

November 2017

## Increasing Research Requirements for Tenure at Teaching Universities: Mission Creep or Mission Critical?

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### Recommended Citation

Blakey, Elizabeth; Khachikian, Crist; and Lemus, Daisy (2017) "Increasing Research Requirements for Tenure at Teaching Universities: Mission Creep or Mission Critical?," *Teacher-Scholar: The Journal of the State Comprehensive University*. Vol. 8 , Article 3.

Available at: <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/ts/vol8/iss1/3>

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## **Increasing Research Requirements for Tenure at Teaching Universities: Mission Creep or Mission Critical?**

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The word *tenure* comes from Old French and Anglo-Norman legal traditions, originally meaning, in the twelfth century, the right to hold property, as in a *tenement*, and later, in the seventeenth century, meaning the right to hold a particular position, such as judge or civil servant (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 2017). In the modern context, tenure is granted to faculty members who meet a standard of performance, after a term of years known as the probationary period (Defleur, 2007). Faculty tenure in the United States was developed after the formation of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in 1915. AAUP was instrumental in designing the principles of the current university tenure system.

The AAUP's *Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* was promulgated in 1940 and revised in 1970 and remains the key statement of the purposes of tenure for U.S. colleges and universities (Defleur, 2007). The *Statement* does not specify the requirements for obtaining tenure, which are left to the institutions to determine. The *Statement* represents a compromise of some of the difficulties surrounding tenure that have persisted over the years (AAUP, 1970 [1940]; Metzger, 1973; Van Alstyne, 1993).

Tenure, directly tied to academic freedom, is meant to prevent censorship of faculty members who take controversial positions (Cloud, 2015; Capeheart, 2015; Gould, 2011). Tenure increases the civil liberties and freedom of expression of professors (AAUP, 1970 [1940]). This purpose sometimes gets obscured in the competitive race to be awarded tenure. It might be assumed that tenure should strike a different chord, depending on the type of university or college. In contrast to research universities, state comprehensive universities (SCUs) often have institutional missions directed more toward teaching than research (Youn and Price, 2009; Henderson, 2009; Braxton & Del Favero, 2002). Thus, the standards for tenure differ. Youn & Price (2009) found that a large percentage of faculty at all types of institutions (research, SCU, and liberal arts) believe that publications are necessary to obtain tenure, but the percentage of faculty at SCUs who agreed with that statement increased at a greater rate over time (2009: p. 216). These faculty saw that the value placed on teaching as the "primary criterion" for promotion was declining dramatically at SCUs, as of the late 1990s perhaps due to economic stress during the decade (2006: p. 216). Youn & Price found that SCUs were shifting from an emphasis on teaching to an emphasis on research, starting in the 1980s and afterwards. This change was attributed to economic conditions in the academy,

coupled with isomorphic change as SCUs imitated the values and practices expressed by competing institutions.

To be sure, there is a trend toward requiring more research as a condition of granting tenure to professors who teach at SCUs than in years past. As a result, higher education scholars have been debating the issue of “mission creep,” which refers to the increasing research requirements for professors at SCUs. The broad question addressed in this study is whether the trend is “mission creep,” or if it is actually *mission critical* for SCUs to increase the research productivity of faculty. More specifically, this study addresses the social influences shaping the trend.

### **Alternative Explanations**

There are two competing arguments for why research requirements have increased at SCUs over the last few decades. One is the academic-economy argument. From this standpoint, the changes in research requirements are being driven by university administrators, who are being influenced, in turn, by macro-level economic factors, such as levels of enrollment and the number of new doctorates on the job market. Economic factors influence the SCUs, as institutions are looking for external funding streams. These revenues are attractive to the SCUs that are facing reduced public funding (Schevitz, 2004; Zieg, 2016). The market-driven approach to higher education is well documented (Smith, 2015; Bok, 2003). Indeed, there are scholars who suggest that economic pressures are causing administrators to create a corporate, for-profit atmosphere at the SCU, where workers (i.e., the faculty) face increased productivity requirements, coming from the top down. The academic-economy argument is sometimes extended to say that research requirements not only distract faculty from teaching, but also destroy collegiality (Wilson, 2010). These views form part of the mission creep debate.

The other explanation for the trend of increasing research requirements is the teacher-scholar argument. This explanation is that cultural values, held by faculty members at teaching universities, are leading faculty, starting at the department level, to increase research requirements of their own accord. This argument acknowledges that faculty at SCUs view the teacher-scholar model in a positive light. Many have doctorates from research universities and have been thriving in faculty positions at teaching universities. The teacher-scholar argument sees increased research requirements, for hiring and getting tenure, as an expression of faculty values or disposition. This disposition leads to faculty decisions that are later encoded into institutional-level policies.

### **Tensions between Research and Teaching**

To untangle the competing arguments for increased research requirements, it is important to understand the tensions between research and teaching. Within higher education, the integration of teaching and research is often stated in terms of the teacher-scholar model (Hall, 2009; André & Frost, 1997). This model encourages institutions to balance research and teaching (American Council of Learned Societies, 2007). Despite a renaissance in thinking about the teacher-scholar model,

however, state comprehensive universities sometimes face an artificial separation between the teaching mission and the research mission.

In the management of the public universities in the state of California, for example, teaching and research were artificially separated with the adoption of the California Master Plan for Higher Education in 1960. The Master Plan mandated that California State University (CSU) institutions focus on teaching—the *dissemination* of knowledge—while University of California (UC) institutions focus on research—the *production* of knowledge (Kassiola, 2007; Schevitz, 2004). CSU faculty were supposed to prepare students to enter the workforce, and UC faculty were to conduct research to advance knowledge. In the decades since the Master Plan, however, the CSU has moved to increase research requirements for faculty.

