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CREATED IN THEIR IMAGE: ACADEMIC CAREERS MOLDED  
(MANGLED?) BY STATE COMPREHENSIVE UNIVERSITIES

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At the first meeting of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Council (newly reborn after a near-death experience), a colleague lost his temper and blurted that Youngstown State University (YSU) ruins the careers of newly minted Ph.D.s by remaking them in its image. What's best for YSU, according to him, is not what's best for a rising academician. Success at YSU—getting tenure and early promotion—is not likely to allow someone to move to a “higher” institution of higher learning. Of course, it's certainly true that YSU wants to keep its faculty members if they're good teachers and scholars, and it has specific needs that may not enhance one's ability to move on.

Although YSU can't counter-offer or grant merit pay to keep someone who might get an offer from another university due to its vigilant and strong faculty union, the university does have indirect devices to persuade colleagues to stay: good health-care coverage, excellent retirement benefits, straightforward tenure and promotion guidelines, full-year sabbaticals, half-year faculty-improvement leaves, and generous dean's reassigned time. A colleague from Shippensburg University in Pennsylvania, Kim Long describes similar inducements at her university as “golden handcuffs.” Our universities, one might say, seduce faculty members into staying. According to the NEA *Advocate's* special issue on faculty salaries, when ranked with doctoral program universities in Ohio, YSU ranks last; we only entered this “doctoral” category recently and with only two doctorate programs. When compared to truly like institutions in Ohio, such as Shawnee State, we do very well, particularly considering that we are in northeast Ohio, the dying rust belt, in which a very nice four-bedroom house with three bathrooms costs 150K.

But money and benefits are not what my colleague meant when he asserted that YSU eats its young. He meant that YSU's heavy teaching and advising load, endless committee appointments and responsibilities, and somewhat eccentric scholarship expectations make it hard to develop the kind of “productive” career that many new Ph.D.s expect of themselves and that research universities look for when hiring mid-ranked faculty members.

At YSU and similar SCUs, we become the kind of professional that our university values, not necessarily the kind that we intended when we first joined the profession. All actions have implications and

repercussions; unintended consequences dog our steps. When we accept positions at teaching-intensive universities, many of us are stunned by the direction our careers take and how our academic roles are shaped by our institutions. True, if we worked for an Ivy League or one of the big state research universities, that, too, would shape our careers and lives, but, somehow, many new faculty members, often new Ph.D.s, don't anticipate the consequences of working for those "lower-tier," "open-admissions" universities and colleges that pick them up fresh out of graduate school. This essay will discuss how Ph.D.s are prepared for their careers and will then review how SCUs, but YSU in particular, shape faculty members' careers: our scholarship, teaching, and service are inextricably shaped by our universities. In the essay, I rely primarily on my experience, but I've added the observations of several YSU colleagues who kindly answered a series of questions I e-mailed to them.

As a "lifer" at YSU, a mid-sized, teaching-intensive state university, I can affirm that my career does not look like that of my graduate-school professors, nor does it look much like the career I envisioned. Luckily, for me, in nearly every way, it's far better than I imagined—I'm happy at a teaching-focused university, and I have to admit that I dreaded that, however unlikely, I might wind up at one of those prestigious research universities, where I would have to focus on what I found to be self-absorbed, ego-centric scholarship and far less on teaching, where I'm most effective. However, an uncomfortably large number of my YSU colleagues are startled and resentful as they look around and find themselves, as they say, "trapped" in a "lower-level" university, with no way to "escape." Many new Ph.D.s find that their paradigm of a university faculty member's academic and professional life clashes with the reality of their careers, and some are unable—or unwilling—to adjust the frame. They have moved across the country, away from family and friends, to work in a strange state for a strange university, and it's a hard transition.

