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## Introduction: The Work of the People's University

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## THE WORK OF THE PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY

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The state comprehensive universities (SCUs) may represent the most neglected and least understood segment of American higher education. Despite enrolling a substantial portion of the students at four-year institutions of higher learning, the SCUs receive little attention in the popular higher education literature (e.g., the *Chronicle of Higher Education*), in the more formal academic journals of higher education (e.g., *The Journal of Higher Education*, *Research in Higher Education*) or in many of the book-length treatments of the history and issues surrounding higher education (e.g., Geiger, 2005; Levine, 1993; Thelin, 2004). The intent of *Teacher-Scholar* is to bring much needed attention to the SCUs. What is an SCU? How are SCUs alike and different from public and private research universities and liberal arts colleges? How is the work life for faculty and students different at SCUs? Why have SCUs struggled with their identities? What can SCUs do that can help them play a distinct role in American higher education? What is the distinctive mission of the SCU? These are some of the questions I want to address in this essay. I will provide some background on the SCUs, discuss a model for the mission of the SCUs, and suggest some areas for future research.

### **Distinctive Features of the SCUs**

An SCU is a four-year institution with a wide range of undergraduate programs funded by a state. SCUs usually have master's programs (most SCUs are in the master's category in the Carnegie classification system). Some have a few doctoral programs, often in applied areas such as education. Elsewhere (Henderson, 2007), I have called the SCU the People's University. Although that term was originally used to describe the land grant schools, as Herbst (1989) has argued, it is the SCUs that opened higher education to the masses in the middle class. When the baby boomers wanted to go to college in large numbers, it was the SCUs that made admissions less selective and made higher education affordable.

No one official grouping of colleges and universities coincides precisely with the SCUs. The membership of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) includes nearly all SCUs but also includes some former SCUs that have become doctoral-level institutions in the Carnegie classification. For 2005, the National Center

for Educational Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education reported 273 public master's universities with 2,471,344 students (compared to 165 public doctoral-level and 104 public baccalaureate institutions with 3,651,241 and 356,342 students, respectively). The Center, based on the National Study of Postsecondary Faculty, also reported 107,300 faculty members at comprehensive universities in 2003. In many states, the SCUs are in statewide systems of higher education, which in some cases include the state-funded research universities (e.g., North Carolina, New York) and in other cases do not (e.g., California, Pennsylvania).

In theory the SCUs are distinguishable from the rest of the public colleges and universities by having a distinctive mission. Throughout their histories, the SCUs have had a special responsibility for providing teaching, research and public service with a vocational orientation (Bardo, 1990; Dunham, 1969). Many degree programs of the SCUs are designed to prepare students for jobs immediately after graduation in fields ranging from teaching to nursing to construction management. A common derogatory comment from SCUs faculty members in the traditional liberal arts disciplines about their own institutions is that their universities are too much like glorified trade schools (Caesar, 1991). The public service provided by SCUs is often important to their regions but goes unrecognized at state and national levels. Much research at SCUs leads to technical studies or evaluation reports to schools, agencies and businesses that are too limited for general publication outlets.

There has been encroachment on the SCUs' distinctiveness of mission from several sources in recent years. All kinds of colleges and universities have moved toward a more applied and vocational orientation, including liberal arts colleges (Pace & Connolly, 2000). On the other hand, there has been increasing pressure on SCU faculty to imitate the publication practices of the research university faculties (but see Henderson, 2009, for questions about the actual degree of imitation). This has led some scholars to claim that four year colleges are looking more and more alike in their missions (e.g., Dey, Milem & Berger, 1997). Yet what distinguishes the SCUs most is their variety and variability. In addition to their varied origins, they vary in size (a few under 2,000 students, a few more than 30,000), location (rural to urban), and selectivity (moderately selective to not selective). Students at SCUs range from very strong (valedictorians and National Merit Scholars) to very weak (those with poor class standing and low test scores). Curricula include majors in the basic liberal arts and very applied majors in areas such as construction management and medical technology.

### **A Brief History of the SCUs**

It is not surprising that SCUs have a strong applied or vocational orientation in their missions. Many of the SCUs (about half) have their roots in the state normal schools and teachers colleges (Finnegan, 1991). From their starts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, normal schools were community oriented. The founders of the normal schools were almost always civic minded leaders who wanted to educate teachers for the common (elementary) schools in their regions (Ogren, 2005), although a few were businessmen out to make a profit (Holland, 1912/1972). However, soon after they were founded most normal schools became places where young people in the region could acquire a higher education, regardless of whether they wanted to teach or not (Altenbaugh & Underwood, 1990). Of course many women during this period planned to teach (and were permitted to do so) only until they were married, so the need for new teachers was ongoing. The preparation of common school teachers was a low status activity. The preparation of secondary teachers and administrators, a higher status activity, was the business of colleges into the twentieth century when some of the normal schools began to include such preparation in their curricula. Many of the normal schools were not four-year or degree-granting colleges until the 1920s or 1930s when they became teachers colleges (Pangburn, 1932).

The teachers colleges did not last long. Once institutions became four-year, degree-granting colleges, the move from single purpose institutions to colleges offering a comprehensive program of undergraduate programs required little effort (Altenbaugh & Underwood, 1990). Because many of the students who attended the teachers colleges had little commitment to teaching and because many supporters of the teachers colleges wanted their regions to have college experiences of a broader sort available, the change was relatively uncontroversial. The median time from an institution's change from a teachers college to a state college was only 24 years (Henderson, 2007). The term teachers college had disappeared in most states by 1960. While college enrollment in the United States grew dramatically after the Second World War, the growth of the state colleges was delayed until somewhat later. The combination of concerns about falling behind the Soviet Union in scientific and technical fields, the need for teachers for the children of the baby boom, a growing emphasis on the right to higher education by politicians, and ultimately the large number of baby boomers seeking higher education led to a rapid growth in college enrollment. The 299,000 students in the state colleges in 1954 grew to 1,300,000 by 1966 (Harclerod, Sagen, & Molen, 1969).

