

Rhetoric Studies
Department and Program Scholarship Guidelines
Fall 2013

These guidelines apply for those hired for tenure lines after July 1, 2013. For Forensic track lines prior to July 1, 2013, the former Rhetoric and Media Studies guidelines apply until the next contract renewal, tenure, or promotion.

Rhetoric is the art of persuasion, of communicating effectively and with consequence. As such, scholarship in Rhetoric Studies examines public advocacy and social expression by exploring such artifacts as influential speeches, internet posts, court opinions, media representations, written documents, and many other ways that society engages in persuasive arguments. Research may focus on communication including political, legal, environmental, social, activist, historical, textual, theoretical, or cultural rhetoric. Scholars in our department utilize and/or contribute to rhetorical theory in an effort to study the kinds of communication phenomena in which they have interest.

Rhetoric Studies is a diverse area of investigation and exploration. Hence, each candidate's scholarship and/or creative work will and should follow different trajectories. Some candidates will demonstrate a breadth of intellectual engagement; others will focus and develop a specific area of scholarship. Our department focuses on qualitative and critical research. Publications engaging in analyses of the production, history, culture, texts, and theory of rhetoric featured in refereed or juried venues should be the primary focus of a department member's research. Specifically, the following guidelines serve as a measure of expectations for scholarship in our department:

FIRST AND NECESSARY TO TENURE AND PROMOTION

Peer reviewed publications in a candidate's field of study are a necessary part of justifying tenure or promotion. These may include:

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

As noted in the Whitman College faculty code (Chapter One, Section Three, Subsection A2a), peer reviewed items should appear in appropriate refereed journals, as monographs or articles, as chapters in books for which the submissions are refereed, as refereed conference proceedings, meaning a set of published papers from a conference competitively selected for publication in a volume of conference proceedings, or other juried, peer reviewed venues. Peer reviewed publications outside of specific disciplinary venues should be given full consideration so long as they are related to the candidate's areas of expertise.

Issues such as acceptance rates for various peer-reviewed journals, a given journal's distribution range (e.g. international, national, regional), reputation for excellence of a journal, and more may be factors of note in considering a candidate's scholarly peer-reviewed work. Candidates are expected to explain the peer review process of their publications.

While there is no universal preference for books over articles in rhetorical studies, scholarly, manuscript length monographs are sufficient and strong evidence to point to a candidate's scholarly activity within, and as part of, their field of expertise.

VALUABLE TO TENURE AND PROMOTION

The following professional activities, though in and of themselves not sufficient to warrant granting tenure or promotion, also contribute to the scholarly profile of a candidate for tenure or promotion.

PEER REVIEWED CONVENTION PAPERS AND PANELS

Participation in panels and presentation of papers at conventions and other scholarly venues shall be given significant consideration as being valuable to tenure and promotion. Consideration may be given to location, size, and acceptance rates of particular conventions though it should be noted that there are a wide range of varying professional conferences within the broader area of communication-rhetoric-argument studies.

NON-PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

Non-peer reviewed publications with scholarly merit are one means of augmenting a candidate's professional activity. Scholarly merit shall be defined as contributing to the intellectual understanding of communication-rhetoric-argument theory as demonstrated by clear relationships with scholarly concepts and thinkers.

PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS IN RELATED AREAS

As noted in the Whitman College Faculty Code (Chapter One, Section Three, Subsection A2b/c), publications in matters of pedagogy and curricular design are another venue for contributing to a candidate's professional activity. Actual instruction materials or course/program outlines and/or descriptions would not be eligible. If a candidate's scholarship emphasizes instruction, such as someone who has an emphasis in educational rhetoric, that candidate's peer reviewed educational rhetoric scholarship should be counted as peer reviewed publication, provided it is refereed.

