

Department of Family Development  
Research/Survey Paper  
November, 2008

Sharing Scholarly Work in Family Living:  
Lessons Learned, 2002-2008

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#### Abstract

The definition of “outreach scholarship” has been evolving for the University of Wisconsin-Extension (UWEX) in recent years. By the fall of 2002 the Department of Family Development formed a committee to plan a training session as part of an annual conference of Family Living colleagues (both faculty and academic staff). This session was to be based on a successful Northern District All Staff Scholarship II Conference held on October 17-18, 2002. Due to budget constraints and the resulting travel restrictions, the fall 2002 conference was cancelled. This set the stage for the development of an alternate delivery method to share scholarly work among colleagues and thus, provide an additional opportunity for peer review of the work being shared. During the period of 2002-2008 several teleconference or WisLine Web programs were provided for the purpose of sharing scholarly work. This paper presents evaluation data from the series with lessons learned and makes recommendations for continued improvement of the program.

### Statement of the Situation

The mission of the University of Wisconsin (UW)-Extension is to extend the knowledge and resources of the university to the people of the state – where they live and work. During the 1990s UW-Extension had many discussions about scholarship. These discussions explored many models and perspectives which broadened the thinking among colleagues about scholarship. Also contributing to these discussions was the 1999 Kellogg Commission’s report, “Returning to our roots: The engaged institution” (Returning to our Roots. Executive summaries of the reports of the Kellogg Commission on the future of state and land-grant universities, 2001).

Task forces in 1995 and 1997 recommended making changes to the UW-Extension tenure and promotion criteria and guidelines. The Faculty Senate adopted these recommendations in 1997 (Wise, Retzleff, & Reilly, 2002). UWEX Articles of Faculty Governance were updated to articulate and institutionalize those revisions. As they reflected on these evolving discussions and definitions of outreach scholarship, Wise et al. (2002) said “We must build on the intellectual foundation of scholars that have gone before us” if we are to be successful in this effort. “The most significant challenge of this new review process [as developed by the task forces and faculty governance mentioned above] is the need to understand and define scholarship in order to assess and evaluate performance of faculty for promotion” (Dickrell, Gruenewald, Jante, Kniep, Maier & Winnett, 2001). Dickrell et al. (2001) go on to identify the need for opportunities to stimulate thoughtful discussion about scholarship.

The four elements of scholarship as adopted by the University of Wisconsin-Extension (University of Wisconsin-Extension Articles of Faculty Governance, Appendix I.B, Criteria for Faculty Appointment and Promotion in UW-Extension, 2001) are listed below.

- Creative, intellectual work
- Reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value
- Added to our intellectual history through its communication
- Valued by those for whom it was intended

Adams, Harrell, Maddy & Weigel (2005) refer to a diversified portfolio of scholarship for the successful Extension educator and go on to describe scholarly products as the translation of the results, outcomes and impacts of their work.

Early in 2002, the University of Wisconsin-Extension Department of Family Development (DFD) formed a committee to plan an outreach scholarship training session as part of an annual conference of Family Living colleagues (both faculty and academic staff). Due to budget constraints and the resulting travel restrictions, the fall 2002 conference was cancelled. Program Director Laurie Boyce offered financial support for an alternate, distance delivery method to conduct the outreach scholarship program for the purpose of advancing the understanding of these newly defined elements of scholarship. A state program specialist with program development and evaluation responsibilities, Nancy Brooks was assigned the coordination of this project. A planning committee was identified which included academic staff as well as faculty members.

The committee met to discuss a format, an application process and a schedule for the program. Program presenters were asked to identify their proposed presentation with a current state team focus as a way to seek balance across all areas of work within Family Living.

It isn’t only in Wisconsin’s Extension programs that these discussions about the meaning and implementation of scholarship are on the minds of scholars. In the Journal

of Extension, Theodore Alter (2003) asked the national audience, “Where is Extension scholarship falling short, and what can we do about it?” From his 33 years of experience, he identified six challenges which reflect where current scholarship is falling short:

1. Achieving a scholarly mentality;
2. Broadening our view of scholarship as philosophy and concept;
3. Understanding the scholarship of engagement;
4. Conducting research on the scholarship of engagement;
5. Developing and implementing action proposals for change; and
6. Developing tools to assess and document outreach scholarship.