Although Ogren (2005) has provided a thorough history of the normal schools, the history of the development of the regional

state colleges has yet to be written. Elsewhere (Henderson, 2007) I have speculated on why the regional colleges developed so rapidly from normal schools to teachers colleges to comprehensive colleges and universities. Certainly the pressure by local leaders for close-to-home higher education for their children and their constituents was a major factor. Higher education held out the promise of upward social and financial mobility. Another factor in the rapid change concerned status issues. Both outside supporters of the schools and administrators and faculty within them desired that their institutions acquire higher status. Both the transition from normal school to teachers college and the transition for teachers college to state college reflected increases in institutional status. Teachers colleges were of higher status than normal schools because they offered four-year degrees instead of certificates and prepared higher status secondary teachers and administrators instead of just lowly common-school teachers. The change from teachers colleges to state colleges afforded the opportunity of distancing the institution from the low status business of preparing teachers. Faculty members who had been hired to provide general education for teacher candidates pushed to develop majors in their disciplines, and administrators saw the opportunity to broaden the curriculum to include other professional programs such as business and nursing (Johnson, 1989).

Perhaps the most powerful influence in the rapid development of the regional state colleges was demographic. College attendance was for an elite few for a long time. Even the GI Bill provided college education for relatively small numbers. As the state colleges continued to broaden their offerings into the 1960s and 1970s, the growing number of lower- and middle-class baby boomers wanted and expected access to higher education (Henderson, 2007; Johnson, 1989). The elite universities could take some students by growing, but the numbers were too great even for the research-oriented mega-universities to accommodate them. It was the state colleges that provided access (especially to women) and became what Dunham (1969) called the “colleges of the forgotten Americans.”

As fast as the changes occurred at the SCUs with roots in the normal schools, perhaps the changes at SCUs with origins other than normal schools were even faster (Henderson, 2007). Some SCUs began as branches of research universities and thus had infrastructures that facilitated rapid development in close parallel to the main campus in values and operations. Some current SCUs started as technical or agricultural schools, including some of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities that were funded by the second (1890) Morrill Act. Many of these schools have histories much like those of the normal schools, starting as secondary schools then becoming two-year then four-year state colleges. A few SCUs started as private schools and became state funded

when they encountered serious financial exigencies. Finally, some of the newest SCUs started from scratch, usually in rapidly growing regions that were underserved by public and private sources of higher education.

### **History, Status, and the SCUs Today**

Some of the characteristics of the present day SCU are legacies of their histories. These legacies represent tensions that continue to stimulate debate. First, and perhaps most general, is the tension between the need to develop a focused mission and the need to be responsive to those constituencies, including government officials, parents, students, and people in the private sector, who desire an increasingly broad array of activities, from curricula and courses to services and entertainment. A second tension arises from the historical desire to provide access to a broad range of students while also maintaining academic standards. The intent to be democratic about admissions but not about degree attainment can easily drift into grade inflation and low course demands (especially for student reading and writing). A third major tension, one that is apparent at both the curricular and faculty levels, is the one between basic and applied education. In their early forms, the SCUs put a strong emphasis on vocational education and service to the local community. But many faculty members in a wide variety of disciplines see themselves as scholars in their disciplines, not preparers of the future workforce. Many resist teaching courses with a vocational orientation and are likely to resist becoming involved in public service or research activities that are seen as too applied. Fourth, there is the tension between the need for teacher preparation and the disdain those outside teacher education have for the low status associated with anything to do with education. Finally, there has been a tension between a need to have an academic focus and a countervailing tendency for SCUs to spread themselves too thin, trying to be all things to all constituencies.

While these tensions are real and are likely to remain legacies of the SCUs' histories indefinitely, aspects of their histories provide a strategic advantage. First, the normal schools, teachers colleges, regional colleges, technical schools, branch campuses, and new universities have all had histories of strong community support. In an era when public support is essential, the SCUs are well-positioned. Second, the predecessors of SCUs were among the most affordable of the four-year institutions in American higher education and remain so today. Along with moderate level selectivity, the low costs continue to make the SCUs highly accessible for most high school graduates. Finally, the SCUs and their predecessors have had a history of public service. In an era when the need for expertise in business, education, government, and social services is well recognized, SCUs faculty members who are willing to apply their

expertise can provide major public service. The SCUs need to address concerns about status, the tension between the applied and the pure, and the balance among teaching, research and service requirements for their faculties. If they can do so, their roots in the normal schools and teachers colleges, technical schools, branch campuses, and junior colleges can provide a base for developing distinctive missions.

### **Status and Esteem Issues**

Regardless of their histories, many SCUs and their faculties struggle with the low status and prestige they are accorded in American higher education. Status and prestige issues are ubiquitous in higher education. Burke (1988) claimed that "Prestige remains the oxygen of higher education" (p. 114). Boyer (1990) argued that many colleges and universities are "driven by the external imperatives of prestige" (p. 55). Rankings of institutions, departments, journals and individuals are common across universities and within disciplines. Concerns about increasing and maintaining status guide many administrative and faculty decisions (Brint, Riddle & Hanneman, 2006). The issue of status influences the SCUs at both the institutional and individual faculty member levels.

