

Collaborating for Change: Utilizing Cross-Institutional Partnerships to Advance the Scholarship of Teaching at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions

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Abstract:

Because the teaching-research-service triad of faculty responsibilities at Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs) is weighted toward teaching, faculty development initiatives at these institutions may anticipate early—and easy—adoption of the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Indeed, our experience sharing SoTL programming and resources with faculty at Park University confirmed that the culture of teaching often in place at PUIs can prove fertile soil for SoTL programming. However, we also discovered the challenges that can arise when moving from a culture of teaching to a culture of the scholarship of teaching. Our institutional story of membership in the Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning reinforces the value of devising multiple avenues to integrate SoTL into a teaching-focused institutional culture, and the necessity of cross-institutional partnerships to stimulate greater perspective on and participation in teaching as a scholarly endeavor.

Key Words:

Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, CASTL, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, SoTL, Primarily Undergraduate Institutions, Faculty Development, Cross-Institutional Collaboration.

Introduction

Although the flagship campus of Park University will soon celebrate its 135th birthday, one of its most defining moments occurred only ten years ago when the institution transitioned from Park *College* to Park *University* due to addition of master's-level academic programs and a rapid growth in overall student enrollment. This shift in identity has productively challenged the institution—and its faculty—to define and negotiate the role of scholarship alongside an unchanging 4/4 teaching load. Like faculty at many Primarily Undergraduate Institutions (PUIs), Park University's faculty embraced the integration of teaching and scholarship, even going so far as to incorporate the language of “the Boyer model” into the definition of scholarship outlined in faculty tenure and promotion guidelines. This adoption of Boyer created a need to educate and support the broader faculty community about the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL).

To be sure, scholarship existed as a component of faculty life prior to the institution's transition from college to university. However, the primary emphasis was placed upon disciplinary scholarship, both the production of this scholarship and, perhaps even more important, its consumption. That is, part of what cultivated (and continues to cultivate) teaching excellence at the institution is faculty's commitment to remaining current in their respective fields and to incorporating disciplinary research into their curriculum. When the institution's faculty development center was established in 2005, its chief agenda was not to preach the value of scholarship but to raise faculty awareness of the various ways that SoTL could enhance approaches to disciplinary scholarship, aid preparation of outstanding curriculum, and uncover opportunities to more systematically reflect upon and share teaching innovations.

Thus, Park University's journey with SoTL did not begin with a SoTL-themed faculty development center. Instead, it began with the language of SoTL serving as a mechanism by which to preserve, and perhaps defend, a primarily undergraduate, teaching-focused institutional culture in the wake of a significant external change—in this case, the transition from college to university status and the burgeoning faculty scholarship expectations that accompanied that change. Importantly, these scholarship expectations carried with them the opportunity to define (and perhaps expand) precisely what scholarship would mean at the institution. The story of the *Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning* demonstrates the challenges and rewards that accompany any effort to take SoTL from the realm of rhetoric to reality. The culture of teaching established at Park University facilitated discussions of teaching and learning at the same time that it sometimes resisted, both practically and philosophically, transforming those discussions into methodologies for systemic inquiry into teaching.

Much has been written about research at PUIs; this literature is focused on such issues as how to accomplish rigorous (and often costly) scientific research with limited resources and how to leverage student-faculty research to meet expectations for faculty advancement (Ramirez & Hoagland, 2003; Hoagland, Abraham & Otto, 1998; Elmes-Crahell, 1992). We add to this research a perspective on faculty SoTL engagement at PUIs, where the faculty ethos is largely built upon a commitment to excellence in undergraduate education, and where the teaching and learning emphasis of SoTL not only resonates strongly within the faculty culture but also elicits some degree of

misgiving. Our experience reinforces the importance of devising multiple avenues and resources for faculty to utilize in charting their own journeys with SoTL, and the invaluable role of cross-institutional partnerships in helping a young faculty development center devise these opportunities. After a brief institutional context, we discuss how colleagues at regional institutions helped us initiate campus conversations about SoTL; we then present some of opportunities for SoTL engagement we implemented in order to explore with faculty multiple ways of making their SoTL work “public.” We conclude by imagining the next phase of SoTL at our institution and the challenges that will likely propel and constrain that development.

