

Teaching/Learning Matters

ASA's Newsletter for the



Section On Teaching &
Learning In Sociology

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SECTION CHAIR'S CORNER

Diane Pike, Augsburg College
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Dear Section Members:

Perhaps you are, as I am, incredulous that another academic term seems to be approaching the end point. It seems amazing that a semester or quarter can go by so quickly—that may be part of the beauty of teaching—it engages us so much. It is hard work on all counts, but I truly think we are so fortunate to do this for a living.

As I hope you have noticed (either smiling or rolling your eyes), we have two main section themes this year. First, "If you teach, you belong!" This mantra refers both to the notion that if you love teaching, you belong within a community of sociologists who value the same commitments and to the idea that if you are teaching, you *ought to* belong to this section. The Section on Teaching and Learning should be the largest section in ASA. Your membership reflects a professional commitment and an understanding of the importance of effective teaching and learning. Teaching may come naturally for a few of us (and even they would benefit from collaboration), but most of us work diligently and thoughtfully on our teaching. The Section is here to provide support, programming, new ideas, and opportunities for all of our members.

Second, teaching *is* intellectual work. As with any section, your membership reflects commitment to an intellectual endeavor that requires peer review, synergy, and connection. Whether the scholarship of teaching, scholarly teaching, or effective daily practice, the intellectual challenge of knowing one's areas and of understanding pedagogy and student learning is exciting and engaging. The bar should be set high for the quality we provide to students and at the core is intellectual rigor and engagement.

If you joined us in Philadelphia, I hope you had a worthwhile experience at our Section pre-conference workshop, paper sessions, roundtables, or at the Award Ceremony with a presentation from the 2004 winner Liz Grauerholz and the awarding of the 2005 prize to Greg Weiss of Roanoke College. Many thanks to then-Chair Wava Haney of UW Richland for all her hard work and inspiring leadership last year. Thanks to all of you who participated and made it a good year.

Looking ahead, we do hope many of you can be with us for the 2006 meetings in Montreal—John Zipp, Chair-elect, has an excellent program planned supported by you, our members. Consider attending the pre-conference workshop sponsored by the Section. In whatever way you can, do join us! Montreal is a wonderful city and it should be an exciting set of meetings.

We always welcome ideas—issues to be brought to Council, direction on what needs we might fill for you. Higher education continues to be in the national limelight—for better and worse. From assessment to on-line learning to service learning to research-rich environments it has never been more important for us to collaborate, learn from each other's gifts and ideas, and continue to strive to make sociology the best taught discipline in the academy. As Durkheim argued, "Pedagogy depends on sociology more closely than any other science." Teachers of sociology, unite!

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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This issue continues the tradition established by previous editors by providing information relevant to section members – from information about the section and section members to the regular column about the scholarship of teaching and learning to renewing our connection to other sections also interested in encouraging discussions about teaching among their members. As we look forward to the upcoming

semester and calendar year, the publication committee members and I invite you to contribute to the newsletter – let us know what you've published, what awards and honors you've earned, and think about the newsletter as an avenue for publishing your own ideas and thoughts on teaching and learning. Have a wonderful holiday season!

SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Jeffrey Chin, LeMoyne College
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The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL): Publishing Your SoTL Work

It has been over a month since the annual meeting and while it is always fun, it is a good thing it happens only once a year. So many people put so much time and energy into preparing for the annual meeting, that I for one always leave inspired and equipped with many more projects and ideas for projects than when I arrive. But it takes a little while before I'm ready to tackle anything. Of course the beginning of a semester looming on the horizon is always a formidable deterrent as well.

This is the second of a series of three articles on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) for this volume of *Teaching/Learning Matters*. In my first article, I discussed the concept of communities of scholars in teaching and learning. Readers of this column may also find last year's set of articles by Kathleen McKinney for this column highly informative. In the inaugural column (33:1:6-7), Kathleen defines the SoTL. In her second column, she analyzes two volumes of papers in *Teaching Sociology*, looking for evidence of SoTL. In her third column, she discusses how to use SoTL to improve classes, departments, institutions and the discipline.

