

Presidents Discussion Series
Changing Faculty Roles and Responsibilities, Part 2

This is the second part of a discussion series on the roles and responsibilities of faculty now that Mount Royal is a University.

Discussion Summary:

April McGrath discussed the integration of teaching and research at MRU. April demonstrated by example that the processes of teaching and doing research are mutually reinforcing in several ways.

Duane Bratt reviewed the types of research and supports for research at other, research intensive institutions. When there is more support for research there are higher expectations for output and, with increased output, there are different levels of expectation regarding the types of research being done and where it is published. Mount Royal does not have the supports in place to have the output of a research intensive University, and we should not strive to evaluate research in the way they do.

Mount Royal is in a position to define the level of research at an undergraduate teaching focused baccalaureate institution. The current problem is that we, and Quality Council, do not know what levels and types of research should be being produced at this type of institution. It would be very helpful in program reviews for faculty to clearly indicate faculty contributions. Describing the research done according to Boyer's model would show Quality Council how extensive, impressive and multifaceted the research being done at Mount Royal is. Moreover, faculty need to ensure they are not underreporting their research activities in annual reports. A lot of activities, such as maintaining currency or community involvement, are being listed in 'other' or 'events' categories and so are not considered by Quality Council as part of the research being done at MRU. Mount Royal has a role in creating a more multidisciplinary, collaborative and community focussed model of research.

Related concerns:

- We may need to more clearly codify post tenure performance expectations. However, the intent of the Collective Agreement is that the requirements for achieving tenure were to be the performance expectations of faculty with tenure. We could, rather, consider improving post tenure evaluation.
- Faculty working as consultants contributes to scholarship and teaching and is, in the Boyer model, the scholarship of application. However, we need to ensure there is a clear line of doing this for profit versus moving the profession forward and informing the classroom. We are lacking in policy around this and we should encourage it.
- We need to better value community engagement and the 'public academic.' This role informs our work as teachers and researchers and our service to the university.

The integration of teaching and research in a teaching institution that values research

April McGrath, Psychology

Teaching and Research often overlap and in many different ways for different faculty. Research impacts the courses that faculty teach and the decisions made about those courses by faculty. Faculty are able to develop courses in special topics where their research can be very integrated with their teaching, but often this is not the case. In other courses, there is still overlap between teaching and research. Also, in the process of teaching different courses faculty are benefited as researchers.

Some of the ways teaching and research are integrated include:

- Integrating knowledge from conferences in classes and in research. Some things from conferences can be assigned as readings for classes and these can be intriguing for students. Conference materials can be made available online and can be used in the classroom if it is relevant.
- Faculty research can provide good examples and information for students

- Working with students outside the classroom as honours students or research assistants. This is another opportunity to teach students and you can also get data from them. They can do lit reviews in the research process.
- Research in SoTL can be easily integrated and it shows students your dedication to teaching

How does our research differ from a research intensive university? How much is enough?

Duane Bratt, Policy Studies

There is no clear distinction between pure and applied research: we should avoid this dichotomy. Evaluating Research at Research Intensive Universities:

- There are rankings of where you are publishing not just if you are publishing. Books need to be published by the top university presses.
- To measure the impact, the number of times you are cited is important
- They exclude textbooks and textbook editing. This should be included because textbooks do provide new knowledge and synthesize and communicate research. This is an arbitrary distinction between research and teaching
- Multidisciplinary research or common knowledge research is not considered as highly

The supports for research

- They have a lot more support for research than MRU or GMU have.
- The labs and types of equipment are important.
- Having honours students is not the same as having grad students who are paid to support your research
- The level of grant funding here is much lower than at other Universities
- The issue of merit pay also effects the amount and types off research
- The amount of time spent teaching is also related

Quantity of research

- With the supports in place at research intensive Universities there will be a lot more output.
- When there is more support there is more expectation for output.
- It costs less to do research in social sciences and arts than it does to do it in science.

Discussion:

Q: What are the processes for hiring Research Assistants at Mount Royal?

A: Sometimes students are paid by internal research grants and sometimes they volunteer; they want the experience for their plans to go to graduate school.

Q: The question on a lot of people's minds is how much is the right amount at a place like Mount Royal? How do we communicate clearly about what the reasonable expectations are?

A: We have this codified in tenure policies but nothing for post tenure.

- There is also a conflict between quality and quantity.
- How much is determined by how much support, time and resources are provided.

Q: Regarding the comment about institutions devaluing common knowledge research (i.e. the more people who read it the less respect it gets). Research that becomes public knowledge should be as highly valued as the specific knowledge.

A: Yes, and you should be able to do both. You should be able to publish in the journal of science with all the data and then pare it down with the core conclusions for inclusion in more public documents

Q: The measures research intensive Universities have in place may be antiquated. Is there a possible shift toward a more multidisciplinary collaborating and less hierarchical model?

A: This is where places like Mount Royal can find a niche

- The changing natures of academic journals may affect the nature of research (open access, print, online etc).

Q: Have we still retained the adoption of Boyer's model of scholarship: discovery (pure), application (applied), Synthesis, and SoTL? Traditional Universities are focused on discovery and we have a focus on all and on the areas more directly related to teaching. The PSLA lists six sectors of PSE in Alberta, MRU is an applied baccalaureate institution and our research is to be related to the degree granting of our institution. Are we sticking to the Boyer Model?