NOTEWORTHY PRESENTATIONS

Presentations that are neither refereed nor juried may count toward professional activity when such events demonstrate scholarly merit. Presentation of a rhetorical analysis, engagement in a debate, and invited guest presentations at institutions outside of Whitman College, particularly in the candidate's field of study, would count when they link to the candidate's field of expertise.

PARTICIPATION AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS

Attendance at professional conferences is encouraged but mere attendance shall not be considered as evidence of professional activity or scholarship. To count as professional activity, candidates should serve as panel chairs paper respondents, and/or attend business meetings at appropriate conferences.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOLARLY ORGANIZATIONS

Professional activity in a scholarly organization can include, for example, serving as a journal editor, or as a leader of an organization's governing body, or as service or leadership on a designated committee within the scholarly organization.

WRITING AND SUBMITTING EXTERNAL GRANT PROPOSALS

The writing and submission of proposals for external grants is encouraged and should be considered scholarship in the same way that other work is; if it is peer reviewed, its final report should be treated as such; if it is not peer reviewed, it should be reviewed for its contribution to communication-rhetoric-argument scholarship.

OTHER VENUES OF SCHOLARSHIP

While not displacing the need for peer reviewed scholarship, community-based research, scholarly collaborations with non-academics, writing for non-academic audiences, activist research, academic production that challenges seemingly fixed boundaries between rhetoric as an “art” and as a “social science,” and other innovative endeavors connected with a candidate’s rhetorical scholarship may be considered important and appropriate parts of a candidate’s overall scholarly trajectory.

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

ADVANCEMENT TO PROFESSOR STATUS

Ultimately, for promotion to the rank of professor, a candidate should demonstrate a significant, long term, and ongoing intellectual contribution to the study of communication-rhetoric-argument through publications with scholarly merit. This might be achieved by a substantial number of peer-reviewed articles, the writing of a book length manuscript, the editing of a major scholarly work, or some combination thereof. It might also be achieved by a select set of peer-reviewed articles that demonstrate especially strong intellectual contribution.

The Rhetoric department appreciates that administrative duties (in the department, College-wide committees, and interdisciplinary programs) will consume considerable faculty time after tenure, but also expects that candidates for promotion to full professorship will continue to engage in a lively program of scholarly work.

CONSIDERATION OF CO-AUTHORED PUBLICATIONS

Typically, the lead author is featured first in publications in our area of intellectual inquiry but that is not always the case and being the lead author does not necessarily indicate what that author has accomplished. To avoid any confusion, the candidate should state what their contributions to co-authored publications are and, from that, the degree to which the candidate contributed to the scholarly merit of the piece may be ascertained.

THE FORENSICS TRACK POSITION

The Forensics Track Position is promoted and given contract renewal on a basis different from tenure track faculty in our department. As the Faculty Handbook notes for the Forensics Track Position:

The professional activity of the candidate will also be evaluated. A broad definition of professional activity will be used, and in particular, publication will not be a prerequisite for contract renewal or promotion.

As such, the Forensics track person typically strives for scholarship related to the practice of argumentation and debate. Such scholarship might include authoring or editing widely disseminated but not necessarily peer reviewed debate evidence, essays or books on debate theory or practice for college or high school coaches, critics, or competitors.

Professional activity would include presentations or postings of scholarly merit involving argumentation and debate at debate tournaments, conferences, or posted on online forums. Professional activity also includes holding elected major offices in regional or national forensics organizations.

Further, consideration should be given to peer selected judging in championship level debates at national level tournaments. Such judging ballots, posted materials, and tournament presentation outlines should be reviewed by other departmental members for their scholarly merit as it relates to advancing debate and argumentation theory and practice.

Advancement to professor status should result from demonstration of a significant, long term, and ongoing intellectual contribution to at least debate but also argument, rhetoric and/or media through professional activity as defined above for the forensics track but with a substantial number of excellent contributions or with a select group of truly outstanding contributions demonstrating scholarly merit as it relates to advancing debate and argumentation theory and practice.