Most regional state universities have little national recognition; they often have strong reputations within their states, but they may be ciphers to Ph.D.s applying for their first positions. A widely published and nationally known colleague at YSU, Sherry Linkon, director of YSU's Working Class Studies, wrote in response to the questions that I sent her:

And part of it is about the institution—I didn't think that YSU was the kind of place where anyone did anything that significant. I'd never heard of this place, and I'd been trained to think of this kind of institution as a bad place to be—too much teaching, too few resources, students with insufficient preparation. Who knew that those very things could be the basis for building a really interesting career? (personal communication, March 21, 2009)

Another colleague, Stephanie Smith, serves as chairperson of the art department, and her story sounds much like that of the angry colleague mentioned at the beginning of the essay. Those who were most traditionally trained and who are most invested in the traditional narrative of one's professional future often have the worst time acclimating at YSU. She wrote:

The amount of work at YSU is massive and regardless of what anyone thinks, this is NOT an urban research institution and never will be. With a teaching responsibility of four classes per semester (nine per year when we were on quarters) in addition to service responsibilities, research doesn't get done. While I am and have been professionally disappointed (this isn't what I signed up for), I have made the most of the situation (as is my nature) and found other ways to challenge myself. (personal communication, March 26, 2009)

Honestly, few of us at YSU are angry or disillusioned, but learning how to survive—even thrive—at a teaching-intensive, open-admissions university takes some work. Those who have patience and flexibility find their YSU careers challenging and fulfilling, but even they have a rough road to adjustment and understanding. Those of us who had taught elsewhere seem particularly happy. Bob Hogue (computer sciences) said, “I think the main impact on my career has been this: Almost from the first day on the job here, this seemed like the place I wanted to stay. I had moved around quite a bit in my career before, but I'm now finishing my twenty-first year at YSU. That's amazing to me” (personal communication, March 22, 2009). Some unhappy colleagues never manage that transition from disillusionment and distaste to acceptance and satisfaction. Of those, some have moved on to their dream jobs; others, unfortunately the majority of those disappointed souls, remain at the university until their retirement, spending most of their career sneering at their students and institution.

### **Where It Starts (From Our Perspective, That Is)**

Certainly, part of the problem is the unrealistic preparation for a career in academe most graduate students receive in graduate school. Disciplines vary in their methods, and some seem to make some attempt to address the realities of the profession, but from what I've seen and read, doctoral programs pride themselves on their focus on research, grant-getting, and publishing—or what they think publishing might mean, since often they know and value only a small segment of the publishing world. Teaching preparation usually means teaching some lower-division general-education requirement that the full-time faculty members want to avoid. If they have had appointments as graduate teaching assistants,

most English Ph.D.s have fairly extensive training in teaching freshman composition and a smattering of experience in general-education literature courses. Smith reported that in art history, her preparation was slim: "My graduate career prepared me to be an academic researcher, not a teacher and certainly not an administrator. I was a TA during grad school, which meant that I led the discussion in small group breakout classes from large survey sections and I worked in a slide library." Others in the sciences or social sciences, for instance, may have some experience teaching labs but little or no independent teaching. The jump from a research focus with a little teaching to teaching four courses a semester, is huge and, for many, terrifying.

Traces of how new Ph.D.s are prepared for the workplace appear in their application letters. Anyone who has served on search committees in the past two decades has read the standard graduate-student application letter with its arcane summary of the dissertation and its relevance to the discipline, dressed up with a few token tossed-off comments about the importance of teaching. Truthfully, at YSU, we care very little about that dissertation: Few of them become books; few are relevant to undergraduate teaching. At YSU a search committee needs to know that the dissertation is done or nearly done, or we can't hire the candidate. We care far more about the candidate's ability to multi-task and overall intellectual flexibility and integrity than about the possibility that the dissertation will be published. At least in YSU's English department, we look for evidence in letters and recommendations that suggest that the applicant genuinely cares about teaching and holds the promise of being a good and dependable colleague.

These criteria for a desirable future colleague have been consistent for decades in universities such as ours, but applicants continue to spend valuable application-letter space on talking about their ground-breaking, earth-shaking research because they believe that the dissertation is the golden key that will unlock the door that opens to a pathway ending in a position at a research institution. Many candidates apply to SCUs because they have to find work somewhere, even if it means sacrificing their dreams of a certain kind of academic career.

Not only do scholarship and publishing play a different role at comprehensive universities, but service, barely ever mentioned in graduate school, is vital. Without faculty participating in department, college, and university-wide committees, little gets done. Faculty members at YSU pride themselves on being instrumental to institutional governance, and they have fought long and hard to defend their governance role. The union contract and Board of Trustees' policy set aside segments of university operation that are exclusively the faculty's province, some that are joint held, and others that are administration-only. Without faculty

members actively participating in service, the university stops working. Many departments at YSU try to protect their new faculty members from getting too immersed in committee work, but it's usually hopeless. After a token semester or two with a lighter load, new faculty members begin committee work, and committee appointments pile up. Within a short time, most new faculty members are on five or six committees and responsible for such things as departmental program assessment (that hot potato).