The earlier work of Wise et al. begins to address challenges 1-3. The Family Living Sharing Scholarly Work program most closely addresses challenge 6 and provides additional opportunities for scholars to consider the remaining challenges raised by Alter.

#### Program Objectives

The objectives for the Sharing Scholarly Work in Family Living programs are listed below.

- The programs will provide a forum for sharing colleagues’ scholarly work
- The programs will provide the opportunity for peer review of that work
- Participants will increase their understanding of the elements of scholarship as they apply to the work of Family Living colleagues

#### Response/Methodology

The budget situation in 2002 made a distance delivery methodology a priority. The WisLine Web technology was relatively new at that time and not used by most county-based colleagues. The committee provided a variety of presentation options:

- Audioconference only
- Audioconference with handouts delivered in advance electronically
- Audioconference with enhanced internet (WisLine Web)
- Audioconference with advanced “homework” or other activity by participants
- Other

Many participants were reluctant to try the new technology and opted for some of the more familiar methods such as utilizing a teleconference with handouts delivered in advance. None chose homework or activities in advance and none chose audioconference only. Increasingly, colleagues were willing to utilize the WisLine Web technology, sometimes with the facilitator (Brooks) controlling the screen and/or with the facilitator as a backup. By 2008 most colleagues were willing to take control of uploading their own files and controlled the program independently.

Presenters were provided a 30 minute segment during which they could present their program situation, response, and results as well as highlight the scholarly aspects of their programming. Presenters also had the opportunity to collect feedback via question and answer session and/or the use of polling slides in the Live Meeting software. Participants were encouraged to provide additional feedback to the presenters following the program via email, telephone, etc. The extent of additional feedback being shared with presenters is not known.

Initially the series placed an open call to all Family Living colleagues with special attention paid to inclusion of colleagues in all educational position types, faculty and academic staff. This call required a formal application from prospective presenters which was reviewed by the committee, and presentations were scheduled at that time. After the initial “surge” of presentations, recruitment primarily involved establishing a schedule for

the programs and scheduling those who wished to share their work. Over time, the facilitator scheduled the programs, initiated calls to prospective presenters and managed the programs without input from a planning committee.

The first session included a case study presented by a professor in the DFD along with a Wisconsin Nutrition Education Program Coordinator. A follow up discussion was facilitated by the DFD Chair. Participants all agreed the case study assessment was somewhat useful (29%) or very useful (71%) in their understanding of the elements of scholarship. Appendix A provides a listing of the dates of the sessions, presenters and topics.

In order to better facilitate the feedback to colleagues (which represents the element of scholarship “reviewed by scholar’s peers who affirm its value”), three note-taking tools have been provided to participants. The facilitator created a document entitled “Evidence of Scholarly Work in UW-Extension” (Appendix B) by formatting the precise language in the UWEX Articles of Faculty Governance, Appendix I.B, 1997, Criteria for Faculty Appointment and Promotion, UW-Extension. The document provides a form or template for recording observations of strengths or challenges in the program presented by a colleague. The document was posted on the Family Living scholarship website. Another note-taking document was provided by another DFD member in 2007 entitled, “Taking Notes on Scholarship” and was also posted on the website. A third document co-authored by the facilitator, “Worksheet for Assessing Transformational Education in Extension Programs” (Appendix C), was posted on the website. It was designed to help colleagues identify additional steps which could advance their programs in this context of transformational education. A website was also developed by the facilitator to host basic information about scholarship, archive past presentations and house the note-taking tools.

