

UC Santa Cruz Sociology Department Guidance on Engaged Scholarship in Promotion and Tenure Files

Approved 4.14.2023

Revised 8.29.2023

Scholars across UC Santa Cruz engage with their respective publics in various ways. In sociology, engaged scholarship involves a variety of research and dissemination activities, vital to the university's mission, that are intentional, mutually beneficial, and connect deeply with a community or public audiences through teaching, research, and/or dissemination. The terms "community" and "public" can invoke a variety of groups – including public agencies, government boards and councils, private non-profits, labor unions, advocacy groups, activists, community leaders, and other publics that are part of or represent various populations that would benefit directly or indirectly from an involvement in scholarly activity. In sociology, the groups with which we engage are varied, but engaged projects share a common focus on issues with social justice ramifications.

In August 2023, the UCSC Campus Provost/Executive Vice Chancellor's Office along with the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and the Committee on Academic Personnel released a memo entitled UCSC Campus Expectations for Assessing Community-Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Reviews (UCSC CP/EVC 2023) (see Appendix 1 for the full text). This builds on an earlier Campus Annual Report from 2021-22 which notes that CAP has received an increasing number of personnel files with public-facing and community-engaged scholarship (see Appendix 2 for the full text of the relevant section). The 2023 memo notes that, "When a file includes community-engaged scholarship, it is helpful for the candidate and the department to discuss the methodology underpinning the work, the quality of the scholarship, its significance/impact, and dissemination" and then details criteria for each criterion.

The Sociology Department at UCSC has created its own discipline-specific approach to evaluating community-engaged scholarship. Like the campus guidance, we use "engaged scholarship" as an umbrella term for the different modalities that faculty employ when conducting scholarly activities with and/or for their relevant publics. On one end of the spectrum, this includes scholarship produced in direct collaboration with communities or community organizations (community-engaged scholarship). On the other, it includes scholarship that is deeply informed by or informs on-the-ground movements for social justice. American educator Ernest Boyer in writing about engaged scholarship notes, "ultimately, the scholarship of engagement ... means creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other" (Boyer 1996, p. 20). We consider the bidirectionality of this relationship to be the key indicator of engaged scholarship.

Engaged scholarship is often multi-disciplinary, involving scholars and community partners across traditionally siloed disciplines and domains. This type of scholarship often integrates research, teaching, and/or service in ways that are hard to fit into traditional paradigms. In addition, the work can require significant relationship-building to create long-term trusting relationships or substantial investment in community work, to connect with various publics.

Engaged scholarship generates a variety of products, some of which have not traditionally been recognized in the tenure and promotion process because they are not published in peer reviewed venues. Although public scholarship like opinion pieces or news articles that interview and quote scholars are generally recognized as important contributions to society, it is yet unclear how to assess the scholarly products of engaged research – including reports, briefs, websites, maps and story maps, theories of action, social media campaigns, community-based convenings, community-based art and creative works, collaborative art and performance, and others. In addition, engaged scholarly products may include multiple co-authors and co-conveners, including community partners who contribute to the work in significant ways.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (2022) [defines community engagement](#) in the following way:

Community engagement describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity. The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good.

The American Sociological Association released [guidelines](#) on public sociology in 2005. The Modern Language Association (2022) [recently released its own guidelines](#) for evaluating files in what it refers to as public humanities. The MLA states that public humanities (and we extend to humanistic social sciences and engaged sociology) projects can be evaluated as follows:

Measures of impact for public-facing work can include the ways in which the work advances the mission of the institution, improves retention of underrepresented populations in higher education, reaches out to new audiences through multilingual public scholarship, preserves local cultures, creates new areas of study, highlights a need for increased board diversity and training, fosters participatory partnerships, produces more equitable policy, recognizes the need for language accessibility through paid translation and interpreting services, or facilitates new frontiers of engagement with businesses, nonprofits, government agencies, humanities centers, and philanthropic organizations.