Institutional Context: Integrating Scholarship into a Culture of Teaching

Founded in 1875 as an independent, liberal arts institution, Park University (then College) adopted a “work-study” curriculum wherein students worked full-time for the institution in exchange for tuition and fees. That mission of access later led the institution to expand beyond its historic residential campus in Parkville, Missouri, to establish a number of campuses around the country in order to serve military and adult learners. In the early 1990’s, Park became one of the first institutions in the country to “experiment” with distance education modalities, piloting a number of models, including fully online courses. From that point forward, Park experienced rapid growth in enrollment and infrastructure. Now Park *University*, the original campus has grown to include 43 nation-wide campus centers, and an extensive online program supporting 45,000 annual student enrollments at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Although Park University’s growth has included four master’s-level graduate programs, the vast majority of teaching and learning at the institution occurs at the undergraduate level, in traditional 16-week semesters and accelerated 8-week terms conducted face-to-face and online. Faculty maintain a rigorous teaching and advising load; and class sizes, even in the online programs, are set to maintain an overall average student-faculty ratio of 14:1. Both in practical terms (i.e., how faculty expend most of their energies) and in spirit and culture, Park University has remained throughout the years focused primarily on realizing a teaching mission of providing “access to academic excellence.” Faculty are drawn to, and remain at, the institution because of its emphasis on teaching, specifically the opportunity to teach and mentor across a diverse range of student demographics, from the traditional, residential student to the working adult completing his/her degree amidst full-time work, parenting, or, in many cases, military deployments. Park University boasts a cultural diversity owing to its significant international student population, with learners representing over 120 countries. The diversity of student demographics and instructional modalities at Park University has attracted and fostered an incredibly adaptive and innovative faculty. Curriculum for the institution’s 42 campus locations, including online, is developed and approved by full-time faculty. As a result faculty possess a deep loyalty to, investment in, and passion for the curriculum of the university.

Established by the Office of Academic Affairs in 2005, the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning’s (CETL) mission is to “advance the practice and profession of teaching at Park University,” with attendant goals of supporting and recognizing “faculty contributions to the scholarship of teaching and learning.” The three faculty members

appointed at partial release time to oversee the Center were fortunate to build upon the incredibly strong foundation of teaching excellence already in place at the institution. The attention to and value placed on teaching and student learning by the faculty translated into widespread interest and support in the aims of the Center. Challenges emerged, however, as faculty debated the value and feasibility of making their teaching activities “public,” especially in peer-reviewed forms. Would SoTL truly improve the quality of teaching, and of learning, at the institution? Would SoTL preserve or pollute the teaching identity of the institution? In practical terms, where would the time for this type of scholarly inquiry and production come from? How would faculty re-activate skills of inquiry and writing honed in graduate school after sometimes lengthy periods without engaging in these activities? How could the proviso of “going public” in SoTL be negotiated with a traditionalist view of scholarship as the single-authored disciplinary manuscript?

As we go on to discuss, these conversations formed an important initial stage in our understanding of SoTL at Park University. As a faculty community pursuing a greater understanding of SoTL, we found comfort, and sometimes encountered conundrums, as we tracked our conversations in the literature; and we gained confidence and direction from SoTL mentors close to home.

