

TFT

Valuing and Supporting Community-Engaged Scholarly and Creative Activity

Considerations for Faculty Advancement

The UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television has a long history of community-engaged scholarship and creative activity. Faculty from both of the School's Departments, Film, Television and Digital Media, and Theater, have long engaged in projects focusing on community-based content, community-relevant research, and community collective creativity.

The TFT Departments of Film, Television, and Digital Media and Theater value and are committed to community-engaged scholarship and creative activity that deepen our intellectual and creative work and that advance our fields with excellence. While community-engaged work may be outside our disciplines' mainstream, we recognize its relevance to our institutional mission and to society as a whole.

UCLA's Council on Academic Personnel (CAP) has issued guidance inviting faculty, should they choose, to include evidence of community-engaged scholarship and creative activity as part of the university review process for personnel actions. This document aims to establish transparent criteria within the School of Theater, Film, and Television for submitting community-engaged scholarship and creative activity by faculty wishing to have this work evaluated. These guidelines will also serve as a common frame of reference among departmental peers, the dean, and CAP for rigorously evaluating community-engaged work in TFT's core disciplines when it appears in faculty dossiers for academic personnel review. This document is based on related ones authored in the division of Social Sciences, the School of Arts and Architecture, the Herb Alpert School of Music, and the School of Education and Information Studies. We are appreciative of their leadership and important contributions.

This document has been reviewed and recommended for adoption by the Chair's of both Departments and by TFT's Dean. The Senate Faculty of each department and the school's Faculty Executive Committee have also approved its adoption.

Reflection questions to guide the presentation and evaluation of community-engaged scholarship and creative production by TFT Faculty:

- What are the purpose and forms of community-engaged scholarship and creative activity in TFT? Community-engaged scholarship and creative production in TFT serve many purposes. It supports the generation of new knowledge and new capacities, it contextualizes historical theatrical and media forms and experiences, it informs professional practice, and it explores the great potential of collective creativity. It illuminates problems of practice or issues of concern to communities, particularly issues related to identity, representation, and expression. And it documents and exhibits stories and other theatrical and media expressions that hold great value to communities and deepen shared understandings of historical and contemporary issues central to them.

There are many possible products of community-engaged creative and scholarly research: publications, digital collections, preservation projects, artworks, new professional practices, curricular materials, approaches and tools to support community storytelling, alternative distribution practices, new forms of audience participation, and more.

- What purpose(s) did the project seek to advance?
- Why was it important to advance these purposes through community-engaged scholarship?
- Why was this product chosen to share or represent the work?
- Who are the community engagement partners, and how do TFT artists/scholars collaborate with them?
 TFT values community-engaged scholarship that forges relationships with a wide range of communities and community partners. Partnerships may take many forms, such as research partnerships, participatory action research partnerships, community-design partnerships, etc. Partners may participate in various phases of a scholarly or creative production project, such as research questions definition, investigation, data gathering, creative design, distributed production, story workshopping, and more. Community-engaged scholarship in TFT aims to involve such partners in research, creativity, storytelling, and education, focusing on community needs and empowerment.
 - When and how was the relationship with the community partner established? How has this relationship been sustained over time?
 - To what extent have community partners had a meaningful opportunity to shape the purpose, direction, and ultimate forms of expression of the collaborative project?
- What values inform and motivate the process and aims of community-engaged scholarship in TFT?
 Community-engaged scholarship should be “mutually beneficial”—that is, the collaboration must be of value to both university-based artists and scholars and their community partners. This points toward a recognition that academic artists and scholars need to grapple with issues of power and relationality as they enter into and build collaborations with community partners. University-based scholars must take care that their collaborative work is not extractive or exploitative.
 At its best, community-engaged scholarship should broaden the range of voices by, for, and about a community. It should make a difference in how knowledge and creative expression are generated and distributed.
 - How and in what ways has the collaboration drawn upon the histories, expertise, and wisdom of the community partners?
 - How and in what ways has the work explored and/or negotiated issues of power and purpose with your partners?
- What evidence should the departmental faculty use to evaluate the quality and impact of community-engaged scholarship?
 Any assessment of community-engaged scholarship and creative activity must attend to both the process and products of the collaboration. Community partners/participants should be invited to share their own reviews and evaluations of how they experienced the collaboration and how it benefited them. Partners may wish to consider whether, and to what extent, the community-engaged scholarship: a) Provided them with ways to share important knowledge or stories; b) Enhanced their community practices; c) Informed or amplified their advocacy; and/or d) Supported their social change efforts.

