

**Remarks on Scholarship  
Faculty Development Conference  
August 25, 2010**

**Good morning. It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's conference and to the beginning of our 112<sup>th</sup> academic year. For those of you who are new to the College, let me extend to you a special welcome. By all accounts this promises to be a tremendous year. We have a record number of students of remarkable quality joining us and we have a number of significant projects to tackle this year as a faculty. Allow me to put in a shameless plug for the Welcoming Reception I'll be hosting on Thursday afternoon in the Hendrickson Dining Room starting at 3:00. While I don't plan to give a formal address, I will provide some very brief comments related to some of the goals I have for the year and for the future. I hope to see you there.**

**Now, on to the topic of today's conference – Scholarship at St. Norbert College. I thought it might be helpful in setting the context for my comments to talk about some of my experiences with scholarship over the past eighteen years at an institution not so very different from SNC. For those of you who have not studied my CV in detail (and I suspect that that would include almost everyone in this room), allow me to give a brief biographical sketch. I joined the faculty at IWU in the Fall of 1992 as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Chemistry. About eighteen months later I was hired into a tenure track position and earned tenure and promotion to**

**Associate Professor in 1999. I was promoted to Full Professor in 2005. As I moved through the ranks I served on a variety of elected and appointed committees, including the promotion and tenure committee. I also served as chair of the chemistry department and just prior to coming to SNC I was an Associate Provost.**

**Initially the teaching load was seven courses (3-1-3), but that was reduced to six four-hour courses/ year in the mid 90s. Throughout my time at IWU I engaged in a variety of scholarly activities most of which included working with undergraduate collaborators. In addition, my scholarly activities typically included faculty collaborators at IWU and at other institutions (that sharing of the work, especially supervising undergraduate collaborators, is what, in part, allowed me to continue working on my scholarship while doing fulltime administrative work). My scholarly activity resulted in 9 peer reviewed publications (including 6 undergraduate co-authors, some were co-authors on multiple papers, and I worked with many more on other projects) and textbooks for a two-year sequence in chemistry (which I must confess did not work out as well as we had hoped - probably for a variety of reasons that I'd be happy to talk more about with anyone who is interested). I currently have one more paper in the review process.**

**Some observations from my experience:**

- 1. Scholarship is hard work and takes sustained effort.**
- 2. Expect the unexpected – story of broken air conditioning...**
- 3. Working on scholarship with students may take more time than doing things yourself, but it is much more rewarding!**

**Let's turn now to focus on scholarship at SNC. One of the points I'd like to make today has to do with professionalism. My apologies to our colleagues who have already heard me speak on this topic this week, but I think these comments bear repeating for the entire group, and the focus is a bit different today. COMMENTS FROM HENRY ROSOVSKY. It is my hope that all of us approach our work as professionals. As you know, for fulltime teaching faculty there are four areas of professional expectation: (1) teaching, (2) scholarly or artistic work, (3) collegial service and (4) advising. Second on that list is scholarly/artistic work. We as a community expect everyone to be working in all four areas and we need to model the best of what it means to be a teacher-scholar for our students!**

**Frankly, I've got to tell you that I'm dismayed by one line of thinking that I've heard expressed since my arrival. The argument that was stated is that SNC *needs* the faculty to do scholarship. I hope we have not given that impression and I hope that not many of you share that line of thinking. It would be my contention that**

**you, as professional teacher-scholars need to be doing scholarship simply because that is what teacher-scholars do. In fact, I would call you to think intentionally about how your scholarly agenda does (or should) fit in with your long-term career goals (something I hope all of you have). I think it is important as we talk about scholarship that you think about how your scholarly agenda might evolve as your career evolves.**