*The institutional level: The undistinguished middle child.* In one of the few instances when the SCUs attracted the attention of the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, the reporter called the public regional university "the undistinguished middle child of public higher education" (Selingo, 2000). Among the other descriptions of the SCUs are "weaker universities," "academic orphans," "ugly ducklings," "unproductive universities," and "academic Siberia" (Bogue & Aper, 2000; Boyer, 1990; Van den Berghe, 1970). This low status has several sources. Some are historical. Those SCUs with roots in the normal schools and teachers colleges share the low status that plagues teachers and those who prepare them. Perhaps no segment of higher education has been subjected to so much criticism, at least some of it unfair and/or inaccurate (Labaree, 1997, 2004). SCUs with other histories also developed as relatively low status institutions, because of two-year backgrounds, fiscal problems as private colleges, or lack of tradition (Henderson, 2007).

There are three major generators of institutional status and prestige in higher education (Brewer, Gates & Goldman, 2002): student selectivity, high-level research (grants and publications), and big-time athletics (football and men's basketball). In the quest for status, the SCUs do not fare well in any of these domains. Most SCUs are not highly selective for two reasons. One is that competition for the students with the highest test scores and grades is fierce. Many SCUs attract significant numbers of students with excellent records, often by developing honors colleges

or other programs that target strong students. However, the typical SCU is not competitive in attracting large numbers of students at the highest academic levels. The second reason for the SCUs' relatively low selectivity is philosophical. Historically, the SCUs have been about access. They are the people's universities. They intend to offer the opportunity for higher education to students with a wide range of preparation, and they do.

The SCUs also do not effectively accrue status through research. SCUs do not rank anywhere near the top of lists of the universities receiving basic research funds from the federal government, the usual metric for assessing research status (Weisbrod, Ballou, & Asch, 2008). Faculty members at SCUs also do not publish at high rates (Henderson, 2009; Henderson & Buchanan, 2007; Toutkoushian, Porter, Danielson & Hollis, 2003), not nearly high enough to attain high status. Likewise, the SCUs have considerable difficulty breaking into the big time sports arena. Although the SCUs' athletic teams occasionally succeed at the national level in minor sports (e.g., baseball) or make a brief appearance among the recognized in major sports (e.g., a spot in the NCAA basketball tournament), the SCUs are not typically among the athletic elite. Even trying to succeed at high levels of athletic competition is expensive and likely to be frustrating.

Perhaps the central question of institutional status is one of mission. The mission of the SCU differs from the missions of the research universities and elite liberal arts colleges in important ways. The heart of the research university mission is the conduct of cutting edge research to push the boundaries of knowledge and the preparation of students who will continue to do so. The heart of the elite liberal arts college mission is the classical education of those students who can most benefit from it. The heart of the SCU mission is (arguably) the provision of higher education, often with a vocational bent, to a broad range of students who might not otherwise obtain one, the conduct of modest amounts of research, often applied in nature, and the provision of services to its regions and communities (see Bardo, 1990). There may be an inherent difference in status in these varied missions. However, the mission of the SCU can be seen as having high value even if it does not convey high status and prestige. The leaders of some SCUs may see it as their own mission to increase the status and prestige of their universities, especially through increasing research activity. A few have succeeded in doing so, although it is hard to name one that has joined the elite class of research universities. However, the risk is that they will fail to succeed and their institutions will be neither prestigious nor successful, just pretentious (Grubb & Lazerson, 2005).

*Individual status: Research professor envy.* SCU faculty members receive their doctorates in established disciplines at research universities.



As a result, they have been socialized into the value systems of both the university and the discipline for three to six years or more. The process of socialization involves formal seminars, informal discussions with faculty and more experienced graduate students, attendance at professional meetings, and reading the professional literature of the discipline. The values they are likely to learn include the centrality of research and publication, the significance of advanced laboratory or library resources, the importance of professional involvement in the discipline, the advantages of graduate student assistance, and the critical need for time free from teaching (Austin, 2002). The newly minted product of the research university may wind up working at an SCU because of the geographic location of the SCU, because of a perception that jobs at SCUs are less stressful, because the SCU had the only job open or available, or because the faculty member perceived the SCU as a place where teaching is more important than research (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). If the new SCU faculty member internalized the values of his or her graduate institution, some degree of cognitive dissonance is bound to ensue. The discrepancy between the faculty member's vision of the successful university professor and the reality of the demands of the job at an SCU may be considerable, unless he or she is among those who want to spend more time teaching than doing research.

The response of those research-university-trained faculty members at the SCU varies (Henderson & Kane, 1991; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). One response is to attempt to make the SCU more like the research university by lobbying for improvements in facilities, reductions in teaching loads, expansion of the graduate curriculum, and lessening of service responsibilities such as committee work and student advising. A different response is to alter the research university value system and embrace the emphasis on teaching and service responsibilities as well as a pragmatic approach to doing research in less than optimum conditions. Faculty members at SCUs who adapt to being at an SCU clearly vary in their strategies for finding a balanced work life. Some will not adapt, finding the SCUs inhospitable, and will try to move to a job that more closely fits the research university model. Some will do only what they need to get by. Regardless of the faculty member's strategy, the discrepancy between the research university expectations and the nature of life at the SCUs may lead to self-esteem problems. The day before I wrote these words I heard something like the following: "I really belong at major university X and will move there soon when I get out a few more publications." Boyer cited Lovin who pointed that when SCUs hire faculty members based on their research potential rather than on their desire to be at a comprehensive university, those faculty members often feel "no sense of pride for either their institution or their role in it" (Boyer, 1990, p. 61).

The SCUs faculty members who are most happy about their jobs are those who are able to find a workable compromise between the research university values and the nature of the SCU. Not doing so leads to a loss of self esteem or denial. Doing so usually means finding pleasure in teaching SCUs students, developing modest disciplinary programs of research, and engaging the university community and the region through university and public service. In *Teaching at the People's University*, I described SCU faculty who did and did not adapt to being at an SCU, but I could not offer any detailed explanation for what leads to different outcomes. We need to know more about what makes the difference. What factors lead some SCU faculty to adapt and even embrace their positions while others withdraw (with or without changing jobs)?