In this column, I want to talk about getting published. While there are many strong arguments suggesting that there are many forms that work in the SoTL may take, in my opinion, for SoTL to be taken seriously, it must pass through the process of rigorous peer review (Shulman 1999, 2000). The peer review process is used most often as preliminary to publication or presentation at a conference.

My comments are based in part on my work as past editor of *Teaching Sociology* and will sound vaguely familiar to attendees of the Teaching and Learning section's pre-conference workshop "Teachers Teaching

Teachers". My intention here, as is the case whenever I make presentations on this topic, is to try to demystify the process and make it more transparent. The editorial process is often viewed as a black box and knowing what goes on both in the editorial office and in the minds of reviewers will help you prepare a strong paper. I hope my colleagues who are or have been editors will agree that these comments are applicable for most journals.

Let's assume you have an idea for a project in the SoTL that you would like to get published. (The question of how to move from an idea on teaching to a publishable paper in the SoTL is the basis for another column.) As with any scholarly project, there is a lot of preliminary groundwork that must be covered before writing the first words.

Assuming that most of you reading this column are sociologists, the logical place to think about publishing your work is *Teaching Sociology*. We are fortunate to have an excellent journal that reflects the vibrant community of scholars of teaching and learning in our discipline. Editors of *Teaching Sociology* are in the business of trying to publish the highest possible quality work not only enhancing the reputation of the journal but also to set the standards for what the SoTL could and should be. It behooves contributors to have, as much as is humanly possible, an idea of what editors are looking for and to do that well.

Guidelines of the Journal

Since Ted Wagenaar's editorship, prospective authors of papers for *Teaching Sociology* have had guidelines for articles, notes and conversations to follow. Since my editorship, these guidelines have been published in every issue of the journal. (They are also available on the journal's website, www.lemoyne.edu/ts/tsmain.htm.)

Review these guidelines. Does your project meet these or does the design at least lend itself to meeting these? Pay particular attention to item #7 for articles and items #4 and #7 for notes. What evidence do you have or what data do you intend to collect that will answer the question of whether or not the points you are making are valid? In an era of assessing student learning objectives, meeting these criteria is especially important.

Evidence of Effectiveness

For example, many of us are fortunate to stumble on some great ideas for teaching particular concepts. One of my favorites has always been the use of game simulation. Some of the tried and true activities are Bafa, bafa and Starpower. Bafa, bafa is a nice cross-cultural simulation. Starpower is a powerful activity that demonstrates stratification. Hundreds of my

students have done these activities and thousands more have experienced these activities at other schools. We use them because we know they are effective. But can we prove it?

In a recent paper, Dundes and Harlow (2005) do just that. They give a thorough description of the activity and then present a count of unsolicited comments from students' instructor/course evaluations. In addition, they provide a non-systematic sample of student final exam essays that require that they explore "structural limitations on (social) mobility" (2005:40). These essay excerpts provide a rich database from which the reader can easily see that the concepts Starpower is designed to present have in fact been successfully conveyed to students.

Literature Review

A second item to pay attention to is your literature review. It goes without saying that your paper should be well-grounded in the relevant literature. This, of course, is no different if you are writing a paper for the *American Sociological Review* or *Teaching Sociology*. One thing to be aware of is that most reviewers know their journal's literature (and often the literature from many other journals as well) pretty well. This is especially true for reviewers for *Teaching Sociology*. Cite that literature! I have seen some pretty good papers that did a good job of citing literature on teaching and learning but ignored papers on that topic that had been published in *Teaching Sociology*. Needless to say, this was one of the first things the author had to fix if they were permitted the opportunity to resubmit.

Presentation

A third item is to pay attention to is the presentation. Included in this topic is the physical presentation as well as the technical aspect of your writing. In these days of word processing and laser printers, there is no excuse for anything less than a flawless-looking paper. A little more difficult is to make sure that there are no misspellings (spell check!) or awkwardly written sentences (grammar check!). Read and re-read your paper. Put it aside and come back and read it again. Better still, have a friend read it. And if your friend is or was in a program for English composition, even better! Or invest in a copy editor. Their work is worth every penny.