Yet it is safe to assert that none of the new Ph.Ds. that begin positions at YSU has been prepared for this reality. Sherry Linkon wrote, "What I didn't learn, and I think few grad students do, is anything about the service parts of professional life—other than to disdain them or to expect a lot of tension in working with others" (personal communication, March 21, 2009). I've seen this in my own preparation: As a graduate student, I was strongly advised to avoid service at all costs because it would interfere with my "real work"—which was scholarship, of course. My tendency to seek experience in such things as teaching technical writing and administrative assignments was viewed as evidence that I wasn't serious about attaining my doctorate. In my eighteen years at YSU, I have been involved with dozens of searches for various faculty and administrative positions and have served as a mentor to several new faculty members, and I've become adept at spotting shell-shocked new faculty members as they struggle to find balance in the first few years of the reality of their career. Luckily, our department has a mentoring program, and experienced, tenured faculty members can help new colleagues to adjust and to understand YSU's culture and its rules. That is not the case in every department.

Advising is another key component of the job, crossing boundaries between teaching and service—by contract and by tradition. New faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CLASS) are given a year to get used to YSU, their department's majors and minor, and YSU's somewhat eccentric general-education program, but then they are expected to advise with everyone else. In a large department, such as Computer Science and Information Systems, this means that approximately twenty faculty members advise more than six hundred students. Needless to say, it doesn't get done as well as they would like, but they work very hard to get as close as possible to being effective. Faculty members in departments with graduate and undergraduate programs, such as English, advise everyone from undetermined incoming freshmen through graduate students completing their thesis.

How are Ph.D. candidates prepared for this reality? Not at all. Graduate advisors at Ph.D.-granting institution seldom consider preparing graduate students for endless committee meetings and

curriculum development, much less for advising for course schedules and professional goals. New Ph.D.s beginning a career at an SCU have to find out for themselves how to juggle their scholarly agenda, teach as many as four different courses a semester, advise dozens of students, and serve on varied, often demanding committees.

### **Our Schizophrenia: Who the Heck Are We?**

Further evidence of our institutional schizophrenia is that, as faculty members confront and adapt to their teaching and service-intensive positions, they still have to find time to do research and writing in their fields. At the institutional level, all general-purpose universities extol the importance and relevance of research to its faculty and students. A quick survey of universities' mission statements reveals how important scholarship is at comprehensive universities. We value scholarship for a wealth of reasons, some of them quite wonderful, others not so much. At our odd-duck universities, we try to be all things to all people.

University mission statements illustrate our need to be all-encompassing. For instance, YSU's newly minted mission statement reads:

Youngstown State University provides open access to high-quality education through a broad range of affordable certificate, associate, baccalaureate, and graduate programs.

The University is dedicated to

- outstanding teaching, scholarship, and service and to forging connections among these three interactive components of its mission;
- fostering student-faculty relationships that enrich teaching and learning, develop scholarship, and encourage public service;
- promoting diversity and an understanding of global perspectives;
- advancing the intellectual, cultural, and economic life of the state and region (Mission Statement, 2009)

Other regional state institutions are similar in their broad-brush mission statements:

Eastern Illinois University is a public comprehensive university that offers superior, accessible undergraduate and graduate education. Students learn the methods and results of free and rigorous inquiry in the arts, humanities, sciences, and professions, guided by a faculty known for its excellence in teaching, research, creative activity, and service. (Mission Statement, n.d.)

California State University, Bakersfield is a comprehensive public university committed to offering excellent undergraduate and graduate programs that advance the intellectual and personal development of its students. An emphasis on student learning is enhanced by a commitment to scholarship, diversity, service, global awareness and life-long learning. The University collaborates with partners in the community to increase the region's overall educational level, enhance its quality of life, and support its economic development. (Mission Statement, 2007)

Each of these universities articulates laudable goals, but note that scholarship is mixed in with service, teaching, outreach, economic development, etc. Faculty members are expected to participate in each of these endeavors. The reality of our version of the professoriate includes trying to dig out time for scholarship while managing high teaching and service loads that were, for most new Ph.D.s, a huge, and unpleasant, surprise.