### **Mission Creep and Mission Confusion**

Not all SCUs are content with their low status (O'Meara, 2007). At institutions where low esteem has had negative consequences, strong leaders will attempt to improve the university's standing. If the model of an effective institution is one in which faculty members conduct disciplinary research with substantial outside funding, then improvement requires imitation of that model (Brint et al., 2006). Individual faculty members who value success in their disciplines will see this emphasis as a positive trend and will support an increased emphasis on research. Even faculty members who are not actively engaged in research, but who have been educated to value research, are likely to consider "real" professors and "real" universities in terms of productivity in traditional scholarship. They will support leaders who want to imitate the research university. The result is what is known as mission creep or mission drift. Kassiola (2007) argued that SCUs have been erroneously accused of mission creep. He claims that the production of research is a prerequisite to quality at master's institutions. He believes that masters' and doctoral institutions need to be more alike in their missions and operations. However, there are practical reasons why it is inadvisable for the SCUs to become more like the research universities (not the least of which is expense). Perhaps more important, mission drift leaves important constituencies unserved (Henderson, in press).

SCUs and their faculties who attempt to become more like the research universities face some difficulties in making the transition. Research universities are expensive. In many disciplines, especially in science, health and technology, the equipment and personnel needed to conduct cutting-edge research are expensive. An SCU with ambitions to be like the research university is still funded as an SCU. Teaching loads and research funds are set at rates quite different from those at research universities. Some faculty members have to act as an advanced guard

to move the SCU closer to the research university model. They have to conduct more research than their peers and begin to bring in research funds. Administrators have to find funds to facilitate the shift. For an SCU in a statewide system, leaders also have to convince the system administrators that allowing an SCU to move to research status is good for the system (and the taxpayer). Such moves are likely to be resisted by other research universities in the system, especially the flagship university. In the meantime, the SCU must hang on to the faculty members who are becoming increasingly attractive to existing research universities. The more emphasis SCUs put on hiring faculty members in hot, but narrow, specialties, the more they risk losing candidates to the research university competition (Youn & Gamson, 1994).

Youn and Price (2009) studied the changing tenure and promotion practices at four New England comprehensive universities (two public) from the 1970s to the early 2000s. They found that higher demands for research and publication (“sustained scholarship”) characterized the changes. The new rules for tenure and promotion came along with administrators hired from research universities and were endorsed by new research-oriented faculty members. A common new rule was the use of external reviewers in tenure evaluations. Although respondents reported that the comments of the outside reviewers rarely informed any actual decisions (almost all those who applied for tenure received it), the rule was seen as important for the messages it sent to internal and external constituencies about the institutions’ values.

The imitation of the higher-status research universities may be seen by leaders as a means for improving the scholarly quality of the institution. More ambitious leaders (Brint et al., 2006) may see such changes as necessary in striving to move the institution to the “next level” (i.e., the next Carnegie doctoral category). For faculty members at striving institutions, movement to new status levels may mean pressures to do it all, in teaching, service and research, without the requisite release time and fiscal and physical resources. Wright et al. (2004) described universities where such pressures occur as “greedy institutions.” Wright et al. examined the demands of different types of colleges and universities and concluded that comprehensive universities were the greediest of all. At the institutions Youn and Price studied, publishing activity increased, but not dramatically, and mostly in second-level journals. Moreover, they found that promotions were often determined not by significant scholarly accomplishments but by dedication to teaching, loyalty to the institution, and collegiality. Youn and Price warned that imitation of research university standards could result in limits on the institution’s flexibility for innovation in research and pedagogy as increasingly narrow specialization by the faculty is rewarded.

Mission drift and greediness are a reflection of institutional confusion about direction. With the research university and elite liberal arts college models as the only well-developed models for four-year institutions, the SCUs are left without a model that fits their situation. Those that do not drift toward the research model may focus on regional service or teaching innovation for an identity. However, many individual faculty members, educated in research universities and loyal to their disciplines first, are unlikely to be happy with simple service or teaching missions. Something essential to making a professor different from a high school or community college teacher is missing in those approaches. What is missing is scholarship for those who see publishing scholars as the model professor. The role conflict between the faculty member's ideal and the realities at the SCUs can be considerable.

### **Isomorphism or Differentiation?**

Higher education researchers describe mission creep as isomorphism, the tendency for institutions to copy the most successful models (Finnegan & Gamson, 1996; Morphew, 2002). Of course, the most successful model is the research university. Have the SCUs, even those that have not explicitly attempted to copy the research university model, nonetheless copied it? Should they? Does the research university, despite its costs, provide the best model for American higher education? There are many ways for SCUs to mimic the research universities. They can imitate their instruction and curricula, their selectivity, their emphasis on research, or their emphasis on intercollegiate athletics.

Despite claims to the contrary, there is little solid evidence for isomorphism (Henderson, 2009). Imitation in the realms of selectivity and athletics do occur to a small degree. However, if you can trust faculty self reports, the one area in which SCUs have really made significant strides toward isomorphism is research and publication. Numerous self-report surveys have indicated that over time there has been more pressure on faculty members to publish (e.g., Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Milem, Berger, & Dey, 2000; Youn & Price, 2009). However, SCUs are rarely competitive for basic research grants from federal sources or major private foundations (Weisbrod et al., 2008). Moreover, as indicated above, although publishing rates at SCUs have increased slightly over time, faculty members at SCUs publish at rates far below those at research universities and even liberal arts colleges (e.g., Toutkoushian et al., 2003). The publish or perish value system of the research universities may be part of the SCU ethos, but it has not translated into a degree of research activity that makes the SCUs like the research universities.

