

To: Teachers College Faculty

From: William Baldwin, Interim Dean

Re: Faculty Annual Report on Professorial Activities

Date: June 15, 2007

Until a few years ago, we had an annual practice that had faculty submit a report on professorial activities. The practice was discontinued and a request for copies of an updated, current CV from each faculty was substituted. For a number of reasons, this alternative has proved much less useful than the annual report on professorial activities. In addition to providing a basis for understanding more fully the range of activities in which faculty are engaged, the annual reports are extraordinarily helpful in a number of other ways, such as facilitating reports for various accrediting agencies, generating information to understand more deeply the full range of service and outreach undertaken, facilitating the faculty mentoring program, identifying opportunities for collaboration, particularly around program development or sponsored research, and providing an information base to identify faculty “experts” in response to inquiries from the press and other media.

Also, with a new President and Provost, the reports provide an excellent opportunity to get the new leadership up to speed on aspects of your work that are not easily captured from CV’s or course/enrollment reports. Susan and Tom have expressed great interest in using such information to help them focus their efforts on supporting faculty work and careers in every way possible.

As we reinstitute the request for an annual report on professorial activities, we would like to request a 2-3 page statement of professorial activities and accomplishments for this past academic year (2006-07), including honors, awards, publications, grants, etc.

The Department Chairs will review the reports and may provide you with feedback. They will also forward the reports to the Office of the Provost and Dean of the College.

We are sending this to you both electronically (along with a template form you may complete) and by regular mail to your home address. Please submit your annual report to your Department Chair as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, August 10, 2007.

FACULTY ANNUAL REPORT ON AY2006-07 PROFESSORIAL ACTIVITIES

Name: Robbie McClintock

Date: 7/1/2007

A. Honors, awards:

None

B. Scholarship

1. Publications – title, coauthors if any, place of publication:

“Educational Research,” *Teachers College Record* (Online commentary, March 28, 2007) <http://www.tcrecord.org/Content.asp?ContentId=13956>

2. Progress on research in progress – just a couple of sentences on each research/scholarly project with expected publication opportunities and dates):

I am devoting most of my energy to ongoing work on the structure and content of www.studyplace.org, passim. During 2006/2007, I twice reorganized the the navigational flow through the site; initiated a major project for 2007/2008, examination of the role common knowledge plays in education at all its different levels; and started work on another long-term project to organize and frame pedagogical knowledge for a more general public.

Additionally, I am drafting a monograph, *On not defining education*, which will be an historical critique of the main developments in the ways educational history has been written since 1950 or so. I have begun writing, but since I have a lot to say and a lot of material, I am not sure when the manuscript will be ready for publication.

3. Grant proposals in preparation, submitted, and grants awarded – with grantor, amount, and co-pi’s listed:

In Fall 2006, CCNMTL (a unit in the Columbia libraries) received a \$250,000 grant from a private donor through the Jewish Communal Fund (a disbursing agency) for support of the StudyPlace project, of which I am the PI. Work enabled by those funds started and will continue through the 2007/08 and 2008/09 academic years.

I have a sabbatical due in 2009/10 and will seek supplemental funding for that year, perhaps as a fellow in the Cullman Center at the NYPL or perhaps the American Academy in Berlin or other research group there.

C. Teaching and Advising

1. Reflections on teaching – please review your student evaluations and reflect on them, offering your own thoughts about how your classes went and what you would like to focus on with regard to your teaching:

Frank Moretti and I offer MSTU5606/5607 – *Readings in communication theory and social thought* for 3 points each semester. This course has enrolled 10 to 15 students (4 to 6 from the Communication Ph.D. in Journalism and 6 to 8 from TC, mostly Communication and Education Ed.D. in CCTE) who across 30 weeks read and discuss substantial selections from 30 major contributions to 20th century social science. The course is demanding to take and to give. Students have generally evaluated it very highly, occasionally one or two will develop an aversion to the content, mainly the work of dead, white, European males who are not now avant guard and who tilt mainly leftward, or to our style of class management, that of living, white, Eurocentric males who prefer to provoke more than facilitate. It is a mature course, which we keep tweaking. We have changed a few readings this year, partly in response to student input, and will try to even out imbalances in participation in discussions by the more effective use of online tools. (<http://www.studyplace.org/wiki/index.php/MSTU5606>)

I wrote the previous paragraph before the start of the term. We have had to cancel MSTU5606 owing to very low enrollment (4 students), a situation which I find disturbing. I have considered why so few students want to take it. I think we have somewhat depleted the pipeline in the Communication Ph.D. in Journalism. Within TC, I think most students in CCTE see it as too academic and intellectualistic for their needs and interests and there is no functioning advisement process that would bring it to the attention of students in other program areas. I will have more to say on this problem below.

