

*A position paper:*  
**The Value of Including Creative Endeavors  
In the Tenure and Promotion Process**

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Submitted in response to a request by:

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And  
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This position paper was written primarily to clarify the value of including creative scholarship in the tenure and promotion process. Creative endeavors, creative artistry, creative works, professional practice and professional application are words used to label creative scholarship for interior design. Since the use of multiple terms may be confusing the text includes definitions to help explain creative scholarship. Because evaluation for creative scholarship may be unfamiliar to administrators and faculty involved in tenure and promotion there is a section on methods for evaluation. This document is in support of the position paper on APPOINTMENT, TENURE AND PROMOTION posted on the website for the interior Design Educators Council.

An appropriate preface to this document is a replication of the statement made on page one of the IDEC Appointment, Tenure and Promotion paper, " IDEC recognizes the prerogative and responsibility of each institution to determine its own appointment, retention, tenure, and promotion guidelines based upon the mission of the institution and the goals and objectives of the administrative unit. The criteria presented here are offered as an aid to those post-secondary institutions seeking assistance in the development of appropriate evaluative for interior design educators."

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## The Value of Including Creative Endeavors in the Tenure and Promotion Process

### Executive Summary

This position paper was written to define the terms used for labeling creative scholarship; clarify the value of including creative scholarship in the tenure and promotion process; and provide criteria and methods for evaluating the significance of scholarly work in creative fields. This document is in support of the position paper titled APPOINTMENT, TENURE AND PROMOTION posted on the website for the Interior Design Educators Council. "IDEC recognizes the prerogative and responsibility of each institution to determine its own appointment, retention, tenure, and promotion guidelines based upon the mission of the institution and the goals and objectives of the administrative unit. The criteria presented here are offered as an aid to those post-secondary institutions seeking assistance in the development of appropriate evaluative for interior design educators."

As the field of creative scholarship has been further refined and expanded over the past decade, various authors and institutions have defined the work of design scholars in more descriptive terms (e.g. Weiser, 1996; Boyer, 1990; Cantor & Lavine, 2006). These include terms such as public scholarship, creative artistry, research based practice, scholarship of application, scholarly practice, evidence based design, and design research. This position paper provides definitions which may be useful as institutions seek to recognize a broader diversity in scholarship activities in their own promotion and tenure documents. Criteria for evaluating the quality of scholarship are also provided as each institution establishes its own culture for measuring the value of scholarly work.

There are both qualitative and quantitative measures for creative scholarship that must be applied by experts who can recognize the value of certain exhibits and the quality of a design produced by professional practice or a benchmark design which is as valuable as a research study to the Interior Design profession. Weighing the impact of outcomes will require expert judgment, therefore, programs that have "non-design scholars" making determinations of tenure and promotion and annual evaluation may need to engage external peers to assist them in evaluating the dossier of untenured faculty who have creative forms of scholarship as part of their submitted materials. In addition, the significance of outcomes from creative work must be clearly presented in order for evaluators to appropriately assess the scholar's dossier at annual evaluations and for promotion and tenure.

Creative scholarship requires the same consideration for expert judgment as any other field of study. The challenges inherent in expanding the appreciation of what it means to be a scholar are easy to recognize. Creative scholarship may require a different form of qualitative and quantitative evaluation, and adoption of these methods may require dialogue and education in order to develop an understanding of contribution and value. IDEC supports creative scholarship both in practice as well as artistic endeavors. The work presented at our annual conferences enriches our intellectual dialogue, broadens understanding of design theory, and contributes to the body of knowledge that serves our social compact as a profession. It is proposed that programs, departments, colleges and/ or universities that house interior design programs examine the cultural milieu to locate opportunities for discipline specific scholarship to fulfill missions.