While the SCUs may be becoming more like the research universities in some ways, the concept of isomorphism is too strong to

accurately describe what has happened. The lack of true isomorphism is probably good news for American higher education. There is room for the SCUs to distinguish themselves from the research university model and to develop distinctive missions. What might a distinctive model look like?

### **The Work of the SCUs**

*The Boyer model.* If the SCUs are going to carve out distinctive missions, we need a new model of what constitutes our kind of university and a new model of what is acceptable faculty work. Two decades ago it looked like Boyer (1990) had provided such a model. In *Scholarship Reconsidered*, Boyer argued that the work of faculty members at too many universities has been construed too narrowly. To be an authentic faculty member at any four-year college or university was to be a disciplinary researcher. The quality of faculty members, regardless of where they worked, was assessed by how well they met the criterion of producing peer-reviewed publications and obtained funds to support their disciplinary research. Boyer felt that much of the best work of faculty members at institutions outside the research sector was being ignored and that assessments of many faculty members and institutions were based on an inappropriate model. His alternative model was a broader view of scholarship that included the scholarship of teaching, the scholarship of integration, and the scholarship of application in addition to the traditional scholarship of discovery. In particular regard to the SCUs, he argued that both teaching activities and applications should be, and often are, based in a faculty members' expert knowledge and should be recognized as scholarship.

Since 1990, many institutions have adopted aspects of Boyer's model (O'Meara, 2005). However, there has been opposition from traditionalists. For example, in one of the most sophisticated critiques of Boyer, Ziolkowski (1996) argued that Boyer's expansion of the concept of scholarship simply weakens it and thus weakens the quality of institutions and faculties that adopt it. The traditionalists fear that the special place of honor for traditional scholarship will be taken by activities such as serving on social or search committees or serving meals at the local homeless shelter.

A second, related, concern about Boyer's model has been that it creates conceptual confusion. For example, there has been confusion between the scholarship of teaching and scholarly teaching or between the scholarship of application and scholarly service (Marek, 2003; Richlin, 2001). These issues reflect a concern that if Boyer meant for scholarliness to count in faculty reward systems, he went too far. Scholarly teaching and scholarly service, while important, are not sufficient indicators of

quality and are, perhaps, too subjective to be measured reliably. Published research is the best indicator of the quality of faculty members and their work.

A third concern about the application of Boyer's model has been that instead of providing an alternative way of thinking about faculty work, Boyer's new scholarships would just become additional, not substitute, requirements in the faculty reward system. Given the greedy nature of universities, the scholarships of teaching and application could be just more work for the faculty member to do. O'Meara (2005), in her surveys of chief academic officers, found that at many institutions, especially research universities, a renewed emphasis on teaching, including the scholarship of teaching, had become an additional desirable activity for faculty members, but no other activity had been de-emphasized.

Perhaps the broadest concern about the Boyer model has been how faculty members' execution of the categories of scholarship would be assessed. In the preface of his 1990 book, Boyer made it clear that his major concern was the low priority assigned to teaching and student learning. Just a few years later, Boyer was already indicating a greater concern about the scholarships in terms of how they could be assessed and less concern about teaching and students. The Carnegie Foundation he headed soon issued a formal report on how scholarship in its new forms could be assessed (Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997). In that report and in other reports (e.g., Braxton, Luckey & Helland, 2002, 2006), there has been a good faith effort to envision ways to assess all the types of scholarships in a variety of ways. However, the simple truth is that the quickest, easiest and thus most practical medium for assessing all the types of scholarship is peer-refereed publications. Indeed, that route has become easier with the growth of new publication outlets, particularly for the scholarship of teaching and learning (Braxton & Del Favero, 2002).

While the broadening of publication outlets for faculty members was probably a good thing, it has done little to address the fundamental problem Boyer originally identified. Even if a faculty member began to publish an occasional paper on scholarly work in teaching, integration, or application, little credit would be given to the bulk of their work. Perhaps more important, publications (and other product-oriented approaches to scholarship) continue to be the major indicators of faculty quality when they are really only proxies for quality. Traditionally a faculty member was considered to be of high quality on the basis of production of peer-reviewed research. Success in publishing peer-reviewed research was presumed to indicate that the faculty member was not only a good scholar, but also a good teacher. Scholarship of teaching publications might also be seen as proxies for good teaching, although to date there

is no evidence that those who engage in the scholarship of teaching are better teachers for doing so, or even that work in the scholarship of teaching has improved college teaching (McKinney, 2006).

In short, the Boyer model, as it has been adopted, has done little to change the one-dimensional view of scholarship as publication that has dominated American higher education since the Second World War. Although giving credit for work in teaching, integration and application has broadened what is seen as appropriate at the research universities (even as add-ons), it has changed the situation at SCUs very little. At almost any SCU, while traditional basic research likely always has had the highest status (despite evidence that relatively little of it is done there), other forms of publication have always been given credit in the faculty reward system. Articles published in any of the “*Teaching of \_\_\_\_\_*” journals, textbooks, and published technical reports of various kinds have always been acceptable indicators of a productive SCU faculty member. Department heads, deans and provosts at SCUs have always been happy when faculty members have published, no matter where or what they published. If the SCUs are going to be distinctive, they need models of faculty work that go beyond the counting of publications as indicators of the quality of their faculties.