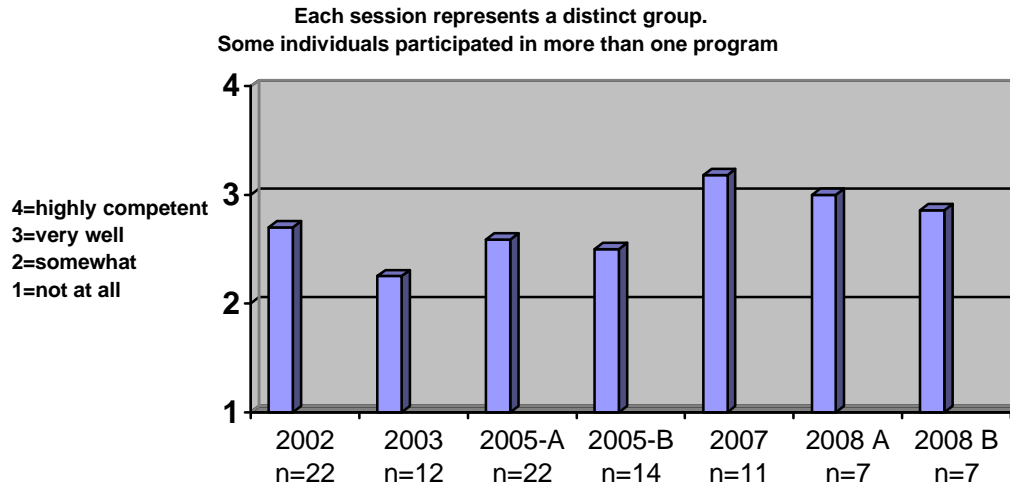
By 2008 anecdotal evidence suggested the evolution of understanding scholarship among many colleagues had advanced to a level at which it seemed appropriate to share additional resources to enhance scholarly work. Two presentations were delivered in this context: the Cooperative Extension Librarian shared library resources available to Family Living colleagues; and the UWEX copyright reviewer addressed copyright issues for Family Living colleagues. Each of these presenters designed their presentations with a focus on how their respective resources could support the development of scholarly work.

Given the new program delivery method, evaluation of the program’s value for participants was important. The facilitator began the program with a set of questions to assess knowledge pre- and post-program. These questions were communicated via the Live Meeting polling slides for real-time response from program.

### Results & Findings

The number of participants varied from ten to 28. The participation numbers are shown in Appendix A as reflected by the number of respondents to the polling questions. Nearly all colleagues (87 of 95) participating in the programs had read the four elements of scholarship prior to participating in the program. In fact, since 2005 it has been rare (1 of 25 participants) for a colleague to attend the program without having previously read the elements of scholarship. Over the six years these programs have been presented, a modest gain has been noted as to how well participants understood those elements at the beginning of the program, still falling in the “somewhat” to very well” category. (Figure 1).

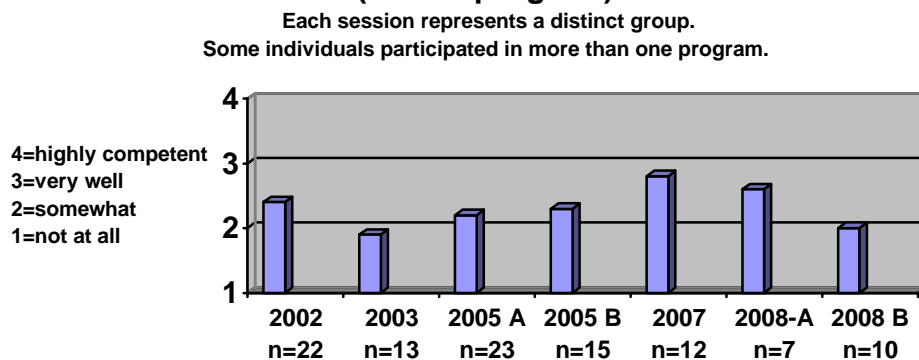
**Figure 1**  
**Understanding the elements of scholarship**  
**(before program)**



It is important to note that these findings are each at a point in time and must be considered in context given the variability of individuals who have participated, There was a mix of tenured and tenure-track colleagues as well as academic staff colleagues both in the role of presenter and participant as reported by the facilitator’s observations. It is likewise known that there are some individuals who are represented in multiple years or more than one program data set.