#### Selected References:

- Boyer, E. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, (p. 34) New York: NY.
- Cantor, N. & Lavine, S. D. (2006) "Taking public scholarship seriously" *The Chronicle for Higher Education*, Section: The Chronicle Review, Vol. 52, Issue 40, Page B20 (print 6/9/2006) Retrieved January 3, 2008 from <http://proquest.umi.com/pgdweb?index=0&did=1075754561&SrchMode=1&sid=2&Fmt=3&VInst=PROD&VType=PQD&RQT=309&VName=PQD&TS=1199457684&clientId=48067>
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## The Value of Including Creative Endeavors in the Tenure and Promotion Process

### ***Introduction and Position:***

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*The missions of universities in relation to contemporary society cannot be met without the incorporation of qualified faculty through a compatible definition of roles and rewards. For that reason, university administrators and faculty are equal stakeholders in the important process of tenure and promotion. Conversely, faculty cannot realize their goal of contributing within a university setting unless the process of tenure and promotion is coupled with a definition of scholarship that supports the needs of specialized disciplines and the university's commitment to service and society. The success of both the faculty and the university are fundamentally intertwined. Therefore, it is important to address how they might complement one another.*

*The definition of scholarship must give faculty the freedom to inquire and discover using methodologies and skills that are recognized in their specialized discipline. For interior design educators the methods of inquiry reach beyond traditional research into various forms of creative scholarship. These diverse forms of scholarship lead to the creation and discovery of new knowledge that support university missions that relate to change and improvement of contemporary society.*

*Existing challenges for both administrators and faculty are described below:*

- 1. When evaluating interior design educators, some institutions may not have language in their promotion and tenure documents that recognizes or rewards diverse forms of scholarship. This creates a process in which the successful achievement of promotion or tenure is unattainable for those who do not produce traditional research. Consequently, a narrow definition of what constitutes scholarship may result in low retention rate or frequent turnover in teaching personnel. For the university hoping to maintain continuity, quality and successful accomplishment of important university missions this may prove to be very costly.*
- 2. Because interior design programs are housed in a variety of departments and colleges, attitudes toward guidelines for creative endeavors may vary where traditional research is the benchmark of faculty excellence. Guidelines for evaluating diverse forms of scholarship may be ambiguous to non-design scholars who lack expertise to determine and evaluate creative scholarship; therefore, creative endeavors are often only accepted for programs located in fine arts colleges and schools or colleges of architecture.*
- 3. The lack of evaluation criteria for creative scholarship often leads to a stratification of creative endeavors and traditional research methods and results in a hierarchy which prefers traditional scholarship over other forms of scholarship*
- 4. Many qualified professionals are unwilling to join the ranks in a university when faculty roles and rewards are defined in a manner that excludes scholarship opportunities for faculty in design disciplines. Even with additional efforts many*

*faculty positions in interior design go unfilled each year making the work of the university and their existing faculty more difficult. Furthermore, accreditation becomes a greater challenge and the mission of the program and university itself may suffer.*

- 5. Limited views on scholarship also eliminate valuable contributions from creative endeavors and innovations that move our society forward.*

*Therefore, it is proposed that this document provide a resource for institutions seeking to define creative scholarship and evaluate it on an equal basis with other forms of scholarship in the tenure and promotion process.*

## **Background**

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In May 2006, Eric Wiedegreen then president of the Interior Design Educators Council (IDEC) charged a task force of IDEC members to develop a position paper on the value of including creative endeavors in the tenure and promotion process for interior design educators. In June of 2007, Jane Kucko president of IDEC renewed the request for a paper advocating the universal inclusion of creative artistry and professional practice as equal to traditional research in the tenure and promotion process.

Acknowledging the importance and significance of design scholarship within IDEC is not a new challenge. In 1993, the IDEC Appointment, Tenure, and Promotion Paper was released. In 1995, Guerin and Birdsong followed up with a summation of a workshop in which 30 Midwest Regional IDEC members developed or identified definitions of creative scholarship, evaluation criteria, outcomes evaluation of methods, and measures for creative scholarship. Outside of the field of Interior Design Education, there have been calls to broaden the definitions of scholarly work as well as the value and reward systems within academic institutions (e.g. Boyer, 1990; Weiser, 1996).