Last year I offered experimental versions of A&HH6577 – *Topics in the history of American educational thought*, which I will offer this year as an ongoing group study opportunity. I thought the version I offered last Fall to a small group did not work in ways that were evident to me without student evaluations. I significantly reorganized it last Spring, meeting regularly with a yet smaller group of volunteers sitting in or enrolled under various independent study numbers in MSTU and A&HH. I learned much about making a digital commons a venue for “collaborative independent study” from this group and look forward to implementing some of these ideas with a somewhat larger group in a more systematic way during the coming academic year. For 2007/08, the group will concentrate on six twentieth-century views of what the key pedagogical problem is that educators, in a very inclusive sense, need to help people address in order to enable the public to master the problems and possibilities confronting it. (<http://www.studyplace.org/wiki/index.php/A%26HH6577>)

I have also proposed and have been assembling materials for a new, 4000-level service course, A&HH40XX – *History of modern pedagogy*, to be given for the first time in Spring 2008. This will survey the development of pedagogical thought from roughly 1500 to the present, understanding *pedagogy* in a European sense, succinctly put by the German philosopher, Wilhelm Dilthey -- “the origin and goal of all real philosophy is pedagogy in its widest sense, the formative theory of man.” The times are interesting with respect to a course such as this. A century ago, it was a core offering in graduate schools of education. It has largely disappeared, or persisted as a bit of professional pablum. I believe its decline has a lot to do with the atrocious state of educational leadership in the country (and elsewhere, too) but its resuscitation will be tricky as it somehow will need to preserve its Western roots while sprouting global fruit. I intend to make extensive use of on-line resources and to make the course both difficult and popular. I am rather pessimistic that this course will find interested students as it is in the tradition of service courses, which no longer exists at the College.

2. Doctoral students completing dissertations on which you served as sponsor:
Students sponsored for degrees awarded in 2006/2007:

Ph.D.

Seth David Halvorson	For Which It Stands: Formative Justice and Civic Education
Alexander Castilla	The Social Interaction of Moroccan Within An Open, Civic Nationalist Society: The Case of Catalonia

Ed.D.

Julia Hutchison	How Experienced Teachers Learn Meaningful Classroom Integrations of Web-based Technology: A Grounded Theory Study of the Process
Camilo Willis	Computer-Enhanced Curriculum for New York City Independent School Teachers: A Study of the Factors That Influence Practical Applications
Florin Salajan	Problems and Possibilities of Integrating ICT in European Union's Higher Education: Perceptions of People Inside and Outside the European Commission's eLearning Programme
Ulises Mejias	Networked Proximity: ICTs and the Mediation of Nearness

Advising load – numbers of advisees broken down by degree:

As TC advising loads go, I would guess mine is about average. I suspect an average load here is very high in comparison to graduate schools of education where the norms derive more integrally from the research university of which they are a part, i.e., Stanford.

3. Reflections on advising – your feelings about how well you did; what, if anything, you’d like to see improved:

Two things pertaining to advisement bother me, one having to do with the distribution of students into courses and the other with doctoral advisement.

First, too often I find myself teaching classes that are too small from a pedagogical point-of-view, let alone a financial one. I get depressed about it and often wonder whether I am simply a lousy instructor that the grapevine says to shun. But I really do not believe that I am a bad teacher or that what I have to teach is out to lunch, and when I manage to get a working quorum, I have received my share of commendations from the Deans office for outstanding evaluations. That does not, however, dependably translate into the ability to consistently attract adequate course enrollments. I have been willing to teach earlier in the afternoons, which may contribute to the poor enrollment, but we can't function with all classes at 5:10. Taking all these things into account, I think that my teaching suffers in particular and that all our teaching suffers in general because we have a serious advisement problem, and beneath the advisement problem we have a bankrupt intellectual life at the College. Advisement rarely deals with ideas, but consists almost exclusively in discussing with students what courses they should take, and the question of what courses students should take consists almost exclusively in explaining to them what courses they need to take to meet one or another package required by one or another program. Professors have become functionaries of a program and students have become clients of a program. We recruit students to programs. All courses get offered through programs. There are no college-wide courses. There are no service courses. All advisement is program advisement. It is not that potential College-wide courses cannot exist, but there is no College-wide discourse about them should they exist and hence they do not exist in anyone's conscious awareness. Students take courses, even out-of-department courses, because they and their advisors judge that these courses fit into their program; there is no thought that perhaps their program should fit into a larger consideration about educational circumstances within the society and the culture. I do not like the idea of required courses at the program level or the College level and I have always tried to avoid teaching a captive group. I would like a heterogeneous group of students in my courses, yet I recoil against running around begging this colleague and that to send me a soul, and as a result my courses are often under-subscribed and when a course lacks a critical mass, it is a drag to give and to take. I recognize that it is probably not much better at other institutions, and I know from long experience that were it better at Teachers College in the past, it was at most marginally better. That our problem is both ubiquitous and chronic is no cause for feeling satisfaction.