*An alternative model: Doing interesting scholarly things.* As far as the SCUs are concerned, Boyer was on the right track in 1990. As Boyer foresaw, the broadening of the concept of scholarship could be of great help to the SCUs. The emphasis on scholarship, however, was bound to lead to an emphasis on traditional forms of publication as a representation of the work of individual faculty members. In its original form, I suspect Boyer’s concern was not so much for a broadening of the forms that scholarship could be presented in as for a broadened role for the acquisition and use of knowledge or scholarliness. Scholarship is a product that is relatively easy to assess. Scholarliness is a process that requires a different form of assessment. I think what Boyer was on to was that at the SCUs (and other places) we need to emphasize and recognize the importance of scholarliness as a base for all our activities. One legacy for SCUs of the normal school and the teachers college was a sense of inadequate, second-rate scholarliness and a neglect of the intellect substituted for by an emphasis on the practical. Instead of focusing on a direct assessment of the scholarliness of faculty members, the SCUs bought into the idea that demonstrating the ability to conduct traditional discovery research could assure the scholarliness of a faculty member’s teaching and service.

My argument is that we should not settle for an emphasis on SCUs faculty members conducting a modicum of discovery research to prove their mettle in a pale imitation of the research universities.

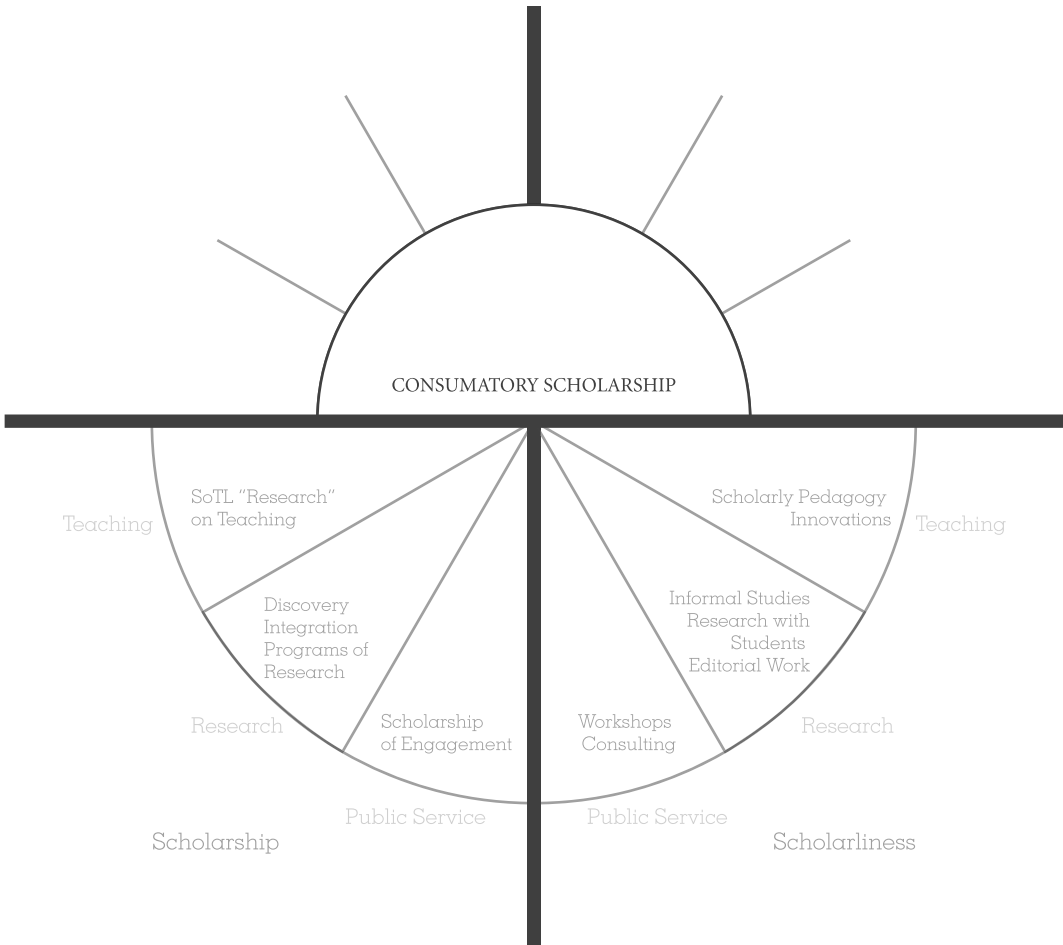
Instead we should encourage faculty members at the SCUs to engage in interesting scholarly things of many kinds and then evaluate the scholarliness of those things. The interesting scholarly things include a wide range of faculty activities that require scholarly expertise but may not result in publishable products. My concept of interesting scholarly things is presented in Table 1. The left-hand side of the model includes the traditional forms of productive scholarship, including teaching, research (combining both the scholarships of discovery and integration in Boyer's terms), and public service. At its best, scholarship results from the expressions of a faculty member's curiosity and the desire to make a contribution to one's discipline. More mundane motivations for scholarship include the quest for prestige and status for the faculty member and for institutions.

Scholarship is the realm of the research university (and to a lesser degree, the elite liberal arts college). The research category is the focal point for most research university faculty members' work. Faculty members are more identified with their disciplines than with their local institutions. Competition for getting published in the best journals, receiving the most citations, obtaining the most research funding, and attracting the best graduate students is significant, sometimes even brutal (Rojstaczer, 1999). Research on teaching or applications may occur, but is of secondary importance at research universities. In contrast, at SCUs while research gets done, it is less likely to get published in the most competitive journals, is less likely to be funded, and is more likely to involve or even be led by students. Research and publication are relatively more likely to be about teaching or applications. Heidi Buchanan and I (Henderson & Buchanan, 2007) found that the scholarship of teaching and learning appears to be a special niche for SCU faculty. We found that while SCU faculty members are rarely represented in the most prestigious discovery and integration journals, they have a substantial representation, as authors and editors, in the best disciplinary scholarship of teaching and learning journals.