IDEC members continue to discuss the challenges of educators and advancing the body of knowledge. A declining pool of qualified faculty and graduate education programs are all associated with recognizing and rewarding the important work of design scholars. As recently as 2007, Joy Dohr, articulated scholarly cultures for Interior Design in the Journal of Interior Design. Her comments were a continuation and follow-up to the dialogue on these issues at the 2007 IDEC conference in Austin Texas.

## **Definitions of Creative Scholarship**

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Guerin and Birdsong (1995) outlined the products of creative artistry and professional practice in their explanations of IDEC's definition of creative scholarship. As the field of creative scholarship has been further refined and expanded over the past decade, however, more specific definitions have been proposed. Following are definitions that have been used by various authors and institutions to qualify the work of design scholars in more descriptive terms. These definitions may be useful as institutions seek to recognize a broader diversity in scholarship activities in their own promotion and tenure documents.

**Scholarship:** Creative intellectual work that is validated by peers and communicated (Weiser, 1996). Scholarship achieves stated goals, is documented and evaluated, and is communicated or made public in appropriate ways *so as to have an impact on the discipline and significance beyond the University* (Department of Apparel, Textiles and Interior Design, n.d.). Scholarship creates something that did not exist before that is validated and communicated to others (Boyer, 1990).

**Public Scholarship:** Commissioned or contracted scholarly work is sometimes referred to as “Public Scholarship.” This definition of public scholarship in the arts and humanities comprises research, scholarship or creative activity that: connects directly to the work of specific public groups in specific contexts; arises from a faculty member’s field of knowledge; involves a cohesive series of activities contributing to the public welfare and resulting in “public good” products; is jointly planned and carried out by coequal partners, and; integrates discovery, learning, and public engagement (Cantor & Lavine, 2006).

**Creative Performance/ Creative Artistry:** The design scholar seeks to make others see, experience, and understand through new visual experiential structures or through forms unto themselves (Dohr, 2007). Work that interprets the human spirit; creates and communicates new insights and beauty; develops and refines methods (Weiser, 1996).

**Research Based Practice/ Scholarship of Application and/or Scholarship of Integration of Theory through Professional Practice/ Scholarly Practice/ Evidence-based Design:** The design scholar, as practitioner and interpreter, seeks to change human conditions, to approach planning and design from a holistic perspective, which includes understanding values and applying design theories and research findings in an innovative manner (Dohr, 2007). Work gives meaning to isolated facts, putting them in perspective and making connections across the disciplines (Boyer, 1990)

**Design Research/ Scholarship of Discovery:** The design scholar, as observer and interpreter, promotes the understanding of human experience and design, adding to cultural understanding and meaning, to historical understanding and meaning, and/or to scientific (social, psychological, technical and physical) understanding of human-environment interaction within a given context (Dohr, 2007). Work generates and communicates new knowledge and understanding; develops and refines methods (Weiser, 1996; Boyer 1990)

## Thesis

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All research is creative and thereby a method leading to the discovery of new knowledge; therefore, applying hierarchy to different forms of scholarship should be discouraged. Increasing awareness and appreciation for creative endeavors is essential. This paper serves to assist institutions in evaluating and giving due credit to those faculty who engage in this important and timely work. Diverse forms of scholarship enrich the academy and assist programs, colleges, universities and institutions in supporting their missions.