A similar pattern is observed when considering the question, “How well are you able to identify scholarship in your own work?” when asked before the program. (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**  
**Able to identify scholarship in my own work**  
**(before program)**



When considering the individual sessions, the program generally had a positive effect both on the participants’ understanding of the elements of scholarship and their ability to identify the elements in their own work. For these two questions, at each program the average score on the “before” question is compared to the average score on the “after” question representing a net gain or loss for that date. The net gain or loss was

averaged and weighted by number of participants to calculate a net gain for the entire series of .48 for each question. (Figure 3).

**Figure 3**  
**Gains/Losses in 1. Understanding the Elements of Scholarship**  
**and 2. Identification of Scholarship in One's Own Work**  
**(comparing before and after responses)**



Ultimately the goal of the Sharing Scholarly Work programs is for participants to create more scholarly work. When asked, “To what extent has today’s program increased the likelihood that you will design/plan programs in the future which will demonstrate scholarship?” more than half of respondents indicated it was “much more likely” (51%) or “certainly” (18%) on a scale of not at all, somewhat more, much more likely or certainly. It will take more time to determine whether the goal of actually creating more scholarly work has been met and what effect, if any, these programs will have had on that outcome. These data indicate it is likely that these programs will have had some positive effect.

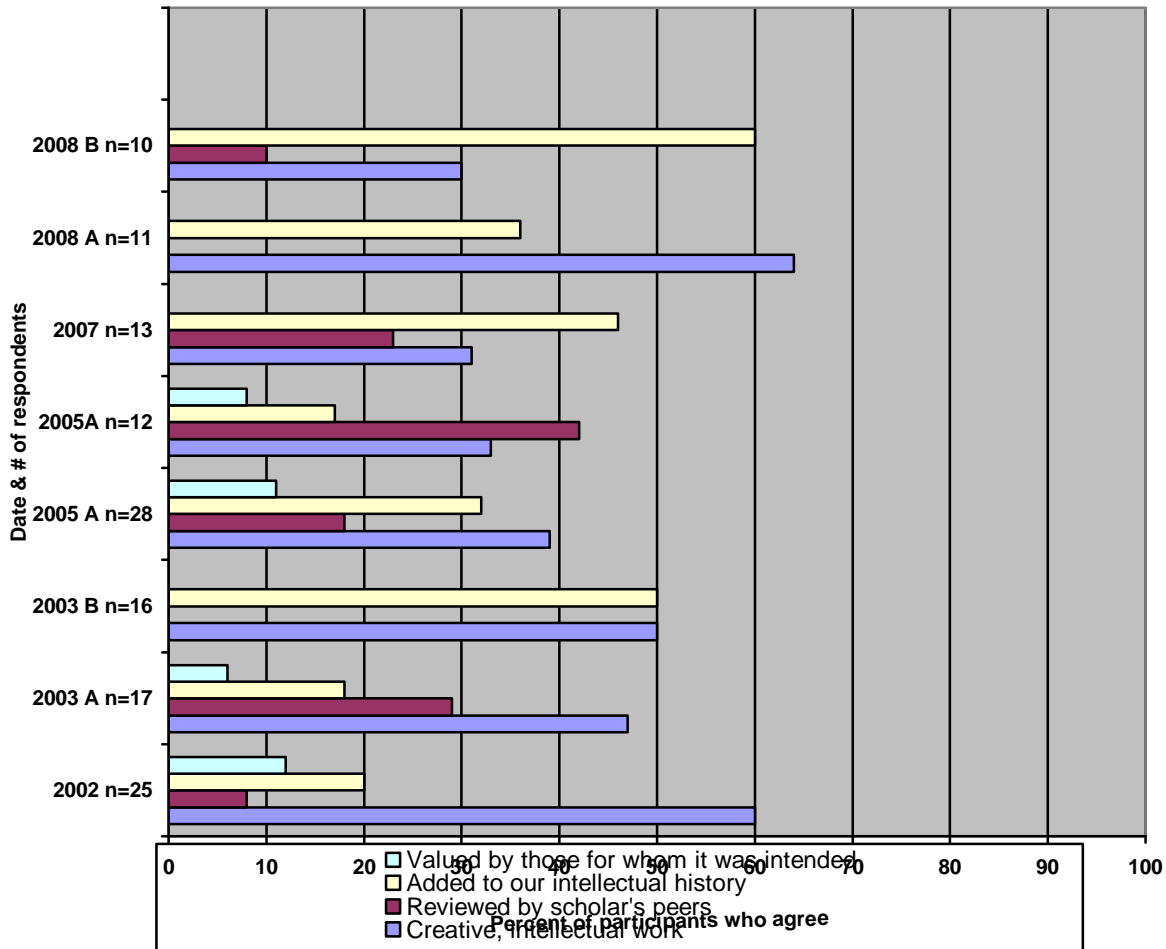
The 2008 addition to the program included presentations on supportive resources available to colleagues including library services and copyright support. More than 80% of participants said their awareness of the availability of library services had “increased greatly” as a result of the program. One third said it was “somewhat likely” they would access some library services described in the program with two-thirds indicating it was “very likely.” No respondents indicated it was not likely.