According to Kassiola (2007), it was a mistake to force a division between teaching and research universities in California, as it was elsewhere in the U.S. He suggests there should not be a “false choice between teaching and research in the [mutually] exclusive missions of different higher education institutions” (Kassiola, 2007: p. 141). Kassiola argues that teaching in the twenty-first century must be research-based for two reasons: first, because of the exponential increase in knowledge production, and, second, because online communication technologies have altered the landscape of knowledge consumption. For Kassiola, knowledge dissemination at SCUs must be integrated with knowledge production, to maintain *excellence in teaching*. He concludes that one good way to be an excellent teacher at an SCU is to be actively engaged in research (Kassiola, 2007).

University administrators face a deceptively simple dilemma regarding the relative value of teaching effectiveness and research productivity (Allen, 1996). The divide between hiring faculty committed to research and those committed to teaching is a recurring topic of discussion (Leslie, 2002). Certainly the “proportional emphasis” on research and teaching varies by type of institution (Leslie, 2002: p. 53). Even though many in the academy consider teaching and research equally important, Leslie argues that the “explicit reward structure of academy favors research and publication” (2002: p. 71; see also Theodorsdotti, 2013; Schaffer-Carroll, 2003; Adams, 2003). Yet in the teacher-scholar model, research and teaching are understood to be mutually reinforcing. “The best scholars are the best teachers; the best teacher is a scholar who keeps abreast of the content and methods of a field through continuing involvement in research” (Fairweather, 1995: p. 100; Fairweather, 2002: p. 29).

Based on the trend that research requirements are increasing at SCUs, the question becomes: what is driving the trend? Following the academic-economy argument, it is believed that economic forces are the dominant social forces shaping this trend. Economic forces are thought to be influencing the increase in research requirements for obtaining tenure, with top-down pressure from administrators seeking to increase extramural grants.

This study, however, suggests that the trend is being driven as much by faculty values and preferences, regarding the integration of research and teaching, as by

economic forces. Faculty values and preferences are expressed in the teacher-scholar model at the level of departments in hiring and tenure decisions (see Schevitz, 2004).

### Contributions of Study

The main contribution of this study is the finding that micro- and meso-level cultural forces have an important influence on research requirements for hiring and tenure. The drive to increase research productivity is not entirely a top-down trend coming from administrators as suggested by the academic-economy argument. We found that economic factors do not necessarily have a strong effect on individual institutions, even if there are macro-level economic effects across institutions studied in the aggregate. In this study, we located definite faculty preferences, at the department level in favor of increased research productivity within the teacher-scholar model. The increase in research requirements appears to be moving from the ground up, as faculty preferences lead to hiring and tenure decisions, and these values and practices later become part of university manuals, and eventually university standards and missions.

Another contribution of this article is the theoretical argument that it is *mission critical* for SCUs to recognize the worth of integrating teaching and research. Teaching and research are two sides of a coin that should not be artificially split. The production and dissemination of knowledge is the key source of legitimacy for professors. This argument is based on the field theory of Pierre Bourdieu. A third contribution of this article is to re-introduce Bourdieu's field theory to higher education scholars as a complement to neoinstitutional theory.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jacquette (2013) studied how colleges become universities and argues that scholars of organizational change in the academic field should look carefully at how institutions change their mission statements, to increase enrollment and grow revenue. He conceptualizes "mission shift" as a form of divergent change that can be studied using neoinstitutional theory by focusing on cultural factors, as well as resource dependence theory that focuses on economic factors. He says institutional theory and resource dependence theory share a common lineage and are best analyzed as *complements*, rather than in opposition (Jacquette, 2013). In a similar way, Bourdieusian analysis combines the study of economic and cultural forces (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984). According to neoinstitutional theory, organizations in competitive field slowly become more similar over time, a process termed *isomorphism* (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977). As discussed by Jacquette (2013), a mission is "a statement of organizational purpose," while "mission shift" is a move away from an organization's historic mission toward the mission of another type of organization (2013: p. 517; see also Zieg, 2016). Jacquette finds that colleges are more likely to transition into the form of a university in response to three factors: (1) when there is declining freshmen enrollment, (2) when there was prior adoption of curricula associated with the SCU model, and (3) when other colleges in relevant networks are also becoming universities. The theory is that both administrators and faculty strive to achieve higher status within the academy vis-a-vis other institutions. Arguably this interest in legitimacy or cultural status, tied with economic concerns, results in an increasing emphasis on research as a criterion for tenure, in SCUs. The suggestion is that schools that once emphasized teaching tend to imitate elite research universities, both as way to gain status in the field and as a solution to economic concerns.

## Field Theory

This study engages Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, a flexible theory that balances alternative explanations about the economic and cultural factors that influence social dynamics at macro- and micro-levels, while looking more directly at the meso-level. Field theory is explained in some detail here because it can benefit higher education studies and support further research efforts about tenure and other topics related to the organizational culture of higher education.

Field theory, also known as a theory of practice, is an excellent tool to foster understanding of the organizational culture of higher education (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984; Benson, 2006; Martin, 2003). With field theory, Bourdieu synthesized two arguments about social change that are usually exclusive. Field theory combines economic arguments, or class-based theories, on the one hand, with cultural theories on the other hand (Bourdieu, 1993; Martin, 2003). Field theory is similar to neoinstitutional theory, pioneered in the 1970s and 1980s by Meyer & Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio & Powell (1983).