Starting a Campus Conversation about SoTL: Tapping “Local Knowledge”

Prior to developing centralized resources to support SoTL, Park University adopted the language of the original Boyer model in the definition of scholarship presented in the faculty tenure and promotion guidelines. This move to expand notions of scholarship beyond traditional “discovery” produced a somewhat paradoxical effect, precisely because the “scholarship of teaching” made its way into faculty conversations in the context of more rigorous tenure and promotion expectations in the area of scholarship. Thus, on one hand, faculty interest and dedication to teaching was affirmed by the inclusion of “scholarship of teaching;” on the other, faculty apprehension and concern over balancing teaching, scholarship, and service were heightened by the very conversations intended to assert the potential for teaching as scholarly inquiry. Faculty development programming around the concept of the scholarship of teaching had to attend to these dual reactions. As a first step in reframing faculty perceptions of and conversations about SoTL, CETL looked to the local SoTL community as a resource.

O’Brien (2008) observed that faculty new to SoTL benefit not only from an introduction to the theories, methodologies, and venues for public dissemination but also from “a little local knowledge” (p. 2). Indeed, an effective starting place for conversations about SoTL at Park University was Park University faculty themselves. We sought out “early adopters” of SoTL methodologies in various disciplines, beginning our search in the school for education. Undoubtedly true at other PUIs, some of the most rigorous pedagogical research takes place within education curriculum, as faculty offer pre-service teachers ways to systematically reflect upon and improve their developing skills of classroom instruction (D’Andrea, 2006; Huber, 2006).

These education faculty, along with a smattering of faculty from other disciplines, were willing to talk with fellow university faculty about SoTL outside of the evaluative context of the tenure and promotion guidelines; and it was these conversations that

started the Center's SoTL programming. These "early adopters" of SoTL helped us reinforce to faculty that scholarly approaches to teaching were already happening at the University; and the models provided to faculty—by faculty—eased the apprehension and skepticism about SoTL as an unrealistic expectation or irrelevant distraction from teaching. These conversations were perhaps our first foray into one sort of "going public" described by SoTL scholars, termed by Wilner (n.d.) as "counter-cultural":

In an atmosphere not of competition but of mutual implication in a common mission, we faculty, typically so jealous of our academic independence and personal space, can practice the kind of collaborative partnership we increasingly advocate for our students. Professors are the most immediate beneficiaries of this sharing. For our students, the benefits promise to be immeasurable. (para. 17)

After establishing local expertise in the form of Park University faculty who had adopted, to varying degrees, SoTL as a frame for classroom inquiry, we broadened our search for O'Brien's "local knowledge," locating a core group of Carnegie scholars from area institutions who were willing to share their original and ongoing SoTL experiences with our faculty. These scholars moved us toward a deeper understanding of SoTL, in particular by articulating the productive relationship between *scholarly teaching* and *the scholarship of teaching*; these scholars helped us focus not on the products of SoTL but on the attitudes, practices, and perspectives motivating that kind of inquiry.

A scholarly approach to teaching—careful reflection, assessment, and enhancement of curriculum and instructional methods fueled by disciplinary scholarship (Richlin, 2001)—was already a part of the faculty ethos at the university. This commitment to teaching as a scholarly activity served as common ground on which these locally-located, nationally-known SoTL scholars could meet our faculty. Sharing concrete SoTL projects in varied disciplines, and the stories around those projects, taught us that adopting a scholarly approach to teaching meant uncovering "a set of problems worth pursuing as an ongoing intellectual focus" (Bass, 1999, para. 5). Our faculty responded very well to the SoTL project examples shared by these Carnegie scholars, specifically that each project was rooted in a practical, pedagogical "problem." Regardless of institutional context—doctoral, research-intensive or primarily undergraduate—most faculty can certainly identify with having persistent "problems" in their teaching.

The examples shared by the Carnegie scholars served to shift the focus from SoTL *products* and SoTL *processes*—that is, how one develops a plan for systematic inquiry into a pedagogical problem and then shares the results of that inquiry. The Carnegie scholar conversations halted, or at least delayed, a preoccupation with peer-reviewed scholarship of teaching (and all of the anxieties that accompany developing "products" for peer-review) and instead brought the SoTL enterprise into the very familiar territory of the classroom. From a faculty development perspective, this was a watershed moment in our efforts to understand, and promote understanding of, SoTL. This shift in focus from product to process helped us recognize that the move from scholarly teaching to SoTL would necessarily involve an accompanying cultural transformation in the ways that our faculty looked at and valued scholarly inquiry as a necessary part of responding to everyday teaching problems. Moreover, seeing the "lifecycle" of actual

SoTL projects heightened our awareness that SoTL, like any scholarly inquiry, takes inspiration, time, and ongoing support.