Notably, in Spring 2021, UC Berkeley became the first campus to approve language in its Academic Personnel Manual about community-engaged scholarship. This language can be found in full in the UCLA report [*Recognizing Community-Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Review*](#) (Staub and Maharammli, 2021, pp.33-35) and in Appendix 3 to this document.

Based on a review of approaches at key institutions and in various fields, Sociology at UCSC adopts the following criteria in evaluating personnel files for engaged scholars: 1) methodology, 2) significance/impact, and 3) dissemination. Depending on the file, one or more of these may be most appropriate.

1. **Rigorous Methodology.** We identify rigorous methodology as having two components:
 - a. Applying appropriate methods to address the research questions, including rigor by academic standards governed by our discipline as well as rigorous engagement processes that generate projects community partners and public audiences find relevant and actionable.
 - b. Engaging in collaborative practices that are essential to ethical community engagement based on mutual trust and reciprocity (e.g., by collecting data alongside community partner organizations, working through partner networks to reach vulnerable populations, or by gaining access to settings that would be otherwise inaccessible, etc.).
2. **Significance/Impact:** We identify research significance/impact as occurring across the following components:
 - a. Beneficial impacts in the communities with which scholarship is conducted, for instance by providing input into key decision or policy conversations, providing feedback at important intervals, describing problems that communities identify as critical to address, making progress towards social equity and/or systemic change that promote the public good, increasing capacity of community to advocate for themselves, building power in communities and/or organizations as they work toward addressing their goals, etc.
 - b. Contribution to knowledge creation that intervenes in contexts where contemporary social problems manifest. This may include: peer reviewed academic publications and contributions to other scholarly outlets; securing increased funding for additional research, program implementation, and/or community partners; adding consequentially to the discipline on issues that matter to the external partners and the community; creating new ways of understanding society and action based on those understandings.
 - c. Challenging existing hierarchies of knowledge and amplifying critical perspectives, which may contradict existing knowledge and/or assumptions pervasive within academic fields.

- d. Bridging, translating and reaching new audiences with the research, including undergraduate and graduate students, community partners, activists, policymakers, local leaders, the general public, and others.
 - e. Societal impact by contributing to the public good and the social justice mission of the university in multiple ways, including fostering participatory partnerships, producing more equitable policy, recognizing and diversifying culture and language, and facilitating new understandings and new frontiers of engagement.
3. **Effective Dissemination**. We identify effective dissemination as having four key components, all of which are done with clarity and integrity:
- a. Communicating with and disseminating research results to appropriate academic and public audiences using forms that are adapted to the specific needs of the public.
 - b. Presenting research with and for community and public audiences in ways that non-academic stakeholders find accessible and understandable.
 - c. Clarifying the future trajectory of the project and which portions of its aims have been achieved to date (e.g., this may especially be the case for digital or oral projects or those using multiple methods or taking place over a number of years).
 - d. Presenting or co-authoring with community groups and/or supporting community partners in their dissemination goals, such as through grantwriting, communication to government representatives, highlighting projects for web and social media platforms, etc.

Resources

- American Sociological Association. (2005). *Public sociology and the roots of American sociology: Re-establishing our connections to the public*. American Sociological Association. Available at:
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Appendix 1: Campus Expectations for Assessing Community-Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Reviews

August 11, 2023

By Lori Kletzer, Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor
By Maureen Callanan, Co-Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel
By Susan Gillman, Co-Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel

August 11, 2023

TO:
SENATE FACULTY
DEANS
DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

Campus Expectations for Assessing Community-Engaged Scholarship in Academic Personnel Reviews

Dear Colleagues:

We write to provide guidance on assessing community-engaged scholarship in the academic personnel review process. Community-engaged scholarship includes research conducted in partnership with non-academic agencies and organizations within larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global), creating opportunities for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources that make a positive contribution to the public good. Though this type of scholarship aligns with the public university mission, it is often conducted outside the standard framework of peer-review and therefore can involve components that do not produce traditionally recognizable interim milestones or final products. Special effort must therefore be taken to ensure the scholarly output of community-engaged projects is valued appropriately in the academic personnel review process.