Neoinstitutional theory is often employed in higher education studies, but field theory has been underutilized. For instance, recent studies, including Kaufman (2016), Cai & Mehari (2005) and Jacquette (2013), engaged neoinstitutional theory to study the social dynamics of SCUs, showing that, in addition to being subject to economic forces, SCUs also imitate one another in cultural ways, which leads to changes in their missions and programs. Neoinstitutional theory can be a bit amorphous, however. It does not proscribe methods for how the legitimating myths of the academy are to be located and how social changes are to be traced.

Field theory allows higher education researchers to better understand decision-making at colleges and universities, because it uses multiple levels of analysis, as well as combining economic and cultural analysis. Field theory is flexible enough that researchers can avoid looking at social change *solely* in terms of macro-level economic forces—or *solely* in terms of the micro-level cultural choices of individual agents (Martin, 2003).

Field theory has three primary concepts: field, capital, and habitus. A *field* is a social space, such as the academic profession, for example. The field of higher education can be defined to include community colleges, liberal arts colleges, SCUs, and research universities; however, the theory is flexible enough also to define SCUs as a field. The concept of what is a field is open to the needs of the researcher. In this study, the field of study is the population of SCUs, although this is a case study that focuses on an example institution.

The second term, *capital*, signifies the types of value that are generated and exchanged in the field. Two types of *capital* often measured in field theory studies are economic capital and cultural capital. The term *cultural capital* is defined as knowledge and know-how, but it can also be defined as the worth that is accorded to certain practices. *Cultural capital* indicates levels of knowledge, as well as the levels of worth or legitimacy assigned to certain practices (such as research).

According to Bourdieu (1984, 1986, 1993), *cultural capital* functions at two levels. At the field level, cultural capital can be used to compare the perceived worth

of competing universities, for example. Also at the field level, cultural capital can be used as a comparative measure weighing the relative legitimacy of different *types* of universities (liberal arts colleges versus SCUs, for instance).

Yet cultural capital also functions at the individual level, in the subjective understandings, evaluations, and decisions of faculty members. These evaluations are expressions of what “counts” in the profession. What is a worthwhile endeavor for an educator? What counts in a particular profession is usually some variation of the cultural capital that is at the center of that profession. For Bourdieu, every profession (politics, medicine, law, the stock market, etc.) has a different core value, or stake, at its center. The core value is directly related to the core practices of the profession. In the field of higher education, for example, knowledge is the core value and the production and dissemination of knowledge are central practices. How the worth of research is understood and expressed can vary by academic discipline, as revealed in the findings below.

According to field theory, higher education is a *cultural field* of production, because it is influenced by *both* economic and cultural capital. In contrast, in a field of *economic production*, such as auto manufacturing, cultural factors have less influence, because economic factors determine most outcomes (Bourdieu, 1984; Martin, 2003).

The third term, *habitus*, means learned disposition. These are the ingrained habits and practices of actors in a field. Within higher education, habitus includes the values of educators and the related decision-making practices of faculty members and others (Bourdieu, 1977, 1993). Habitus expresses shared cultural capital in terms of values and practices. The three terms, *field*, *capital*, and *habitus*, work together in field theory, so that researchers can measure and map the social dynamics of the field(s) being studied. By using field theory, researchers can combine economic and cultural arguments—and parse out the origins of particular trends and social changes, such as, in this study, the increasing research requirement to obtain tenure at a teaching university.

Field theory is useful for addressing tensions between economic and cultural forces. Bourdieu argues that the social world is divided into fields, which can be conceived of as professions or industries. Each field or profession is situated between two poles of influence: the dominant forces of economic capital and the less dominant forces of cultural capital. For a field of cultural production, such as higher education, the influence of cultural capital is *autonomous*, which means that social change can be based on cultural influences—and may not be overdetermined by economic forces. A field’s *relative autonomy* is measured by the ability of actors to act based on their cultural values, as opposed to economic factors. Cultural forces can have independent influence in a profession, but relatively so, because the more-dominant economic forces still exert significant power. What is interesting here is that, in fields of cultural production, long-term gains in cultural capital can be preferred over short-term economic gains. This is not often the case in economic fields and industries. For example, in higher education as a field, knowledge is valued for its own sake, sometimes without regard to financial concerns.

### **Economic Factors and the Tenure Wars**

Because economic capital is a primary driver of social change, it is important to examine how economic factors have shaped the academic economy over the last few decades, leading to the debates over “mission creep.” Education researchers recognize two time periods of economic stress for liberal arts colleges and the SCUs: the 1970s and the 1990s. These time periods saw fierce competition in the enrollment economy, that is, in the competition to attract and retain students (Youn & Price, 2009).

The 1970s saw growth slowdowns for higher education, because that decade followed a massive period of growth after World War II. In the 1970s, there was a decline in student enrollments, as baby boomers started to “age out” and leave school (Jacquette, 2013). Moreover, in the 1970s, there was an overabundance of young scholars, who had recently graduated from their PhD programs, and were seeking faculty positions. With fewer students and more teachers, tenure became a matter of concern within the academy. Thus, during the 1970s, policy makers started to question whether tenure should be as sacrosanct as had been previously believed (Walden, 1979).

The 1990s were also troubled years for higher education as a field or profession (Youn & Price, 2009). Tenure-track and tenured faculty found it difficult to advance, and non-tenured faculty found it difficult to obtain full-time employment. In addition, in the early 1990s, the Age Discrimination in Employment Act eliminated mandatory retirement for college and university professors (Burton, 1986; Finkin, 1996; Ehrenberg, 1997). This legal change resulted in a slowdown of faculty retirements, which meant fewer available positions for newly graduated scholars. These economic factors shaped the field and profession at the broadest levels. Education scholars point out that standards for tenure started to become more rigorous at the end of the 1990s, apparently because of these economic factors. In addition to the factors mentioned, universities were also facing shrinking budgets and so started to adopt corporate models for university management during the 1990s (Wassying, 1997).

