

2017

Research and Scholarship for Promotion, Tenure, and Reappointments in Schools of Architecture

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1.0 PREAMBLE

The intention of this paper is to articulate the value of scholarship, creative work, and research in the discipline of architecture and its related fields.

Architecture faculty produce a wide variety of scholarship and research. This is a result of many factors including, perhaps most prominently, the diversity of research paradigms that operate within the project of architecture (e.g., historical, technical, cultural, artistic, professional). The potentially wide range of forms of investigation, modes of dissemination, and peer assessment for even a single individual working in the discipline of architecture is one of the more challenging aspects of tenure and promotion review.

The variety of work can include both peer-reviewed and solicited publications, both written and creative work; solo, collaborative, and participatory projects at a variety of scales; competition entries and other works of projective and speculative design work; and public presentations in a range of forms and formats. Research can be supported through major or minor grants from various government sources (e.g., NSF, NEA, NEH, SSHRC, NSERC), public and private foundations, and other sources.

This range can often make evaluation by peers both inside and outside of the discipline challenging. It may also make the presentation of a tenure and promotion case challenging. Essential to the evaluation of each of the research paradigms above is an understanding of the contribution that the work makes to the discipline, both to the profession and to academia; the precise knowledge of the faculty member's role in the work; and the recognition that each individual academic program will have specific expectations.

1.1 Audience

The intended audience of this paper includes academic institution administration, campus-wide promotion- and tenure-evaluation committees, program-level administration, tenured faculty, and tenure-track faculty. Academic institution administration and campus-wide committees often face the difficulty of comparing architecture faculty tenure packages to those in other disciplines. This paper shall convey the recognition by, and contribution to, professional and academic audiences to include the process by which the work was received and reviewed to offer guidelines by which architecture faculty work can be reviewed and compared.

This paper also offers program administrators evidence to advocate (to academic institution administration) for faculty and guidance to tenure-track faculty to help frame their work. It will also provide resources to demonstrate the value of architectural research in all its forms at the institutional level. In addition, strategies are offered for tenured and other full-time faculty for continued academic development as well as tools to help mentor their tenure-track colleagues. Finally, since it is the responsibility of tenure-track faculty members to articulate their own scope of research, this document provides a range of research possibilities, models, and formats for dissemination.

1.2 Teaching, Service, and Research

One's profile encompasses service, teaching, creative work, research, and/or scholarship activities. Each academic institution will have a distinct model for the relative expectations of each, and in some cases faculty negotiate responsibilities. It should be noted that studio teaching in architecture is particularly demanding in terms of time spent in the studio and in reviews, internally and externally.

2.0 RESEARCH/SCHOLARSHIP FIELDS

All faculty in schools of architecture are responsible for identifying their faculty profile. This is the articulated academic definition of one's practices, activities, and benchmarks for measuring excellence, through tenure and post-tenure reviews. A multi-modal approach to scholarship is inclusive of many sorts and conditions of knowledge, and is one that assigns equal value to different modes of production and evaluations. This inclusive approach requires the candidate to identify the research/scholarship fields in which one's work operates and for a bracketed moment of time (e.g., the years before the tenure and promotion evaluation). One must clearly frame the field where one is judged by common principles, standards, and principles of excellence that apply to all kinds of scholarly production. Such focus is often challenged by the need, in most schools of architecture, to teach in areas beyond the scope of one's field of research. Given the studio-based pedagogy in architecture programs, faculty are often split across teaching assignments. This split affects how research and scholarship may be framed.

2.1 Design +

A faculty member whose primary responsibility is to teach design studio who is also tasked with teaching a topic outside of design such as: structures, environmental science, history/theory, building systems, etc. This faculty profile should be reviewed from within their expertise and hence measured against architectural designers.

2.2 Specialty +

A faculty member whose primary responsibility is to teach a topic such as structures, environmental science, history/theory, building systems, etc., who is also tasked with teaching studio. This faculty profile should be reviewed from within their expertise and hence measured against other researchers/scholars in their field.

2.3 Areas of Expertise

The following is a list of subject areas that define the content of one's work. This list expands on the ACSA [Index of Scholarship](#) database.