Seek Mentorship and Guidance

Not sure if your idea is appropriate or adequately developed for the journal? Talk to the editor. When I was editor, I would not read a draft of a paper (I already had enough papers to read) but I was happy to talk about paper ideas with an author. (I follow this same principle with my students.) Or talk to an

associate editor. Their names and institutional affiliations are on the inside of the front cover of every issue. Or find someone in your department or elsewhere but in the discipline who is willing to serve as a mentor (i.e., a list of mentors were made provided to attendees of the section's pre-conference workshop). Otherwise, you should probably stick to faculty in your home institution.

Follow Up

Unless you are one of the very few individuals who not only follows these and other directions and writes an outstanding paper, you will likely get a revise and resubmit or a reject. In either case you will get copies of the reviewers' comments. Get yourself in a psychological space where you can read the comments and understand what the reviewers are saying. This is important. It may be the case that you are right but it doesn't matter. If the reviewers say you need to fix something and the editor supports that recommendation, then you have to fix it. If it turns out that all three of the reviewers and the editor missed your point (not likely), then you need to do a better job of saying it. In either case, you have rewriting to do. Figure out how to do this. If, after a few days or even weeks of thoughtful review, if you still have questions email the editor and request an email or telephone appointment.

It is often the case that reviewers do not agree. My experience as editor showed me that if you have three reviewers, you will generally get three quite different opinions on a paper. Then what? It is the editor's job to sort through the comments and provide the author with guidelines on how to proceed. If you received a revise and resubmit, and those directions are not clear, contact the editor and request clarification. Give the editor as much information as possible and give her/him time. Most editors read a lot of papers and they may not remember yours. That means going back and re-reading not only their letter to you and the reviewers' comments but possibly the paper itself again.

Conclusion

Hopefully, my comments describe a process that happens in almost any editorial office, not just one that handles SoTL materials. If contributors view their SoTL work in the same way as their other research and give it the same time and attention to detail, not only will it increase the possibility of a positive result, but the entire SoTL community will benefit from higher standards and higher quality work.

Bibliography

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- . 2000. "Inventing the Future." Pp. 95-105 in *Opening Lines: Approaches to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, edited by Pat Hutchings. Menlo Park, CA: Carnegie Publications.

Teaching and Learning in Rural Sociology

Joseph F. Donnermeyer, The Ohio State University
Mary Grigsby, University of Missouri-Columbia

Historically, the Rural Sociological Society is one of the most autonomous areas of sociology, with its own annual meeting and journal (both started in the mid 1930's). Institutionally, undergraduate and graduate degree programs in Rural Sociology can be found in mainstream Sociology departments, in separate departments of Rural Sociology, and in joint departments within either Agricultural Economics or Agricultural Education.

Perhaps it is the structural diversity of its administration that has caused Rural Sociology to place little importance on undergraduate and graduate teaching, given the variety of ways students could major in rural studies at the undergraduate or graduate levels. Or, maybe it is its traditional emphasis on research, much of which has been funded through the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the experiment stations attached to the Colleges of Agriculture of nearly all land-grant universities.

Gradually, however, Rural Sociology's view about teaching has changed. One important reason is the diffusion of interest in so-called "traditional" rural sociological issues at non land-grant universities and colleges. Topics related to food and society, environmental degradation, the urban invasion of former rural places, globalization and its impact on local communities and peoples are topics addressed in many Sociology courses at a variety of institutions of higher learning throughout the country. One landmark event in this development was the publication in 2000 of "Teaching about the Complexities and Diversities of American Rural Life" as part of the ASA Teaching Resources Center's series on syllabi and instructional

materials by Carol Jenkins from Glendale Community College and Cathy Rakowski at The Ohio State University. Today, it is one of the most frequently purchased resource books in the series, but more importantly, it represents a collaborative effort of two scholars from very different institutions of higher learning, both by size and mission.

Another reason is that a large share of rural sociologists also attend the annual meetings of the American Sociological Association, and specialty fields whose annual meetings are places where many sociologists congregate, such as the American Society of Criminology, the National Council on Family Relations, or the Population Association of America. These societies place more emphasis on teaching their subject matter at institutions of higher learning, both large and small.