In the years from 1970s to 1990s, many scholars were discussing the meaning of tenure; discussions became so vehement that the debates were deemed the “tenure wars.” Tierney (2004) says that although academics pride themselves on the use of logic, reason, and evidence, the tenure wars were characterized by emotional arguments and the absence of data. Some academics in the tenure wars were behaving “as if the academic sky were falling and tenure was the main culprit,” while others idealized the more-secure types of tenure of years past as the Golden Age of the academy (Tierney, 2004: p. 228). Recent studies establish that tenure standards continued to shift during 2000s—at research universities, SCUs, and liberal arts colleges (Perlmutter, 2010). The idea that tenure is intended to protect academic freedom and independent scholarship started to give way to a view that tenure might be an “unaffordable privilege for a few” (Gould, 2011: p. 39).

## Research Questions

This study was designed to answer two research questions:

1. **Economic Influences.** Are increasing research requirements for tenure at teaching universities being shaped by macro-level economic trends, such as enrollment data and the number of new doctorates on the academic job market? Are these broad factors necessarily influential at individual teaching universities?
2. **Cultural Influences.** Are increasing research requirements for tenure at teaching universities being shaped by cultural values, such as preferences to hire and promote faculty with active research agendas? What value is placed on the teacher-scholar model by faculty leaders within the different disciplines?

A recent comparative-case study looked at similar issues of “prestige versus pragmatism” in SCUs (Zieg, 2016). In that study, Zieg examined two SCUs that were engaged in strategies to overcome economic pressures. The question Zieg examined was whether changes were being made in higher education institutions for cultural or economic reasons. This study contributes to the same line of research; however, this is a longitudinal study of a single SCU over several decades of time, whereas Zieg examines two cases in a single timeframe.

## Research Design

This case study examines a single SCU, at multiple levels of analysis, and via multiple methods, engaging Bourdieu’s field theory. The goal is to provide a close-up, detailed account of what has been driving the increase in research requirements for tenure at an individual SCU, as an exemplar case relevant to the field of SCUs more generally. At the macro-level, it has been shown that broad economic trends are driving the increase in research requirements, as enrollment figures and the number of new doctorates appear to be correlated to research requirement changes in large-scale, multiple-institution studies. But applying these findings from the existing literature to each individual SCU could be tainted by the ecological fallacy. Under the ecological fallacy, large-scale changes cannot be attributed to each of the smaller-scale units within a population, without error because broad trends and influences do not apply uniformly to every case. For this and other reasons, case studies are important to show how social change actually occurs in particular, relevant cases.

The studied SCU was selected with the purpose of answering the two research questions about economic and cultural influences on tenure requirements. It is believed that the dynamics observed at the selected campus are likely to reflect similar dynamics experienced at other similar SCUs. It is not possible to make generalizations from a single case study, but the detail uncovered in this multiple-

method, longitudinal case study provides insights for future research.

CSU-Northridge is a large campus within the California teaching university system known as the CSU (California State University). Universities in the CSU are examples of SCUs where research requirements for tenure have increased over time—both in the decision-making practices of faculty members, at the level of departments, and in the formal requirements coded into policy manuals. CSU-Northridge is located in a large metropolitan area. It is anticipated that this study of tenure policies at CSU-Northridge will shed light on general issues of “mission creep” in similar SCUs, particularly large teaching institutions in urban environments.

CSU-Northridge has experienced an institutional trajectory that other SCUs in the U.S. have experienced. There have been dramatic changes in form and funding over the last few decades. CSU-Northridge was initially a satellite campus of another SCU. The transition was made from a college to a standalone university several decades ago (see Jacquette, 2013). Recently the administration has started to encourage faculty to increase research productivity especially in competition for external grants. These shifts have transformed CSU-Northridge into a much more research-focused campus. Yet teaching remains the central mission of CSU-Northridge.

In other ways, CSU-Northridge is not typical of the general population in the field of SCUs. CSU-Northridge has seen a positive increase in external funding (approximately a quadrupling of extramural research funding over the past few decades). Still, CSU-Northridge, like many other institutions, faces issues with public funding. Another item of difference is that CSU-Northridge has grown exponentially in enrollment. Not only is it a large residential campus within the CSU system, it is also one of the largest single-campus universities in the U.S. Currently CSU-Northridge has over 35,000 students. These differences are both a drawback and an advantage of the research design. One advantage is that its relative size makes it easier to see whether large shifts in enrollment figures are influencing hiring and tenure decisions with relevant time-order correlations. Also, CSU-Northridge has a mission statement that emphasizes teaching and student success as priorities, which makes the issue of mission creep highly relevant to institutional actors. For these reasons, CSU-Northridge was selected for this case study of increasing research requirements for tenure in teaching universities.

