

## The Teacher-Scholar Model at LMU

### Definition of the Teacher-Scholar Model

LMU's commitment to the teacher-scholar model is based on the belief that the integration of teaching and scholarly engagement benefits both students and faculty. LMU teacher-scholars successfully combine their commitment to excellent teaching with ongoing scholarly engagement in such a way that each activity strengthens and supports the other. In this way, students reap the educational benefits of faculty committed to scholarly inquiry, while faculty members reap the scholarly benefits of teaching more deeply engaged students. The teacher-scholar model thus is a cornerstone of a vibrant intellectual community on campus.

Teacher-scholars do not just convey knowledge; they teach and model the activity of inquiry itself. Because the teacher-scholar is constantly thinking about problems methodically they are uniquely qualified to model and inspire sound methodological approaches for others. By actively engaging the scholarship in their fields, teacher-scholars are able to introduce students to new developments in their disciplines and to ensure that students are exposed to the current state of knowledge. This active scholarly engagement creates a learning environment that gives students a deeper and more challenging perspective on the fields they are studying, both by showing them how knowledge is constructed, scrutinized, and contested and by involving students actively in the process of producing, not merely receiving, knowledge. Teacher-scholars thereby model the intellectual values and habits of inquiry necessary for independent, lifelong learning.

In the teacher-scholar model, "scholarly engagement" encompasses a range of scholarly activities, but invariably entails faculty members' active engagement in their disciplines, so that they are conversant in debates about the state of knowledge in their field and fluent in their disciplines' methodological approaches to the production of knowledge. Consistent with departmental expectations, teacher-scholars produce scholarship in the form most suited to their respective disciplines or fields. This may include (but is not limited to) traditional research, creative works, engaged scholarship, or research that involves students in the production of knowledge. Faculty members' scholarly activities enhance the learning experience for students and the explicit integration of these scholarly activities in instruction is reciprocally beneficial for faculty scholarship.

At its core, teacher-scholars approach the various parts of their work in a holistic and integrative manner, rather than as unrelated elements. Nonetheless, the specific ways in which each faculty member chooses to integrate teaching and scholarship may vary from one person to the next, embodying the Jesuit ideal of *cura personalis*, and encouraging faculty members to build upon and develop their particular interests, abilities, and opportunities.

### **Assessment of the Current Situation:**

Realizing the teacher-scholar model requires a frank assessment of where we currently fall short and the identification of obstacles that must be removed in order to achieve our ideal.

LMU has attempted to make the shift from a primarily teacher-only model to the teacher-scholar faculty model without an explicit redefinition of the faculty role or a deliberate strategy for achieving a balance between research, teaching and service obligations. Consequently, in our striving for excellence in both teaching and scholarship, we have often merely imported the research expectations associated with R1 universities (albeit on a more modest scale) and grafted them onto the existing teacher-only model, rather than consciously articulating a vision for a successful teacher-scholar. The result is a situation in which faculty face the conflicting time demands and merit expectations of an unclear and unfocused approach to the balance between research, teaching, and service obligations.

#### **1) Merit**

##### *Disproportionate emphasis on scholarship vs. teaching in merit determinations*

While LMU's rhetoric is one of the teacher-scholar model, the current merit system tends to reward with merit 2 (top merit) only scholarship measured in terms of annual publication. This system of merit encourages faculty to focus on publications to the relative neglect of teaching, other forms of scholarship, and service. A merit system that does not value both teaching and scholarship, and the integration of the two, effectively undermines the university's commitment to the teacher-scholar model by signaling that its actual values are different from those identified in its rhetoric. In addition, an overemphasis on annual publication runs the danger of encouraging quantity over quality.

#### **2) Workload Issues**

*Teaching load coupled with high expectations for scholarship/creative work:* While the Faculty Handbook states that the "[n]ormal full time faculty load is no more than 12 and not less than 6 teaching hours per semester," the reality is that most full-time tenure-line faculty are expected to teach 3 courses (9 teaching hours) per semester. Given current expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service, a teaching load of 3/3 for full-time tenure-line faculty is not conducive to the realization of the teacher-scholar model. Faculty on a 3/3 must engage in constant tradeoffs. This teaching load for most faculty members is not consistent with the level of scholarly activity currently expected from our faculty, nor with what will be attractive to the high-caliber teacher-scholars LMU would otherwise be able to recruit. Excellent teaching and excellent scholarship both require *focus*, and the high teaching load coupled with increasing expectations for scholarship is inconsistent with developing the necessary degree of focus to do both well. The teacher-scholar as defined above needs time to focus on both teaching and scholarship in a way that allows for the thoughtful integration of both. A faculty member committed to the kind of intensive, student-centered, innovative, and rigorous teaching that we want at LMU simply does not have enough time to devote to scholarship in the regular academic year, whether that scholarship takes the form of reading the literature in their fields, doing research, writing, producing creative works, or being involved as practitioners in their fields. Frequently the time that faculty devote to scholarship is in effect stolen time, rather than the sustained periods of time and focus necessary for quality scholarship. If faculty members focus on their scholarship, then they may end up

shortchanging their teaching, by lessening expectations for student writing and research, for example, or by not developing new courses or incorporating new pedagogical approaches.