In sum, Rural Sociology's change is the product of what is now a more porous boundary between it as the sub-discipline and the mother discipline. A previous generation would emphasize that Rural Sociology is a "separate" discipline. Only a small percentage hold this view today, with most defining themselves as scholars who conduct research and teach about sociological issues related to rural communities, peoples, and cultures.

Concurrent with boundary disintegration is a growing interest in the scholarship of teaching and learning within the Rural Sociological Society itself. At the 2005 annual meeting of RSS in Tampa, for example, the *Teaching and Curriculum Interest Group* sponsored paper sessions, which were well attended. Special sessions included conceptual and research papers on "critical thinking skills," "the effectiveness of group/team exercises," "role playing in large classroom settings," "learning by doing," and "service learning."

The success of this year's activities has only served to whet the appetite of the *Teaching and Curriculum Interest Group*. At next year's annual meeting in Louisville, a half-day pre-meeting workshop will be held, titled "Community-Based Research as Teaching Pedagogy." Panel sessions on teaching the core content of Rural Sociology as a "discipline" and online teaching of rural sociological topics are being organized. Plus, a workshop on integrating teaching and research in the academic portfolio is planned.

For more information, contact the chair of the *Teaching and Curriculum Interest Group*, Mary Grigsby, Department of Rural Sociology, University of Missouri-Columbia (grigsbym@missouri.edu).

Reference:

Jenkins, C.A., & Rakowski, C. 2000. Teaching about the Complexities and Diversities of American Rural Life: Syllabi and Instructional Materials. Washington, D.C.: ASA Teaching Resources Center.

SECTION NEWS AND NOTES

Teaching, the Philly Meetings, and the Section

While many of you attended the annual meetings in Philly, we know not everyone could. So here is an update of section activities at the meeting and a request for your ideas and support of the Section on Teaching and Learning.

Section Day went well--beginning with Liz Grauerholz's excellent scholarship of teaching work on syllabi and the content we teach to students. A well attended business meeting was followed by 3 sessions: a panel, and roundtable/keynote/reception, and a paper session. Thanks to all the organizers and presenters for their work. John Zipp is now working on 2006 as you know. jzipp@uakron.edu. We have 4 sessions next year due to increased membership. It is critical that you renew your membership to keep the section strong.

We are also looking for section members interested in serving on Section Committees: Publications, Membership, Co-operative Initiatives, Awards, and Nominations. We balance institutional representation so we can't guarantee a spot but would like to cast the net widely for interest. Please contact me directly.

Finally, we have a overall theme for this year: **If you teach, you belong!** You belong to a community of scholars and teachers dedicated to effective teaching and learning *and* you belong in this section. Urge your colleagues to join us. There will be bi-monthly chair updates with teaching tips so watch for those and contact me with ideas, questions, and comments. pike@augsborg.edu

Renew Your Membership!

Dear Section Member:

As ASA's 2006 annual membership process continues, we would like to encourage you to continue your membership in the Section on Teaching and Learning in

Sociology as well as encourage your colleagues to join us.

The last year has been a good one for the Section and we anticipate this upcoming year to reflect our work in terms of:

- Membership has continued to increase (we are now at 588 members and very close to being granted an additional session at the annual meeting).
- The Section-sponsored teaching workshop for graduate students and first-year instructors was very successful.
- Section-sponsored sessions at the annual meeting were very interesting and well-attended.
- Sessions on curriculum and teaching at the national meeting and at regional and state meetings continued to receive more prominence.
- The Section newsletter continued to keep members informed and to share ideas.
- The importance of teaching as part of what we do continues to receive stronger recognition.

A strong and growing Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology conveys the widespread commitment of sociologists to effective teaching and an understanding of the rewards generated in the teaching-learning process. Thanks for your previous membership and we hope that you not only join us again in 2005, but that you also bring a friend, colleague, or student with you.

Section Membership Committee – Greg Weiss, Chair

Automatic Enrollment in Section E-Mail

When STLS section members pay their annual dues, including Section membership dues, their email address is automatically added to the email list. This list is used by Section officers to send messages to the entire membership. However, this is not a listserv and therefore membership is not able to send messages to other members. While Section officers value this opportunity to communicate more readily with our membership, we recognize that some of you may prefer to be removed from the list.

