

# Statement of Significant Scholarly Work - 2016

## Department of Philosophy St. Olaf College

### **The nature of scholarly activity in philosophy**

Over the last 100 years, the principal ways philosophical work is displayed and evaluated is through journal articles, books, and lectures. In keeping with this background and allowing that "print" now includes online journals and books without hard copy, we believe that refereed published work is the most significant evidence of scholarly activity.

### **Types of Scholarship**

Of central importance in assessing the scholarly contribution by St. Olaf faculty members to the field of philosophy is the publication of original work in peer-reviewed journals, monographs, edited books, chapters in books, book reviews, invited lectures, conference papers, or participation on conference panels. The department also recognizes as scholarship books and articles that facilitate undergraduate learning.

Receiving less weight than the above scholarship, a faculty member's scholarly reputation can be enhanced by other work that contributes to the field of philosophy: editing journals; being on philosophical committees or as officers of philosophical societies; functioning as a reviewer of manuscripts for journals, publishers, conferences, or grants; functioning as reviewers of faculty from other colleges and universities for tenure and promotion; being an external reviewer of philosophy departments; leading NEH seminars or being active on the editorial board of book series. The significance of scholarly reputation may also be indicated by grant awards and invitations to prestigious lectureships.

Philosophers can also contribute as public intellectuals who bring the insights developed within the academy to bear on pressing issues and concerns of our times for a general audience. This work can include publication in newspapers or magazines as well as being interviewed by magazines, newspapers, television or on film; directing television programs or films on philosophy; and creating, managing, or contributing to blogs dedicated to the practice of philosophy. Work in this category is valued as scholarship (although not peer-reviewed), especially when it is of high quality, reaches a wide audience, and sheds light on topics of enduring philosophical interest.

Notwithstanding the above breadth of types of scholarship, the department assigns primacy to refereed publications.

### **Indicators of Significance**

The significance of scholarship by professors can be characterized in terms of selectivity, audience, and impact. These serve as *prima facie* indicators of what is of ultimate importance, namely, the quality of the work itself.

**Selectivity.** Publishing a paper in a highly selective journal is significant. Another sign of selectivity is the acceptance of a paper for publication following a process of blind, peer review. Sometimes selectivity can be evident in cases of when a professor is selected to provide a prestigious lecture or contribute to books or journals.

**Audience.** The Department values published work that appeals to specialists in the sub-fields of philosophy (logic, ethics, epistemology, and so on), as well as work that addresses a broad readership. Marks of distinction and accomplishment may combine selectivity and audience. For example, if the American Philosophical Association selects a book by a philosopher to be the subject of an Author-meets-Critics session at one of its three annual meetings, this is indeed a great honor and achievement. Invited lectureships can be another important mark of distinction when the lecturer is chosen from a roster of highly accomplished philosophers (as, for example, with our own Belugum Lecture).

**Impact.** In philosophy, the impact of a work is not directly tied to the type of publication, whether a monograph, article, or edited book or journal. Monographs and articles are about equally likely to have a strong impact on the field, and because they are supposed to contain original material and insights, they tend to do so more than other types of work; but there are important exceptions. For example, while it is often the case that a book review is not as significant as an article or monograph, some of the most famous philosophical publications in the twentieth century were book reviews (Chomsky on Skinner, Ryle on Heidegger). As such, a group of particularly significant review essays could, under the right circumstances, count as equivalent to a peer-reviewed publication. And an edited collection could transform a field by including topics or contributors that had been ignored. Here again, the quality and impact of the work are what is truly important.

### **Expectations for Tenure and Promotion:**

The expectations for accomplishment listed below are expressed in terms of articles and books or their equivalents. This is admittedly a rough guide, and professional judgment is required to provide an all-things-considered evaluation of such equivalencies, which apply not only between categories of scholarly work but also within a category. For example, not only could one important, groundbreaking article be the equivalent of competent, but not outstanding book, but one high impact, original article may also be the equivalent of two or three articles of similar length that have less impact on the profession.

#### **1. Assistant Professor at the time of the comprehensive review preceding the tenure review (typically in the fourth year of the probationary period)**

Assistant professors in the fourth year of a tenure-track position (or its equivalent) should be working toward meeting the scholarly expectations that arise in the tenure review. They will have advanced significantly from graduate level work, joining the community of professional philosophers, and should be well positioned to meet, within two years, the requirements for tenure and promotion to associate professor. It is expected that by the fourth year, the faculty member has not only produced original philosophical work (including work started in the dissertation) but has also succeeded in disseminating, through conference presentations and publications, some of that work. Three or four refereed articles will be required by the time of tenure. Thus, other things being equal, we generally expect all candidates to have published or have forthcoming one or two articles by the fourth year review and to have one or two additional papers in progress, or to be making good progress towards

a larger project, such as a monograph, that will be accepted for publication in time for being reviewed for tenure.

Faculty members in their fourth year are also expected to be making progress in establishing themselves as active, contributing members of a scholarly community by making other contributions to the profession, for example, as a reviewer for journals, books, and granting agencies.

## **2. Tenure and promotion to the rank of associate professor**

The conferral of tenure is, in part, both the college's recognition of a faculty member's achievement as a scholar and its reciprocal promise of providing support and stability for the faculty member's continued scholarly activity. The tenured faculty member has demonstrated high quality scholarly work "and evidence that such work is likely to be continued" (Faculty Manual 4.X.B).

Tenured associate professors of philosophy at St. Olaf College should have peer-reviewed work published or accepted for publication comparable to that of an associate professor of philosophy at any selective liberal arts college. Normally, the department expects at least three or four articles in respected refereed philosophy journals, or their equivalent, for tenure and promotion to associate professor along with a professional development plan that includes on-going work and indicates that this faculty member will be active philosophically throughout their tenure at the college.

Tenured associate professors are also expected to be active, contributing members of the wider philosophical community, as evidenced by contributions to the profession such as: as a reviewer for journals, books, granting agencies, contests and conferences, or as a commentator or chair for conference papers, and organizing conferences.

## **3. Professor**

Promotion to the rank of professor requires evidence of achievement and of ongoing scholarly activity above the rank of associate professor. Assessing whether faculty members achieve the rank of full professor involves assessing their work overall, their reputation and promise of future work.

Evidence of scholarly achievement is accumulated throughout a person's career, so that work done at an earlier phase in a faculty member's career remains part of the total evidence of accomplishment at later stages. In judging achievement, it should be noted that as a philosopher's reputation increases, so also does the number of invitations for lectures, interviews, and papers; requests for reviews of philosophical work, departments, and faculty members; and other opportunities for leadership within professional organizations. Thus, publication of papers in refereed journals or conferences, although still a part of a senior faculty member's output, often becomes a less prominent feature of a faculty member's scholarly work; and signs of significance shift from those that focus on particular works to those that focus on the faculty member's overall accomplishments and reputation. For the purposes of any promotion, however, some of the evidence of ongoing activity must take the form of peer-reviewed published work.

Having recognized such diverse avenues for scholarly professional activity, we expect full professors to have a record of publication, including in total, at least the equivalent of six refereed articles or a book, with some of these works published after promotion to associate professor.