The right-hand side of Table 1, scholarliness, is common to faculty members at all kinds of colleges and universities. It is in the evaluation of the lower level of the table where the SCUs can establish their distinctiveness. Scholarliness is the foundation for all faculty work (except what could be categorized as citizenship, including committee work and other chores that do not require disciplinary expertise). The keystone for the interesting scholarly things model is consumatory scholarship. I use the term consumatory scholarship to describe the processes by which faculty members acquire and maintain their disciplinary expertise (Henderson, 2007). Reading the literature of the discipline, talking with peers and students about new findings, going



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to workshops and conferences, and reflecting on disciplinary issues are all aspects of consumatory scholarship. Also included in consumatory scholarship are the informal and preliminary research activities that may never lead to publication. Consumatory scholarship begins in earnest in graduate school and presumably continues throughout one's career.

All the categories of interesting scholarly things fundamentally depend on consumatory scholarship (and feed back into consumatory scholarship). All the forms of productive scholarship involve considerable consumatory scholarship. Scholarly teaching can only occur when a faculty member has disciplinary knowledge to share. Effective teaching requires the blending of disciplinary knowledge and pedagogical knowledge, sometimes peculiar to a discipline, that Shulman (1987) has called pedagogical content knowledge. It is also the knowledge from consumatory scholarship that faculty members use to share through consultation, workshops, etc. to reach out to community audiences beyond the university.

Consumatory scholarship and the categories of scholarliness have not typically been assessed directly. Instead assumptions have been made about the presence of scholarliness. Published research in peer-reviewed journals has been the common measure of disciplinary expertise. Published research is assumed to indicate sufficient scholarly expertise for executing both teaching and service. Because faculty members at SCUs do not publish anywhere near as much as do those at research universities, it seems that using publications as the indicator of scholarliness is inadequate. SCUs could, however, develop ways to directly assess the scholarliness of their faculties. SCUs cannot compete with the research universities in terms of productive scholarship, but they can become the experts at directly encouraging, assessing and recognizing scholarliness.

What might the direct assessment of scholarliness look like? I will make a few suggestions in each category. The assessment of consumatory scholarship itself seems relatively straightforward. It would involve keeping a record of the consumption of scholarly materials. I can understand those who might consider this silly, obtrusive or ineffective. Yet I think that with the increase in the use of part-time and fixed-term faculty members such a procedure is not only useful, but necessary. Faculty members without full-time appointments (who are often working for multiple institutions, face-to-face and online) are not provided with the time and resources to read, study, and learn (i.e., to consume) new discoveries in their disciplines. The intellectual capital faculty members gained in graduate school is all they have and it gets used up quickly when they do not have opportunities to consume new information in their disciplines. Institutions need to know if faculty members are keeping up

with their disciplines. Self reports of consumatory scholarship are a start. Means for tapping how consumatory scholarship is expressed in teaching and service activities are needed to confirm the self reports.

Scholarliness could be tapped in teaching in a number of ways. Perhaps it would be most clearly apparent in course design and syllabi and how courses change over time. Required readings and assignments should reflect changes in the discipline's knowledge base. They should also reflect changes in the faculty member's pedagogical knowledge. The content of class lectures, discussions, laboratories, etc. should also reflect the faculty member's growing expertise. Faculty members could also be asked to describe how they have incorporated their scholarship into their teaching in narrative form. Assessing the role of consumatory scholarship in public service or applications may be difficult. Recipients of scholarly service often do not know whether they are receiving the products of good scholarship. It may be fairly easy to appear scholarly to outsiders without much substance. Here again, peer review can be used to assess the scholarliness of a faculty member's reports of services provided and recipients can report on effectiveness.

The main barrier to the implementation of the interesting scholarly things model is resistance by faculty members to being engaged in the critical assessment of scholarliness. Yet the time and effort to do so seems worthwhile, even independent of the interesting scholarly things model. The inferences required do not seem as large as those needed to link peer reviewed publications to scholarly teaching and service. A major advantage of the proposed model is it fits a differentiated approach to faculty assignments. Some faculty members will be more skilled at doing traditional research while others are better at teaching or service. But all faculty members can be held to high standards of scholarliness and rewarded accordingly. The SCU of the twenty-first century is likely to need to differentiate faculty assignments. There will be an associated need to develop means to assure fairness and high quality.

### **What We Need to Know about SCUs**

*Teacher-Scholar* is designed to provide a forum for ideas about SCUs like the interesting scholarly things model. Up until now research, thinking or criticism about the SCUs has had to find its way into the mainstream literature on higher education. Some has. However, in order to be published, submissions have to impress the gatekeepers with their importance. Of course, because one of the distinctive features of the SCUs as a group is their low prestige and status, that is difficult to do. SCUs have been largely invisible in the larger picture of American higher education. When they have received attention, it has been in their role of the neglected middle child or the ugly duckling. Most of the published

literature on SCUs has been authored by higher education researchers at research universities. The views of those who work at SCUs have not been well represented. Perhaps that is our fault. *Teacher-Scholar* removes any excuse we might have. What do we need to know about the SCUs? A lot. My suggestions fit into three major categories: description, policy and practice.

*Descriptive information.* The basic information we need about SCUs includes descriptions of students, faculty and institutions. Who are our students? We know there is great variability in SCUs students' abilities, preparations, and interests. What brings the students who could have matriculated anywhere to the SCUs? Just how underprepared are many SCU students? How can we best characterize individual differences in SCUs students' academic motivations and attitudes? How do the college experiences of SCUs students compare to those of students at other types of colleges and universities? What role does socioeconomic status and the need to work to pay for college have in student experiences and success? How do the vocational goals of so many SCU students influence how they negotiate the curricular and extracurricular aspects of college? Do SCUs students identify with their institutions as students and alumni?