Promoting Cultural Transformation through Practical Support: The Regional SoTL Symposium

As campus-wide dialogues helped Park University faculty begin to frame SoTL at the institution, it became evident that additional support would be needed to maintain and build upon the momentum. More specifically, our faculty were in need of time and inspiration to do this work, and in need of opportunities to collaborate with colleagues in their discipline who were engaged in various stages of SoTL work (both novice and veteran). During this time, CETL again turned to colleagues and faculty development centers at regional institutions to create a cross-institutional regional SoTL “gathering” hosted at Park University. Workgroups were led by willing individuals in our network of Carnegie scholars. Out of this initial gathering, a steering committee with institutional representatives was formed and the *Greater Kansas City Symposium on Teaching and Learning* established.

The Symposium created a unique cross-institutional venue for faculty committed to enhancing student learning through Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) initiatives. The Symposium provided opportunities for faculty from regional institutions to work collaboratively to advance course or institutional-level teaching and learning projects. And as Huber and Hutchings (2005) highlighted, having the opportunity to “go public” with insights, experiences, and results that other educators can evaluate and build upon, is a large part of the SoTL movement. In particular, the Symposium offered two significant perspectives: first, the event gave participants a notion of “going public” that productively worked against the reductionist view of scholarship as the sole province of the single-authored manuscript; second, the Symposium reinforced the SoTL-as-process mindset first introduced to us by our campus conversations with Carnegie scholars.

Unlike a traditional conference, the Symposium consisted of facilitated work-groups and peer review of work-in-progress through an interactive poster session. Participants contributed to dialogue and collaboration on self-selected topics including implementing classroom-based research and reflective practices; how SoTL intersects with other teaching and learning movements within the academy; and issues related to the evaluation of teaching. The Symposium offered collaboration and exchange of ideas in an inclusive environment, and had no more than 100 participants to ensure that all working groups did not exceed more than eight individuals. Having dedicated time and feedback in the development and implementation stage of SoTL work is critical to the success and sustainability of the project.

After hosting the Symposium for two years and establishing a regional steering council, the symposium continues to be held annually and is rotated every two years among participating institutions. The event now involves not only faculty but also graduate students in the SoTL process and has a nominal charge to cover meals and materials. Given restrictions on faculty travel and the closing of professional development centers nationwide during times of fiscal constraints for institutions, having such regional professional enhancement opportunities has become even more vital.

The relationships that have been established during the tenure of this program, and the impact of work shared cannot be measured and is evident in the SoTL projects that have resulted. Pat Hutchings (2007) proposed that the richness of SoTL

stems in large part from the fact that many different kinds of work, representing a wide range of traditions and contexts, can come in contact with one another, find fertile cross currents, and bring fresh insights and resources to the ongoing conversation about how to strengthen our students' learning. (p. 3)

Indeed, the Symposium has served as our context for these "fertile cross currents" and "ongoing conversations" to advance SoTL at the individual, project, and institutional level. The success of the Symposium led us to experiment with another venue for disseminating ideas and examples of SoTL work, a refereed scholarly journal.

