

Reports

Professionally Related Public Service as Applied Scholarship: Guidelines for the Evaluation of Planning Faculty

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In this paper, prepared in consultation with the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessing Service as Scholarship, I advocate a new approach to professionally related public service as applied scholarship for planning faculty. The committee conceptualizes service as an activity that makes knowledge development more responsive to society in accordance with the highest standards of the academy. Service, like other forms of scholarship, should be documented and evaluated by standards equal to that for basic research and teaching. This paper provides specific suggestions for evaluation, and challenges the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning (ACSP) to play a role in their implementation at the institutional level.

■ BACKGROUND

In 1986, ACSP adopted a report on *Guidelines on Evaluation of Planning Faculty for Promotion and Tenure*.

The report conveys concern that planning faculty differ from their counterparts in how they develop knowledge and educate students, that they are located in universities where faculty from other fields participate in their evaluation, and that they should be assessed according to standards in their own field. It argues that although the teaching activities of planning faculty may resemble those in other fields, the activities call for a broader range of skills to organize studio projects and supervise service-learning internships and that workloads may differ because of the relatively small number of planning faculty and the emphasis on graduate students.

The report argues that although some planning faculty conduct research and publish in refereed journals, others focus on professional practice and produce technical reports. This combination of standard scholarship and professional practice can cause difficulties in personnel evaluation. The report concludes that public and university service should recognize work with planning agencies and professional organizations, although these too can be difficult to assess.

Since then, there has been increasing interest in the evaluation of service as a workload component across the

curriculum in higher education. There have been serious efforts by national associations to reconsider faculty roles and responsibilities, most notably the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), American Association for Higher Education (AAHE), and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. There have been research studies of the subject, presentations at professional meetings, and growing literature on institutional practices and innovative initiatives, including publications of my own from which I draw directly here. A list of selected resources accompanies this report.

■ REDEFINING SERVICE AS APPLIED SCHOLARSHIP

Professionally related public service is defined here as work that develops knowledge for the welfare of society. This meaning is consistent with *Professional Service and Faculty Rewards*, the NASULGC report by Sandra Elman and Sue Marx Smock, which defines service as “work that draws upon one’s professional expertise or academic knowledge for the welfare of society;” with *Making the Case for Professional Service*, the AAHE report by Ernest Lynton, which presents case studies of “service as scholarship” at several universities; and with *Scholarship Assessed*, the Carnegie Foundation report by Charles Glassick, Mary Taylor Huber, and Gene Maeroff, which concludes that service should be evaluated by the same standards that are used to judge research and teaching.

This meaning of public service contrasts with, but does not diminish, the importance of professional service through participation in professional associations, university service through membership on campus committees, or other forms with which faculty are familiar. Membership on campus committees and maintenance of professional associations are activities in their own right, but are not necessarily contributions to knowledge or service to society. These forms are expressions of *good citizenship* but are different from *service as scholarship*, which draws upon professional expertise. *Citizenship* is a responsibility of membership and is expected, voluntary, and nonremunerative except in special cases, whereas *service* is a form of scholarship and should be recognized and rewarded as part of the workload.

This definition of service will not appeal to those who believe that all civic duties should receive reward, that time on campus committees or in professional associations should substitute for service as a serious form of scholarship, and that the university is an instrument for private initiative rather

than public responsibility. But this definition of service will appeal to those who believe that faculty have substantive knowledge and practical skills for problem-solving and capacity-building, that applied scholarship should be valued as much as research and teaching, and that universities are civic institutions with responsibilities to the society of which they are part.

■ TYPES OF SERVICE

Which activities should be included as service? Elman and Smock continue that:

The basic question relates to whether or not the work requires expertise in one's academic discipline; and, if so, does the work:

1. create new knowledge,
2. train others in the discipline or area of expertise,
3. aggregate and interpret knowledge so as to make it understandable and useful, or
4. disseminate the knowledge to the appropriate user or audience.

These may include activities in the general categories of (1) research that is responsive to real-world problems or issues, (2) teaching and training in the form of clinical or continuing education or professional lifelong learning, and (3) consultation and technical assistance at local, state, national, and international levels—but not work with campus committees or professional associations unless these draw upon one's professional expertise or academic knowledge.

Following are some illustrative activities drawn directly from the above studies and adapted for planning faculty. Professionally related public service includes efforts such as:

- Work with a community organization or planning agency to address a pressing problem or issue.
- Collaboration with a civic agency as a partner in the planning, implementation, or evaluation of a program.
- Creation of new knowledge that contributes to public problem-solving or capacity-building.
- Training of citizens or professionals in planning in order to build the planning capacity of society.
- Development and dissemination of professional knowledge in ways that make it more understandable and accessible to planners and citizens.
- Consultation and technical assistance to community clients, as when asked to analyze some data, solve a problem, or evaluate a program.
- Bringing the lessons learned from practice into classroom teaching or workshop training of planning students or professional practitioners.
- Conducting research from practice which involves the community in the process of knowledge development.

