

Initial Report of the Senate Task Force on Service

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Charge

The Task Force on Service was created pursuant to Motion [US21/22-01](#), which passed the Senate on October 6, 2021. The original charge asked the Task Force to collect data in fall 2021, to analyze the data and hold public listening sessions in Winter term, 2022, and to produce a public report with a legislative proposal in Spring term, 2022. The main focus of the Task Force was specified as faculty service. In addition to reporting on findings, the Task Force was directed to report on outstanding issues that they are not able to address in the initial proposals.

Timeline

The Task Force was not fully composed until the beginning of Winter term, 2022. It met five times in winter, 2022, during which time it did a brief literature review, considered and decided against conducting a service workload survey, and planned focus group meetings with Department Heads. During Spring Term the Task Force has met twice, identified the elements of a proposal that all members supported, and prepared for writing this report and proposing Senate legislation.

Literature Review

The Task Force reviewed a selection of literature on questions of Faculty Service, including both analyses of existing imbalances in distribution of service and proposals for best practices in addressing such asymmetries. For those who are interested in the empirical basis that informs our work, and also our recommendations, we offer this brief annotated bibliography.

- A 2021 [White Paper on Service](#), authored by Gabe Paquette (a member of the Task Force) gives a condensed overview of research about service inequities in academia in general, outlines the “state of play” at the UO, considers some potential interventions, and lists some next steps in preparation for the work of the Task Force.
- A 2021 report from the UO Center on Diversity and Community entitled [Transforming the University of Oregon’s Racialized Climate: Five Factors Shaping Faculty of Color Retention](#), authored by Kwadwo Assensoh, Gerard Sandoval (a member of the Task Force), Charlotte Moats-Gallagher and Hatsue Sato. In addition to a wealth of other thought-provoking information, this document specifically calls out the phenomenon of “Cultural Taxation”, a cover term for the earlier, heavier, and sometimes institutionally invisible service burden that faculty of color assume for the benefit of the institution.

- A 2021 report published by the American Council on Education entitled [*Equity-Minded Faculty Workloads: What We Can and Should Do Now*](#), authored by Kerryann O'Meara, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra, and Audrey Jaeger. This report presents the results of a National Science Foundation funded project at the University of Maryland, which studied workload distribution in the academy and then proposes a series of best practices for addressing systemic asymmetries in faculty workload and rewards for work. They identify six conditions that are linked to creating more equity in faculty workloads: **Transparency** of workload, **Clarity** of assessment for work, giving **Credit** to those who expend more effort, creating **Norms** that commit to seeking fair faculty workloads, accounting for the **Context** in which faculty strengths and faculty workloads should be aligned, and putting into place mechanisms to ensure **Accountability**.
- A 2020 article in *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning* entitled [*"Faculty Work Activity Dashboards: A Strategy to Increase Transparency"*](#) (Kerry Ann O'Meara, Elizabeth Beise, Dawn Culpepper, Joya Misra and Audrey Jaeger (2020) *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 52:3, 34-42, DOI: 10.1080/00091383.2020.1745579). This article addresses how a specific tool, publicly accessible dashboards that report faculty service work, increases **Transparency** of faculty workload, thereby establishing a basis for more equitable distributions of that workload amongst all faculty.
- A 2017 article in the *American Economic Review* entitled [*"Gender Differences in Accepting and Receiving Requests for Tasks with Low Promotability"*](#) (Linda Babcock, Maria P. Recalde, Lise Vesterlund, and Laurie Weingart (2017) *American Economic Review* 107(3): 714-747, <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20141734>). This article speaks specifically to the gender asymmetry in service: "Gender differences in the frequency of requests and in the acceptance of requests for less-promotable tasks may help explain why women advance at a slower rate than men in the workplace."
- Two 2017 reports on UO focus groups, one giving results of a [*UO Women of Color Faculty Focus Group*](#), the other results of a [*UO Women of Science Faculty Focus Group*](#). Both focus groups identified Service as an area where they experience asymmetries in their workload, with the perception that they are asked (and accept) to do more service work; for the women of color group, the perception is that some kinds of service work they do is not recognized and acknowledged.

Survey on Service

At the time the Task Force legislation was written, the sponsors of the motion were aware of the existence of a draft of proposed questions for a survey of faculty and department heads, developed in 2019 by a Service Advisory Committee here at the UO. This work was then put on hold by the advent of the pandemic. One charge to the Task Force was to finalize and distribute this survey, then analyze the results. The Task Force worked on revising these questions, but then decided not to distribute the survey. The primary reasons for this decision were:

- We did not begin our work until winter term, so it did not seem realistic to conduct a survey and process the results of that survey in time to have them inform our proposals for action.
- We learned that the UO Division of Equity and Inclusion, in partnership with Gallup, was in the final stages of preparing a Climate Survey to be sent out to all employees at the UO and the proximity of two surveys with some overlap in content could have the unintended effect of decreasing participation in either or both surveys.