*Sabbaticals and College Fellowships:* The infrequency of sabbaticals and the limitations of College Fellowships only exacerbate workload difficulties, as faculty are rarely able to devote the time and full focus necessary for the production of quality scholarship.

*Differentiated workloads:* The University must address the existing reality of differentiated workloads among tenure-line faculty created by the hiring of Presidential Professors and endowed chairs and the extensive use of course remissions. At present, there are an unknown, but likely high, number of “off the books” course remissions that do not correspond to additional administrative or service work or scholarship. This system is currently in need of both audit and revision. The deeper problem, however, is that even a revised course remissions system still relies on the underlying notion that teaching, research, and service are both separable from each other and yet also exchangeable. The teacher-scholar model, however, presumes that no such strict distinction is preferable or even possible. The reality of differentiated workloads, that some faculty have permanently or long-term reduced course loads, whether contractually stipulated or by way of course remissions, shifts the burden of teaching to other faculty, both full-time and part-time. Neither group of faculty then embodies the teacher-scholar model, the former because of their reduced teaching expectations and the latter because their teaching obligations impinge on their ability to do scholarship. Divorcing scholarship from teaching, rather than seeking ways to enable faculty to balance and integrate the two, will only serve to undermine the teacher-scholar model.

*Class size:* Small classes are a necessity if we are to do the type of intensive, student-centered, innovative, and interactive teaching envisioned by the teacher-scholar model. In fact, the University touts small class sizes, an average of 20 students to 1 instructor, as part of its marketing, and President Burcham has referred to this ratio as a target for all classes. The reality is that many classes are far larger. In addition, there is the danger that reductions in course load and attempts to reduce reliance on contingent faculty will lead to even larger class sizes. Larger classes will only make it more difficult to realize the teacher-scholar ideal, both because of the impact on the dynamics in the classroom and because of the effects of larger classes on faculty members’ ability to stay engaged with scholarship.

### **3) Faculty Hiring**

A university that embraces the teacher-scholar model for its faculty should strive to ensure that as many faculty as possible embody the teacher-scholar ideal. That means making a commitment to the funding of regular tenure-line positions, where faculty are expected to combine teaching, scholarship, and service into a holistic approach to intellectual life. At present, however, the University’s hiring priorities seem to be working against this assumption. On the one hand, many of the current discussions about faculty hiring at LMU focus on hiring more Presidential Professors and endowed chairs and on expanding the ranks of a teaching-only “clinical faculty.” At the same time, LMU has come to rely increasingly on the use of term and adjunct faculty throughout the curriculum. Although such practices may be cost-effective, they also carry real dangers, most notably by making the encounter between the student and

the permanent teacher-scholar faculty member peripheral rather than central to the university experience. If students benefit from having teacher-scholars in the classroom and if faculty benefit from the integration of teaching and scholarship, then the hiring of faculty who either pursue scholarship but do little teaching or do a lot of teaching but are able to do little research denies the benefits of the teacher-scholar model to students, to faculty, and to the university as a whole.

#### *Increasing emphasis on Presidential Professors and endowed chairs*

The increasing emphasis on recruiting more Presidential Professors and endowed chairs, with contractually-stipulated reduced teaching loads, runs counter to the ideals of a teacher-scholar model that stresses the symbiotic relationship between teaching and scholarship. Devoting additional resources to such positions, moreover, is inconsistent with LMU's stress on the education of students as its primary mission.

#### *Expansion of a "teacher-only" faculty (Clinical, Visiting and part-time faculty)*

Whereas the desire to offer visiting instructors longer and/or indefinitely renewable contracts is understandable, the redefinition of the term "clinical faculty" -- initially a term that referred to clinicians or practitioners -- to include teaching-only instructors, who teach 4/4 loads and do little to no research, creates a permanent teaching-only faculty. The same holds true for full-time visiting faculty, whose substantial teaching responsibilities at LMU typically leave little or no time for pursuing scholarship. Whereas the ideal part-time faculty members are ones whose other responsibilities support their development as teacher-scholars, the reality of the current political economy of higher education means that such part-time faculty are likely to be struggling to put together a living wage by teaching at multiple universities, thereby effectively precluding opportunities to engage in scholarly or creative activity. In each case, such a teaching-only faculty runs counter to the ideal of the teacher-scholar, not merely by divorcing teaching and scholarship but also by depriving students of the benefits of having a teacher-scholar in the classroom.