Community-engaged scholarship can take a variety of forms. A non-exclusive list of examples is provided here to illustrate some possibilities.

- Research or inquiry that involves partnerships with community groups and generates new knowledge to address practical problems experienced by public or practitioner audiences. This research may be funded by a community partner, including non-profit organizations, community-based organizations, foundations, government agencies, business enterprises, industries, or trade associations.
- The application of existing research, in collaboration with a specific community, to address in an innovative way an issue impacting that community.
- Original creations of literary, fine, performing, or applied arts and other expressions or activities of creative disciplines or fields that are made available to or generated in collaboration with a public (non-university) audience.

When a file includes community-engaged scholarship, it is helpful for the candidate and the department to discuss the methodology underpinning the work, the quality of the scholarship, its significance/impact, and dissemination. The following criteria should be considered in the evaluation of a personnel file.

1. Methodology

- a. Use of recognized methods to explore research questions, adhering to traditional academic standards. Typically builds upon previous research. See b. and c. for research methods specific to community engagement that extend beyond traditional forms of presentation.
- b. Community engagement processes that are built on trust and reciprocity. Collaboration that enhances the research process through community-engaged approaches with attention to the ethics of collaborative work. Examples include, but are not limited to, collecting data with partner agencies, working through partner networks to reach vulnerable communities, or gaining access to settings that are otherwise inaccessible.
- c. Promoting and being accountable for inclusive, equitable, and respectful collaboration in research environments.

2. Quality

- a. To aid reviewers who are outside the candidate's field, efforts should be made at every level of review to assess quality in addition to documenting quantity. Indices of quality should be provided when possible. Indices will vary from field to field, but may include prizes; fellowships; numerical indices of impact, such as citation counts or number and reputation of reviews garnered; external funding; or information about the channels of review and approval for specific projects, selectivity and reputation of venues of publication, exhibition, or performance.
- b. Assessments of quality should address potential questions such as: What new knowledge or understanding has this research created? What important questions, intellectual, social, political, have been posed or answered? What new community partnerships have been created, and how are they transformational? Are the research or creative contributions original? Does the scholarship include a solution to an especially difficult technical, methodological, or societal challenge? Is the developing body of knowledge making a significant difference to the shape or direction of the field? How, effectively, in what forms, has this research knowledge been translated for external and public audiences?
- c. Because community-engaged, public-facing work frequently spans the three categories of research, teaching, and service, both the department and the reviewers should address this overlap where relevant. The process of being involved with the community in producing knowledge (as a parameter related to but distinct from the output of the collaboration) potentially brings in teaching and mentorship (undergraduate and graduate students and community roles), and service (public participation). (See also below, section 4c.)

3. Significance/Impact

- a. Consider the potential or actual impact for the scholarship to advance knowledge and provide beneficial outcomes in the communities in

which the scholarship is conducted. Examples might include influencing or shaping policy, changing practices, outlining problems that communities identify as critical to address, and making progress toward social equity and/or systemic change that promotes the public interest.

- b. Contributions to knowledge in both the academic field and community. Such contributions might take the form of peer-reviewed academic publications, increased funding for further research, implementation of new programs, public exhibitions, reports, websites, and/or making a significant contribution to the discipline on issues relevant to external partners and the community.
- c. In files where appropriate, external reviewers should be chosen who have expertise to assess community-engaged research contributions, and this review should be formally requested in the departmental External Reviewer solicitation letter.
- d. In some cases, faculty may request additional letters for their personnel files to assess the broader impacts of their community-engaged work. In these cases, the following parameters for peer reviewers may be helpful:
 - The ways that Professor X collaborated with your organization or community and your assessment of the depth or quality of this relationship;
 - How the scholarship has helped your organization or community in moving forward with its policy, practice, fundraising, or other goals;
 - The role of the scholarship in supporting diversity, equity and inclusion or social justice missions; and
 - The impact of the scholarship beyond your organization or community.
- e. Enhancing the ability of public communities to benefit from the research such as students, community partners, policymakers, local leaders, and the general public.
- f. Impact through a focus on underserved communities, addressing disparities, or addressing the needs of California's diverse population.