The copyright program had similar results. When asked how useful the presentation was, 70% of participants indicated it was “very useful – I am likely to use these services” and 30% indicated it was “extremely useful – I will definitely use these services.” While two-thirds of respondents indicated they had researched a copyright question in the past year, few were aware of the support available. One hundred percent of respondents indicated they had increased their awareness of the availability of support

for copyright questions in UW-Extension. Eighty percent of respondents indicated it is “very likely” they will seek support for copyright questions in the future, and most (80%) will do so by contacting the presenter directly. Respondents indicated a strong preference for the Family Living Connection as the way to receive more information on copyright issues, followed by an equal preference for face to face, distance education delivery and one-on-one consultation as needed.

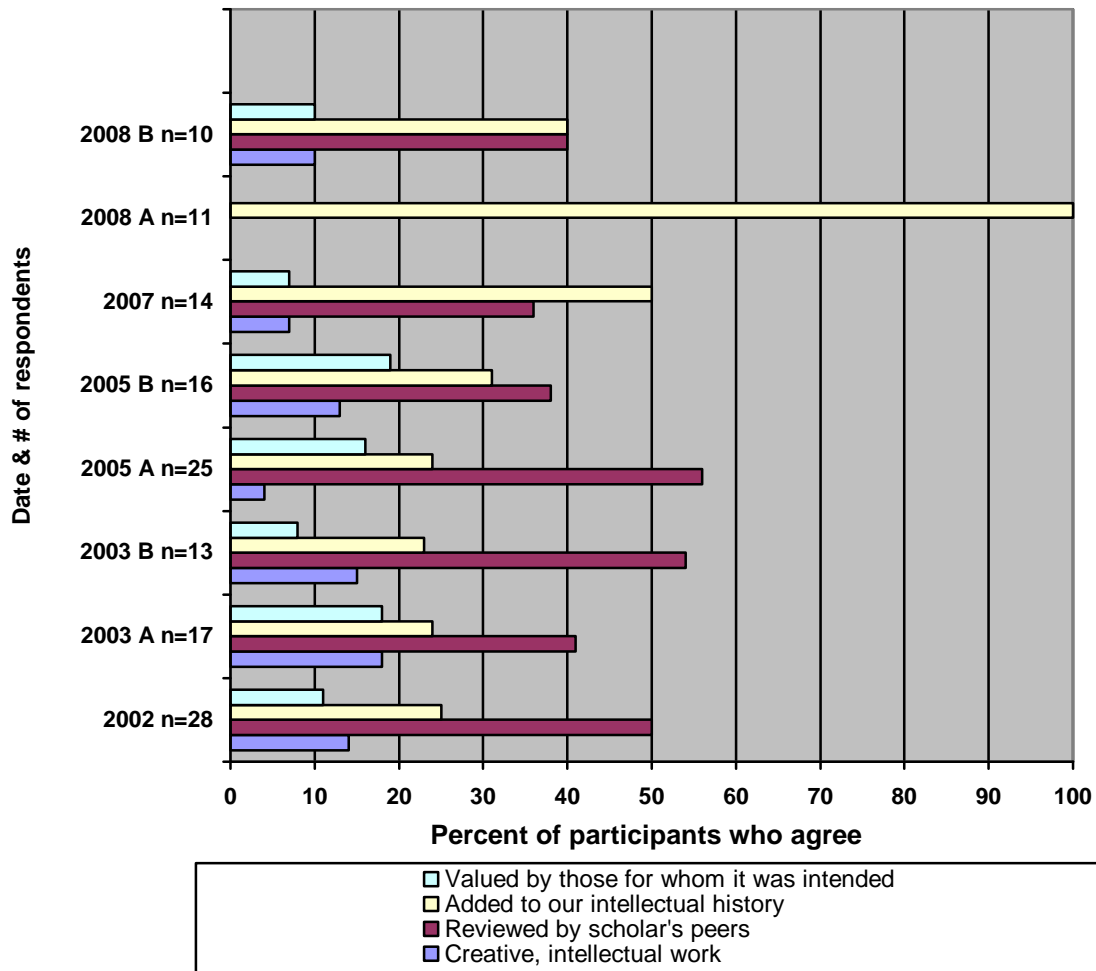
“Creative, intellectual work” was the element of scholarship most often identified as most difficult to understand (five of the eight sessions). (Figure 4) “Added to our intellectual history...” was the second most frequently identified element as most difficult to understand.