**How do we define scholarship at St. Norbert College? It is my understanding from reading the notes from Mike Marsden's Spotlight on Scholarship and from attending President Kunkel's talk last Spring that we typically look to the Boyer model of scholarship – a model I wholeheartedly endorse. Thus, we can think about scholarship from various perspectives. There is the scholarship of discovery (some may think of this as the original creative research that pervades most graduate training). There is the scholarship of integration (making connections among and within disciplines). There is the scholarship of application (here we often think of engagement, perhaps even public engagement). I had the opportunity to hear a talk by Mary Huber, a Carnegie Scholar, not long ago. Her contention is that the scholarship of integration and the scholarship of application are moving close to the center of many fields. It seems to me that we will need to embrace these forms of scholarship (if we are not already doing so). And finally, there is the scholarship of teaching and learning – another form of scholarship that I would think would be viewed as**

**a positive in the context of a liberal arts institution where teaching is the central activity. We also obviously need to include the creative activity that our colleagues in the Fine and Performing Arts do as scholarship. It is incumbent upon us as an institution to be as clear about what our colleagues in the Fine Arts can “count” as scholarship so that they can be promoted up the academic ladder.**

**President Kunkel, in his address to the faculty on this topic, made the following point – “having some appropriate research agenda is imperative.” I could not agree more! As he noted, this keeps you fresh in your discipline, keeps you respected in your field, allows you to stay current in your teaching, and provides opportunities for undergraduate research partnership (which I would encourage whenever possible). In fact, I would contend that as you are able to involve undergraduate students in your research you can “have your cake and eat it too.” For, there is an element of teaching or mentoring in directing undergraduate students in the process of scholarship, but at the same time you can make progress on your scholarly agenda. Tom also went on to state what he would consider to be five hallmarks of scholarship at SNC. I think it would be useful to remind ourselves of these hallmarks, so, here they are.**

- 1. Rigor – the work is truly substantive and befits a liberal arts college of national stature.**

2. **Originality** – the work demonstrates fresh thinking, even on well-covered subjects.
3. **Creativity** – the product of the research is professionally and artfully presented.
4. **Utility** – the work will matter to fellow scholars in the field and/or to a wider audience.
5. **Impact** – the work will cause fellow scholars to pay attention to the faculty member and the institution.

I would like to add one more to the list.

6. **Peer review** – the work must be reviewed by your peers in some way.

Thus, for something to “count” as scholarship, there must be an element of peer review of the final product. In keeping with this principle, I would suggest that *favorably reviewed* grant proposals should “count” as scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. I say *favorably reviewed* because it is fairly typical for proposals to be positively reviewed, yet the proposal is not ultimately funded for budgetary reasons.

I’d like to suggest some techniques that may be helpful in thinking about how to establish and maintain a scholarly agenda. Some of these ideas may seem like common sense, especially to those of you who are very active in scholarship, but I’m hopeful that they will help those of you who are struggling to get started or maintain a research agenda. Since I don’t want to face a plagiarism charge in

**my second month on the job, let me note that some of these ideas came from an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, some from a book by Anna Neumann and Kimberly Pereira, and some are my own.**

- 1. Get started early - this is key for our newest faculty colleagues. This also allows you to easily maintain your connections from graduate school and postdocs. These colleagues may end up being future collaborators.**
- 2. Make research a priority - set aside particular times each week for research, don't allow other things to fill all the available time, focus on the important (rather than the urgent).**
- 3. Creating Space - Clear out a workspace or move away from a workspace that diminishes scholarly learning (this was a new term for me, but useful as we think about ourselves as life-long learners modeling for our students what that term really means.) Find a space that is conducive to your scholarship and use it.**
- 4. Seek out collaborators and mentors - these may be colleagues at SNC or at other institutions. Look to connect with experts in areas adjacent to your research: look beyond the narrow focus of your own research. Attend and participate in professional conferences. I'd like to suggest that smaller regional meetings may allow for more**