4. Dissemination

- a. Outcomes (findings, analyses, conclusions, etc.) must be communicated in some form that has permanence and is accessible to the public beyond the immediate sphere of the faculty member and the agency or group with which the work was performed.
- b. The work must be cast in a form that can be disseminated beyond the first-hand, in-person encounters between the researcher and the main research partners. The research must be presented in a form that can have influence beyond its immediate context, is accessible to the public and is durable over time.
- c. Some examples of specific dissemination strategies include: community reports, newsletters, non-scholarly presentations, ongoing

relationship building through regular communication webinars and digital trainings, plus other education and outreach activities—including and beyond social media (blogs, podcasts, other online forums).

- d. In addition to community-engaged scholarship, assessment of teaching and service shall also value community-engaged activities. Faculty should explain in their personal statement the extent of work done that may go beyond the usual effort in these activities, for example, a course based on community-engaged activity may need to be redesigned each year as the community partners change, and thus it may be a new course preparation for each offering.
- e. Development of community engagement shall be recognized in any area of research, teaching, and service.

Works Referenced and Additional Resources

American Historical Association. Guidelines for Broadening the Definition of Historical Scholarship (2023). Available at: <https://www.historians.org/definitions>

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Sincerely,

Lori Kletzer

Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Maureen Callanan

Co-Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel

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cc:

Department Managers

Divisional Academic Personnel Coordinators

Appendix 2: Text of UCSC CAP Annual Report, 2021-22, Section II.D.

II.D Public Facing Digital Humanities or Social Sciences Community Work

Available at:

https://senate.ucsc.edu/committees/cap-committee-on-academic-personnel/cap-annual-reports-folder/cap-annualreport-2021-22_scp2031.pdf

Increasingly, CAP has encountered faculty dossiers that include public-facing, community-oriented, and/or digital scholarship, primarily in (although we expect not limited to) the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Divisions. Several professional organizations are now offering guidelines for evaluating new types of scholarship, and these developments also require that the campus re-conceptualizes how to measure faculty research performance beyond traditional types of publications, and what evidence is required for effective evaluation. As APM 201-1-d posits, scholarly modes of presentation continually change: “As the University enters new fields of endeavor and refocuses its ongoing activities, cases will arise in which the proper work of faculty members departs markedly from established academic patterns. In such cases, the review committees must take exceptional care to apply the criteria with sufficient flexibility.” For context, the [American Philosophical Association](#) “encourages departments, colleges, and universities to recognize public philosophy as a growing site of scholarly involvement... [and] develop standards for evaluating and practices for rewarding public philosophy in decisions regarding promotion, tenure, and salary, so that faculty members who are interested in this work may, if they choose, pursue it with appropriate recognition and without professional discouragement or penalty...” The American Historical Association has also developed guidelines for evaluating 12 and 13 scholarship.

Since it is neither practical nor desirable to develop an overarching set of standards for excellence that covers all disciplines on our campus, it is crucial for departments and deans to contextualize the importance of public-facing, community-oriented, and/or digital scholarship for faculty reviews, by explaining how it meets or exceeds disciplinary standards. Accordingly, in cases where the faculty member’s scholarly activity includes work that extends beyond traditional forms of presentation (e.g., books, articles), inviting potential reviewers to assess the intellectual, research, and creative dimensions and overall impact of *all* modes of scholarship. Additionally, both the department and external reviewers should explain how the candidate’s public-facing, community-oriented, and/or digital scholarship interfaces with their teaching and service.