### **Recommendations**

#### *Reforming the merit system:*

1. The teacher-scholar model demands that each faculty member strive for excellence in all three faculty functions – teaching, scholarship, and service. At the same time, we do not expect that every faculty member will be equally meritorious in each area or even consistently achieve excellence in each area. We particularly do not expect that faculty will be able to meet both the expectations that small liberal arts colleges have for intensive teaching and mentoring *and* the expectations that research universities have for scholarship. Rather, LMU must adjust expectations for both teaching and scholarship in a way that enables faculty to integrate teaching and scholarship in ways beneficial for both students and faculty.
2. The merit system must be one that is consistent with the teacher-scholar model (and the idea of striving for excellence in all three), even as it acknowledges that each faculty member brings a unique mix of talents to the table and thus ensures that different mixes of achievement can still achieve merit 1 and merit 2. The best model available might be a points-model, where faculty are assigned a rating in each of the three categories and then those categories are weighted

according to LMU's stated 40-40-20 ratio, to get an overall rating, which would determine the level of merit. Such a system ensures that a mere publication would not be sufficient for top merit without quality teaching and service, just as it ensures that excellent teaching and service even in the absence of a publication in any given year might be sufficient to earn top merit.

*Addressing workload issues:*

1. To be both dedicated, engaging, innovative teachers and active, thoughtful scholars who make real contributions to their fields, faculty require the time necessary to focus their attentions on each area. The university must create a system that allows faculty more time to devote to their scholarship, without taking away from their teaching or lessening their commitment to their students. We recommend consideration of adopting one or more of the following methods.
  - a. One method, adopted by a top liberal arts college, is to offer faculty more frequent sabbaticals (every 7<sup>th</sup> semester rather than every 13<sup>th</sup> semester), so that faculty who wish to do so can focus on their teaching during their teaching semesters, developing innovative and rigorous courses and providing intensive mentoring for students, and primarily on their scholarship during their sabbaticals and summers. This model enables faculty who wish to do so to focus primarily on teaching at certain times and scholarship at other times, so that the two enhance rather than detract from each other.
  - b. Another method would be to lower the teaching load to 3/2 over one year or 2/2/2/3 over two years. It is, however, essential that this reduction in the teaching course load also be a reduction in teaching workload –e.g. not offset by larger classes and/or the expectation that faculty will do even more in the way of student research, community-based learning, and so on.
  - c. Another method, regardless of what the teaching load is or how often the university offers sabbaticals, would be to allow faculty to bank courses (and to earn points for service and independent studies, which would then be converted into course-equivalents) and then to “buy” a full semester off from teaching.
2. The university must seek both to reform the course remissions system and to rely upon it less overall, instead thinking about the needs of faculty from the ground up, rather than from the top down, in which our starting point – a 3/3 for full-time tenure-line faculty – requires “remission” in order to produce scholarship.

*Hiring for the teacher-scholar model*

1. A university that embraces the teacher-scholar model for its faculty should strive to ensure that as many faculty as possible themselves strive to embody the teacher-scholar model. That means making a commitment to the funding of regular tenure-line positions, where faculty are expected to strike a balance between teaching, scholarship, and service and to integrate those three functions into a holistic approach to the intellectual life. The university should thus re-direct resources away from the hiring of Presidential Professors, endowed chairs, full-time instructors, and part-time faculty. Rather, the university should focus on hiring regular tenure-line faculty who will engage in both teaching and scholarship, thus striving to embody the model of the teacher-scholar.

2. The university should limit the definition of “clinical faculty” to clinicians and practitioners; the term should not be used to refer to a teaching-only faculty of permanent instructors, who teach 4/4 loads and for whom there are no research expectations. There are some programs where there is a real need for clinicians or practitioners on the faculty, either part-time or full-time. These clinical professors, who may not have terminal degrees or engage in traditional scholarship, are engaged in scholarship in the form of praxis. Their work as clinicians or artists, for example, should be seen as similar to the scholarship of academic faculty for the purposes of the teacher-scholar model. Their practical experience, moreover, is integrated into their teaching, thus enriching the students’ learning. The university, in its commitment to the ideal of the teacher-scholar, should thus hire as Clinical Professors, only true clinical faculty and only in those disciplines where it makes sense to have clinicians/practitioners on faculty. To ensure that those faculty members, if full-time, are able to continue their practical form of scholarship and to perform university service, the teaching load of clinical faculty should be the same as that of tenure-line faculty.
3. There will always be a need to hire some contingent faculty to fill short-term needs (e.g., sabbatical replacements, to provide coverage between a departure and a new hire, to cover courses left open because of course remissions, to meet a specific curricular need, etc.). In general, however, a university committed to the teacher-scholar model should work hard to minimize its use of contingent faculty, devoting resources instead to the hiring of an adequate number of full-time, tenure-line faculty members to cover teaching needs. When it is necessary to hire full-time visiting faculty, then those faculty should be able to continue to pursue their own scholarship, whether by adjusting the teaching load so that it is that same as the tenure-line faculty member replaced, by limiting the number of preps, or by fostering a system in which they can use the time that other faculty devote to service for their scholarship. At a university committed by our mission to social justice, , we should also work to ensure that part-time faculty are adequately compensated and have access to some benefits (e.g., offering a group major medical health insurance plan, in which part-time faculty can also enroll).