# ED480469 2003-00-00 Faculty Service Roles and the Scholarship of Engagement. ERIC Digest.

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ERIC Identifier: ED480469 Publication Date: 2003-00-00

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Source: ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education Washington DC.

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The three facets of a faculty member's job in the modern university are teaching, research, and service. When people talk about teaching, they tend to be in agreement on what they mean. Faculty are first and foremost teachers; teaching is part of the very definition of what it means to be a faculty member. As modern roles for faculty have evolved, another part of the faculty role that is clear, at least to those on the inside of academe, is research: faculty are creators of knowledge and information (Altbach, 1995; Boyer, 1990). When people refer to the service role of faculty, however, what this involves is less clear (Berberet, 1999; O'Meara, 1997). This uncertainty may be entirely appropriate, as the service role of faculty is expansive and often vaguely defined (Boice, 2000; Fear and Sandmann, 1995).

#### THE MANY MEANINGS OF SERVICE

There are internal and external dimensions to service. These two forms of service are distinct, yet they are often lumped together under the rubric "faculty service." Internal service refers to service to the institution as a means to conduct institutional business and service to the discipline as a means to maintain disciplinary associations--it supports the internal functioning of the academic profession and higher education as a whole and is tied to the premise of shared governance. Most faculty members spend considerable time attending committee meetings, answering e-mail queries from students and colleagues, scheduling lecture series and conferences, reviewing articles for journals, and advising student groups. This service to the discipline and campus is part of the hidden curriculum of faculty life.

In contrast, external service is a means for institutions to communicate to multiple external audiences what it is that higher education does to meet societal needs. External service takes many forms, including extension, consulting, service-learning, and community and civic service. Common to all of these forms is faculty operating in contexts beyond the campus.

### VARIABILITY IN SERVICE ROLES

Research shows that there is variability in internal and external service roles depending on institutional type, discipline, rank, and demographics such as race and gender. Faculty at larger and more prestigious campuses, especially tenured faculty, have greater personal power and professional autonomy, which typically translates to fewer service obligations tied to the institution (Austin and Gamson, 1983). Service for faculty at these institutions tends to be focused outward on national activity and reputation, as well as funding agencies. As one moves further down the institutional scale, administration begins to take precedence in the setting of policy for faculty, who are treated more as employees contracted to teach than as equals in governing of the campus (Austin and Gamson, 1983).

There is only limited research about disciplinary norms and how they shape faculty

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work, and in particular, faculty at work as institutional and disciplinary citizens. When considering aspects of faculty work such as service, typically disciplines on different campuses are more alike than are different disciplines on the same campus. For example, education faculty, regardless of campus, can expect service responsibilities with local schools (Brown, 1994; Hill and Pope, 1995; Lawson, 1996). Disciplinary affirmation does have an impact on faculty internal service because disciplines rely heavily on faculty to maintain the activities of disciplinary associations.

Other research on faculty shows that participation in and influence on institutional affairs is dictated, in part, by an individual's rank (Austin and Gamson, 1983; Finkelstein, 1984). Knowledge about institutional and disciplinary affairs grows as one gains more experience as a professor in general and as a professor at one campus in particular. Austin and Gamson (1983), using earlier research by Baldwin and Blackburn (1981), found in their work on the academic workplace that service appears to increase over the years. Faculty members appear to get more involved in service activities as they become more comfortable with their teaching responsibilities and less pressured by demands for scholarship (p.22).

Increasingly, both anecdotal and research-based evidence supports the notion that people who are different from historical norms in the professoriate are called on disproportionately to serve their units, campuses, disciplinary associations, and communities (Aguirre, 2000). For a faculty member whose gender or ethnicity is unusual on a campus or in a department, this difference can translate into frequent calls to represent his/her gender or ethnicity in organizational and disciplinary affairs.

### HOW IS FACULTY SERVICE TIED TO INSTITUTIONAL OUTREACH?

Outreach is a mission-related concept that connects the resources of higher education with audiences external to campus (Lynton, 1995). One way a campus enacts its service mission is through making itself available as an intellectual resource for external audiences. Service is not an add-on to an already full faculty load but instead is a way for faculty to apply their disciplinary expertise to needs that exist beyond the campus. In this way, faculty can simultaneously meet their own needs for professional accomplishment and campus goals to be engaged with their communities. Goals for outreach cannot be met without faculty enacting their service roles.

## WHAT IS THE SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT?

Service is often seen as somehow outside the "real" work of scholars. However, faculty members who can extend their intellectual curiosity into their service activities, Huber (2001) suggests, can unify their professional lives, bringing together their teaching,

research, and service in a synergistic way, to the benefit of each aspect of their work and the benefit of those with whom they work. One way to make faculty service a more legitimate use of faculty resources is to treat outreach and service activities as scholarly activities in the same way that research always has been and teaching is increasingly being treated. When faculty and administrators finally embrace a scholarship of engagement and acknowledge the important role of service in both the internal and external functioning and health of the campus, then faculty can begin to experience integrated academic lives.

### HOW CAN CAMPUSES MOVE TOWARD A SCHOLARSHIP OF ENGAGEMENT?

In 1983, Austin and Gamson conducted a comprehensive review of the current state of the academic workplace. They identified the tensions that existed between teaching and research and identified service as an "afterthought" as reflected in the literature. The service function of faculty has been referred to as the "short leg of the three-legged stool" (cited in Boyer Lewis, 1985). On most campuses, service continues to be the least understood and correspondingly the least rewarded of all the faculty roles (Berberet, 2002; Boice, 2000). In spite of contemporary calls for the engaged campus, faculty members attempting to integrate engagement into their work can get caught between administrative and public calls for engagement and the realities of resulting staggering workloads and academic reward structures that tend to devalue outreach and engagement efforts. Efforts to connect campuses with communities will remain unfulfilled without attention to this and other dilemmas that face campuses, faculty, and the service movement in general.

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**Title:** Faculty Service Roles and the Scholarship of Engagement. ERIC Digest. Note: Based on the ASHE-ERIC report of the same title, published by Jossey-Bass

published, a John Wiley company (ED 476 222).

**Document Type:** Information Analyses---ERIC Information Analysis Products (IAPs)

(071); Information Analyses---ERIC Digests (Selected) in Full Text (073);

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Descriptors: College Faculty, Faculty Workload, Higher Education, Integrated

Services, Teacher Role

Identifiers: ERIC Digests, Faculty Service