## **Proposal to Enlarge the Definition of Scholarship**

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IDEC supports creative scholarship both in practice as well as artistic endeavors. The work presented at our annual conferences enriches our intellectual dialogue and broadens understanding of design theory, and contributes to the body of knowledge that serves our social compact as a profession. It is proposed that programs, departments, colleges and/ or universities that house interior design programs examine the cultural milieu to locate opportunities for discipline specific scholarship to fulfill missions. As noted by Cantor and Lavine (2006) “colleges have the intellectual and artistic resources to make significant contributions to society”

Rethinking current academic reward systems to include creative scholarship would create an attractive environment for design oriented scholars and increase the potential benefit to the overall culture. Qualified interior design faculty have begun to search for a system that extends the definition of scholarship to include their strengths. The institution that understands and recognizes the value of diverse forms of scholarship may attract the best qualified faculty and enhance scholarship on their campus as a whole as well. This may be especially critical for interior design programs seeking to attract the most qualified and motivated interior design educators from the small pool of applicants currently available.

## **Criteria for Validating Scholarship**

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No matter what shape scholarship takes it must be evaluated. Quality of scholarship must be confirmed for faculty to receive credit in the promotion and tenure process. Good scholars look forward to having their work evaluated when it is done equitably.

## **Recognizing Multiple Forms of Peer Validation of Design Scholarship**

Each institution establishes its own culture for measuring the value of scholarly work. Even the value of a journal article can be debated based on its impact, audience and acceptance rate. A trained scholar must be familiar with the field and its publications in order to make an informed decision. In the design fields it is no different. Some practice is not scholarly. Some creative works do not achieve anything of significance.

A major criterion and the ultimate evaluation of one's scholarship is whether it has been judged by peers to be an addition to knowledge (new knowledge or innovative application of existing knowledge). Thus, some form of evidence is necessary as an indication of peer-validation. It is important to recognize, however, that peer validation and communication can occur in a variety of ways including but not limited to peer-refereed publications. For example, selection for a grant is done by external reviewers who award grant dollars based upon recognized qualifications. On a basic level, being selected as the designer for a project which carries a fee or being paid a commission for art or design work is similar. The designer's recognized expertise based on previous work and their proposal for this project is the basis for the selection.

Unlike writing a paper or completing non-commissioned creative artistry, the design practitioner is reviewed by their peers (including public peers outside the institution) before they are even able to start the work. Unlike artistic endeavors which do not require a client, practitioners do not continue to practice unless their work is valued by others willing to invest significant resources necessary to engage them.

The judgment of outcomes of the work is another level of critique and peer-validation can come in various forms; post occupancy evaluation, acceptance for a design award, publication in media, or presentation at a national conference. Once the conceptual work has been completed for habitation or exhibit it may be evaluated by the inhabitants. This is certainly a valid form of assessing contributions of the work. Besides the evaluation by users other experts may recognize within the work a new way of solving an old problem, a redefinition of an old problem, or the address of a heretofore unrecognized problem with an innovative outcome which would create a benchmark or the possibility for changing the way society looks at established outcomes. Positive documented judgments by qualified viewers, inhabitants, users, and or juries of experts about completed works provide a measure of creditability for creative work.

Each institution sets expectations for measurable outcomes. Diversity in scholarship would not mean there would be no common assessment techniques. Nor does it sacrifice stringency in professional standards. There is growing evidence that many institutions are recognizing the multiple indicators that can be used to assess scholarly productivity and professional growth that contributes to the mission of the institution (Buffalo State, n.d.; Cantor and Lavine, 2006; Department of Apparel, Textiles and Interior Design, n.d.; Weiser, 1996).

Assessment team members must have credentials which qualify them to render assessments as peers and must be judicious enough to recognize a contribution. Finding peers to evaluate the contributions of creative endeavors against the backdrop of our profession is dependent on how the work is presented and the qualifications of those who are to jury. There are both qualitative and quantitative measures for creative scholarship that must be applied by experts who can recognize the value of certain exhibits and the quality of a design produced by professional practice or a benchmark design which is as valuable as a research study to the Interior Design profession.

### **Disseminating & Communicating Scholarly Work**

Communication for all scholars involves two distinct activities; communication or dissemination of the individual work to the appropriate public, and communication of the significance of the outcomes of work to those who evaluate the scholar's dossier at annual evaluation and for promotion and tenure.

