

Department of Earth Sciences: Definition of Scholarly Activity

(submitted 04/20/05 by Brendan McNulty, Chair, Department of Earth Sciences)

Definition of Scholarly Activity

The Earth Sciences Department has developed this statement in order to clarify what the members of the Department consider to be scholarly activity. Specifically, we have listed – and ranked - activities that qualify as scholarly activity. In sum, these criteria are consistent with those recently drafted by the College of Natural and Behavioral Sciences at CSU Dominguez Hills.

The most important benefit of scholarly activity is in keeping the faculty member current in his field, so that the new developments can be transmitted to our students. They will, after all, soon be seeking employment in Earth Sciences and they should be reasonably up to date on modern methods used in the industry. We therefore place a high priority on activities that produce faculty development. A second benefit accrues to the institution and the Department through the publicity generated by scholarly activity. The enhancement of reputation among colleagues and the increased enrollments that may result are long-term but extremely significant. A third benefit relates to the funds and equipment that are received by the Department and University when grants are won. Lastly, everyone benefits from the expanded knowledge for that results from scientific study and investigation.

Under some circumstances, it is not clear whether an activity belongs under scholarly activity or not. We have taken the generous attitude that talks given to the Rotary Club on a scientific topic could qualify as scholarly activity. What if an instructor takes his class to hear a speaker at another University? Is this evidence of good teaching or scholarship? We would place that under teaching. But in most cases, we think it is up to the instructor to decide where the activity should be described.

Though it is not always possible to see immediately the importance of specific scholarly work, we have attempted a rough ordering of our list of qualifying activity with most important first. These activities, which are critical in regard to the RTP evaluation process, may range from the minor contributions to very significant accomplishments. There are large overlaps, and also a range of significance within each category, so the RTP reviewers must use their own judgement in delineating these nuances.

Ranking of Scholarly Activity

1. Publication of books or articles on topics in Earth Sciences or Geography.
2. Award and completion of funded research projects.
3. Leading of workshops or short courses of instruction for other scientists. Leading of seminars or sessions at scientific meetings.
4. Attendance at scientific meetings for the purpose of delivering or co-authoring papers for which referenced abstracts are published.
5. Submission of a grant proposal.
6. Publication of field trip guidebooks, maps or other materials compiled from published sources.
7. Reviewing or editing of textbooks or articles.
8. Attendance at scientific meetings or talks.
9. Interaction with other scientists or academics on Earth Science matters. (Supported by evidence).
10. Keeping current by regularly reading the journals in the appropriate field. This is probably the minimal acceptable level of scholarly activity but it is extremely important and is difficult to document. Faculty can state what journals they read regularly.