**Figure 4**  
**The Element of Scholarship Found**  
**Most Difficult to Understand**



Another perspective on scholarship was explored in the question “Which element of scholarship do you find the most difficult to incorporate into your work?” “Reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value” was the element most often identified as most difficult to incorporate into respondent’s own work followed by the element “added to our intellectual history...” (Figure 5)

**Figure 5**  
**The element of scholarship most difficult**  
**to incorporate into my own work**



In addition to the recommendations cited in the situation statement for the provision of opportunities such as this, there was clearly interest among colleagues for additional opportunities to learn about scholarship. When asked, “How important do you think it is to provide future opportunities for sharing/learning about scholarly work in Family Living?” ninety-five of 96 responses among all the program dates answered “very important.”

In the eight sessions evaluated by the question, “Did you find the WisLine Web technology helpful as a delivery method to learn about your colleagues’ work and the elements of scholarship?” 94% of responses (total responses = 133) indicated it was “helpful” or “very helpful.”

Implications for University of Wisconsin-Extension and Family Living  
 Participants have clearly indicated they “value the WisLine Web (web conferencing) technology to be helpful as a delivery method to learn about colleagues’ work and elements of scholarship.” Continuation of the series with ongoing efforts to convey the value of this methodology for peer review could be accompanied by exploration of other technologies which would suit this purpose.

Scholarship issues have been reframed in Ohio (Davis, Burggraf-Torppa, Archer, & Thomas, 2007) into an applied research framework. This reframing stretches the imagination as to what kinds of training or opportunities might advance our understanding and demonstration of scholarship. Wisconsin may not be ready for this reframing or even find this model appropriate in the future but it helps to provide a context for the possibilities and the ongoing evolution of our understanding of outreach scholarship.

Data about the quality of the feedback provided in this peer review opportunity were not available, however anecdotal reports suggest there is potential for improvement. High quality, meaningful feedback to presenters, whether they are tenured or tenure-track colleagues, has tremendous potential for program improvement, increased scholarship, and further development of programs toward a goal of transformational education. Increased engagement among peers will be essential for the program to provide feedback to presenters which is higher quality and most meaningful.