This last point is an important ancillary consideration for faculty evaluations, and it is in line with [UCOP’s recommendation](#) that “[a]lthough research is typically evaluated separately from teaching and service, these three elements of UC’s mission are, in fact, interdependent and can be synergistic....” In other words, instead of evaluating faculty performance separately in these three categories, research, teaching and service should be seen as integrally interwoven, particularly

for faculty engaged in public-facing research and public service. Moreover, as APM 210-1-d states, “the review committee shall exercise reasonable flexibility, balancing when the case requires heavier commitments and responsibilities in one area against lighter commitments and responsibilities in another.”

Community-engaged scholarship at UC Santa Cruz includes research conducted in partnership with non-academic agencies and organizations in our local community, across the country, and even internationally. These can include public agencies, non-profit organizations, K-12 schools or school districts, multi-sector collaboratives, and other community entities. Publication venues for the results of such scholarship might not be directed toward an audience of researchers but, instead, towards an audience of policy makers, practitioners, or activists. Such products and publications need to be included in files (with supporting descriptions) and considered as part of a candidate’s productivity. Community engagement is a core component of UCSC’s mission and vision, which include values of social and environmental responsibility and a commitment to community engagement.

Appendix 3: UC Berkeley’s Community-Engaged Research Assessment and Guidance Assessing Community-Engaged Research

Available as appendix II of:

https://communityengagement.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Tenure-and-Promotion-Policy-for-Engaged-Scholarship-Report-10_12_21.pdf.

January 2021

These guidelines frame some principles on the assessment and crediting of research projects that involve partnerships with non-academic entities that work in the public interest (“agencies”). Many faculty who pursue this kind of research publish peer- and non-peer-reviewed articles, chapters, or monographs that draw on and disseminate the findings of their community partnerships. These publications are credited in the same way as any other publications.

The campus’s current practice is to credit policy papers, reports, and other such documents as research. The campus considers such material to be “published” if it has been submitted to an agency, provided it is generally accessible to the public. This accessibility condition is met if the agency publishes or otherwise disseminates the material or, if the agency does not, the candidate makes it available broadly. Such publications will normally be treated as non-peer-reviewed unless there is a formal vetting process by the agency (this should be described); nevertheless, such publications can and will be credited if the Chair and/or Dean presenting the case provides an assessment of the work’s status, importance, and impact. When the work is a contribution to equal opportunity, diversity, equity, and inclusion, this should be noted, as stipulated in Section 210–1d of the Academic Personnel Manual.

In assessing the work, it will be critical to understand how the work has shaped policy or changed practices (or what its potential to do so is). Such an assessment is essential to reviewers’ ability to award fair credit. If the research undertaken did not bring about any such concrete changes nor is it likely to do so in the future, the work may nevertheless be of value if it advances knowledge; in such cases, an assessment of how knowledge was advanced will be critical.

In situations where a faculty member has served as an advisor or expert consultant to a governmental agency or a non-profit, but that engagement has not resulted in any written document, campus practice is to credit such engagement as service. That noted, there may be instances in which such engagements can be credited as research, if they meet some basic minimum criteria for dissemination and influence:

1. To be considered as research rather than service, outcomes (findings, analyses, conclusions, etc.) must be communicated in some form that has permanence and is

accessible to the public beyond the immediate sphere of the candidate and the agency for which the work was performed.

2. To be considered as research rather than service, work must be cast in a form that can be disseminated beyond the first-hand, in-person encounters between the researcher and the main research partners. In other words, research must be presented in a form that can have influence beyond its immediate context.

According to these criteria, documents such as policy reports, development plans, and apps can be credited as research, as long as the importance and influence of the work is explained and assessed by the Chair and/or Dean, as well as subsequent reviewers. Oral communications, such as presentations to public bodies or viva voce consultations with a non-profit, are generally not to be credited as research in the absence of written documentation and/or clear evidence of impact.