## **Methods and Data**

***Quantitative Analysis.*** Quantitative content analysis was combined with visual-data analysis to explore correlations between economic data and university research requirements over time (See methods appendix available from authors). The textual data used for quantitative content analysis were the personnel policy manuals of CSU-Northridge, which outline the requirements for retention, tenure, and promotion (“RTP”). Coders were trained in the quantitative content analysis as described by the leading text (Neuendorf, 2016). A codebook of instructions was

developed and refined during the summer of 2016. Twenty-one quantitative variables were identified and converted from text into ordinal variables to create trend lines, comparing economic forces with changes in the university's research requirements by rank of professor year over year. The manuals were coded for the academic years 1975-76 to 2015-16. There were three years of data missing (1977-78, 1995-96, and 1999-00); in total, thirty-nine cases (academic years) were analyzed. Two coders worked separately to code all thirty-nine cases and all the variables passed intercoder reliability tests using Krippendorff's alpha (Freelon, N.d.).<sup>2</sup>

**Qualitative Analysis.** Two types of qualitative analysis were conducted. Textual passages from the personnel manuals were analyzed discursively to assess the changes in research requirements (as a dependent variable). Next, qualitative interviews were conducted with the chairs of the departments in several different colleges of CSU-Northridge, to assess the influence of faculty values and practices on changing research standards in RTP policies. Questions asked in the interviews focused on the value (i.e., the worthiness criteria) that the chairs placed on faculty members having active research agendas, and on the integration of teaching and research. This was a cultural capital measure (as above described).

**Dependent Variables.** The relevant texts of the CSU-Northridge manuals contain several dependent variables that were analyzed using both quantitative content analysis and qualitative content analysis. In the manuals, there are general statements on research requirements. There are also more-specific statements of research productivity requirements, organized by rank of professor. Research requirements for hiring and tenure of faculty as expressed in the personnel manuals were converted into ordinal variables by rank.

The research required at the Assistant Professor rank was coded as research-assistant (or, *res-assst*), and so forth by each rank: research-associate (*res-asc*) and res-full (*res-full*). Coders read the text of the relevant parts of policy manuals, and converted the research achievements into variables: if research was *not required*, then the coders were to code as 0 (if research was stated as *desirable* = 1, *normally required* = 2, and *required* = 3). These ordinal variables were then placed on trend lines, by year, and checked against the economic variables (described below) to assess whether there were correlations between macro-level economic changes in the academy and increased research requirements at CSU-Northridge. In other words, the trend lines for the economic shifts and the shifts in research requirements were placed into Excel charts and examined for time-order correlations. Did it appear visually that economic shifts were changing research requirements at CSU-Northridge? (Statistical analysis was not available as this is a case study.)

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<sup>2</sup> If Krippendorff's alpha is low in initial results, researchers might reasonably look for an explanation, for example that one or more coders made an obvious coding error due to inattentiveness and related issues (De Swert, 2012). Several of the variables that did not initially pass the intercoder reliability test were checked and corrected for obvious coding errors, as described in the methods appendix available from the authors.

The second type of dependent variable was located using qualitative content analysis of the text to determine when research standards changed, in particular standards regarding the types of publications that are recognized as contributions to the field for purposes of RTP.

**Independent Variables.** Two categories of independent variables were used: economic and cultural. The economic indicators are (1) enrollment data, both national and local, and (2) the number of PhDs in the market, which variables interact in a complicated way to produce tenure outcomes (Hargens 2012). A third type of independent or causal variable was located with qualitative interviews of the chairs of departments. The interviews ask about increasing research requirements and assess the value the chairs place on integrating teaching and research, as mentioned. (See methods appendix available from authors). In sum, there were three types of economic variables:

**(1) Enrollment Data - National.** Student enrollment data were obtained from the National Center on Education Statistics (NCES). It was expected that enrollment levels would cause shifts in the academic economy. The expected shift would be from a seller's market (i.e., advantage to the faculty, as sellers of their work) to a buyer's market (i.e., advantage to universities), causing the university to increase research requirements. When enrollments are low, the corresponding demand for faculty is also expected to be low, meaning that it is a buyer's market (Hargens, 2012). It was expected that changes in enrollment levels would be correlated with later changes in research and publication requirements.

**(2) Enrollment Data - Local.** In addition, local data from CSU-Northridge on student enrollment were obtained for the relevant years, to determine whether local enrollment data were correlated with changes in the research and publication standards in the policy manuals. It was expected that if enrollment was down, then the reduced need for faculty would give an advantage to the university in the market, meaning that higher or increased research requirements would result.

**(3) Number of Recent Doctorates.** Data on the number of recent doctorates, year by year, were obtained from the NCES. It was expected that this second independent variable, the number of PhDs on the market, would interact with the enrollment economy. If demand for faculty is high, due to high enrollment, the greater supply of new PhDs on the market might nevertheless result in a buyer's market (advantage: university), instead of a seller's market (advantage: faculty candidates). This would occur because of the number of candidates competing for positions. An increase in the number of competing candidates would give an advantage to the universities. In a buyer's market, it is likely that research requirements would be increased within a few years because the university would have more say in the type of candidate desired (Hargens, 2012). Hargens, however, recognizes that economic factors do not tell the entire story, as there are usually other cultural and human behavior factors in play.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Hargens found that in a buyer's market assistant professors produce better research portfolios and have better tenure outcomes. Hargens argues that when the labor market is weak (fewer jobs and

**Qualitative textual analysis and interviews.** Finally, as mentioned, the text of the manuals was analyzed for dependent variables (changes in research requirements). In addition, interviews were conducted with the department chairs to record the ways in which the chairs express their views on increasing research requirements, and on integrating teaching and research. The interviews also asked for the chairs' values and practices related to the teacher-scholar model.

### Findings and Discussion

Based on coding of the policy manuals, we were able to pinpoint the exact dates when research requirements changed, at different ranks of professors, at the studied institution, CSU-Northridge. We found that research requirements increased over time, with discontinuous points of change, but not for all ranks of professors. A distinct shift in standards occurred in 1978, at the ranks of associate and full professor. In 1978, research requirements changed at all ranks, except for Assistant Professor. The variable *res-asst* was consistently stated for all of the studied years: that research requirement for Assistant Professors (i.e., new hires) has constantly been "desired" (coded as "1") for all forty years studied. (See methods appendix).