If You Build It, They *May* Come: Starting a National SoTL Journal

Central to the SoTL goal of promoting the systematic study of the teaching and learning process (Cambridge, 2001) is disseminating the results of systematic teaching inquiry, findings and/or reflections in a public forum that utilizes traditional peer-review processes (Richlin, 2001). Not only is the need for public dissemination important for meeting the spirit and intent of SoTL, but, from a practical perspective, the publication of one's work in a peer-reviewed forum provides concrete evidence of scholarship. It was this issue, need for scholarly publications, which arose as a driving motivator for our faculty who were attempting to transition from the teaching-oriented responsibilities of *Park College* to the more comprehensive teaching, service and scholarship requirements of *Park University*. While we were successful in encouraging our faculty to engage in more scholarly approaches to their teaching through such venues as campus conversations and the regional Symposium, we soon realized that the reality of being a teaching-focused institution often results in scarce faculty time and attention to devote to preparing "publishable" scholarship. Equally challenging was the realization that for many of our teaching-oriented faculty, research and writing had taken a backburner to other kinds of scholarly activity. Our faculty recognized and valued the centrality of remaining current in their respective fields to teaching vitality; however, enacting a reciprocal move (to not only inform their pedagogy research but to use their classroom as sites for generating new knowledge) remained as a challenge.

Building on the University's teaching-focused faculty culture and cognizant of the limitations on faculty time due to teaching loads, we created *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching* as a cross-disciplinary venue for brief (minimum of 10 pages) theoretical and empirically-based research summaries, critical reflection pieces, case studies, and classroom innovations relevant to teaching, learning and assessment. Additionally, we were concerned with creating a process that would enable faculty to experience academic, double-blind review from external collegiate reviewers but that would also provide faculty, as writers, with extensive, formative feedback to encourage continued scholarly work. As such, the goals of *InSight* were to: 1) foster effective teaching and learning through the integration of SoTL strategies; 2) mentor the publication process for faculty unfamiliar with the dissemination of their scholarly work; and, 3) support faculty in meeting the University's emerging expectations for publication.

Setting *InSight* apart from similar SoTL journals was a focus on mentoring the publication process. In contrast to many of the other available SoTL journals, faculty who submit their work to *InSight* are mentored closely through the review process and receive feedback, regardless of publication decision, geared towards helping them further develop their scholarly writing skills. Additionally, we tapped our network of cross-institutional partners to assemble a peer review board of individuals willing to go beyond traditional manuscript feedback to provide substantial feedback geared toward revision, even in cases where the manuscript did not fit the aims of the journal.

With the driving goals of *InSight* centered on meeting the unique needs of our faculty, *InSight* was originally limited to submissions from the University's full and part-time faculty. While this limitation allowed us the opportunity to work closely with authors and effectively foster the publication process, after the first year of publication, we discovered that it also had some unintended consequences that were counterproductive to the original goals. Specifically, regardless of the double-blind review process utilized and the respectable acceptance rate of the journal, many faculty questioned the quality of an in-house publication and perceived manuscripts published with *InSight* as being less influential or valuable as compared to articles published via external journals. This, in turn, led to a decrease in submissions from the very faculty group that we were primarily attempting to serve.

Based on our experiences, we revised the submission limitations and *InSight* was expanded to serve a national audience. Despite the change in scope, *InSight* maintains an emphasis on mentoring the publication process and working with authors who are new to the SoTL experience. The journal now publishes scholarly work from faculty nationwide and, with the increased growth and national audience, *InSight* is also cataloged in a number of online search engines in an effort to be more accessible and widely distributed for readership: Ebsco; Cabell's Directory of Publishing Opportunities in Educational Curriculum and Methods (www.cabells.com); Directory of Open Access Journals (<http://www.doaj.org/>); Google Scholar (<http://scholar.google.com/>); MERLOT: Multimedia and Educational Resource for Learning and Online Teaching (<http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>); Intute: Social Science Network (<http://www.intute.ac.uk/socialsciences/>).