### **Communication or Dissemination to Publics beyond the Institution**

The work of the design scholar can be disseminated beyond the institution in multiple forms. Each of the activities may have a different level of significance that is dependent upon several variables. The results of research, scholarship, and other creative activity should be shared through means appropriate to the discipline. The text further defines both research and creative endeavors as, "characterized by clear goals and purpose, originality, and appropriate methods for the project goals.

Outcomes can include but are not limited to:

- Built structures and installation
- Exhibits
- Juried Presentations
- Periodicals (newspapers, trade magazines, etc) and Reports
- Peer-Reviewed Publications
- Regional, National, and International Presentations
- Copyrights and Patents
- Intellectual Property

### **Communication of Scholar's Body of Work in the Promotion and Tenure Process**

Framing outcomes in traditional academic formats may be one of the problems most difficult to solve. The scholar being evaluated would have to gain knowledge in how to present credentials to evaluators outside his field. In *Scholarship Assessed: Evaluation of the Professoriate* Glassick, Huber & Maeroff (1997) agree that the common purpose is to gain and retain a strong and vital faculty that can assist in meeting university goals. Assessment of evaluation methods can build from the already familiar ground of review and dissemination, however these methods should be shaped differently for specific disciplines and new categories that deserve the status of diverse scholarship. Academics who produce work in the areas of scholarly practice should carefully document:

- Selection process and criteria (as a form of peer-validation of their expertise)
- Project requirements (scope and methods)
- Level of engagement (similar to level of involvement in multiple authored papers)
- Significant outcomes of the project that contribute to the body of knowledge

### **Criteria for Validating Scholarship**

Creative scholarship requires the same attention to expert judgment that any other field of study requires. Form and activities are often easier to document and evaluate than are substance and consequence (Wieser, 1996). Weighing the impact of outcomes will require expert judgment, therefore, programs that have "non-design scholars" making determinations of tenure and promotion and annual evaluation may need to engage external peers to assist them in evaluating the dossier of untenured faculty who have creative forms of scholarship as part of their submitted materials. Qualitative criteria that can be considered include:

**Public Scholarship:** Breadth, value, and persistence of use and impact.

**Creative Performance/ Creative Artistry:** Beauty, originality, impact, and duration of public value, scope and persistence of influence and public appreciation.

**Research Based Practice/ Scholarship of Application and/or Scholarship of Integration of Theory through Professional Practice/ Scholarly Practice/ Evidence-based Design:** Usefulness and originality of new or different understandings, applications and insights.

**Design Research/ Scholarship of Discovery:** Originality of work, scope and significance of new knowledge, applicability and benefit to society.

## Concluding Points:

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The challenges inherent in broadening the understanding of what it means to be a scholar are easy to recognize. There are constant pressures to uphold the high levels of academic integrity that are the foundations of our universities and institutions of higher learning. Traditional forms of scholarly work and the quantifiable outcomes of peer-reviewed journal articles continue to be a method that permits familiar and efficient validation of a scholar's contributions to their field of study. The inclusion of other forms of scholarship may call for a different form of qualitative and quantitative evaluation, and adoption of these methods may require dialogue and education in order to develop understanding of contribution and value. The additional challenges involved in enlarging the scope of scholarship are unquestionable but the acceptance and mastery of these will enrich the traditional landscape of investigation and improve opportunities for exploration.

Regardless, all forms of scholarship must be judged by the significance of its results (Glassick, Huber & Maeroff, 1997).

Our recommendations are based on the premise that interior design is a diverse and complex discipline that requires skills and expertise in areas as different as technology, art and social science. Considering the different nature of academic performance in these areas, IDEC recommends assessment of faculty members depending on their predominant area of expertise. This assessment should take into account the specifics of academic evaluation in the predominant area of engagement. Through the acceptance and validation of diverse pursuits, faculty may better contribute to the missions of their institutions and be appropriately recognized and rewarded for their professional endeavors.

## References:

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