The change for other ranks in 1978 was: the Associate Professor's research requirement was increased from *desired* to *normally required*, and the Full Professor's research requirement was changed from *normally required* to *required*.

**Single upward shift.** In plain terms, there was a single upward shift in research requirements at the ranks of Associate and Full: from *desirable* to *normally required* for Associate Professors, and from *normally required* to *required* at the rank of Full Professor. It had been expected that there were going to be several increases in research requirements over time. Yet, on further consideration of Bourdieu's field theory, we realized that changes in requirements are more likely to be expressed first in the practices emerging at the micro-level, at the level of departments, before appearing in university manuals or other organizational statements. Also, tenure standards need to be flexible at the institutional level, to allow for college-level and department-level decisions that vary by candidate and discipline. While uniform standards might be considered important, an overly strict, university-wide code of conduct, without variation or flexibility, as to faculty hiring and tenure standards would be unworkable across candidates and disciplines (Lawrence, Celis & Ott, 2014; Fairweather, 2006; Braxton & Bayer, 1996; Braxton & Del Favero, 2002).

**No correlations with number of new doctorates.** We also looked at whether the change in research requirements, by professor's rank in AY 1978 at CSU-Northridge, was correlated with the NCES data on the number of new doctorates in

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more candidates), assistant professors may work harder to attain tenure. He suggests economic hypotheses need to be combined with theories of human motivation. Hargens also presents a "differential performance hypothesis" (2012: p. 313) as another reason for better tenure outcomes in buyer's markets: universities are able to select better candidates to hire, and so the faculty members perform better and are more likely to obtain tenure.

the national market. We found no time-ordered correlation after plotting and analyzing the trend lines. (See methods appendix available from authors.)

After examining the increased research requirements by rank, plotted with the number of new doctorates in the national market over the entire forty-year time periods, it became evident that while the number of new PhDs grew dramatically year over year, research requirements did not respond to this trend in the job market. As stated, research requirements at the university level changed only once in AY 1978. Looking more closely at the 1970s, specifically at the decade from 1974 to 1983, or the five years on either side of the 1978 research shift at CSU-Northridge, we plotted the number of new PhDs over the ten-year period and compared the two types of data. There appeared to be no correlation between the national market of faculty candidates and the shift in research requirements in AY 1978.

The close-up look at the data revealed that in the years prior to the increase in research requirements, there were a total of 910,007 new PhD graduates in 1975 and a total of 917,000 new PhD graduates in 1976. In the two years *following* the increase in research requirements, there were 948,000 new PhD graduates in 1978 and, in the next year, 956,000 new PhD graduates (1979). In summary, there was a slight increase in new PhDs on the national market in the two years *before* the increase in research requirements at the ranks of associate and full. While there was a slightly larger increase in the number of new PhDs *after* the change in research requirements in 1978, it is unclear, from this data, how this shift could be related to *earlier* changes in the research standards, because of the time order. At least anecdotally, this case study shows that the increase in research requirements at an individual SCU were not necessarily in response to economic factors. In fact, looking at the national data and the studied institution, the data reveals that there was a large increase in new PhDs in the following decades, from the 1990s to 2013, while university-level research requirements for CSU-Northridge remained the same over the time period at all ranks.

***No correlation with enrollment data: national or local.*** This analysis of the PhDs on the market led us to ask whether the other economic factor, enrollment figures, were more important. An increase in enrollments could mean an increase in need for faculty to teach courses, due to the burgeoning student body (Hargens 2013). To examine this dynamic, we plotted the research requirements by rank with national enrollment data. We found that, despite increases in national enrollment, there were no corresponding increases in research requirements as stated in the CSU-Northridge manuals.

Turning to local enrollment figures, the same hypothesis was tested. After examining the number of students enrolled, undergraduate and graduate, plotted against the increase in research requirements by rank, we found no obvious correlation between increasing enrollment, which grew dramatically year over year, and the research requirements that shifted in AY 1978.

The 1978 increase in research requirements did not have a clear relationship with either national or local enrollment figures. Local enrollment increased in the 1970s and 1980s, with a high of over 31,000 total students at CSU-Northridge in

1988. Enrollment then fell in the 1990s, following national trends. For example, undergraduate enrollment hit a low of under 20,000 at one point in the 1990s. Enrollment at CSU-Northridge then increased, past prior highest levels. In 2013, the total enrollment at CSU-Northridge was over 38,000 students, with approximately 5,000 graduate students. The local enrollment surge did not have any apparent effect on increasing research requirements at the university level as stated in policy manuals.

### **Pedagogical Research Is Recognized in University Tenure Requirements**

As discussed, another dependent variable was measured using qualitative content analysis to examine changes in research requirements for tenure. We examined the policy manuals, line by line, for changes in university-level requirements for research and publication, in order to identify shifts in the history of the university's research requirements (that could not be quantified into ordinal variables). We found that in AY 1989-90, the publication types recognized as contributions were defined more specifically by type of scholarship. In 1988, the text of Section XX32.4(2) read:

#### **Sect. XX32.4. Contributions to the Field of Study**

1. The University standard requires that the individual demonstrate continued growth as a recognized scholar and contributor to the field of study.

2. The University defines publication to include:

a. Scholarly books, articles and reviews that appear in scholarly or nationally recognized journals devoted to the candidates academic discipline or closely related fields. Departments may prescribe additional publication requirements deemed appropriate to the discipline. Such additional requirements are subject to approval of the School Personnel Committee.

b. Equivalencies to publication as defined by the candidate's Department Personnel Committee. Such equivalencies shall be submitted to the appropriate School Personnel Committee for approval [ . . . ].