2.3.1 Architectural Design

Architectural design-based research focused on visualization, representation, design, art theory, 2D, 3D, 4D, digital representation, or, more generally, design process. This also includes professional practice whereby individuals maintain an active presence in building design. Design/build includes physical construction, art exhibition, and installation, which feature design and construction. This area may also include experimental technologies, prototyping, digital fabrication, etc

2.3.2 Building Sciences and Technology

Science and technology-based research (funded or otherwise) focused on environmental systems, structures, construction, digital design and fabrication, materials, prefabrication and modular construction, information technologies, post-occupancy, building information modeling, project delivery, practice studies, sustainability and high-performance buildings, resilience, and healthcare performance metrics.

2.3.3 Community Engagement

A combination of applied and community service practice, public interest design, community engagement, community-based participatory research, social impact design focused on transformation of social organizations/groups beyond the academy or extending across the academy-public community boundaries, to include transdisciplinary methodologies.

2.3.4 History and Theory, Cultural Studies/Humanities, and Social Sciences

This area of expertise includes humanities-based scholarship focused on historical subjects and theoretical discourse, cultural studies/humanities, and social science-based subjects as well as scholarship on architectural education and pedagogy.

2.3.5 Allied Design Fields

Urbanism, Landscape, Industrial Design, Product Design, Interior Design, Health and Aging, Housing, Interior Architecture, Historic Preservation, and Adaptive Reuse

2.4 Constraints

The following are constraints towards achieving success in tenure and promotion when architectural educators have teaching and research/scholarship profiles that extend beyond one's field of expertise.

The type and range of teaching required by the department and the type and amount of research work required by their field, department, and academic institution;

Metrics of evaluation in that different research fields have different metrics and benchmarks for evaluating excellence. Reviewers are at times unclear as to which benchmark is best to use when a faculty member has a hybrid teaching and research/scholarship profile; and Peer-reviewers (external evaluators) who are mismatched. Reviewers whose expertise may lie in one field/expertise are often challenged with reviewing the work of a faculty member whose work crosses over multiple fields.

3.0 MODES OF PRODUCTION AND EVALUATIONS

To be considered in support of a tenure and promotion package, all research, scholarship, and creative work needs to be reviewed and/or evaluated by an external reviewer. Given the range of modes of production and evaluations, it is not possible to offer a uniform hierarchy, ranking system, or impact factor for all cases. Value, however, can be determined by the scale of audience to which the work is disseminated. The following list enumerates commonly accepted categories of research, scholarship, and creative work in architecture programs.

3.1 Curation

Like other academic colleagues, professors in architecture organize and chair conferences, colloquia, public seminars, workshops, etc. They also commonly curate exhibitions, whether of their own work, the work of their colleagues, or of practicing architects either dead or alive. Architectural exhibitions have become a well-recognized and often provocative means of diffusing architectural knowledge — often accompanied by catalogues comprising scholarly essays. As discussed in the previous heading, a peer-review process must validate that work of curation: the more an exhibition is reviewed and discussed, the more it can be said to have had a significant impact upon the discipline.

Curation may include:

- conference
- exhibition
- symposium
- workshop

3.2 Funding

Funding sources in architecture tend to follow a number of established models: the humanities and social sciences and technology and engineering. There are also well-established models for funding creative work in the arts, and private sponsorship of design research and/or research-based design. Unless working on the latter model, funding is relatively scarce and amounts comparatively small. In any case, it is as highly and increasingly competitive as any other academic institution discipline. Funding is even scarcer and more competitive for professors working at the more artistic and/or service end of the discipline.

Funding may include:

- corporate sponsorship
- foundation funding
- in-kind donation
- municipal sponsorship
- research grant: external/national: lead researcher
- research grant: internal: lead researcher
- research grant: external/national: secondary researcher
- research grant: internal: secondary researcher

3.3 Practice Recognition

Much like creative work in the fine arts, built work can be a valid element of a tenure and promotion dossier in architecture. In some cases, it may indeed be the most central component. There are two issues to consider: the role played by the faculty and the impact of the work. The difficult problem is to segregate impactful architecture from consultant work. For most academic institution disciplines, consultancy — whereby a professor provides remunerated expertise — though acknowledged to be valuable insofar as it allows that professor to remain in contact with the professional world, is not considered part of the candidate's research dossier.

In architecture, however, a professor may have been remunerated for work that s/he still considers to be a valid part of his/her “research” dossier. The main criteria to validate such inclusion is a peer-review process: an architectural work commissioned following a well-publicized and ambitious competition, a building that won design awards, or publication in prominent professional journals, etc. The more a building (or other form of architectural work) is discussed in architecture journals, the more it demonstrates its general impact within the discipline. It should be noted that getting one's architectural work published in prominent professional journals is often considered a greater achievement than having an article published in high-impact journals — even if such comparative judgment should be made on a case-by-case basis.

