

Expectations for Faculty Scholarship and Research
Department of Political Science and Geography
Seattle Pacific University

The Seattle Pacific University *Faculty Employment Handbook* (§ 5.2.2.2) calls on each department to create a set of guidelines for scholarship that will be used in the tenure, promotion, and evaluation process of faculty members in the department. To be specific, the *Handbook* requests “each department... to develop and maintain a description of: 1) the types of scholarship, 2) the particular kinds of public scholarly products, and 3) the types of peer review that are most common and valued within their discipline; as well as 4) a sense of the trajectory of a productive scholar in their discipline at institutions like SPU.” The following statement was adopted by the Department of Political Science and Geography to fulfill this requirement of the *Handbook*.

1. Appropriate Types of Scholarship

The *Handbook* identifies four possible types of scholarship: the scholarship of discovery; the scholarship of teaching; the scholarship of application; and the scholarship of synthesis. All four types of scholarship are well-suited to the disciplines of political science and geography.

- **Scholarship of Discovery.** Like other disciplines, political science and geography prize the creation and dissemination of new knowledge, and they have established venues (journals, professional meetings, academic publishers) to disseminate this new knowledge to fellow scholars.
- **Scholarship of Teaching.** Political science and geography are key components of both K-12 and collegiate education. For example, every student is expected to learn about the principles of the American Constitution and basic geographic facts about the surrounding world. Because political science and geography are so integral to American secondary and higher education and because SPU has set out goals about student engagement with modern society, scholarship about how to more effectively teach political science and geography is a particularly worthy endeavor. This scholarship of teaching includes setting our research problems, collecting and interpreting evidence, and publication.
- **Scholarship of Application.** Because politics focuses on how to govern in the real world, it is especially appropriate for political scientists to try to apply the insights of the discipline to the solving of real-world problems, and political scientists can play a beneficial role in advising both government and non-government

organizations in the development of sound public policy and in the better operation of the political process.

- **Scholarship of Synthesis.** Modern politics touches nearly every area of human life, including education, business, economics, the arts, the sciences, and even religion. It is thus appropriate for political scientists to promote a holistic understanding of politics and public policy that draws together the insights of many disciplines, such as economics, history, geography, philosophy, and law. For Christian political scientists, it is especially appropriate to integrate the study of politics with the insights of Christianity. Moreover, because every citizen contributes to democratic self-governance, the “scholarship of synthesis” has an important role to play in imparting a deeper understanding of politics and public policy to the general public. In addition, Geography has long been considered a synthesizing discipline that brings together aspects of social and natural sciences. Geographic topics for scholarly inquiry may include, for example, perspectives on human interaction with the natural environment in fields such as earth science, climatology, biology, and geology.

2. Appropriate Kinds of Public Scholarly Products

The appropriate kinds of public scholarly products in the disciplines of political science and geography depend on the type of scholarship being generated. Relevant kinds of scholarly products are enumerated below.

- **Scholarship of Discovery.** Appropriate public scholarly products for this type of scholarship include books and monographs published by academic or university presses (e.g., Louisiana State University Press, University Press of Kansas, Rowman and Littlefield, Baker Academic); articles in scholarly journals focusing on the disciplines and subdisciplines of political science and geography (e.g., *Political Science Reviewer*, *American Political Science Review*, law reviews, *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, *the Professional Geographer*, *Geographic Review*). Although published books and articles carry the most weight, evidence of active scholarship can also be supplied by papers presented at interdisciplinary academic conferences and at the meetings of professional societies such as the American Political Science Association, regional political science associations, Christians in Political Science, Association of American Geographers, Association of Pacific Coast Geographers, and Association of Washington Geographers, etc. Because of the special nature of scholarship at a Christian university, the

scholarship of discovery could also be presented via refereed journals such as *Christian Scholar's Review*.

- **Scholarship of Teaching.** Appropriate public scholarly products for this type of scholarship include journals specializing in whole or in part on teaching methods and curriculum (e.g., *PS: Political Science and Politics*, *Journal of Geography*, *Social Education*); papers presented to professional conferences dealing with teaching methods and curriculum; workshops for other teachers on curricular improvements and innovative teaching strategies; and the development of textbooks that improve or refine the curriculum in a certain area. Again, published books and journal articles carry the most weight.
- **Scholarship of Application.** Appropriate public scholarly products for this type of scholarship include articles in journals, magazines, and other publications read by participants in the public policy process (e.g., elected officials, appointed officials, journalists and commentators, scholars who specialize in public policy); studies and policy briefings put out by public policy organizations and disseminated to policymakers; draft legislative proposals submitted to policymakers at the state, local, and national levels; testimony before legislative and government bodies about proposed legislation; books published by trade or university presses.
- **Scholarship of Synthesis.** Appropriate public scholarly products include most of the items listed for the previous types of scholarship. In addition, scholarly products for the scholarship of synthesis include textbooks and reference works for use by students or other scholars; articles in popular publications that bring the insights of the discipline to bear on particular public policy questions and/or integrate the study of politics with the Christian faith; books by trade presses that are designed to educate the general public about specific issues in politics and public policy and and/or integrate the study of politics with the Christian faith; and participation in multidisciplinary investigative scholarship through groups such as the National Science Foundation.