In 1989, the text of the same section was modified (see changed passage in boldface):

#### **Sect. XX32.4. Contributions to the Field of Study**

1. The University standard requires that the individual demonstrate continued growth as a recognized scholar and contributor to the field of study.

2. The University defines publication to include:

a. Scholarly books, articles and reviews that appear in scholarly or nationally recognized journals devoted **1) to the candidate's academic discipline or closely-related fields; and 2) to pedagogical research and/or teacher education in the candidate's academic discipline or closely-related fields.** Departments may prescribe additional publication requirements deemed appropriate to the discipline [ . . . ]

This was a sea change in terms of what counts as a publication. The recognition at the university level of pedagogical research as a type of valued research was innovative, and tends to show that there was an emergence of the teacher-scholar model at the organizational level. This recognition of the worth of pedagogical research was part of a larger conversation (See Boyer, et al., 1990).

### **Habitus and the Expressions of Faculty Values—by Discipline**

In the final phase of the study, interviews were conducted with department chairs at CSU-Northridge. It was hypothesized that the faculty views on research, teaching, and tenure would vary by discipline because of the different objects of study in each discipline. It was also expected that these variations were likely to result in distinct types of legitimacy being recognized in each college of the university, even if there were also shared values and practices across the institution. According to Bourdieu's field theory, these different expressions about the value of research and teaching reflect the habitus of the faculty within each discipline as a subfield or professional orientation as well as different expressions of cultural capital.

The departments were randomly selected from three different colleges of the university. Each college has a unique set of majors, falling into a larger category. The three colleges were: (1) *Practical Arts*, including such majors as art, journalism, film, music, and theatre; (2) *Business*, including such majors as accounting, management, and marketing; and (3) *Science*, including such majors as biology, chemistry, and physics. Each chair was asked the same questions. Highlighted points of their answers are presented the table below.

As can be seen from the table, the chairs' evaluations of the relative value of teaching and research varied by college. The chairs recognized different levels of legitimacy given to research (over teaching) based on their disciplines of study. The way their habitus was expressed varied by discipline, with the sciences seeing research as a teaching tool, and, in contrast, with the practical arts viewing the hiring and tenure of research professors as a way to maintain legitimacy in the university, while still working to prepare students for work in the profession. The chair in the practical arts, who came from a professional practice, rather than research university, emphasized the need to have academic scholars on the faculty to maintain legitimacy within the institution.

All of the chairs emphasized the importance of integrating the production and dissemination of knowledge. This habitus was expressed with a hiring preference, at the department level, for candidates who have active research agendas. All of the department chairs have increasingly focused on hiring faculty members who are actively engaged in research. This is driven in part by individual faculty members' dispositions, learned in graduate doctoral programs, where research is emphasized as the key to obtaining greater legitimacy. (See Question No. 6, comparing the practical arts to science and business.)

The faculty acknowledged the freedom of professors to set their own disciplinary standards, at the department level, and also through the networked

connections they have with other faculty in national associations and accreditation agencies within their disciplines. While the academic-economy argument has validity, according to the macro-level studies cited above, this case study establishes that there are cultural influences shaping the increase in research

**Table 1.** Interviews with Department Chairs

<i>Question</i>	<i>Practical Arts</i>	<i>Business</i>	<i>Science</i>
1. How important or valuable is research and creative activities when hiring or reviewing faculty on tenure track?	[I]n a discipline like ours, ... it can be important... to get someone who has a record of scholarship. Or, if you have a bunch of PhD's...then you're going to want to look at the kind of work that people are doing in the profession.	We are an accredited institution, the college. So research is absolutely part of our requirement for our faculty—to be a scholarly-academic.	Very important in the sciences...having students do research is the best teaching tool we have... We teach students how to do stuff.
2. Which is more important or valued at [the university], teaching or research?	This is a teaching university. It's not a Research One. We can't compete at that level and it's not our mission.	Both are an integrated part of educational goals.	It's <i>equal</i> , with an even greater emphasis recently on research, particularly in the tenure process.
3. How much value does your department place on integrating teaching and research?	We are placing more value on it because of the initiatives that the current university president has.	Teaching and research as integrated, or mutually reinforcing, is very important, very very critical.	It's the number one goal we have ... it's to integrate our research programs at undergrad and grad levels.
4. Does your department have a preference for hiring faculty with active research agendas?	Yes	Without the agenda or without the referred journal papers, we would not even consider for an interview.	Yes
5. Has this preference increased over time? why or why not?	The preference has increased over the last few years, because of ... meeting the goals and objectives of the institution.	The requirement has been increased for research over time, since I started, ten years ago, because our requirements for accreditation have increased.	It started [over ten years ago] ... I've been through when it was a <i>just a teaching mission</i> . funded research.
6. How does your own experience in graduate school influence the level of worth or value you place on research when you are evaluating faculty?	I came through the practitioner route. My experiences make me... sensitive to [attaining] a balance of people who are <i>more scholarly</i> .	[This view] was absolutely influenced by my own personal experience in graduate school.	I was at R-1 for my doctorate. So it certainly impacted [me] greatly.

requirements for tenure at CSU-Northridge, as an illustrative case. This finding is possible with Bourdieusian analysis, because data is collected at the meso-level.