**interaction with colleagues than the larger, national meetings.**

- 5. Containing Attention – Focus on those facets of your scholarly learning that are most personally meaningful and viable. Position yourself to engage in service/administration that supports scholarly learning.**
- 6. Connecting Contexts – Use scholarly learning to connect teaching (or mentoring) with research or creative endeavors with the aim of enriching knowledge construction through work with students. Use scholarly learning to frame institutional, public or professional service, so as to advance one’s understanding of one’s core subject of study. Use scholarly learning to connect your profession to your life and possibly to the lives of others. Try to think about your scholarship in the context of what you are already doing.**
- 7. Keep something on the burner – don’t let your research become dormant, have something you can think about in those times when you have a minute or two (or maybe even more) to spare.**

**I’d like to spend a few moments musing on the topic of scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Let me note at the outset, I have not lived the process at SNC. Therefore, these comments draw largely from my past experience. My thoughts may differ once I experience the SNC process this year. Having said all that, I**

**think it is fair to say that I believe that scholarship should most certainly be a factor in the process, with the clear understanding that teaching is and will continue to be our primary emphasis at SNC. We currently say that in order for a person to earn tenure he or she must show the promise of scholarship. It seems to me that the easiest way to demonstrate the promise of scholarship is to actually be doing scholarship. In fact, I'm not quite sure how you would do it in any other way. That is to say, you demonstrate the promise of scholarship by being actively engaged in the process of research or creative activity. You demonstrate the promise of scholarship by presenting at conferences. If all goes really well, you demonstrate the promise of scholarship through publication. We as a community need to think carefully about how our colleagues in the fine arts (especially) are accommodated by our definitions of scholarship so that they have full access to opportunities for promotion. At the time of promotion, I would expect to see evidence of what I'll call scholarly achievement – peer review journal articles, books, juried exhibits, etc. For me, it is that element of peer review that elevates what we might call professional development to the level of scholarly achievement.**

**I realize that there are various perceptions among my faculty colleagues that may be hindering movement through the ranks. For example, some may think that expectations relative to scholarship are unclear or that the standard is a moving target. If so, we need to work to clarify expectations and standards.**

Likewise, if traditional publication is viewed as the only form of scholarship that is accepted as scholarship, we have some more work to do. We must ensure that we abide by our broad definition of scholarship at tenure and promotion time so that those whose scholarly/artistic work does not lend itself to traditional publication can still be deemed to have met the standard. Our guest from Luther College will be sharing some ways we might think about improving in this area.

What is the single most significant barrier to doing outstanding scholarship? From what I've heard over the last almost two months, the answer is time. I don't think SNC is unique in this regard! So, if we are going to do more scholarship, we simply need to make time. The question then becomes, how do we get more time? Let me start by stating what is perhaps the obvious, I don't think that time is going to come from doing less teaching. Given current circumstances, I can't imagine that we will be considering a reduction in teaching load in the foreseeable future. I also think it is safe to say that given the attention our students expect and the need to retain them, more time is not going to come from doing less advising. That leaves only one more place to look. If we want more time, we are going to have to figure out how to carve that time out of what is viewed (at least this is what I've heard) as a burdensome and inequitable system of collegial service. To that end, I am calling for a thorough examination of our current committee structure that I hope will lead to a radical rethinking of

**the way we do our governance work. Paul Johnson, as Faculty Chair, has agreed to lead this effort and you will hear a bit more from him about what he has planned later this morning. I am hopeful that if we are successful, we will make our committee work more efficient and equitable, and in so doing we will provide more time for everyone to have the chance to fulfill the ideals of what it means to be a professional teacher-scholar.**

**A related issue may be that we need to start trusting our colleagues who are elected to do committee work. From what I've heard from some of you this may be a problem that creates even more work for more people. Obviously, I have not experienced this issue at SNC yet, but I can think of at least one other institution where it has been a problem. Therefore, I would urge all of us to elect people who we believe will do good work and then let them do the work they were elected to do. This may be another way to create even more time for scholarship.**

**I'd like to close with a quote from Paul Humke, a professor of mathematics at St. Olaf who says – "I treat my research time the way I treat my class time. It is a high priority and I don't cancel my research time unless I would cancel a class for the same reason."**