Scholars also may present other evidence about the impact of the collaboration. They

may include documentation of where and how the products of community-engaged scholarship are used. If appropriate, they may note the scale and/or reach of the work and why and how this matters. In addition, scholars and artists may include awards, formal acknowledgments, or other forms of recognition for this work.

- How, if at all, has community-engaged project benefited the community collaborators, for example, by broadening access to important stories or information, enhancing practice, informing advocacy, or influencing social change efforts?
- How, if at all, has community-engaged scholarship/creative activity broadened the range of community voices heard?
- What has been learned through this work, and how will it inform future scholarship, creative production, and curriculum in the future?

Criteria for presenting and evaluating community-engaged scholarship and creative production by TFT Faculty

The following guidelines propose criteria for presenting and evaluating community-engaged artmaking and art scholarship and should be considered with the necessary flexibility to be inclusive of the diversity in community contexts and community-based processes involved in this type of work. These criteria are meant to be enabling for community-engaged faculty, not onerous. The indicators are intended to be expansive and inclusive so that faculty dossiers can be prepared and evaluated with appropriate context. Faculty are ~~not to be~~ expected to meet all the indicators in each area. Many of the criteria are informed by the earlier documents adopted in the units mentioned above, but some of the language has been amended to be relevant to TFT's faculty.

Criteria 1. Clear Academic & Community Impact Goals

Objectives defined

Clear purpose and focus of inquiry

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of clear goals, such as:

- Clearly stating the basic community-oriented purpose of the work and its value for the discipline(s), the specific involved communities, and the public good
- Documenting the alignment between the artist-scholar's community-engaged work and community-oriented priorities of the department, TFT, and the university mission.
- Identifying significant scholarly and creative research questions in the discipline and for the community/external stakeholders with whom the artist-scholar partnered.
- Articulating a coherent program of research and objectives

Criteria 2. Adequate Preparation in Content Area and Grounding in the Community

Preparation and knowledge about developments in the field of study and relevant community context

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of adequate preparation and grounding in community partnerships such as:

- Investing time and effort in developing reciprocal and mutual relationships with community partnerships.
 - Bringing appropriate skills to the collaboration.
 - Participating in training and professional development that builds skills and competencies in community-engaged theater or media making and knowledge generation.
 - Understanding the norms and expectations of high-quality collaboration and partnership with communities.
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Criteria 3. Appropriate Methods: Rigor and Community Engagement

Rigor is evident in research design, data collection, interpretation, creative processes, and reporting of results.

Rigor is maintained, or even enhanced, through the evolving relationship with the community.

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of artistic rigor informed/enriched by engagement, such as:

- Refining the core research questions and confirming their validity, through collaboration or co-generation with the community partner(s).
 - Using creative and scholarly methods appropriate to the goals, questions, and community context of the work and providing rationale for election of methods.
 - Modifying procedures in response to the changing circumstances of the participating community and the artist-scholar relationship with it.
 - Engaging the community partner as a collaborator(s)/co-creator(s) in developing and/or improving the scholarly or artistic project.
 - Extending and broadening the dissemination of study findings and creative outcomes through partnership with community members and organizations.
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Criteria 4. Significant Results: Impact on the Discipline/Field and the Community

Beneficial impact as determined in collaboration with the communities/community members with whom the scholarly/creative research was conducted.

Assessing the development of ongoing and reciprocal relationships with community partners as one concrete impact.