3. Appropriate Types of Peer-Review

The appropriate kinds of peer-review in the disciplines of political science and geography depend on the type of scholarship being generated. Relevant kinds of peer-review are enumerated below.

- **Scholarship of Discovery.** The “gold standard” for peer-review of this kind of scholarship is blind peer-review by one or more scholars of a journal article or a book published by an academic or university press.

However, this is not the only relevant form of peer-review accepted in our disciplines. Articles or book chapters solicited for inclusion in a peer-edited academic or reference work is also a form of peer-review. (For example, a senior scholar in one's field of specialization may solicit a chapter for an academic anthology edited by the scholar. The chapter will be peer-reviewed by the scholar editing the work, but the chapter may not undergo blind peer-review by another scholar. Nonetheless, the chapter has still undergone peer-review.) Yet another form of peer-review takes place when a paper proposal is submitted and then approved for presentation at a scholarly conference, and the paper is then presented on a panel where it is analyzed by a qualified discussant.

- **Scholarship of Teaching.** In addition to the forms of peer-review already mentioned, peer-review in this area may include the selection of a syllabus or curriculum for inclusion in a model syllabi or curricula collection to be used by other teachers and scholars.
- **Scholarship of Application.** In addition to the forms of peer-review already mentioned, peer-review in this area may include the adoption of a public policy proposal by policymakers and/or other scholars, as well as the demonstrated recognition of the significance of a public policy proposal by policymakers and/or other scholars.
- **Scholarship of Synthesis.** In addition to the forms of peer-review already mentioned, peer-review in this area may include post-publication reviews and analysis of the scholarly products by scholars in relevant fields (e.g., a book or series of articles may be reviewed by one or more established scholars for its contribution to the further understanding of a certain topic by other scholars or by the general public; a textbook or reference work may be used by many teachers in a particular field or be included as a standard reference work in libraries).

4. Trajectory of a Productive Scholar

The SPU Department of Political Science and Geography expects its tenured and tenure-track faculty to be active scholars. At a minimum, this means that a faculty member will be able to demonstrate one or more areas of specialization in which he or she actively engages in research and publication on an ongoing basis. Ideally this area (or areas) of specialization will be connected to the areas in which a faculty member teaches, and the faculty member will be able to show how his or her scholarly activities enrich the courses taught by the faculty member. Because all of the kinds of scholarship listed in the *Handbook* are appropriate to the disciplines of political science and geography, faculty members in our department are free to pursue any or all of the four types of scholarship enumerated in the *Handbook*.

For purposes of tenure and/or promotion to Associate Professor, a faculty member in our department is expected to present evidence of a minimum of one significant public scholarly product prized by other scholars in the candidate's field outside the university. For purposes of advancement to Full Professor, a faculty member in our department is expected to present evidence of a minimum of three significant public scholarly products prized by other scholars in the candidate's field outside the University, at least two of which must have been completed since promotion to Associate Professor. Articles, books, and book chapters published by recognized academic journals or presses that have undergone peer-review prior to publication are presumed to have met this standard, but other scholarly products may also meet the standard (e.g., a book published by a trade press as part of the "scholarship of synthesis" that is recognized as important by scholars in relevant fields; a textbook or reference work shown to be a significant contribution to the "scholarship of synthesis" or the "scholarship of teaching"; a legislative or public policy proposal that is adopted by a government body and is recognized by scholars and policymakers as a significant contribution to public policy). The faculty member is also expected to present evidence of ongoing activity of research and scholarship in at least one area of specialization (e.g., Russian politics, Christianity and politics, French political theory, grassroots political mobilization, environmental policy). Evidence of this ongoing activity is provided not only by the faculty member's PDP but by a list of completed scholarly projects and a description of projects planned and in process that can be incorporated into the faculty member's vita whenever the faculty member is being considered for promotion.