

## **Department of English Statement of Significant Professional Activity**

The Department of English expects and strongly encourages professional activity by its faculty. Given developments over the past thirty years, recent changes in the department's and the college's curricula, and the breadth of research interests demonstrated by the department's faculty, professional activity appropriate for English Department faculty has come to cover a wide range of subjects and fields.

While retaining a traditional focus on British and American literature, our discipline and its associated professional activities now embrace literatures in English from across the globe. Further, these activities include a greatly expanded set of methodologies and critical approaches, marked both by an interdisciplinary attention that goes beyond the literary to include the historical, cultural, social, and intellectual, and by a theoretical orientation that transcends applied or practical criticism. Some of our faculty are also creative writers. Creative writing in whatever genre—poetry, fiction, drama, or creative nonfiction—is a professional activity central to our discipline. Other faculty, through a variety of media, extend their professional learning and critical expertise to wider general audiences.

Members of the English Department carry varied course loads that frequently involve teaching material outside their areas of specialization. Furthermore, their loads always include the labor-intensive demands of teaching writing. These factors make sustaining a program of professional activity particularly challenging. Nonetheless, the department encourages its members to make the effort to do so, and also to demonstrate the other categories of significant professional activity specified by the Faculty Manual: the "ability to relate scholarship, research, and creative activity to effective teaching" (4.VII.B.2); and "success in stimulating the intellectual development of one's colleagues through disciplinary or interdisciplinary work" (4.VII.B.3). While these latter two concerns may be difficult to measure and assess, the department views them as essential to a faculty member's significant professional activity. It is the category of "public professional activity," however, that this statement is expected to clarify, according to Section 4.VII.B.1 of the manual, and it is therefore that category that we emphasize in this statement.

The Department offers the following guidelines for the evaluation of public professional activity in English. At the same time, the department is skeptical of setting rigid standards that would obviate the need for collegial judgment. Thus we emphasize the need to apply these guidelines in a flexible way, and one moreover that respects each candidate's individual situation.

### **A. Public Professional Activity: Quality**

Quality is the most important factor in assessing significant professional activity. Testimony by professionals in the field is the best indicator of the quality and significance of the various items presented as evidence of the candidate's public professional activity.

Greater weight is given to work published by presses respected by other academics, or in nationally recognized journals, newspapers or magazines. Refereed publications are more highly valued than non-refereed ones.

## B. Public Professional Activity: Kind

This ranked listing indicates the weight normally given to different kinds of activity. The enumeration of kinds of activity is meant to be illustrative, not all-inclusive: the testimony of professionals in the field should be consulted on any forms of activity not mentioned below. This list, we cannot stress too emphatically, must be interpreted flexibly in both content and ranking.

1. **Publications:** a and b carry equal weight.
  - a. Writing aimed at an academic audience: these publications include books; articles, chapters, or parts of books; editions of texts; reviews of scholarship.
  - b. Writing aimed at a general audience: these publications include book-length works (such as novels, plays, collections of poems, screenplays, memoir) and shorter pieces (for example, poems, short stories, essays, magazine or newspaper articles, and reviews of trade books, art, film, and performances).
2. **Presentations:** lectures and papers delivered at national and international conventions, or at regional or local professional meetings; readings of creative work; public performance of original work; presentations of academic material to the general public; broadcast media presentations; the creation of websites or other media for widespread dissemination of professional activity.
3. **Professional Conferences, Organizations, and Refereeing:** participation on panels or seminars (when not delivering a paper); leadership or organizing roles in professional organizations; refereeing, reading, or editing the professional work of others, whether for creative or scholarly publication.
4. **Honors, Grants, Awards:** recognition and financial support for both individual and group projects or achievements; grant applications and writing of major reports; awards refereed externally or internally.

## C. Public Professional Activity: Quantity

When considering the amount of professional work a candidate has produced, evaluators must be flexible and must especially bring qualitative judgments to bear. For tenure, the department looks, particularly toward the end of the candidate's probationary period, for promise of future accomplishment. For promotion, the department looks for evidence of achievement.

1. For promotion to **Assistant Professor:** the Ph.D. or other terminal degree, or equivalent professional distinction.
2. For granting of **Tenure:** evidence of promise of professional activity, including publication and public presentation of professional work.
3. For promotion to **Associate Professor:** the requirements for tenure, plus evidence of continued growth and sustainment of public professional activity as described in Section B, with particular emphasis on publication.
4. For promotion to **Professor:** the requirements for the preceding rank, plus evidence of continued growth and sustainment of public professional activity as described in Section B, with particular emphasis on publication.

(Reaffirmed by the Department, October 11, 2004)