We desperately need a robust argument about what half dozen courses all our students should take if they are to measure up as educated professionals in a meaningful field of action. As a result of such an argument, we would end up with some two dozen courses that significant cross-sections of our students would take because advisors would know a great deal more than they do now about what goes on in areas other than their immediate program; they would have an inkling why it might be important; and they would have views about what serious students might engage outside of their immediate program. What common knowledge should educators share? Why? How?

Second, while I find the absolute load of doctoral advising troubling, I am more disturbed by the load of doctoral students who are very poorly prepared and/or motivated for serious academic work (which does not necessarily mean that they have no business pursuing a doctorate). I think I speak for more than myself alone when I say that at TC the alignment between professorial skills and expectations and those of our doctoral students is often poor or non-existent. In my experience, the staff of doctoral programs is usually very small while the scope of the programs are broad and diffuse. As a result, students frequently asked a professor to serve as their doctoral adviser for the vaguest of reasons. I find myself too often requested to sponsor a student's dissertation even though he or she has not taken courses with me or has little idea what my intellectual interests and skills are. On pointing this out, the student will respond that there is no one else able or willing to do it. This creates a situation unsatisfactory in both directions. Students have a legitimate claim on appropriate advisement, creating a burden of responsibility on members of the faculty to provide it, up to a point. Faculty members must show a certain amount of adaptability, but I feel that over the years I have shown far too much adaptability, and as a result I have too often served poorly as an adviser while doing so detracts inordinately from the extent and quality of my work as a scholar. Over the last few years, I have resolved to be less accommodating.

What I would like to see improved: I would like to see the College distinguish far more clearly between students seeking preparation as scholars and those seeking preparation as practitioners. I think our doctoral requirements make sense only for the former group, the scholars, not for the latter, the practitioners, yet the majority of our doctoral students are seeking advanced preparation as professionals in the field. I would like funding for doctoral students seeking academic preparation improved so that in advising them one can assume they are working full-time to develop their scholarly skills and capacities. I would like to see doctoral students in this group identified as doctoral students at the start of their graduate work with much less of their serious preparation depending on course-taking and much more on a full-time apprenticeship in the work of scholarship.

- D. Service to the College and Field
 - 1. Service within the College:

I have done my share, most significantly over the past two years in chairing or participating in four faculty searches, the results of which have added significantly to the diversity of the College faculty.

I serve as chair of the Area B Ph.D. Committee and interact with the administration of GSAS fairly extensively.

2. Service to profession/field:

Since stepping down as director of the Institute for Learning Technologies, I have tried to avoid much service activity in the field, although I give occasional talks on technology and education. I confess to having become a cynic about service activity at this juncture, at least with respect to K-12 schools. I stopped doing technology projects in the schools because it became clear the obsession with standards, testing, and accountability ensured that the uses of digital technologies in schools would be insignificant at best and perverse at worst. I think that we are in a bind in which the educational initiatives that are politically feasible are fundamentally wrong-headed and none of us has a clue about how to shift the spectrum of what is feasible in such a way that we can pursue constructive initiatives with some hope of effect. I am relatively optimistic that the Republican ascendancy, having reduced itself to absurdity, is in rapid decline. But I am not sure that in matters educational a Democratic ascendancy will be much of an improvement. In this state of mind, I am interested in two things, one modest and the other grandiose:

- Locally, strengthening the working conditions that pertain for Ph.D. candidates and for faculty members doing fundamental academic scholarship in education.
- Generally, resuscitating educational criticism and cultural criticism in general in the hope of finding a way to reinvigorate the collective commitment to the full development of the humane potentialities of each and every person as the standard for measuring the worth of civic and social leadership. Around the world elites are flaccid and self-serving, and they must be shamed into expecting more *from themselves*, not *for themselves*, and giving more to the commonweal that they now so blatantly abuse.

E. Support

1. Are there any ways in which the College could assist you in your work or professional development?

Time is precious and our need for more wisdom in our collective use of our collective time perennial.

2. Do you have any other concerns or comments?

No.