## Conclusion

This study examined university policy manuals and faculty preferences to assess possible causes of increasing research expectations for tenure at a state comprehensive university. We found that the trend is being driven, at least in part, by faculty values and practices, in line with the teacher-scholar model that emphasizes the integration of research and teaching. This finding has implications for policy makers in higher education in a variety of settings. It is an especially critical finding for states in which the university system promotes a division between research and teaching institutions. In accord with Bourdieu's field theory, it was found that, while there is mission creep in tenure requirements at the studied SCU, this change appears to be a movement toward core institutional values of the professoriate, such as integrating research and teaching in the teacher-scholar model.

In the existing literature, there is evidence of economic influences on research requirements for tenure, but in this case study it was shown that the decisions to hire and promote faculty who have an active research agendas is not overdetermined by economic factors. Based on this study, the trend toward increased research requirements appears to be fueled by faculty values and practices that express the cultural norm of the teacher-scholar model, rather than by being dominated by economic forces, as is so often argued or assumed.

Although arguments about the tenure system focus on economic factors, an argument based in cultural beliefs and symbols of the academy is also valid (see Schuman 1998). Schuman emphasizes that tenure is the symbol of the professoriate. Tenure represents the social value of professors, who have spent decades in school—as do doctors, lawyers, and engineers, callings that are sometimes more richly rewarded in salary and status. In other words, tenure is an expression of cultural capital or worth of the primary stake in education: the production and dissemination of knowledge. Schuman argues that recognizing the cultural function of tenure will allow for a more fruitful conversation about tenure's importance (Schuman, 1998). In Bourdieusian terms, the teacher-scholar model expresses the cultural capital central to higher education as a field.

Bourdieu acknowledges that economic factors will have a dominant influence on social change in higher education, but says that cultural capital also has an autonomous or an independent effect, because higher education is a field of cultural production (1984, 1986). Based on Bourdieu's field theory, it is not likely that economic pressures alone would be driving the increase in research requirements within higher education. For Bourdieu, professors are motivated as much by cultural capital as by economic capital. This is because the academy is the social institution that creates and protects the store of knowledge.

One of the contributions of this study is to illustrate the application of Bourdieu's field theory to the study of higher education. Bourdieu has been recognized as "the most important figure in cultural theory," because he synthesizes structural-level explanations with individual-level explanations for social change (Smith, 2001: p. 133). That is to say that field theory links economic and cultural

explanations for observed phenomena. According to field theory, faculty at teaching universities are likely to place a high value on an integrated approach to research and teaching, and to see the production and dissemination of knowledge as interrelated. Bourdieu's field theory is useful for understanding higher education at the structural level (e.g., macro-level economic factors leading to university policies), *and* at the level of the subjective understandings of individual faculty members (e.g., cultural factors regarding the value of a professor's place in the teacher-scholar model). Field theory is extremely useful for the study of higher education, an important field of cultural production. Field theory is so useful because it blends structural and cultural explanations and crosses levels of analysis from macro to micro, emphasizing meso-level organizational dynamics, such as the dynamics of decision making at the level of department chairs.

We found that the national-level economic data do not show a correlation between increasing research requirements and the economic indicators of student enrollment and new doctorates on the market, in the case studied. One common perception—put to the test by this case study—is that the demand for increased research productivity comes primarily from university administrators (Schevitz, 2004; Bok, 2003).

Shared governance is often the norm in decision-making in the academy (O'Meara, 2005). While mission creep is slow—and sometimes abrupt—we found that there were distinct shifts in research requirements, both by rank in the policy manuals, as coded, and in the text of the policy manuals as analyzed qualitatively. The identified shifts appear to be shaped as much by faculty decisions during shared governance as by university administrators (Finklestein, 2003; Chait, 2002; Fairweather, 2002; McPherson & Shapiro, 1999). Certainly, tenure requirements fluctuate with economic conditions (Hargens, 2012), but this study provides some evidence and theoretical perspective on the issue of mission creep. The shifts in research requirements at teaching universities are likely driven by a combination of economic and culture forces (Smith, 2015; Jacquette, 2013; Youn & Price, 2009; Bok, 2003; Schuman, 1998).

Moving forward, how will SCUs continue to develop and understand the value of the teacher-scholar model, as related to the hiring and tenure of faculty? Allen (1996) argues that researching faculty can provide better instruction for students, precisely because of their more accurate pool of knowledge developed through an active research program. But the teacher-scholar model is not only about producing more knowledge: it is also about different modalities of teaching that respect the production and dissemination of knowledge. It is about teachers who teach students multiple ways to learn, so they have not only information but ways to gather and comprehend information.

According to a national study, teacher-scholars exhibit two key characteristics (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007). First, teacher-scholars are committed to teaching and pursue an active research program that they then integrate back into the classroom to enrich their teaching. Second, and importantly, teacher-scholars promote *deep learning* through activities that encourage students

to ask questions about the quality, validity, and persuasiveness of the forms of knowledge being presented—rather having students simply memorize and repeat information (Association of American Colleges and Universities, 2007). Hopefully it is this idea that is behind the increase in research requirements at teaching universities

Tenure is a complex topic, related to civil liberty and job security. Academic tenure in the U.S. started in response to political intrusions into academic freedom, but it remains a complicated issue of economic efficiencies, shared governance, and organizational culture (McPherson & Schapiro, 1999; Yarmolinsky, 1996). Shared governance—or the authority to decide—is distributed in varying degrees across the university, including at the department or faculty level. Via shared governance, faculty members at state comprehensive universities have an influence on increasing research requirements for hiring, tenure, and promotion. It appears, at least at CSU-Northridge, that these decisions are moving toward the teacher-scholar model, as an expression of the values and practices of professors. This movement is a positive step toward the integration of the production and dissemination of knowledge. Students are learning points of knowledge as well as modes of inquiry. Bringing research into the classroom at the state comprehensive university benefits students and the public alike.

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