

Scholarship and 4-H

Faculty Responsibility for Scholarship in the 4-H Youth Development Education Department
April, 2007

Definition of Scholarship:

Scholarly and creative activities in the 4-H department involve the integration and application of knowledge for the purpose of improving the practice of youth development.

- Improved practice can result from assessments of program need, quality, or impact, and from the development or modification of program materials or methods.
- Material innovations include the development of new products, revision of existing learning resources, and adaptations for new contexts.
- Procedural innovations can include new approaches, methods, technologies, and procedures that result in enhanced outcomes for young people.

Scholarly and creative work must be *validated* by and *communicated* to peers. Methods of validation include formal peer review/refereed processes and adoption by other practicing youth development professionals across the state, region, or nation. Scholarly work is frequently communicated through presentations at state, regional or national meetings of youth development professionals. Ideally, the content of such presentations is recorded in printed proceedings of these meetings. Scholarly work is also communicated through the periodicals, journals, Extension publications, or other printed products. Successful pursuit of competitive grants is also considered scholarly activity.

Some Key Points

1. Scholarly contributions to the field of youth development- all 4-H faculty members with a scholarly component to their position have an obligation to contribute to the field of youth development. Although scholarship is often thought primarily as something needed for promotion and tenure, that is really secondary to the real purpose of having scholarly requirements for 4-H faculty: 4-H faculty to contribute to the field of youth development.
2. Archival quality- it is true that one of the main ways 4-H scholarship is communicated to peers is through presentations or trainings. Nonetheless, it is important that scholarly presentations have a component that is “archiveable.” That is, a physical record of what was presented. Conference proceedings are one way this can happen.
3. Publishing- even though much of 4-H scholarship is communicated through presentations, the traditional method of academic communication- that is, publishing, should not be overlooked. 4-H faculty members need to publish some of their work in order to meet the scholarship requirement. Publishing also provides an automatic archive of work. So, if you have a great program to share, and you present it at a conference, be sure to take the next step and publish an article about your work.