Practice recognition may include:

- award
- building
- competition entry
- exhibition design
- pavilion (e.g., PS1 or the Serpentine Galleries)
- speculative (e.g., unbuilt) work

3.4 Publication

The range and relative merit of publication in architecture generally follow the criteria of humanities and social science-based disciplines: A sole-authored book published at a major academic institution or academic press rates highest, followed by blind peer-reviewed articles in high-impact journals. For those working closer to technical fields, refereed-journal articles may have more value than books, as is common in engineering, but that should be judged on a case-by-case basis. Architecture distinguishes itself, however, by the importance of certain journals that are not blind peer-reviewed but that are under tight editorial control and have high impact. Rather than scientific in the strict sense, these journals deliver well-informed and influential opinions (e.g., *Log*), set new trends (e.g., *Architectural Design*), or may indeed be indistinguishable from traditional peer-reviewed journals (e.g., *AA Files*).

Opinions, trends, and even fashion have importance in a field like architecture — as in the fine arts — and shouldn't be dismissed out of hand. It rests on each tenure and promotion committee to evaluate the importance and innovative substance of such public expression of opinions and trends. Architecture also has a considerable number of impactful professional journals publicizing current building production nationally or internationally. Writing building reviews in such journals (usually remunerated) is often categorized as “journalism” rather than traditional scholarly publication.

Publication may include:

- book chapter
- book review
- building review in the professional press
- edited book
- journal article
- monograph
- refereed paper published in conference proceedings
- refereed abstract published in conference proceedings
- research report

3.5 Public Presentation

Peer-reviewed conference presentations and panel presentations are valued similarly to other disciplines, as are invited public lectures. One element that distinguishes architecture from other fields in terms of public presentation are guest critics for design reviews. It is customary in schools of architecture to invite either architects and/or fellow academics to participate in juries for end-of-term studio reviews. There may be some ambiguity as to whether reviews should fall under “service” or “teaching,” but it should not be part of a research dossier. The work of “juror” in a design competition should be considered part of “service.” However, in the event that it shapes the discipline in profound ways and has greater impact value, it is up to candidates to frame their work in this arena in the larger context of their research and practice.

Public presentation may include:

- critic
- invited presentation
- juror
- keynote
- lecture
- refereed presentation
- session/panel organizer
- workshop

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides an overview for tenure-track faculty as well as administrators in the successful pursuit of tenure and promotion.

4.1 Tenure-track Faculty

Recognizing that architecture is a multi-modal academic practice, we encourage tenure-track faculty to clearly identify:

A field of research and area of expertise in which the candidate expects to be evaluated;

- Peers who are operating in this field and who are contributing to its excellence and definition;
- The metrics or modes of evaluation appropriate for one's designated field and areas of expertise;
- The forms and value of validation of work specific to their field of research and area of expertise; and
- The value of forms of validation in the school, college, and academic institution setting.

4.2 Administrators

In the tenure mentoring and review process, a faculty member is best served by clear articulation of his/her field of expertise; an early agreement between a faculty member and his/her mentors and administrator about the structure and direction of the field of expertise is most critical for the individual's case. Tenure-track faculty members are best guided through a tenure-track review process when administrators have a clear understanding of the candidate's research trajectory and the relationships of the candidate's teaching and particular field of expertise.

APPENDIX

ACSA Junior Faculty Handbook on Tenure and Promotion, 2nd Edition, 2009
by Robert Greenstreet and Marvin Malecha

Faculty Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

Auburn University Guide for Faculty Engagement

Florida Atlantic University College for Design and Social Inquiry Policy on Mission and Career Management

McGill University Department of Art History and Communication Studies Procedures and Criteria Relating to Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure

PennDesign Faculty Policies and Procedures Handbook

Portland State University Policies and Procedures for the Evaluation of Faculty for Tenure, Promotion, and Merit Increases

The Technion—Israel Institute of Technology Faculty of Architecture and Town Planning—Criteria for Appointment and Promotion

Tyler School of Art Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

University of British Columbia School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture ARPT Norms

University of Illinois at Chicago Promotion and Tenure Guidelines

University of Kansas Department of Architecture Faculty Evaluation Plan

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Policies and Procedures

Washington University in St. Louis Policy on Faculty Appointment, Retention, Tenure, and Promotion

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