Despite YSU's heavy teaching and service load, it expects substantial publishing and ancillary scholarly activity, particularly of new faculty members. In a recent public-relations campaign (thankfully replaced), YSU plastered the faces of its premiere faculty members on huge billboards on the local highways; the chosen few were, yes, excellent teachers, but they had garnered recognition for their scholarship and publications, inventions, patents, and grants. While full professors can get away with little or no publishing (although, surprisingly, and more on this later, most still pursue scholarly agendas that produce articles and books, even without administrative pressure or much support), new faculty members join the tenure-track with codicils in their contracts that dictate scholarly output, usually discipline-specific—the scholarship of teaching and learning gets lip service at best. Currently at YSU and, I'm sure at other SCUs, committees that review graduate faculty membership are engaged in a strenuous debate about what constitutes scholarship and how that scholarship is to be weighed and measured. Admittedly, this debate has been going on for decades. It wasn't invented by Ernest Boyer in *Scholarship Reconsidered*, nor was it settled by such highly critical indictments as *A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education*, master-minded by Margaret Spellings, which has sent accrediting agencies and universities scurrying to defend themselves. The nature and relevance of scholarship remains unresolved—or worse, it remains as traditional and insular as ever. James Schramer, who has served on our Graduate Council for the past six years, reports that the pressures to employ an easily quantifiable measurement (e.g. two articles published in refereed journals in a specified period of time) are growing.



One might think that the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL) would have particular traction at SCUs, and, in part, that's true. At a recent SOTL conference at Eastern Michigan University, Richard A. Gale, Visiting Scholar at Royal Roads University (Victoria, BC) and Mount Royal College (Calgary, AB), noted that comprehensive universities more often respect and foster teaching scholarship, but even there, SOTL is a safe endeavor only after faculty members have satisfied discipline-specific requirements and achieved tenure. Despite years of discussing Boyer's *Scholarship Reconsidered* and calls for change from such authorities as Maxine Atkinson, who said in 2001 that "[e]vidence suggests that we are in the initial stages of a new, major and long-lasting trend in higher education. This latest transformation once again elevates teaching as an activity central to the academy" (1217) and "[l]imiting Scholarship of Teaching and Learning to refereed publication will assure that Scholarship of Teaching and Learning will have little or no impact" (1224), we're left with promotion documents that specify discipline-specific, traditional scholarship.

I am a member of a committee convened after a faculty member was denied promotion; we are to review the documents, interview the various constituents, and make an independent recommendation on whether she should receive promotion. Her record attests to brilliant work with undergraduates in her field, including them in research and professional presentations, grants, and publications, but the dean and provost have denied promotion on the grounds of insufficient "real" scholarship. Her SOTL activities and focus on undergraduates are likely to delay—perhaps indefinitely—her promotion. Only if she changes direction and becomes more discipline-appropriate in her research is she likely to change the minds of the dean and provost, who have final say on promotions and tenure.

In a 2004 article, "Balancing Institutional, Disciplinary and Faculty Priorities with Public and Social Needs: Defining Scholarship for the 21st Century," Robert M. Diamond and Bronwyn E. Adam noted nine problems facing higher education [they are presented here without the attached discussion]:

1. Colleges and universities do not reward the faculty work they claim to be important. In a survey of over 50,000 faculty and administrators at all types of United States colleges and universities, the most often repeated faculty comment referred to the 'lip-service' paid to the importance of teaching. . . .
2. In every academic discipline, important activities go unrecognized. . . .
3. "Scholarship" or "research" as understood within the scientific paradigm fails to take into account important disciplinary differences. . . .

4. In an increasing number of established disciplines, some traditional research questions or topics have been over-worked while many serious, pragmatic questions have not been addressed. . . .
5. Funding agencies strongly influence faculty in areas where outside support is necessary. . . .
6. Few university scholars take the lead in addressing important social problems. . . .
7. Much of what is accepted as significant research in traditional disciplines is limited by western cultural biases. . . .
8. Some argue that higher education, on the whole, is doing a poor job in its primary mission—education. . . .
9. Faculty are not encouraged to apply educational research to their teaching . . . . (30–33)

These problems persist. On paper, SCUs esteem teaching and argue that their focus is exclusively on students, extolling the virtues of “engagement” and dedication to service to the community. But at the same time, SCUs tell faculty members to get their research done and to seek competitive grants that can only be fulfilled through less—or no—teaching.

