counts: Broaden the community of peer review.
8. Support publicly engaged graduate students and junior faculty.
9. Build in flexibility at the point of hire.
10. Promote public scholars to full professor.
11. Organize the department for policy change.
12. Take this report home and use it to start something.

*Tenure Policy in the Engaged University*, seeks to expand promotion and tenure guidelines so public scholarship and civic engagement practice receive appropriate institutional recognition. The report generated recommendations that now frame the TTI's continuing work (see sidebar). It also produced a charge for both policy and cultural change in academe.

### Moving Forward

Following the report's May 2008 release, the TTI and Campus Compact cosponsored a national working conference in early June at Syracuse University's New York City venue, Lubin House. At this conference, members of the Tenure Team and national partners from disciplinary associations and networks met to stimulate the national dialogue about these issues and to address the report's specific recommendations through four concurrent thematic working groups.

Building on these conversations, the TTI and Campus Compact are planning regional meetings beginning in February 2009. The meetings will include faculty and administrators who are working to improve the rewards system for public scholars, as well as local participants from Publicly Active Graduate Education (PAGE), the graduate student

component of IA. As we look toward these regional meetings, we are moving forward to disseminate perspectives and findings from the report throughout the IA consortium and among our national partners and networks.

IA kicked off the action phase of the TTI with a session at the IA national conference at the University of Southern


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California in October 2008. The session focused on one of the report's primary recommendations: to build the capacity of department chairs, institute directors, and center directors to support public scholars. We hope that these outreach efforts will help support cultural change and expanded faculty rewards.

As David Scobey, cochair of the Imagining America TTI Working Group on Public Scholarship, observed at the conclusion of the working conference, the TTI is "partly about intervening as citizens of our institutions and partly about intervening as citizens of

higher education." Higher education must "distill, clarify, and mobilize at the national level...[to] create [a] framing and validating context" in support of engaged scholarship's full potential. We invite you to use the report to start or enrich the discussion about engaged scholarship and faculty rewards on your campus or within your

network. Let us know what happens by emailing [imaginingamerica@syr.edu](mailto:imaginingamerica@syr.edu).

For details about the TTI project or to obtain a copy of the report, visit [www.imaginingamerica.org](http://www.imaginingamerica.org). 

### REFERENCES

- ELLISON, J., and T. K. EATMAN.** 2008. Scholarship in public: Knowledge creation and tenure policy in the engaged university. Syracuse, NY: Imagining America. [www.imaginingamerica.org/IApdfs/TTI\\_REPORT%20FINAL%205.2.08.pdf](http://www.imaginingamerica.org/IApdfs/TTI_REPORT%20FINAL%205.2.08.pdf).
- IMAGINING AMERICA.** 2008. National tenure team initiative for arts and humanities announced. Syracuse, NY: Imagining America. [www.imaginingamerica.org/IApdfs/05.09.24-TTI.PressRelease.pdf](http://www.imaginingamerica.org/IApdfs/05.09.24-TTI.PressRelease.pdf).

## Examples of Engaged Scholarship

**Public History of Slavery:** At Brown University, Professor James Campbell (working at the instigation of President Ruth Simmons) led the Steering Committee on Slavery and Justice in a research project on the university as a "site of conscience" inseparable from its city and region. This effort led to the production of rich documentary and curricular resources.

**Arts and Civic Dialogue:** The Animating Democracy Initiative funded the participation of writers from both academic and nonacademic backgrounds in three "arts and civic dialogue"

projects. The writers interacted with creative teams during projects such as the Dentalium Project, which explored political and cultural issues surrounding the construction of a Native American casino in the rural community of Blue Lake, California. Resulting essays, with responses from the arts organizations and community collaborators, were published as *Critical Perspectives: Writings on Art and Civic Dialogue* and have been used in a number of college classes.

**Teachers as Public Scholars:** Sarah Robbins of Kennesaw State University

led the Keeping and Creating American Communities Project, based at the National Writing Project's Kennesaw Mountain site. This multiyear project developed a theoretical and critical framework for community-engaged research and teaching for K-12 teachers. Two books—one composed of critical essays, the other of teaching models—resulted from the project.

*Examples adapted from "Scholarship in Public: Knowledge Creation and Tenure Policy in the Engaged University" (Ellison and Eatman 2008).*