Evaluation of knowledge or creative works generated as relevant to the discipline and community

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of significant results/impact, such as

- Achieving the intended or notable goals, impact, or change consistent with the purpose and target of the work over a period of time.
- Contributing to new knowledge in the field/discipline through peer-reviewed publications, exhibitions/screenings/performances in relevant venues, and community-specific relevant forms.
- Contributing to and benefiting the community partners.
- Making contributions towards valuable social change and public good.
- Securing increased funding for additional research, program implementation, and/or community partners.
- Increasing capacity and opportunity of community members/organizations to advocate for themselves.
- Adding consequentially to the discipline on issues that matter to the external partners and the community
- Opening up additional areas for further exploration, inquiry, and/or collaboration
- Ability of the work, in various venues or formats, to stimulate intellectual conversation that advances the discipline or field.
- Ability of the work, in various venues and formats relevant for the community partners, to stimulate conversation within a community or general public.
- Advancing knowledge/understanding for the community in which the work is situated, and discussing its generalizability/transferability to other populations or as a model that can be further investigated in other settings.

Criteria 5. Effective Presentation and Communication to the Community.

Artist-scholars effectively enables the community participant/s to independently review and evaluate the process and outcomes of the scholarly/artistic research.

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of effective review and evaluation by the community, such as:

- Communicating/disseminating to appropriate scholarly, artistic and public community constituencies.
- Presenting the work in appropriate publications and/or venues with significant distinction; publishing research results or teaching innovations in peer-reviewed, practitioner, or professional journals, and other non-traditional forms/venues.
- Using appropriate forums and presenting information and materials in forms that community stakeholders and external partners find accessible and understandable.
- Disseminating information through media used/read by community members
- Producing documents directed towards service providers, policymakers, or legislators.
- Creating and inspiring new conversations (e.g., write-ups, references, etc.) in both general public and discipline spheres.

- Communicating outcomes of community- engaged work in collaboration with community/external partners. Acknowledging that in many contexts this may involve a significant output not in English and recognizing that this is not a simple act of translation, but an ethical approach of access to a non-English speaking community. This might also include creating access for differently abled bodies.
 - Presenting community-based research review situations and exhibitions in forms consistent within a particular community. This may include group exhibits or events by community members or other non-traditional forms and outputs.
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Criteria 6. Reflective Critique: Lessons Learned to Improve Community-Engaged Artistic and Scholarly

Processes.

Reflective critique of community partnerships.

Evaluation of partnership successes and failures.

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of reflective critique such as:

- Critically evaluating the work with appropriate evidence.
 - Seeking evaluations from community members and using those evaluations to learn from and direct future work.
 - Changing project/course design or line of inquiry based on feedback and lessons learned.
 - Being involved in a local, state, national, or international dialogue related to the work.
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Criteria 7. Collaborative Leadership and Personal Contribution

The artist-scholar's work has earned a reputation for rigor, impact, relevance, and the capacity to advance the discipline or community agenda

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of leadership and personal contribution, such as:

- Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built on by peers.
- Describing how the work has been recognized, used, or built upon by community members, practitioners, professionals in the field, and external experts, including positively impacting the university's relationship with community and stakeholder groups.
- Providing comments or reviews (solicited/unsolicited, formal/informal) from academic and non- academic colleagues, peers, and experts.
- Receiving awards or letters of appreciation from community-based organizations for contributions to the community.

- Receiving invitations to present to professional society meetings and conferences, to present to community audiences, to testify before legislative bodies, to appear in the media, or to serve on advisory or policymaking committees.
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Criteria 8. Socially and Ethically Responsible Conduct of Research and Teaching

The work is conducted with honesty and integrity

The artist-scholar's work is conducted in a way that fosters respectful relationships with and among all participants including community organizations and individuals, external partners, peers and students.

Indicators:

The artist-scholar provides evidence of consistently ethical behavior such as:

- Socially responsible conduct of outreach, recruitment and research in creative activity, writings, discourse, approach to media-making, and nature of collaboration.
- Cultivating a conduct of media research techniques, creativity, and appropriate engaged pedagogies that result in meaningful and beneficial contributions to communities.
- Approaching communities as mutual partners to foster trusting, equitable relationships.
- Engaging communities in a respectful manner.
- Recognizing and valuing community knowledge systems and incorporating them into the research process and courses as appropriate.
- Appropriately involving community/external partners in writing and reviewing products and acknowledging their work.