Similarly, who is teaching at SCUs? Finnegan's (1993, 1997) fine work on cohorts of comprehensive university faculty needs to be expanded and updated. Did faculty members come to SCUs by choice or by last resort? How well prepared by their graduate schools are faculty members to work at SCUs? How do SCUs faculty members spend their time? How does that change over time? How does it change over a career? How do faculty members at SCUs deal with the low prestige of their institutions? Do faculty members identify with their institutions? What would SCUs faculty members change about their jobs, their students and their institutions?

Finally, there is much to be learned about the SCUs as institutions. What are the characteristics of SCUs that most distinguish them from other kinds of four-year institutions? What are the various common threads in the histories of the SCUs? What is different about the histories of the former SCUs that became research universities? How are strivers for higher status and non-strivers different? Why have some SCUs thrived more than others? How are major trends in higher education, including privatization, distance education and changing demographics, influencing the SCUs? How do the SCUs relate to their state-level governing bodies? How do the SCUs that are part of statewide systems relate to the other kinds of institutions in the system? What kinds of relations do SCUs have with their communities, regions and states? How does the public view the SCUs compared to how they view flagship

universities? What are the special issues related to historically minority SCUs? What is the role of athletics at SCUs?

*Policy issues.* We need a new model for the work of the SCUs and their faculties. The research university model has not worked. The model may look something like the interesting scholarly things model I have proposed or it may not. Regardless, we need some new thinking about how SCUs can develop distinctive missions and identities. Whatever models are described and instituted need to be studied for their implications for students, faculty, staff and administrators. We need to know about how policies based on the models influence student academic experiences, faculty hiring and evaluation, staffing patterns, and the relationships universities have with their communities, regions and states (see Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). We need to know how the new models for work at the SCUs influence strategic planning and changes in the institutions.

*Best practices.* A third area we need to know more about is how we can best do our work at SCUs. Certainly many practices will generalize across institutional type, just as certainly there must be ways in which institutional type determines what is best. For example, in the area of curriculum, how can the liberal arts emphasis of general studies be integrated with the many vocationally-oriented programs of the typical SCU? How can the curriculum better facilitate the education of those who transfer from community colleges? How can students who work long hours and are full-time students best be advised, taught and evaluated? Likewise, in the area of research, how might expectations about faculty work look different at SCUs? The interesting scholarly things model would provide a very different set of policies than the hybrids so common today. But even under the current models, many of the policies used at SCUs inappropriately mimic those of the research universities.

Finally, perhaps the largest differences in policy between SCUs and other types of institutions concern public service. It is essential that the service provided by any higher education unit be based in solid scholarship. However, for many reasons, the highest priority of the research university is the conduct of basic research and its dissemination. It is the SCUs that are most likely to be deeply engaged in the economic and cultural lives of their communities. Policies concerning the SCUs' engagement need to be understood at the university, department, and individual faculty member levels. Where does engagement fit into missions, hiring decisions, and reward systems? Where do staff members and students fit into engagement?

The neglect of the SCUs in most of the research on higher education has left a lot of gaps. *Teacher-Scholar* can be a place where those gaps can begin to be closed.

### Conclusion

SCUs face both problems and promise. The problems are serious. First, they face all the problems common to all kinds of colleges and universities. These problems include the current difficulties in the economy, the privatization of higher education (which is differentially more problematic to lower status institutions such as the SCUs), demographic changes (positive in some states, negative in others), and the turnover of a generation of faculty members. SCUs also have peculiar problems. The struggle to define what it means to be a scholar at an SCU affects hiring, rewards, and the daily work of SCUs faculty members. That struggle is closely tied to the problem of esteem as faculty members and leaders at SCUs try to find ways to feel good about themselves and their universities. Because of concerns about status, the SCUs are in fact greedy institutions and there is a pervasive tendency to be all things to all people at the university and individual faculty member levels. The solutions to the SCUs' problems are not in the imitation of the selective liberal arts colleges. Their model is inappropriate for universities committed to access. Nor are the solutions in the imitation of the research universities. There the competition is too fierce, the expenses too high, and the outcome mediocre.

Yet the SCUs hold out much promise. Students and teaching have the central role at SCUs. SCUs are "teaching institutions" in the best sense. While faculty members do have greater teaching loads, they also are expected to attend to their students more. Many faculty members like working at SCUs especially because of the emphasis on teaching. If they can get beyond prestige issues, SCUs and their faculties also hold the promise of being able to broaden their workloads to include a diverse set of activities beyond basic research. They can work closely with schools, business and industry, medical services, and government services to better their communities and regions. Activities that do not "count" at research universities do count at SCUs. Finally, if the SCUs can get beyond the research university model, their faculty members can have more varied careers, mixing emphasis on teaching, research and applications in different ways at different times without continual pressure to seek grant funding and publish prolifically.

In some ways the SCUs are threatened as they never have been before. On the other hand, this may be the SCUs' time. Lyall and Sell (2006) point out that the comprehensive universities may be the most needed, but most vulnerable, institutions in twenty-first century American higher education. The public wants universities to put more emphasis on teaching. SCUs already emphasize teaching. The public wants lower cost higher education. SCUs have the lowest costs of all four-year institutions. The public wants universities to be more involved in

their educational, economic and cultural development. SCUs are in the best position to engage the public in those ways. While the pre-World War Two period was the era of the liberal arts college, and the post-World War Two period belonged to the research university, perhaps the first half of the twenty-first century will be the era of the SCUs. The timing of this new publication may be especially propitious.

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