



From the Executive Director

By Robert G. Bringle, Center for Service and Learning
Volume 1. Issue 5

Having the opportunity to provide the plenary talk at the Moore Symposium allowed me to review work we have done at IUPUI on service learning, in particular, and civic engagement more broadly. There is good reason why IUPUI has been labeled “one of the most civically engaged campuses in America” by leaders in higher education. This campus has distinguished itself around the growth in the quantity and quality of service learning courses as well as programs for faculty development, approaches to partnerships with the community, assessing outcomes, and developing infrastructure. But what is most extraordinary is the scholarship that has been associated with service learning. How many journal publications, book chapters, and books do you think have been produced by IUPUI faculty, staff, and students?

1. 25
2. 50
3. 100
4. 150

Our current count puts the number above **150 publications**. That is extraordinary! I’m guessing that we have done more scholarship and research on service learning than we have on any other pedagogical approach. This means that we have an immensely rich set of intellectual capital to incorporate in future work.

Who cares about the scholarship on teaching and learning (SOTL)? We all should, given the rich tradition of work that has taken place on teaching and learning at IUPUI. This campus has been a leader not only in pedagogical developments on service learning but also the Principles of Undergraduate Learning, peer mentoring, Learning Communities and Themed Learning Communities, student portfolios and the electronic Personal Development Plan, and institutional research on teaching and learning. I aspire to SOTL growing on this campus. Amazing contributions could result if only ½ of the faculty and staff at IUPUI invested 5% of their time (i.e., 2 hours per week) for one year in SOTL. Imagine what would happen. Imagine how productive that would be.

“But I won’t get any credit for SOTL.” Maybe; maybe not. My position is that all scholarship should be evaluated for faculty roles and rewards based on similar criteria; all scholarship, regardless of whether it is scholarship on teaching, service, or discipline-based research. The campus guidelines for evaluating scholarship are very parallel for teaching, research, and service and they distill down to three fundamental criteria upon which the academic merit of the work should be evaluated: (a) impact and significance (can be in the department, to the campus, or national), (b) peer review (how others in the discipline or other academic fields have benefited from the work), and dissemination (with the caveat that it should be diverse forms of dissemination that are appropriate to different constituencies, but some of which are academic).

I will contend that this campus has one of the most inclusive views of scholarship of any campus in America. At the campus level, SOTL is recognized as scholarship and will be fairly evaluated on its merit. This capacity shows itself at the campus level, but not necessarily in all schools at IUPUI nor in all departments at IUPUI. For example, only twice in the last five years has only research been the basis for advancement in the majority of promotion & tenure cases at the campus level. As the view of scholarship continues to change to be more broadly defined than only being limited to discipline-based research, the campus climate at IUPUI will provide more and better opportunities for faculty and staff to learn about their teaching and learning and contribute that knowledge to the enhancement of the work of others. Then, IUPUI will be known to national audiences as one of those unique campuses in America at which scholarship of teaching and Learning (SOTL) on all pedagogies is salient.