My college (CLASS) includes a general statement that tenure-track faculty members must engage in scholarship as specified in department governance documents, but in STEM—the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math College—codicils are specific and rigid: three or more juried articles, successful grant applications, etc. The administration is pushing for all entry-level contracts to include such a codicil. The union, YSU-OEA, has not been successful at fighting these codicils because they’re written before the person joins the faculty; the administration can put just about anything there, and the union can do nothing. In recent years, several tenure-track faculty members have lost their jobs because of failing to meet the publishing dictates of their contracts. New faculty members are, therefore, faced with stress that none of the rest of the faculty members face now and that many of us never faced.

As the mission statements quoted above indicate, scholarship serves economic functions, which have become more important in this era of budget cuts and tuition freezes: internally, scholarly activity can bring in additional operating funds from the prestigious grants and attract more students particularly in graduate programs; externally, scholarship in a region such as northeast Ohio is expected to produce a research agenda that will spawn renewed industry and enhance economic development directly and measurably. Ohio’s Chancellor, Eric Fingerhut, has made it clear that universities such as YSU are to serve as economic engines, and our scholarship is pivotal to that end:

Ohio's colleges and universities are vast reservoirs of intellectual innovation and energy. This plan calls for concentrating that energy not only on improving our institutions of higher education, but also on improving the condition of our state as a whole. If the goals of increased enrollment and graduation rates are met, but the state still falls behind economically, then we cannot truly judge our work to be a success or the taxpayer's investment to have been well spent. We must, and we will, do more. (Strategic Plan for Higher Education, 2008)

We are expected to compete for grants and other funding to support scholarship, and part of our success will be measured on how well we increase those outside sources of funding. The state requires each of its universities to propose "centers of excellence," which will be additional engines for economic revival and, of course, scholarship—and more grants. Regional institutions are facing a changing academic universe; politics and economics hit us more directly than the far larger and more well-financed research universities.

The scholarly reputations of most comprehensive universities are faint traces on the national academic map, but in our geographic areas, we are crucial to economic and cultural vitality in our regions. YSU was designated originally by the Ohio legislature to be an open-admission, comprehensive university; under the leadership of the new Chancellor, it has become an "urban research university" and has been targeted as particularly in need of change, according to the Strategic Plan:

Youngstown State University must provide the Youngstown area with the talent and research base for the growth of new companies and industries to replace those that have been lost to a changing economy. Past practices in the state have discouraged the university from playing this vital role by restricting the growth of undergraduate and graduate programs that are an important component of a university's skill base. With the expansion of community college education in the region, Youngstown State will be better able to focus on its indispensable role in the economic rebirth of the Mahoning Valley. The state will encourage this role by authorizing and supporting undergraduate and graduate programs that focus on quality and have relevance to economic rebirth. (Strategic Plan, 2008)

A major part of our mission is to add to economic well-being and to enhance the lifestyles of residents of northeast Ohio. Our scholarship and grant-seeking should reflect that mission. Realistically, new Ph.D.s go where they have to go for the job and the chance to develop as professionals, not because they love Youngstown, Ohio—or Ypsilanti,

Bakersfield, or Fargo. Once we're on the ground for a few years, we develop connections and grow roots, but at first, the low scholarly profile of our institutions can cause great angst, particularly as we are told to revamp our scholarly agendas to fit the university's mission.

Graduate directors in those large research universities make it clear to their students that accepting positions at SCUs is ruinous to their careers. And, if one accepts the premise that our careers are to be dedicated to writing and publishing, this assertion may be true. Achieving "escape velocity" is more difficult than it would otherwise be. At YSU, if a faculty member overcomes the four-four teaching load, service commitments, and advising load to produce a scholarly book, it has less impact on the author's career than it might have had if she or he been at a research institution. Although some grants favor comprehensive universities, most focus on hard-core scholarship and national reputations. My colleagues in the STEM college are competing with the likes of Ohio State for federal and state grants. That they've managed to secure millions of dollars in grants is a huge achievement, but it was hard-won, and now they have to produce, which will mean managing their grant-funded research with an aging, run-down set of labs and equipment.