The facilitator for the program has requested a discussion with the DFD Committee of Professors for the purpose of examining this series and collaborating on ways to incorporate ongoing program improvement into the Sharing Scholarly Work programs. Other DFD members may also be well positioned in their roles as mentors, Standards, Rank and Promotion Committee members, and others in leadership roles, to provide that kind of input as well. A recently organized discussion between program area leaders and Department of Family Development leaders is another potential opportunity to explore discussion of this forum for sharing scholarly work. This program report provides valuable insights into the needs of DFD members with regard to the two elements most often cited for the difficulty to understand or incorporate into their work.

### Recommendations

1. Return to an application process. A committee review and selection of applications appropriate for sharing have the potential to raise the standard of expectations for scholarship in the work being presented. Alternatively, a model which combines both a program in an earlier stage of development and also highlights a more fully developed program of excellence during each session could be considered. This would provide the opportunity for the much needed peer review for tenure track colleagues as well as continuing to share examples of high quality, more well-developed scholarly programs, and thus a model for newer colleagues to emulate. Another strategy is a model which invites each statewide program team to identify a presentation each year that illustrates the elements of scholarship.

2. Continue to evaluate the series and future adaptations of the series which might include other technologies, peer review strategies, etc. Future evaluations might include investigating the presenter's perception of what they gained from making the presentation to the peers. Additional demographic information might enrich future evaluations of the series by assessing the value of the program and the gains made for specific subgroups such as length of employment, tenured vs untenured, etc. Future evaluations could also assess the need for and value of any changes in feedback to presenters.

3. Increase the number and types of "value-added" dimensions to the sessions. The overwhelmingly positive response to the two programs added in 2008 (library resources and copyright support) suggest continuation of this model. Additional resources and/or topics for consideration include the UW-Madison Writing Center for a variety of topics might include Writing Literature Reviews, presentations focused on what colleagues need to know to successfully publish scholarly papers in various journals, and

the use of technology as an issue in scholarship. There are many other potential topics which might fit into this model.

4. Incorporate feedback strategies for those who are unable to attend in real time (while the program is live). Colleagues who have an interest in the peer review process but are unable to schedule participation in the live presentation could share valuable feedback with presenters. Tapping into the archived presentations provides that opportunity but additional mechanisms may be needed to make this a simple and regular occurrence.

5. Improve the Family Living Scholarship Website. This very basic website has functioned primarily as a repository for resources and archives of past programs. Improvements in the website could provide additional learning opportunities for colleagues while facilitating additional feedback to presenters.

Ultimately we all hope to create Boyer's vision of the faculty as a "mosaic of talent" (Boyer, 1900) and support the steps necessary to move our colleagues both new and longstanding) to that level of scholarship where such a mosaic is how we know Family Living Programs.

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**Appendix A**

## Sharing Scholarly Work

Summary of program dates, presenter names and topics, 2002-2008

Date	Name(s) of Presenters	Topic	Number of participants
12/13/2002	Karen Early	Food and Nutrition for Optimal Health	28
	Joan Lefebvre J. P. Ploetz	Strengthening our Communities: Understanding Issues of Poverty	
2/14/2003	Karen Joos	Families, Schools, and Communities United for Students (US) Project	18
	Peggy Olive	Bridges Out of Poverty	
5/2/2003	Sue Nagelkerk Judi Bartfeld	Wisconsin Connections	19
	Peggy Nordgren	Self-Care to Third Graders	
	Dianne Weber	Strengthening Families – Hmong Audiences	
1/7/2005	Lori Zierl	Bullying	27
	Jennifer Caravella	A Needs Assessment Method for Extension Educators	
	Peggy Olive	Impact in Richland County: How Parents Can Help Children through Divorce	
4/14/2005	Joan Lefebvre	Family Resource Coalition: Collaborative Review	16
3/1/2007	Deb Ivey, Donna Peterson, Ruth Schriefer, Sarah Weier	Poverty Education & Awareness in Iowa County	14
	Gayle Rose Martinez	Alliance for Financial Literacy in Clark County	
4/18/2008	Barbara Lazewski	Library Resources for Cooperative Extension	
	Mary Wood	A Better Beginning: Helping Parents & Children Navigate through Separation & Divorce	
5/5/2008	Mary Novak	Addressing Adult Literacy Needs in a Rural Area, Learning for Life	11
	Bev Doll	Southwest Wisconsin Youth Survey (SWYS)	
	Marilyn Kooiker	Mad City Money	
7/11/2008	Patricia McGee	Oneida County Conversations Video Premier	10
	Tina Ginner, Kathy Hetzel, Joan Laurion	Connecting with Families	
	Pam Devore	Copyright Issues in Cooperative Extension	