The increased audience for and visibility of the journal has resulted in increased interest, submission, and a more competitive acceptance rate. Although research mentoring is still offered to Park University faculty, we have found greater interest outside of the university. In many ways, our experience of launching a peer-reviewed SoTL journal has reflected phenomenon described by Leger, Van Melle, Might, and Stockley (2009): "Cultural inertia exists when the intention to value SoTL does not match actual practice or experience of faculty members" (p. 1). As one of our first initiatives for making SoTL public at Park University, the *InSight* journal succeeded in demonstrating an institutional commitment to SoTL; however, submissions from faculty have not continued to increase in the years since the journal was opened to a national audience. This may suggest that interest, time, and resources among our faculty for sharing their SoTL the form of publishable manuscripts have not yet grown to the point necessary to truly institutionalize the journal; it may also suggest that more dialogue is needed among faculty about how to position and promote a scholarly publication in

ways that do not result in the development of a “publish-or-perish” environment. Broad representation from the Park University faculty community on the journal’s peer-review board makes dialogue on this and other topics possible.

Faculty response to *InSight*, combined with the knowledge gained from evaluation of all of our SoTL program, confirmed the importance of devising *multiple* avenues for our faculty to engage in SoTL activities—to develop questions and methods for inquiry; to “go public” with their course-based innovations; and to be recognized for efforts to advance SoTL. The additional programming resources we go on to describe illustrate the kinds of support we have come to understand are necessary at a PUI in order to maintain a focus on SoTL as a process for continuously improving teaching and learning rather than simply as a way to meet university expectations for scholarship.

Creating Multiple Paths toward SoTL

Although *InSight* remained a viable publishing outlet for SoTL work, and a very public demonstration of the institution’s commitment to SoTL, faculty with heavy teaching and advising loads were (and still are) hard pressed for the time and practical support to publish manuscripts, especially those that may be perceived as having too much distance from their disciplinary scholarship. Additionally, although the Symposium remained a sustainable model for expanding the borders of SoTL collaboration outside of the university walls, it alone could not sustain the kinds of ongoing conversations that would lead to cultural changes around teaching and scholarship integration at the University. For these reasons, the next phase of our SoTL program development sought to uncover additional paths for exposing faculty to pedagogical resources, assisting their efforts to examine and intervene in their own teaching practice, and helping them sharing their experiences and expertise with fellow faculty.

A productive constraint faced by our Center from its founding was the geographically-dispersed nature of our faculty body. Multiple campus centers and instructional modalities resulted in full-time and adjunct faculty scattered across the country and, in some cases, around the world. Addressing our audience, then, could never fully take place in the context of a face-to-face workshop, brown-bag, or teaching circle. Thus, in response to the results of our annual surveys of faculty interests and desired programming formats, we devised a virtual arm for our Center, which we named *The Best Practices Institute* (BPI). BPI offers easily-accessible, self-paced online modules on teaching and learning topics relevant to faculty across the disciplines. Each module emphasizes the application of pedagogical theory to classroom practice, exposing faculty to scholarly research and publication on pedagogy, as well as reinforcing the applicability of this scholarship to their daily teaching practice.

At the conclusion of each module, faculty are offered an optional “application process” to engage them in applying the knowledge to their own classroom settings. From there, faculty can choose to “go public” with the results and implications of their application project by submitting it for public distribution through our online *Gallery of Teaching Excellence*. The *Gallery* allows us to showcase innovative work of all Park University faculty—full-time, part-time, and adjunct—from across the disciplines and across the country. Additionally, *Gallery* projects have the potential to develop into more

systematic kinds of inquiry into teaching practice, ones that would become SoTL research.

To engage faculty who wish to build upon their *Gallery* project or another pedagogical interest, we developed a small grant award opportunity to reward faculty efforts to apply and assess the outcomes of new pedagogical theories, strategies, or interventions in their curriculum. The *Instructional Innovation Grant Award* is open to all faculty at the institution, regardless of position or location. Faculty prepare a grant application that asks them to outline a small-scale SoTL project: they pose an inquiry question, and then outline a methodology for pursuing that question, assessing the results of that pursuit, and sharing the knowledge with the Park University faculty community. As a modification of the research mentoring program we developed for the *InSight* journal, grant award recipients commit to working with the CETL Research Associate to plan their project assessment and dissemination plan. In this consultative process, opportunities often emerge for the Research Associate to assist the faculty in imagining the lifecycle of their own SoTL project, including myriad ways to make the resulting knowledge public.