To remove yourself from the STLS membership list for mailings, send a message to: infoservice@asanet.org with the following statement in the *body* of your message – “Please remove my name and email address from the Section on Teaching and Learning in Sociology announcement list.” Then add your name and email address to the message.

CALLS FOR.....

Reviewers, Ideas, and Interest

Contemporary Sociology is now housed at the University of California, Irvine and is being edited by Valerie Jenness, David Smith, and Judy Stepan-Norris. In an effort to utilize a larger segment of the sociological community to produce high quality issues of *CS*, the editors are inviting members of ASA sections to indicate an interest in serving as a reviewer for *CS*. If you are interested in contributing to the larger sociological community in this way, please send a short e-mail indicating your interest in serving as a reviewer and an updated copy of your vita to the new managing editor of *CS*, Jenny Fan, at csoc@uci.edu

Also, the editors are inviting your ideas for symposia, author-meets-the critics, and other materials for the front end of the journal. Please send your ideas to the editors at csoc@uci.edu. As you know, their ability to produce an excellent journal is contingent upon the involvement ASA members.

Submissions Sought

Please submit suggestions for the Spring/Summer newsletter to Anne Eisenberg (see contact information on the last page). Suggestions for articles, regular features, news items to share with other members, and any other ideas are encouraged and welcome! Help me make this the best Section newsletter of the ASA.

MEMBERS' TEACHING NEWS – AWARDS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please let the editor know when you or colleagues have been formally recognized.

STLS Member's Nationally Recognized

Congratulations to section member Kathy Rowell on being honored as “Professor of the Year.” As described in Burton Bollag's article -

“The competition for [the] honor is sponsored by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The winners were chosen from among 300 candidates nominated by their institutions. They were selected for their outstanding commitment to

teaching undergraduate students,' according to a statement issued by the sponsors, `and their influence on teaching.'"

The national winners are selected in four different categories of institutions and "Katherine R. Rowell, a professor of sociology at Sinclair Community College, in Dayton, OH . . . won in the community-college category. . . .The two sponsoring organizations view the annual award, which was started in 1981, as a way of raising the prestige of teaching. For a number of years, criticism has mounted over the greater rewards given to faculty members for research. In the statement, Lee S. Shulman, the Carnegie Foundation's president, said that by recognizing the professors' commitment to teaching and passion for it, `we support the centrality of teaching on campus and recognize its importance to the future of our country.'

In their statement, the award sponsors . . . [cited Ms. Rowell] for her promotion of service learning. Students in her "Social Problems" course are required to volunteer at one of Dayton's homeless shelters and to participate in a one-day lobbying trip to meet legislators in the state capital. In a statement, Ms. Rowell wrote that the program `gives these community-college students, who often feel disenfranchised and powerless to effect change in their communities, a sense of empowerment."

Congratulations, again, to Kathy Rowell whose award represents the best of college teaching!

Conference on Teaching

You are cordially invited to a conference on **FACULTY-STUDENT PARTNERSHIPS IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**, May 16-19, 2006 at SUNY-Geneseo (near Rochester, NY),

<http://tlc.geneseo.edu/conference/index.php>
CRAIG NELSON will present on "Fostering and Assessing Critical Thinking" and "Dysfunctional Illusions of Rigor." GERARD ALOISIO will conduct a workshop on "Teach Big and Enjoy It: Engaging Techniques for Large Classes." Other invited presenters include JEANNE BALLANTINE, DARBY LEWES, KEN TAKEUCHI, and CARL WAHLSTROM on motivating undergraduates, what to do when teaching innovations fail, and encouraging success in at-risk students. PRESENTATION PROPOSALS are eagerly sought! Deadline for submission of proposals is JAN. 20, 2006. Send to Becky Glass

Director of Teaching and Learning Center, and Associate Professor of Sociology
SUNY-Geneseo, Geneseo, NY 14454
glass@geneseo.edu
585-245-5336

STLS Member Receives SUNY Award

Congratulations to Anne F. Eisenberg, Newsletter Editor and Assistant Professor at State University of New York (SUNY) at Geneseo for being awarded the 2005 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching.