A: Duane did not reference this but this is the point: there needs to be a level of synthesis as is in the Boyer Model.

- The Government cannot articulate the difference in research at MRU: we can

Q: Where does the controversy lie? Is the issue that discovery based research requires external grants?

A: This is a level that some colleagues operate at and they struggle due to the resources here at MRU.

Q: Most of us seem to be getting along: aren't we a very productive faculty? What is the controversy? Possibilities are limited for discovery research. But other than that faculty can be very productive here.

A: External pressures on research at MRU are related to Quality Council. The monitoring committee that reviews our annual reports tells us we do not have the right count of publications. But, this is because they are measuring us against other research intensive Universities. Now they have come to us to ask us what the standards should be since we cannot be held to the other standards. There are conversations ongoing and it is a positive development.

- There are internal pressures as well. Faculty come from research intensive Universities and they want MRU to become the place that they left. Views are percolating that MRU should/shouldn't become this type of university. Yet, we do not actually have to be either: there is a middle ground and we can create our own role.

Q: Regarding the *lack* of standards for Associate Professors. There are processes in place, through performance review, for people who have had no scholarly output for years. Merit pay would help with making scholarship expectations clear, but we do not want to go down that path: we do not want to have merit pay. One of the principles in the CA is that there will not be merit pay. If there were merit pay it would have to be for teaching and research.

A: We may need to have a better look at post tenure evaluation.

- When the agreement was negotiated it was imagined graphically. When you were an assistant professor you were climbing to the required level of performance, then, you continue at that level as an associate professor and if you aspire to full professor then you have to continue increasing your performance. The intent was that the standards for receiving tenure were the associate professor performance expectations
- When some people have not performed on TSS they have been "demoted" to TS. It is seen by some as the default for people who are not good enough scholars.

Q: We need to know where we should be in the view of quality council. Why are we being compared to research intensive Universities?

A: They are having a difficult time and they do not know what MRU and GMU should be doing.

- We need to help them define the expectations for MRU
- Program reviews need to be clear on the contributions being made by faculty here. Describing the research done according to Boyer's model shows how impressive the amount of research is. This would be very helpful for the University.
- Young faculty here also benchmark themselves against the research intensive Universities

Q: There was a Quality Council monitoring session of the professional programs where there were pointed questions about consulting: do you do it, why don't you, will you. What is the MRU model on this or does it fit?

A: Research and consulting in business schools fits well and contributes to teaching.

- There is integration here sometimes but in some cases it raises huge ethical issues
- In the Boyer model this is the scholarship of application
- This is something we need to address better: we need to ensure there is a clear line of

doing this for profit versus moving the profession forward and informing the classroom. We are lacking in policy around this and we could encourage it.

- Dissemination and peer review is different from one Faculty to another. The forms of evidence in Faculty documents is one place this issue could be dealt with

Q: Could GMU and MRU get together to come up with a common standard?

A: These conversations are happening but Quality Council does not understand the requirements for faculty in our institutions and the teaching loads etc.

Q: The broadness of research dissemination needs to be remembered. The extent to which we can keep our research broad ensures that it can be integrated with our teaching

A: Departments could submit briefings about types of dissemination to ensure all are valued

We undervalue ourselves: there are a lot of things faculty do that are scholarly that are reported under 'events' not under 'scholarship.'

- We are underreporting and faculty need to ensure all activities are put in annual reports to reflect actual dissemination.
- There are scholarly activities that keep them current but faculty report them as 'other.'
- We need to look at what we are doing and better report it.
- Quality Council is basing their counts on the annual reports so this is important.
- Relationships established at conferences can present opportunities for students

Q: We should celebrate the public academic making knowledge accessible: this should be a badge of honour for this institution

A: We look at Service Scholarship and Teaching, but we are leaving out community engagement. The latter is in all three of these things and it is a big piece of what we do and a big piece of our identity.

- We do have a higher proportion of professional degrees as well.
- Some universities are adding commercialization and we could have this as being ours: we could be in the community.
- This is the direction that the world of research is going in.

One of the tensions here is that the very research focused faculty are feeling like they are outliers and feel like they are not in the right place. Many of them are great teachers, but their colleagues are uncomfortable with some of the activities related to their research (such as having grad students on campus). They are trying to live in the MRU context while doing their research: they are doing a great job but they feel they are not valued in that they are too *researchy*. This is a strange notion.

- Why is bringing a grad student here wrong: it would only benefit our students.
 - o We need a space for them if we are going to have grad students here.
 - o We need to maintain the building over the summer for continued activities
- We do not want these faculty members to ask if they are in the wrong place. We are not going to be UofC or UofA.
 - o There are likely some faculty here who do hope for changes that will lead to a more of a research institution like UofT. The question of being in the right place is something that is up to our members. Mount Royal has a clearly defined vision and mandate
- We need to continue along with the processes we have in place

We need to consider our value proposition and how to get it out there better.

Thank you for coming, this was a great session.

It really is about community engagement our position within Boyer's model and this will likely inform the strategic plan.