Thus, the *Best Practices Institute* provides exposure to pedagogical research and literature on cross-disciplinary teaching and learning topics, while the *Gallery* promotes the informal application of theory and the sharing of teaching strategies. Both resources offer ways for faculty to “go public” with their pedagogical inquiry in forms other than traditional, peer-reviewed publications. The *Instructional Innovation Grant Award* becomes, for some faculty, another, more involved step towards formal SoTL inquiry. These additional programs serve to scaffold the SoTL process for some of our faculty whose experience, interest, and/or availability of time do not resonate with the kinds of formal SoTL project models emphasized in the *Symposium* and presented in the *InSight* journal. These intra-institutional forms of support and mentoring combine with the cross-institutional resources to construct a web of support resources for our faculty.

Writing about SoTL at small, liberal-arts colleges, Peters, Schodt, and Walczak (2008) stressed the importance devising SoTL initiatives “tailored to the particular institutional environment” (p. 83). From the perspective of a large, comprehensive, master’s-granting PUI, we can heartily confirm this thesis; SoTL programming must adapt to the unique contextual diversity found at institutions like ours rather than follow a normative model (focused on the peer-reviewed manuscript productions) that arises out SoTL at research-intensive universities. Additionally, our experience suggests the importance of cross-institutional collaborations as a starting place for PUIs like Park University, ones which may have adopted the letter of SoTL in their faculty contracts or tenure and promotion documents before adopting the spirit of SoTL in their faculty teaching culture. These cross-institutional partnerships can provide just the perspective needed to recognize and prioritize the processes of SoTL alongside its products, and to devise multiple, institutionally-appropriate avenues toward SoTL.

Charting the Future: Challenges and Opportunities

Without question, the teaching-focused mission of access to academic excellence that has sustained Park University since its inception will figure prominently in its future. Park University will continue to adapt and innovate new paths for SoTL engagement

even as the institution's identity as a university continues to unfold. As our story suggests, a persistent challenge for Park University, and other PUIs, will be to devise realistic, accessible opportunities for a faculty audience with demanding teaching and student advising responsibilities. Although the strong culture of teaching present at PUIs may facilitate adopting an SoTL mindset for daily teaching practice, the move from scholarly teaching to the scholarship of teaching involves time and resources that are difficult for some faculty to access.

On an institutional level, the extent to which scholarship, in all its given forms, is defined and assessed at a PUI certainly will affect the degree of continued faculty involvement. The value placed on SoTL methods of inquiry, outlets, and venues for "going public," as reflected in tenure and promotion guidelines, communicates to faculty the credibility and value SoTL has at an institution. As Park University continues to clarify expectations for scholarly engagement, it faces both a challenge and concomitant opportunity to devise integrative scholarship criteria, criteria that responsibly adapt Boyer's categories, including the scholarship of teaching, to maintain an ethos of teaching among its faculty. Adopting scholarship expectations that align productively with a rigorous teaching schedule is essential in an era when many institutions are adding faculty classifications (i.e., lecturers or teaching faculty) that omit scholarship expectations altogether (Jaschik, 2008), suggesting that teaching and scholarship can be extricated without harm or disadvantage.

Perhaps most poignant among the challenges faced by Park University—along with other institutions across the spectrum of classifications—is the loss of national SoTL organizational leadership like that provided by the Carnegie "CASTL" program. Carnegie has provided Park University with venues and resources to support cross-institutional partnerships; we have found these partnerships to be critical to sustaining momentum for SoTL amidst shifting institutional resources. As Park University moves forward, it does so in search of ways to sustain the partnerships and synergistic relationships afforded by its Carnegie affiliation.

Authors' Note:

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