STLS Member's Publications

The sociological-informed novel, *JOKI: When Elephants Fight, the Grass Suffers* (2005) by Kenyan sociologist, Dr. Njeri Mbugua, is an ideal supplementary reading for courses on Family, women in development, stratification, and Africa and globalization.

Congratulations to Natalie J. Sokoloff on the publication of her new edited anthology entitled *DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AT THE MARGINS: Readings in Race, Class, Gender & Culture*. It is a groundbreaking anthology published by Rutgers University that reorients the field of domestic violence research by bringing long-overdue attention to the structural forms of oppression in communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexuality, and/or social class. The most up-to-date and comprehensive picture of domestic violence available, this anthology is an essential text for courses in sociology, criminology, social work, the law, and women's studies. It is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate classes. Beyond the classroom, it provides critical information and resources for activists and professionals working in domestic violence services, advocacy, social work, law enforcement, and the legal profession.

Stephen Brookfield's book, *Becoming A Critically Reflective Teacher*, 1995 Jossey-Bass focuses on using 4 co-ordinates to develop teaching: self-reflection, student feedback, peer feedback, and the research literature. He argues that we generally focus only on the first two primarily and need to take fuller advantage of the second two. Paying attention to what we know and letting others help us think can be powerful.

Stephen Sweet (with co-editors Marcie Pitt-Catsoupes and Ellen Ernst Kossek) published *The Work and Family Handbook: Interdisciplinary Perspectives and Approaches* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates 2006). The Handbook summarizes and links the multidisciplinary theories, methods, and strategies of performing work and family research and practice. It is designed for use in advanced undergraduate and graduate level courses, as well as for reference.

2006 HANS O. MAUKSCH AWARD

The ASA Section on Teaching and Learning seeks nominations for the 2006 Hans O. Mauksch Award for Distinguished Contributions to Undergraduate Sociology.

First Step – to place a name in nomination for the award: To place a name in nomination for this award, please send a letter of nomination to the Award Committee Chairperson indicating the name of the nominee, institutional affiliation, and a discussion of the nominee's distinguished contributions to undergraduate sociology. Please indicate the mailing address, E-mail address and telephone number where both you and the nominee may be contacted. Although not required, it is appropriate that nominees and awardees be members of the Section on Teaching and Learning. **Please send your nomination letter as soon as possible, but no later than January 13, 2006.**

Address nominations to:

Idee Winfield

Phone: 843-953-4899

Department of Sociology

Email: winfieldi@cofc.edu

College of Charleston

66 George St.

Charleston, SC 29424

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Second Step – submission of the application portfolio: The nominator should collate all materials for the portfolio, as indicated below, and forward **five** copies of the entire portfolio to Idee Winfield before the March 24, 2006 deadline. The portfolio should include:

1. The nominee's **summative narrative** of relevant activities and contributions using the criteria below (same headings, same order, please). The criteria are not rank ordered. Be concise with your response
 - A. Teaching honors and/or awards earned.
 - B. Program development (at home institution or other levels).
 - C. Development or modification of innovative teaching techniques; development of new curricula.
 - D. Advising and committee duties related to teaching and undergraduate education.
 - E. Indication of peer and student assessment concerning your instruction.
 - F. Contributions to instructional activities of state, regional, and/or national professional associations.
 - G. Papers given at various meetings related to teaching activities.
 - H. Publications or materials intended to enhance undergraduate instruction and learning processes: instructional activities or techniques, learning environments, computer software, textbooks or supplemental materials.
 - I. Articles related to undergraduate teaching published in refereed scholarly journals.
 - J. Other relevant contributions not indicated above (leadership in faculty development, seminars, workshops; distinctive student learning outcomes, etc.)
2. **Current curriculum vitae.**
3. Four to six **letters of recommendation**, including the nominator's letter (please include these in the packet rather than have them sent directly to the committee)

APPLICATION PORTFOLIOS MUST BE COMPLETED AND RECEIVED BY MARCH 24, 2006 (SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW)