

# Making a Statement

*From the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, University of Arizona, with comments in red from SBS Faculty Affairs*

## GUIDING QUESTIONS

### How can you use your Candidate Statement to help reviewers understand your work?

- How can you highlight your achievements in ways that relate them to your promotion expectations?
- How can the Statement relate your research, teaching, and service to the duties for your position?
- How can you provide a sense of why you are excited about your work, and how it is important?

### How can you inform specialist reviewers and convey the importance of your work to readers outside your area?

- Given that your external reviewers will establish the baseline assessments of your dossier, how can you set out a focused program of research that will be seen as advancing important trends in your area?
  - What are the problems, terms, and concepts that will be of most interest to expert readers?
  - How can you help less specialized readers by providing definitions and examples?
  - Can you benchmark the importance of your research, perhaps by noting invitations to present your work, the standing of the journals you publish in, or citations of your publications?
- How can you benchmark the progress and impact of your program of work?
  - How has your work improved and advanced since your dissertation?
  - If you work on research teams or have collaborated with your dissertation director, how can you specify your independent contributions to those collaborations?
  - Where is your research headed? What will its impact be, and how will you achieve it?

### Should you relate your research to your teaching and service contributions?

- Are there continuities between your research and your teaching philosophy?
- Has your research improved your teaching? For example, have you worked with more graduate students, residents, and/or fellows or helped them in new ways?
- How have your students, department, or other internal and external collaborators benefited from these improvements, for example, through the development of new courses, programs or partnerships?

## FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**Remember your readers, including the non-specialists.** Your external reviewers may skim your CV and then look to your Candidate Statement to frame your research program because they are asked to assess your research. However, most of your internal reviewers will not be specialists in your field and may be more generally concerned with how your work matters. They may also be interested in how your research informs your teaching.

**Less can do more.** Do not overload sentences with complex terminology. Your research is detailed in your publications, so focus on major findings and refer to the publications that provide the details. Use your Candidate Statement to make connections among the work detailed in your CV. Focus on a few central themes to provide a set of take-away points for your readers to assess your work, and use telling details to document its impact.

**While narratives can be an appealing way to approach a Candidate Statement, that appeal can be misleading.** Reflecting upon what you have done is a crucial first step in the process, but those reflections often need to be recast in a less chronological and more analytical form to develop how your work has advanced and improved. There is no hard and fast rule on how to write Candidate Statements. Some reviewers may be looking to get a feel for who you are and what you do. Others may be primarily interested in your research methods, your results, and their implications. Both of these types of readers will be included in the audiences who look to your Candidate Statement to frame your dossier.

These are opening paragraphs from statements with problematic elements: (#1) and (#2) have too much use of technical language and jargon (mind that your readers will include both experts in your field AND UA readers whose expertise is very different from yours); (#3) doesn't introduce anything not already on the CV, and (#4) is vague and generic.

(with letters used for key terms, names and fields changed, and other editing to provide anonymity)

(#1) The focus of our research is the development of synthetic methods to prepare advanced XXXX materials possessing controllable dynamics & properties on AAA, BBB, and CCC scales. By utilizing our expertise in YYY synthesis to ZZZ materials, we have developed novel methods for DDD synthesis, functionalization and EEEE fabrication. The development of controlled GGGG methods for FFFF have enabled us to determine GGGG correlations over a wide range of materials for targeted applications in HHH, III, and JJJ.

(#2) XXXX can be defined as the empirical methodology of YYYYY. As a theoretical XXXXX, I interpret my field broadly, to include a wide range of questions about how to reason from data. I have worked on the analysis of XXXXX data, causal inference under the potential outcomes paradigm, "structural" estimation of PPP and QQQ, and design of RRR. I have used a number of different analytic techniques, including ZZZZZ computational methods and AAAA asymptotic analysis, but there are two main themes that run throughout most of my work. First, I am interested in the problem of BBBB--whether it is possible to learn CCCC from a particular type of data. Second, I take a decision-theoretic perspective to questions of data analysis, because this provides a general framework that clarifies many problems in XXXXXX. My teaching reflects my range of research interests; I cover a wide range of topics and have emphasized BBBB developments in both the potential outcomes approach to XXXX analysis and the structural approach. I also view XXXXX as providing an interface between YYYYY and CCCCC, DDDDD, and other methodological fields. This is reflected in my research in XXXXX, my teaching, and my service work.

(#3) After ten productive years as Associate Director at xxxx, I began serving as Associate Director of xxx at The University of Arizona in Fall 2005. I was hired at the rank of Associate Professor, which was awarded with tenure at xxx in Fall 2001, and now have completed my fifteenth year of full-time teaching in higher education, with nine years as Associate Professor. As described in the Department of xxx document on criteria and measures, I have shown excellence in teaching; included here is evidence of local, state and national recognition variously in publications, convention and conference presentations, and performances. Significant committee and administrative responsibilities have been a major part of my work at The University of Arizona and xxx. My position here, as the second of two faculty members in my area, is defined by the requirements of the position and the needs of the Department of xxx. I hold teaching to be my highest priority, and the quality of my teaching is confirmed in the high level of my student evaluations and the successful professional placements of graduates.

(#4) Genuine creativity is most often found at the boundaries of traditional fields or at the intersection between them. To prepare students for innovation in their work, education and research programs must be interdisciplinary and must provide an accurate knowledge of the component disciplines and an ability to understand and work in the space between them. Within this context, my research and teaching philosophy is founded on the principle that it is essential for students to be exposed to the multidisciplinary applications of research. This philosophy is derived from a long history of experience and leadership both in assorted university and independent laboratories where cross-discipline teaming is an intrinsic part of the research culture.

This is a strong sample statement; it focuses on what the faculty member does and what it means to do this kind of work. She forecasts where to from here to give a sense of her continued trajectory. Finally, she pre-emptively explains an issue that an evaluating committee might be wondering about (in this case, why no institutional service).

**Franci A. Washburn**

**Candidate's Statement of Accomplishments and Objectives on Research, Teaching and Service/Outreach**

I believe in the power of stories and storytelling to effect positive change in the lives of individuals, groups, communities and the world. I define *stories* as speech acts whether written or oral as in fiction, drama, poetry, film, television drama and documentary, scholarly journal articles and books, both secular and sacred oral tradition stories, and speeches or oratorical presentations. That belief lies at the core of everything I do as a professor of American Indian Literature. In *Ceremony*, Leslie Marmon Silko wrote: "I will tell you something about stories . . . They aren't just entertainment. Don't be fooled. They are all we have to fight off illness and death. You don't have anything if you don't have the stories."

My own research and writing, teaching, and service are all aimed at using the power of story to build bridges to understanding between American Indians and other populations of ethnicities within the United States and the world. The trajectory of my work begins with both creative and scholarly publications that move from the local, community level towards a broader and deeper dissemination and acceptance. I support and continue that trajectory in the content and focus of my teaching, which addresses thoughtful scholarly analysis of the creative and scholarly works of others in my field. My service and outreach work assumes the role of storytelling, both formal and informal, within the lives of individuals. Everything is a story. There are the simple, everyday stories such as what happened to me on the way to work (or school) this morning, told around the dinner table at night, or personal anecdotes among friends and family members that only transmit information. More organized story telling can include telling a joke, or an actual story about a recent event, or a story rooted in history and culture. Scholarly writings tell stories about historical events, stories of possible solutions to problems in science, mathematics, physics, anthropology and so on. Creative writings demonstrate through the performative actions of characters, the possible effects of the stories from history, culture, politics, education, economics and more. Stories of all kinds act as the social glue that binds families, communities, and nations together. This is what I care about; this is the heart of everything I do.

Research and Publications

My publications began with creative works, and have evolved into writing scholarly research works as well. I can and must do both if I am to reach both audiences—those who read creative works and those who read research journals. My creative works *can* be read simply as entertaining stories, but as Silko suggests, they are more than just entertainment. Every story contains a message, and I want to convey messages about both the historical and contemporary issues in Native America.

My first novel, *Elsie's Business*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2006) calls attention to violence against women of color, particularly American Indian women. This novel has been or is currently being used as a required course text for classes in English and Womens Studies at colleges and universities such as the University of Texas, Austin; University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh; University of Georgia, Athens; University of Nebraska, Lincoln; and California State University, Sacramento; as well as others.

A second novel, *The Sacred White Turkey* (forthcoming, University of Nebraska Press, 2010) has a dual plot line. The first line inquires into the very nature of both Indigenous and mainstream dominant society spiritual belief and practice. What is holy and sacred? Who decides? The second plot line is inspired by the judicial case of *Cobel v. Salazar*, a lawsuit brought by American Indians against the U.S. Government alleging the wholesale misappropriation of lease money from tribal lands. I suggest one way that such abuses might have been perpetrated, then use the first plot line—sacred practice—as a way to resolve or at least ameliorate, some of the repercussions of lease money misappropriation by tribal governments. A third novel in progress is a travel story in that the main character is an American Indian woman singer in a country western band who travels a circuit around a reservation playing at border bars, engaging or not engaging with fellow band members and the people she meets on this journey. It is a journey through cultural practice, static and changing, and a journey from childhood to adulthood, and from innocence to awareness.

My scholarly research writing consists of the examination and analysis of character performance within the context of American Indian texts. I address the usual literary concerns such as the setting, the language choices, the plot structure, characterization, tone, and the use of metaphor and simile. However, I believe that a complete literary analysis of any text must also address broader issues within literature such as the historical time frame of the text; the historical period in which it was written; the author's intent; the author's personal life in relation to the text that author created; and the political, social, and economic issues that impinge upon the story. It is also important to consider critical theories that may underscore any text such as post-colonialism, Marxism, feminism, and New Historicism. I believe that scholarly analysis of American Indian Literature contributes to a deeper understanding of humanity through these stories. These articles are heavily researched, not using human subjects, but by the application of works of literary theorists and scholars such as Thomas Eagleton, Franz Fanon, and Ngugi wa thiongo who are iconic figures in Euro-western literary scholarship as well as, Gerald Vizenor, Robert Warrior, Jace Weaver and other outstanding native critics.

#### Teaching and Mentoring

As I teacher, I believe that it is my job to help students discover where their talents and interests lie and help them to develop those in both practical and aesthetic ways, so that they can be fulfilled as human beings and financially successful as well. Literature may not be every student's particular area of interest, but everyone can benefit by knowing stories and the underlying messages within them. American Indian stories can help the Native student recognize that Indians produce works of artistic and cultural value, that American Indians can and do make useful commentary about themselves and their place in the world, and so instill a sense of cultural pride. These same stories can introduce non-Native students to the values and culture of an Other and provide a means of understanding the continuing problems of American Indians living in a neo-colonial society. My goal is not only to teach the texts on my syllabi, but also to encourage students to continue reading American Indian Literature beyond the end of the class. Learning the language of another culture may be the best way to get to know and understand that culture. The second best way is to learn their stories.

Mentorship of students is an important part of my job, and by mentorship I don't mean simply serving on student thesis and dissertation committees, although that is certainly important. As a committee chair, I believe in taking an active role from the beginning—helping a student choose a topic, consider an approach, do a literature search, analyze their collected materials, focus their topic, and construct an argument. I also believe that regular contact, preferably weekly, with the student is necessary to keep the student on target, to keep me familiar with the work they are doing, and to insure that they are making steady progress towards completion. Mentoring for me is both a formal and an informal process that assists students not only with their programmatic concerns, but also with any peripheral issues that might contribute to their success. For instance, I believe that it is useful to offer guidance about if and when a student should attend conferences, what conferences would be most useful, how to write an appropriate paper, as well as the general format of conference panels. I look for invitations to nominate students for awards and make every effort to nominate worthy students for those, when appropriate. Several of my students have been granted awards for which I recommended them including American Indian Undergraduate Student of the Year, the Olé Poetry Foundation Residency Grant, the Marshall Dissertation Fellowship as well as other fellowships and grants.

As students approach the final semesters of their program, particularly for students who are anticipating a career in academia, I urge them to polish and expand conference or class assigned papers and submit them for publication. I guide them with this process, reading and critiquing their papers, suggesting appropriate journals, and helping them understand the guidelines for publications for the journal(s) they have chosen. In some cases where a student's interests coincide with my own, it is appropriate to offer to co-author a journal article or book chapter with a student, as a means of helping that student get the first all-important publication. I have done that with one student so far, Billy J. Stratton.

As students approach their dissertation defense and prepare to go on the job market, I help them with their job search by giving them information on where to find job advertisements, and how to read an ad to determine if it fits their qualifications and interests. I read the letters of interest that students prepare as part of those job application packets and make suggestions for tailoring that letter to emphasize how their own education and experience makes them a good candidate for that job. I try to write letters of recommendation that honestly assesses a student's fit for the job, and that point out the student's strengths. If I can't honestly recommend a student for a job, I simply refuse to write a letter and suggest other reviewers. Finally, I set up mock interviews with the assistance of other faculty members to prepare students for the often anxiety fraught process of interviewing for an academic job.

#### Service/Outreach

It is also important for me to reach out to those students and individuals within the larger community to send the message that they can get an education no matter how young or how old, and to serve their needs as human beings. It is equally important for me to advocate for American Indian issues on a state-wide, nation-wide and world-wide basis. I also believe it is important to provide guidance and assistance for people who may not be seeking higher education but could benefit by my input. I am currently working with Native American inmates in the Nebraska State penal system helping them

to set up an informational/literary newsletter that will circulate through the Native American Spiritual and Cultural Association within that system. I take advantage of speaking invitations, requests to serve on fellowship boards, and to attend conferences where I can stress the importance of storytelling, address the needs and interests of both non-Native and American Indian people, and act as a means of communicating that information to the larger, dominant society.

Service work within the American Indian Studies program to me means sitting on the committees I have been assigned and regularly attending faculty meetings, but demonstrating leadership by volunteering to serve in capacities that help assure the continuity and integrity of the program. I have co-taught courses, or taken over the entire responsibility for teaching courses when colleagues have been unable to do so for medical reasons. In one instance, I took over primary responsibilities for directing a student dissertation, at the request of that student's dissertation chair. I have volunteered to serve on ad hoc committees, and always try to interact with my colleagues in a spirit of respect and collegiality with ample doses of humor.

It should be noted that I have not served on any university wide committee because the number of faculty members available to take on the work load within AIS has required that the work load for each individual faculty member is higher here than in other programs and departments. For example, I have served for the past five years on the Curriculum Committee, chairing that committee for the past two years. In addition to the regular business of deciding on student course transfer/substitution requests, during my stint as chair, I have been tasked with the project of guiding the overhaul of all the programmatic guidelines for M.A. students, for Ph.D. students, as well as the guidelines for comps exams for Ph.D. students. The next big project for this committee is to overhaul the guidelines for AIS minor requirements, and to assist in revisiting and reconstitute the entire AIS curriculum. Our committee has begun some of this work, and will continue that work into the Fall of 2010. These are huge but necessary projects that must be done, done in a timely manner, and done well, but projects such as these preclude taking on additional university-wide committee work.

Further, because AIS has a small faculty, made smaller because at least two faculty members have recently retired or left, there are fewer than ever faculty members to serve on student thesis and dissertation committees.

#### Future Goals

In the area of scholarship, I plan to continue with both creative and research work. I plan to complete the third novel during the summer of 2009, but I have outlined at least two more novels to write, and I have a completed poetry manuscript for which I want to seek a publisher. All of these works are American Indian centered, and more specifically, centered on my own tribe of origin, the Oglala Lakota. I am interested in moving beyond the paradigm or theme in American Indian literature, that portrays Indians as the embattled mixed blood protagonist caught between two worlds. Specifically, I want to continue with creative work that demonstrates contemporary issues for American Indian people and that brings their stories to a larger world through the actions of characters within the stories.

My scholarly research and writing interests include pursuing the study of critical theory and how it relates to American Indian Literature. As of now, there is no complete specific theory that is applicable to American Indian Literature. I have already published



specific theory that is applicable to American Indian Literature. I have already published two articles that are theory centered, and have a critical book in progress, *Post-colonialism and American Indian Literature*, which applies that specific theory to American Indian Studies and American Indian Literature.

My teaching goals are to continue to offer students the opportunity to know themselves and to help them develop their abilities to the fullest potential. I will continue to seek advice and assistance from colleagues as well as taking advantage of further training and guidance from university workshops and programs. I am in the process of updating course materials for both my literature classes and my theory classes to include the latest, most relevant information in both areas, and in considering new courses.

In the service and outreach area, I intend to continue my work with Native American inmates in the Nebraska State Prison system and similar opportunities. I am interested and willing to work in the recruiting and retention of American Indian students in the University of Arizona. I will continue to review manuscripts for university presses and peer reviewed journals. I would welcome the opportunity to serve as the editor or on the editorial board of one of the major peer reviewed journals in the field of American Indian Studies or in theory or literature.

I am only beginning what I hope will be a long and fruitful career that gives back to the academic community, to American Indian communities and to the larger world. Ultimately, I hope that my students will not follow in my footsteps, but break new trails, find new arenas of endeavor, not to achieve only my level of success, but to far surpass me.

Notice that there is room on the 5th page for the required statement:

*Sections 4 and 5 are true and accurate statements of my activities and accomplishments. I understand that misrepresentation in securing promotion and tenure may lead to dismissal or suspension under ABOR Policy 6-201 J.*

**This statement, with your signature, needs to fit on to the 5th page (or whatever your last page is, if you're using less than 5 pages).**

**This is a sample statement from a candidate with a non-traditional workload. The inclusion of her percentage effort by area is helpful. And of course it's beautifully written.**

**Alvarez, M.**

### **Candidate Statement of Objectives on Teaching, Research and Service**

In this statement, I describe the ways in which my work at The Southwest Center (SWC) unifies the three distinct functions in my job description (public folklore, research, and teaching) into a coherent vision of public scholarship. As noted in a June 2006 article in The Chronicle of Higher Education, a shift towards more substantive forms of engagement with publics outside the academy has been on the rise at many of the nation's top universities. Yet, despite the praises usually sung for this development, the article also noted that junior faculty is repeatedly advised by senior professors to "defer community-based research and civic collaboration until they receive tenure."

I have been fortunate that my position at the SWC was crafted specifically to allow for the co-existence of hybrid intellectual practices that do not require me to "defer" involvement in broader public conversations on the role of arts and culture in society, but on the contrary, encourage it. The accomplishments that I have achieved at the start of my academic career have aimed to calibrate the dual functions of *intellectual inquiry* and *public impact* inherent to the University's expectations for those who hold positions as Academic Professionals. One key advantage of this kind of position in contrast with the conventional expectations of faculty lines is the opportunity to demonstrate *excellence* by function of the dissemination of knowledge through popular forms of communications (internet, trade publications, press coverage, and practitioner-oriented monographs). Over the last five years I have sought to *maximize* opportunities to speak and write for wider, frequently non-academic, publics while at the same time fashioning an identity and reputation as a thoughtful scholar and teacher who can bring theoretical complexity to the analysis of contemporary culture. Altogether, between refereed publications, book chapters, and writing for practitioners and the general public, I have produced twenty two original texts. During the same time period, I developed and ran ten public folklore projects; have worked on an academic book manuscript; presented papers at ten professional conferences; offered close to 50 lectures, seminars, and community presentations; and have raised \$85,000 in funds to underwrite my work at the SWC. My workload is unique in how it straddles the line between the demands of the intellect and those of practical systems management; a project like the oral history efforts that I lead in Ajo, AZ calls for both roles simultaneously. I must admit that I am most satisfied when I am able to translate knowledge from one arena to the other; I am basically a relational thinker who delights in connecting the dots of theory and practice. Nothing gives me more pleasure than to cast folk knowledge as intellectually rigorous. At the same time, nothing tries my patience more than to hear intellectuals dismiss folk practices.

Over the last five years, I have operated with a deep conviction that I am doing what I love most in the institutional context that most adequately accommodates my divergent skills and intellectual proclivities. In setting out to address the challenges of contributing to public knowledge without compromising authentic scholarship, I have been ambitious. I have responded with equal enthusiasm to serving as a local resource on folklore to schools, the media, the local arts council, students, and tradition bearers as well as to developing a profile of national resonance that was acknowledged by my peers in 2009 through my appointment to the Board of Trustees of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. While I'm certainly not the only contemporary folklorist working to weld intellectual concerns over social meaning with the pragmatics of the arts/culture system, I am part of a community of practitioners that works at the intersection of multiple fields of inquiry. An article in 2008 in The Community Arts Network characterized me as an example of "bridge people" who are developing new vocabularies of strategic practice for the arts by informing policy with knowledge derived from social theory.

### **Service and Outreach: Public Folklore (50%)**

Folklore Studies has a strong history at the University of Arizona. Formally established in 1943 as a University-at-large committee under the leadership of anthropology-trained English professor Frances Gillmor, the "Folklore Committee" was one of the first on campus to be broadly multi-disciplinary and to foster participatory research among scholars, students, and the communities surrounding the University. Straddling the line between ethnology and literature, and operating through an ethics of concern with making the lives of ordinary people relevant to basic human



questions, folklore offers a compelling platform for the practice of what Ernest Boyer of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching termed the “scholarship of engagement.”

The last five years have been a time of charting a new direction for a job that in many ways was widely perceived inside and outside the University as carrying the signature style of a larger-than-life folklorist. For nearly four decades, and still to date, the personality of “Big” Jim Griffith has loomed large over the documentation and presentation of the folk materials of Arizona-Sonora. Upon stepping into these “big shoes,” my task became one of establishing a distinct identity and an original research and public service agenda. This was not easy; during the first two years in the job, I felt that that every single thing that possibly interested me had already been done. Over time, I began to discern how my own strengths and identity contributed to a different view of folklore’s potential that could build upon the legacy of Jim’s work while developing new themes and approaches. Indeed, just being a Latina folklorist already turned upside down the conventional terms of who studies whom that have historically framed folklore work.

In practicing public folklore, I have sought to overcome normative categorizations that restrict folk knowledge to antiquarian, quaint, or marginal practices limited to constrained notions of the vernacular. My time as a Public Folklorist has been spent less on the conventional tasks of collecting “specimens” of variations on folk tales, sayings, or recipes and more on placing folklore at the center of contemporary national discussions on the changing politics of culture, the shifts in U.S. demographics, and the philanthropic and infrastructural developments that facilitate or inhibit the sharing of expressive resources. My own signature approach to the Public Folklorist position has favored the path of more institutional and infrastructural partnerships and interventions and discrete project-based fieldwork rather than the generalist mode of generating folklore “products” in the forms of festivals, exhibits, or demonstrations. Examples of this emphasis are my work broadening the scope of the Tucson/Pima Cultural Plan by mapping cultural assets already present in the local community or the multi-stranded endeavor of environmental science and folkways that is Sabores Sin Fronteras. I have not neglected generating conventional products when these have been necessary. For example, I produced a DVD on Big Jim’s TV segments on food traditions; a short-documentary is currently in production about a controversy over public art in Nogales, Sonora; and working with students, the BorderLore media lab frequently produces digital stories such as “Colorful Houses” featured on *Borderlore.com*. In general, I have invested substantial time and energy creating or participating in more than a dozen hands-on, long-term, community based initiatives that have included both the standard fare of Southwest Folklore such as the folklife festival Tucson Meet Yourself as well as new public policy-oriented interventions (for instance, leading a case study of a misunderstanding in the creation of the Barrio Anita public art project in Tucson done at the request of a member of the City Council). And yet, while I am proud that my own ethnographic and interpretive work is deeply grounded in the distinctiveness of the Southwest region and the particularities of folkways in the US-Mexico borderlands, my analytical style has favored the articulation of broader rubrics of social analysis for understanding the value to society at large of what Bess Lomax called simply “the genius of ordinary folk.” Thus, my professional practice as a Folklorist has centered on deploying the skills and insights of folk knowledge as a lens through which it becomes possible to understand the business of contemporary “public culture” more broadly conceived.

I have chosen to work strategically through local established institutions and to devise ways in which my own work can add texture to what are recognizably the “loci” of cultural activity in the community. My strategy in these last five years has been twofold: first, develop deep and meaningful collaborations with as wide a range of social partners as possible (aim for breadth of engagement); second, utilize the insights of local folk knowledge as a platform to assist in the thinking through of cultural shifts and politics with resonance beyond the local (aim for depth of articulation). Thus, I have built collaborative relationships with a variety of tradition bearers (for example, through my own folklore fieldwork on the cultural history of wheat and Curios; or interviewing and writing about *corridos*; or inviting applicants for a master-apprentice grant at the state Arts Commission) as well as with the “gatekeepers” that codify art and culture for the public at large. I have been successful in forging partnerships as a folklore specialist with major regional cultural resources such as the Arizona State Museum, KUAT/PBS, the Arizona Arts Commission, the

Tucson/Pima Arts Council, Santa Cruz County schools, and the University community through active lecturing and discussions anytime the opportunity has emerged. My interests in the artistic practices of “invisible” populations such as border artisans, migrants, and other minorities have coincided with and found fruitful platforms for dialogue with the interests of national organizations such as the Ford Foundation, the Fund for Folk Culture, and the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture. Whether the subject was immigration, sense-of-place, or transnational relations, I have successfully inserted into these national conversations a perspective derived from the distinctiveness of the Arizona-Sonora borderlands. In this effort, I have been guided by a philosophy that favors employing the university’s intellectual and creative resources in the service of democratic social action in an expansive ethical context of participation and social justice. As a scholar-practitioner I have thus strived to present knowledge in diverse formats (stressing digital and Internet-based media in the attempt to be a proactive cultural commentator) as well as in different registers and styles –often opting for a reporter’s voice over that of an academic theoretician, yet feeling at ease when a shift is necessary.

In a short time, I have been able to lay out the contours of a robust and dynamic folklore “program” at the Southwest Center. Moreover, through programs such as the web-based portal BorderLore (which counts with 2,500 subscribers) I have been successful in branding the SWC and the University of Arizona as important sites of critical and folk knowledge production (see for example my publication on the border fence in The Journal of the Southwest). In 2009, BorderLore received a contract award of \$25,000 from NYU’s Hemispheric Institute/Ford Foundation in recognition of this work. In shaping the job of Public Folklorist, my hope has been not only to interpret a vast array of “folk content” regionally but also to contribute something to how folklore as a discipline can be positioned within the larger spheres of humanistic inquiry in society more broadly. My own service to the University through the Provost’s Task Force on Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences has translated that vision to advocacy for increased institutional support for public scholarship among other faculty across campus.

#### Research (30%)

My research and writing activities over the last five years have clustered around four primary areas. First, at what I call the short-range level, there are a couple dozen folklore materials that I have documented and written about informally in the course of carrying out the service/outreach projects that constitute the core of my public folklore portfolio. At a fundamental level, folklore work is nothing if not ongoing research and fieldwork. A Public Folklorist is someone who collects “data” all the time by living immersed in the vernacular forms of the community that she also calls home. In my work, the bulk of these research observations has been captured and shared primarily through the BorderLore newsletter and Blog. In this format, research is primarily observational and short-term. The writing that results from this kind of inquiry is largely journalistic in tone and scope. Through BorderLore I have explored topics as diverse as chiles unique to the region; the lore of Mexican pastries and bread; linguistic code-switching; the annual Pastorela tradition; and the iconography of an important local mural. I have received numerous emails from subscribers to BorderLore who have told me that they save the articles for future references and teaching. In an effort to contextualize BorderLore’s attention to the miniature dimensions of life in the region within a larger heuristic, I published a generalized orientation to the scope of what constitutes Borderlands folklore in the 2008 Encyclopedia of Culture and Politics in the US-Mexico Divide.

Second, at what I call the mid-range level, my research and writing has been directed at the elaboration of an emerging body of work focused on documenting and theorizing the distinctive material culture of the border region. This work has been represented in published peer-reviewed essays, book chapters, and public talks. Some of the topics engaged thus far include the border fence as a persistent public artifact; the connection between food and poetry or meaning and materiality in the work of the troupe Taco Shop Poets; and the complexity of the border’s curio industries in light of Mexico’s ideology of patrimony and the rising postmodernist interest in tourist kitsch. In addition, the topics of the Sleeping Mexican stereotype and artifacts left behind in the desert by migrants have constituted the basis of numerous presentations in scholarly settings that I am now in the process of rendering into essays to be submitted for publication.

in journals and as book chapters. Some of these topical presentations are the result of extensive theoretical and ethnographic work; my work on the Sleeping Mexican image, for example, represents over a decade of exhaustive investigation and collection of materials. I have had conversations with a colleague in New Mexico who also studies the image to develop a proposal for a book that can finally collect the vast data we hold collectively on this topic. Yet, the fact is that the greatest challenge I face in my job is balancing the high level of public activities that I sustain with extensive "quiet time" for writing. Reaching a balance in this area in order to focus more systematically in writing and publishing is at the top of my professional development plan for the next three years. Nonetheless, due to the visibility I have gained through public presentations, my work is steadily emerging as a nuanced, well recognized voice of expertise on the material cultural forms of the Borderlands.

Third, in what I consider is the long-range scope of my research agenda, are extensive fieldwork endeavors that have the potential to be expressed through book-length publications. The transformation of my doctoral research into a book manuscript has occupied the bulk of my attention in this area and I have devoted significant amounts of time to this effort. The UA Press' Editor-in-Chief told me three years ago that she thought the manuscript was ready as it was for external review. But I have chosen to take more time with it for one important reason: I have reconfigured the text from the modalities and exigencies of an anthropological ethnography to a text that more directly engages and foregrounds critical themes in folkloristics and literary analysis. This "translation" task, so to speak, has had its share of risks and challenges. But I have felt the need to shape a more cross-disciplinary text that can be more useful for my teaching in an English department. One substantial change, for example, is that I have de-emphasized the discussions of the political and economic dimensions of border tourism and strengthened instead the discursive strategies that the narrators used during fieldwork (through playful speech and rhetorical inventiveness) to talk about their own life stories. As such, I have sought to emphasize the use of basic folklore analytical tools such as genre (the personal story), performance (the actor's communicative attempts), and the place of ideology in forms of storytelling. In 2009, I have made substantial progress on the book manuscript; I now have three completed chapters and am making steady progress on three additional ones. I have carved out time in summer 2009 to make the final changes and expect to have the manuscript ready for external reviewers by August 2009.

My deep involvement in one of my core public folklore projects, the foodways alliance called Sabores Sin Fronteras in partnership with my senior SWC colleague Gary Nabhan, has opened up more recently new exciting lines of research from which a second book will most likely emerge. I have been awarded a Fulbright grant to begin research in Sonora, Mexico, for nine months starting in August 2009. This new research project concerns the cultural history and folkways of wheat cultivation in Northern Mexico—an iconic crop of the region that bears considerable weight as well in how "Nortenos" configure their identities and sense of place and tradition. Different from the dissertation-to-book project, the Fulbright research proposal articulates clear folkloristic areas of analysis consistent with the strengths in "folkwriting" that I have been honing through BorderLore and other forms of monograph-style writing during the last five years.

