Boyer and the Scholarship of Engagement

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In 1990, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching published a special report written by its president, Ernest L. Boyer[1], titled *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. This work, as well as a later article by Boyer published posthumously after his death, The scholarship of engagement (1996), have become seminal pieces of literature in the public engagement field.

In *Scholarship reconsidered* (1990), Boyer charted the history of the professoriate as it transitioned from focusing largely on teaching to service and finally to research, noting that research had become the predominant paradigm for scholarship—and thereby recognition and reward systems—following World War II. He claimed that higher education needed a "more inclusive view of what it means to be a scholar" (p. 24) and proposed four general views of scholarship that would enable this expansion:

Scholarship of…	Meaning
Discovery	Original research
Integration	Making connections across disciplines and/or interpreting research in light of larger contexts, patterns, and meanings
Application	Applying expertise in a field of knowledge to consequential problems, both within and outside the university
Teaching	Sharing knowledge so that is comprehensible by others, as well as the systematic study of teaching and learning

In The scholarship of engagement (1996), Boyer elaborated on these four general views of scholarship and again called for an expanded understanding of scholarship. Although it could seem that Boyer's "scholarship of engagement" might be a reworking of the scholarship of application, Boyer was ultimately calling for the integration of all four views of scholarship into a larger whole:

[1] Boyer, a scholar in speech pathology and audiology, transitioned from teaching to administration in the 1960s and held several key administrative positions, including chancellor of the State University of New York (SUNY) and the U.S. Commissioner of Education under President Jimmy Carter. In these positions and throughout his work, Boyer championed cooperation across systems, service learning and hands-on learning experiences for students, and bridging educational gaps for students from marginalized backgrounds.

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> At one level, the scholarship of engagement means connecting the rich resources of the university to our most pressing social, civic, and ethical problems… But, at a deeper level… [i]ncreasingly, I'm convinced that ultimately, the scholarship of engagement also means creating a special climate in which the academic and civic cultures communicate more continuously and more creatively with each other… (p. 27)

Boyer's work marks the beginning of a trend toward an increasing focus on engagement as an element of a university's mission. Many scholars since then have taken up Boyer's mantle and have worked to interpret the different views of scholarship and how they might be applied, including in tenure packets and review processes as well as within undergraduate education (Glassick, 2000; Barker, 2004; Eatman, 2012; Renwick, Selkrig, Manathunga, & Keamy, 2020; Janke, Saltmarsh, Jenkins, & Quan, 2022; Boyer 2030 Commission, 2022). It is a discussion that continues across higher education today.

Citations

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