- Our literature review indicates that asymmetries in service are ubiquitous in higher education, the data available to us from the UO indicates that the asymmetries are also found here, and anecdotal evidence known to individual members of the Task Force was also consistent with this conclusion. As such, we decided that an initial proposal for action did not require the data that would be provided by such a survey.

In lieu of a dedicated survey on service, we were able to place the following question on service into the UO Climate Survey:

Please provide your thoughts about service contributions at the department, university, professional or community levels. a.) My unit has clear processes for how service is assigned; b.) My unit level policies clearly define quality expectations for service; c.) My unit has clear processes for how service is assigned; d.) My unit differentiates between assigned and optional service; e.) I am doing diversity, equity and inclusion activities that my unit does not formally recognize as service; (drop box for comments) f.) Some of what is now considered as service should be reclassified as research or teaching. (drop box for comments).

Also, given that we are requesting that the Task Force continue its work for at least one more year, if in the future the costs of conducting such a survey might be justified by the importance of the knowledge we could gain, our revisions to the service survey questions can serve as a basis for that future work.

Major Findings and Concerns

These bullet points represent conclusions for which we have reached a consensus, followed by issues that we believe require more concentrated future work in the context of an institutional plan to begin to address imbalances in faculty workload.

The major surface issues we have identified

- Some faculty do relatively little institutional service
 - There is little accountability for those in this category, as there is little tracking of individual service activities, that tracking is not publicly available, and institutional policies provide few explicit incentives to engage in institutional service and even fewer consequences for failing to do so.
 - Published work, supplemented by anecdotes known to Task Force members, suggests that senior white male faculty can more easily evade institutional service
- Some faculty do excessive institutional service
 - There is substantial individual variation here, with high-service faculty coming from all ranks.
 - Published work, UO focus group results, and the CoDaC Study of Faculty of Color Active Retention demonstrate that women and faculty of color carry heavier service loads — particularly invisible DEI service — and that it has a significant negative effect on professional advancement.
 - Administrative response to faculty in this category largely consists of encouragement to refuse additional or excessive requests for service. This response places the onus on individual faculty to reduce their service commitments.

- For different reasons (e.g., power dynamics and professional vulnerability, a sense of duty, personal interest in specific service domains), not all feel equally able to refuse such requests. In particular, the Faculty of Color Active Retention report found that all faculty of color groups experienced pressure for participating in DEI work and that there are perceived risks to saying no. In addition to this example, other faculty members report seeing a great need for particular kinds of work to get done, but they either do not see others stepping up to do it or do not see who else is similarly *capable* of doing the work, and they then step up themselves.
- Some Career faculty in this category see service as one of the few avenues to gain workplace respect, connections outside their departments, and self-determination in their jobs.
- Some very important kinds of service that are associated with BIPOC faculty are “invisible” in assessments of faculty performance
 - Faculty of color feel pressure to participate in DEI work and feel that there are risks to saying no.
 - The “cultural tax” placed on faculty of color that come from having to operate in the very white social environment in Eugene.
 - Community engagement work (both internal and external to the UO) is undervalued
 - Faculty of color disproportionately feel the need to mentor students/junior faculty, and to do other emotional labor involved in building community.
 - These kinds of service cause resentment from burnout, which is implicated in cases of failure to retain outstanding faculty of color.
- Other kinds of “invisible” faculty service also exist, e.g. serving as liaison with outside accreditation bodies.

Some major definitional and policy issues we have identified, which require further work

- Beyond the language in the CBA, there is no universal standard for measuring the quantity and quality of service and few departments have explicit ways of quantifying and/or evaluating faculty service.
 - Note that some merit policies (e.g., in the History Department) can be more explicit and prescriptive than the policies for Promotion and Tenure.
- It is necessary to distinguish between **institutional service**, **service to the profession**, and **public service**. Roughly,
 - Institutional service is crucial to shared governance of the university, and takes place internal to a home department, elsewhere within a given school or college, or within committees that affect the institution as a whole.
 - Professional service is extramural service to one’s discipline or area of expertise and may involve leadership roles in associations and learned societies, the organization of conferences, and editorial responsibilities for journals, among countless other forms of non-institutional service.
 - Public service – part of the UO’s vision statement - refers to the application of professional skills and knowledge to benefit communities, non-profit organizations, and the government. Service in the public sphere ranges from

public-facing exposition of research to being appointed as a public official in the government.