Finally, a focus on the documentation and analysis of folk practices at a national scale and in relationship to infrastructural aspects of the field's sustainability constitutes the fourth direction of my research and writing. My partnership with three arts and culture "think tanks" in New York, Austin, and Silicon Valley have resulted in the publication of two monographs and a Working Paper that have circulated widely among community-based art practitioners. My work on the "informal arts," for example, has obtained national visibility by discussing crucial themes of folk culture in a larger sociological framework of "cultural vitality." The monograph that resulted from the research on Informal Arts has been cited by more than two dozen sources nationwide, some of which have used the findings to frame subsequent research (e.g., Irvine Foundation) and elaborate further on the analytical lines that I initiated.

### Teaching (20%)

My teaching responsibility in the English Department rotates among three core courses; one lower division, one upper<sup>5</sup> division, and a graduate seminar. Although there are other courses offered that address oral transmission and various forms of folk knowledge, these are the only three courses specifically designated with folklore content in the department. The load is 2/0, thus I get to choose the rotation. The teaching portion of my job is the result of a special agreement between the SWC and the English department; it expresses a joint commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship grounded in the folklore of the region. Thus, my courses often emphasize topics related to Borderlands history, literature, and traditions as well as stress the study of semiotics, visual and material culture, and methods of oral history and ethnographic writing. These expanded interests have resulted in having been approached by the department to teach two courses beyond my regular assignment: the English Honors seminar (which I taught as a topical course on oral history and narrative) and a course on Literary Analysis that I designed focused specifically on the study of literary representations of the US-Mexico border.

My courses are cross-listed with Anthropology and American Indian Studies, thus the students drawn to the class represent a diversity of disciplinary interests. In addition, I have served on qualifying exams and dissertation committees for students in Spanish and American Indian Studies. I have also worked with eight undergraduate students and three graduate students on Independent Studies and supervised one Honors Thesis. Given that two of my regular course assignments (ENG 449 and 549) are topical, I have been able to design innovative cross-disciplinary courses exploring themes as diverse as "Kitsch and the Visual Cultures of the Southwest," "Narrating the Social: Methods and Theories for the Study of Everyday Life," and "Folklore and Ideology." My courses are always full and evaluations consistently score my performance well above the mean; for example, the evaluation from students enrolled in the Honors Seminar granted me a 4.9 score out of 5. Although my courses are clustered under the traditional banner of "folklore," I am in fact less a traditional academic "folklorist" and much more a "critical theorist" who draws liberally from various interpretative traditions. I have been told by students and departmental advisors that students are attracted to my courses because they tend to cover a wide range of theoretical ground--from anthropological and social theory, socio-linguistics, cultural geography, Marxism and Structuralism, to oral history and performance studies. I am most sought after by students, however, who have an interest in working with objects and material culture or who seek in folklore additional lines of inquiry to inform their own work (thus, I serve on the dissertation committee of a student examining Iranian literature through the lens of theories of everyday life; another student I am currently working with is writing a dissertation on representations of migration and nationalism as expressed in the Border Patrol Museum in El Paso, TX).

My teaching philosophy is guided by a deep conviction that students, despite their gaps in specific areas of knowledge, never enter the classroom as empty vessels. While there is some truth to the dire assessments of student's academic levels in the United States generally, my teaching methods assume that everyone brings assets to the classroom. In my evaluations, I have received repeatedly a perfect score of 5 in "treating students with respect." I devote a substantial portion of my classes to teaching methods of research and all students (lower and upper division alike) are required to produce some kind of original research. Teaching for the empowerment of the students as *researchers* is one of the pedagogical approaches that I most prefer, for it establishes a sense of ethical reciprocity between students and professor from the very start.

In conclusion, I feel that my work is currently located at a fruitful intersection of public and scholarly work. I draw strength from the multiple lessons and depth of experience that have accrued over the past five years of active public folklore work in a research university. At the moment, the goals I set out for myself when I took the job are coalescing around a transparent agenda of meaningful social and intellectual engagement. Looking forward, I begin new research under a Fulbright grant and have started to receive widespread recognition for my areas of expertise. I have the energy, vision, and work ethic required to continue contributing to the field of folklore studies as a public scholar whose work --and voice-- has a distinctive mark of intellectual curiosity and practical capaciousness.

*Sections 4 and 5 are true and accurate statements of my activities and accomplishments. I understand that misrepresentation in securing promotion and tenure may lead to dismissal or suspension under ABOR Policy 6-201 J.*