### **We Do Good Work**

Regardless of the obvious challenges, teaching at a comprehensive university offers faculty freedom and responsibility that are unavailable at research institutions—and I mean responsibility as a gift, not a burden: it is to be prized. In many ways, most of which were unanticipated, working at these institutions has been terrific for many of us, and many of the things that I grouse about the most I'd find just about anywhere (workload issues, insensitive and unimaginative administrators, unreasonable and inequitable pay scales, etc).

If we're patient and creative, scholarship at our institutions can be rewarding and relevant, if not to the high-end research institutions, then to the thousands of fellow SCU faculty members, students, and our communities. First, and perhaps most surprising to those at research institutions, faculty members in teaching-intensive institutions produce substantial scholarship. Many of my colleagues regularly publish in the most prestigious journals in their fields; they are invited to speak internationally and participate in creating entirely new lines of study. Sherry Linkon and John Russo co-direct the Center of Working-Class Studies. They co-wrote the well-received *Steeltown USA: Work and Memory in Youngstown* and received a Ford Foundation grant. Linkon wrote:

I wasn't studying working-class culture when I came to YSU, so my career went in an entirely different direction. That's partially

about where we are, but it's also about the kind of school this is—with its largely first-generation population—because that got me interested in working-class students. I also think that the work we've done at the Center for Working-Class Studies could not have happened at a research institution. Not only is much of our work not traditional scholarship, in that it aims at public audiences rather than at scholarly ones, but the very idea of starting something entirely new (a whole new academic field!) is actually easier at a place where people are less invested in prestige and national recognition (ironic given what's happening now with Centers of Excellence). (personal communication, March 21, 2009)

Linkon is not alone in finding that the rustbelt can provide a rich source for scholarly endeavor. Another colleague, Christopher Barzak, wrote *The Love We Share without Knowing* (2008), a well-received novel that is set, in part, in the landscape of post-industrial Youngstown. Faculty members at comprehensive universities are adept at finding the intersection between their scholarly pursuits and the institution's needs or problems. Colleagues have recognized the value of YSU's Rich Center for Autism and adapted their research in exercise science accordingly; others have built careers on studying the politics of the region, or investigating pollution in the Mahoning River.

Luckily, SCUs tolerate a far wider range of scholarship than may be acceptable at research universities, particularly after tenure and promotion. Textbooks, for instance, garner little respect on the national academic market, yet they require research and careful writing, and they can have a huge impact on the field through guiding and directing students. The claim is that textbooks are not "original" scholarship, that somehow the author or editors are simply derivative or summative, but textbooks—good ones—can foster innovative pedagogic approaches, can incorporate technologies and research that would otherwise be unattainable for students. Those who have worked on edited collections have faced similarly dismissive assumptions about their work, as if an editor's task was merely grammatical housekeeping. Edited collections require editors to research the field, write introductions, assemble bibliographies, solicit articles from scholars across the world, edit articles when they finally arrive, and negotiate with publishers. Also, the claim that traditional scholarship is somehow more original than nontraditional forms is highly suspect. How many articles in the "best" journals are original? How often do aspiring scholars tailor their message to the current cant of theory? How many step away from mainstream arguments to find new ground?

Teaching is the most obvious benefit of being a faculty member at a comprehensive university. At most SCUs, teaching is the focus, their mission, and excellence in teaching is recognized and rewarded more definitely than at research institutions. At YSU the largest number of distinguished professorships is granted to faculty members for outstanding teaching. Related to this teaching focus, luckily, is the at least partial recognition of scholarship of teaching and learning. YSU faculty members get full credit for text books; pedagogical articles; collaborative and non-traditional publications, such as websites like the one posted by the Visual Knowledge Project or online publications; and creative activities. This generosity is under fire, as noted above, as the state and our administration try to move us to an “urban research university,” but the likelihood of that revision succeeding is slight without resources or an entire redesign of our structure. As discussed earlier, we see some traces of the pressure to become more traditional in faculty contracts and promotion documents, but a backlash is growing. YSU faculty members value the flexibility and good sense of fostering a wide variety of publishing and scholarly outlets. If we—as teachers, scholars, mentors, committee members, advisors, role models—are what our universities have shaped us to become, then let us and our institutions look more closely in our reflective moments at the shape that we are in and see that we are, indeed, quite fit for the task ahead.

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