- It is necessary to build consensus on a theoretical definition of what should count as **institutional service**.
 - Some kinds of institutional service clearly “count”:
 - Service on named institutional committees, including search committees, review committees, and *ad hoc* task forces
 - Filling departmental administrative positions (e.g., Department Head, Director of Graduate Studies, Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of DEI committees, etc.).
 - Assessment of service also needs to factor in that some service comes with compensation (e.g., course releases, stipends, summer salary), even if that compensation does not account, in some cases, for the entirety of the effort expended to discharge the duties for which compensation was given
 - There is a need to explicitly define and recognize the “invisible” institutional service that some faculty members do. Service that does not involve named committees or service positions, and so is not always either accounted for or compensated, include:
 - Consultations with department heads and other administrators
 - Serving as liaisons with other entities, e.g. external accreditation bodies
 - Individual DEI work
 - Emotional labor for students and colleagues
 - This definition must interact with both
 - Formal mentoring, which, beyond service, can also arguably be part of a research and teaching profile
 - Advising of undergraduate honors theses and MA theses in professional degree programs. This is clearly a component of a faculty member’s teaching profile, but it is also like service in that it is work that must be done for a particular program to function, however (i) is not always symmetrically distributed, (ii) it typically is additive (i.e., it is added to a full teaching load), (iii) it rarely “counts” for much towards a positive review, and (iv) unlike advising successful PhD students, such advising rarely contributes to a faculty member’s reputation.
- There is a need to generate operational definitions, so that we can readily identify and assess those activities that we decide should count as institutional service.
 - It is necessary to establish a scale for workload level of all service activities, then to rank each service activity according to that scale. This should not be too fine-grained (e.g. no more than 3-4 standardized levels) and should minimally rank all committee service according to expected time commitment.
 - Such rankings should also be done within each unit so that departmental service and service to the school or college can be displayed via the same dashboard.
- How do we address external service (to the profession, community, public service etc.)
 - We propose to leave this to individual departments, so that our work is focused exclusively on institutional service.
 - One department head observed that departments would like to retain some flexibility to formally release an individual faculty member from institutional

- service to allow them to accept major service loads for, e.g., highly prestigious positions in professional societies or important editing positions.
 - Another suggested that entire departments might focus on productivity instead of service, and that this should remain possible under any new proposals
- We need to address the paucity of incentives and rewards (and compensation) for service. Explore creating new service awards, or dedicating funds to reward especially meritorious service.

The actions that we recommend to the Senate

- **Create a Service Dashboard** to track and display publicly the institutional service done by each faculty member
 - This allows transparency of service workloads, which is necessary for giving credit and achieving accountability for individual faculty.
 - Note that this commits the UO to establish a rubric that could be useful for evaluating quantity of institutional service, something which should be explicit in the continuing charge for this Task Force and in the work we ask departments to do.
- **Establish a central requirement/expectation for minimum institutional service** that each faculty member is responsible for doing (floor, not a ceiling)
 - Have graded and explicit expectations based on rank
 - Reduced expectations of service for pre-tenure faculty (possibly propose restrictions on type of service that can be performed by pre-tenure faculty?)
 - Have firm expectations for post-tenure faculty, which would be consequential for promotion to Full and for 6th year Post-Tenure Reviews
- **Call for individual units/departments to create policies** that explicitly define departmental service expectations and procedures by which service is distributed to individual faculty members.
 - The Task Force will create guidelines and an example rubric that might be useful to the various units who will need to formulate these more detailed policies. The guidelines should share our understanding of best practices/guidance in distribution and evaluation of service work.
 - In future, faculty should be reviewed on the basis of these expectations, providing both rewards for meeting expectations and consequences for not meeting expectations.
 - Note that these policies will constitute employment conditions as well as academic matters, so in addition to being passed as Senate legislation, they would likely need to be confirmed also in bargaining.
 - This is especially salient for Career Faculty, some of whom take on service well beyond the 10% that is compensated by their FTE
 - Goal: To help those who are motivated by self-interest see that it is in their self-interest to do their share of service

Proposed Next Steps for the Task Force on Service

- **Schedule other open house / focus group meetings for information gathering**

- Meet with Career Faculty and Classified Staff and OAs to learn more about their experiences with institutional service and to get their take on possible recommendations
- **Begin work on Definitions and Categorization of Service**
 - See details above
 - In collaboration with whoever will create the service dashboard
 - Also in collaboration with Department Heads and Associate Deans, individuals who have extensive knowledge of the service work in their units.
- **Explore how we might create more rewards (“carrots”) for service**
 - financial rewards for committee chairs
 - stipends for particularly high-workload committees, both centrally and at the unit level
 - more service awards, including one dedicated to service that is currently invisible]
 - Create a Senate service award that is dedicated to DEI service
 - University-level or college-level chairs for distinguished service?
 - summer funding for research
 - fractional course releases, etc.
- **Determine how (or if) to adequately assess quality of institutional service**
 - Concerns that no rapid assessment would be very reliable/valid
 - Minimally ask committee Chairs to take attendance?
 - Maintain awareness of the cost-benefit analysis in this endeavor
 - Especially avoid a situation in which doing the assessment might create an unnecessarily heavy workload of its own — we do not want to create problems larger than what we are trying to solve!
- **More deeply explore service-related institutional work activities**
 - How do we recognize and reward mentoring, which cuts across research, teaching, and service?
 - How do we assign, recognize, and reward advising of individual students writing these for a professional MA or BA honors?
- Time allowing, continue to explore other issues as outlined above