**Appendix B**  
**Evidence of Scholarly Work in UW-Extension**

<b>ELEMENTS OF UW-EXTENSION DEFINITION</b>	<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>CHALLENGES</b>
<p><b>“creative, intellectual work”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How does the work build upon the knowledge, research, or practice in the field?</li> <li>* How does the work respond to an identified need for new knowledge, a new approach, or a new method, or the creative adaptation of existing knowledge, approaches, or methods?</li> <li>* How did the work result in the development of new information or the development of new or creatively adapted methods or approaches?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>“reviewed by the scholar’s peers who affirm its value”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How has the scholar’s work been shared in published articles, academic presentations, exhibitions of work, creative performances, or in other public venues in which peers independently evaluated this work?</li> <li>* How has the scholar’s work resulted in the receiving of an award, honor, or some other public recognition by peers?</li> <li>* How has the scholar’s work resulted in testimonials, letters of recommendation, or adaptations that affirm the value of this work?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>“added to our intellectual history through its communication”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* How has the work been shared with colleagues?</li> <li>* How has the work added to the body of knowledge?</li> <li>* Where is the work accessible?</li> </ul>		
<p><b>“valued by those for whom it was intended”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* What actions did the intended audience take as a result of this work?</li> <li>* What measurable impacts occurred as a result of the effort (e.g. individual, family, community - knowledge gained, information shared, and behavior change)?</li> <li>* How were the developed materials or processes subsequently used by others?</li> <li>* What were the implications, either positive or negative, beyond those anticipated for the intended clientele and/or community?</li> </ul>		

**Appendix C**

**Worksheet for assessing the level of transformational education in Extension programs.**

August 2005

Keim/Brooks

Questions to consider in assessing whether my program is at the level of transformational education	Answer questions as they apply to my current program	What can I do in future planning and program implementation to move closer to transformational education?	Who else needs to be involved in these “next steps”?
<b>Complex Problems</b>			
Does this program address a large-scale, complex problem?			
Does this program address a concern of an inter-disciplinary nature?			
Do I have partners/colleagues working together on this problem from inter-disciplinary perspectives?			
Am I flexible enough to recognize when the issue I’ve addressed “morphs” or changes directions into a slightly different focus and prepared to adjust my program accordingly? (issue focused but not issue bound)			
<b>Communities of Interest</b>			

Who is the community of interest working on this issue?			
What is the level of trust in my relationships with them and among all members?			
Has the community of interest developed a <u>group</u> vision and plan for addressing this issue?			
<b>Capacity Building</b>			
What is my role in helping members of the community of interest master content knowledge related to this issue?			
What is my role in helping members of the community of interest build their own group leadership skills/capacity?			
Have I provided facilitation resources to the program?			
Have I provided content resources and expertise to the program?			

<b>Experimentation/Examination</b>			
In what ways has the program involved research?			
In what ways has the program involved trial and error of program initiatives?			
In what ways has the program examined the results and developed new questions to be answered?			
<b>Evaluation</b>			
In what ways are deeply involved stakeholders involved in design of program evaluation?			
In what ways are evaluation results shared with and used by stakeholders?			
In what ways do program			

evaluation results result in change and improvement in program design and implementation?			
<b>Success</b>			
For this program, how would you define “long term” impacts in communities?			
For this program, how would you define “large-scale” impacts in communities?			
How will you know if this program has been successful?			