■ ELEMENTS OF EVALUATION

Professionally related public service should be demonstrated and documented; its quantity and quality judged according to

criteria developed for the purpose; and its results rewarded according to weights and values assigned to performance levels, as follows:

1. Documentation of Activities

Documentation of activities should be as systematic for service as it is for basic research and teaching, including sources of information such as:

- Personal statement and self-evaluation of activities, including the rationale for the project and documentation of outcomes.
- For each activity, information about its nature, frequency, duration, and role played by the faculty member.
- Evidence that the work has had important impacts on a problem, program, issue, agency, community, or society.
- Evidence that the work has contributed to the teaching or training activities of the faculty member.
- Evidence that the work has contributed to student learning or professional development.
- Evidence that the work has contributed to knowledge development or planning practice.
- Evidence that the knowledge has been disseminated through planning documents, technical reports, journal articles, or professional or popular publications such as news stories and media accounts.
- Appointments to local, state, national or international boards and committees which draw directly on professional expertise.
- Honors or awards in recognition of outstanding performance.
- Grants and contracts received in support of service activities.
- Evaluative judgments by individuals or groups affected by the work, such as public officials, civic leaders, community clients, or agency users.

2. Criteria for Evaluation

Evaluation of service should be based upon criteria which are equal to those for basic research and teaching, such as:

- Quantity according to the number, frequency, and/or duration of activities.
- Quality according to measurable impacts on the issue, problem, program, agency, community, or society which are the target of activities.
- Scope, originality, generalizability, and effectiveness of the work.
- Influence of the work on knowledge development, professional practice, and public action.
- Evidence that the methods of knowledge development used are appropriate to the project.
- Evidence of the impact of the work on teaching and training.
- Evidence that the work is sustainable or long-term in its impacts.
- Evidence that paid or unpaid consultation and technical

assistance are of recognized quality rather than merely routine.

- Evaluative judgments of quality by professional peers, community clients, agency users, or external reviewers.

■ TOWARD AN ACTION AGENDA

Professionally related public service has many benefits both on campus and in the community. On campus, it can promote the professional development of faculty, provide new incentives and rewards for the integration of research and teaching, and broaden the basis for evaluation of excellence in the academy. Studies of California universities by Carl Patton show that faculty members who engage in significant service score higher in the number of funded research projects, in the number of professional peer-reviewed publications, and in student evaluations of their teaching than those who do not.

This is not to suggest that public service as applied scholarship is appropriate for all faculty members at all times, for the overall balance of research, teaching, and service will differ for individuals at different stages in their careers. However, it does suggest that service as scholarship is a fundamental form of knowledge development, and that planning education programs should always have some such involvement as an integral element of a balanced institutional effort.

In the community, public service as applied scholarship can provide a source of knowledge through research relevant to the community; education through teaching and training in areas of expertise; and consultation and technical assistance for problem-solving and capacity-building. It can provide a vehicle for community organizations and civic agencies to develop relationships with universities, which make their resources more accessible while serving their core mission.

There are examples of efforts to adapt this approach in neighboring fields. The University of North Carolina School of Public Health, one of the nation's finest, has devised a promotion and tenure process that redefines service appropriately as scholarship. In contrast to the usual tripartite of research, teaching, and service—in which research and teaching are not integrated and service is secondary to the others—North Carolina faculty are expected to demonstrate competence in some combination of “research,” which includes the generation of new knowledge for publication in scholarly journals; “practice,” which applies knowledge to advance the state of the art in organizations and communities with dissemination through diverse publications; and “teaching,” which prepares people for practice in traditional classroom and nontraditional settings. They also are expected to “serve” the profession and the university, but such service is secondary to the emphasis on development and dissemination of practice knowledge.

Despite its benefits, there are obstacles to strengthening professionally related public service as applied scholarship in the university. It is difficult to strengthen service as scholarship when the president or provost do not convey consistent

commitment, when deans or department heads do not define service as scholarship or hesitate to devise appropriate procedures for its evaluation, or when faculty members do not perceive that there are resources or rewards for this type of work. Some faculty pursue service with fervor regardless of its rewards, but other faculty became conditioned to regard service as a distraction from work or threat to their careers.

New initiatives are needed to promote professionally related public service as a form of applied scholarship in the university. Such initiatives will require systematic strategy to define service as scholarship, devise structures for its documentation and evaluation, and provide rewards for its performance. ACSP should strongly support such initiatives by approval and adoption of model guidelines including criteria for evaluation of faculty, and by playing a role in their implementation at the institutional level.

Note: Prepared for the ACSP Executive Committee in consultation with the Ad Hoc Committee on Assessing Service as Scholarship: Eugenie Birch, Hunter College, Co-Chair; Barry Checkoway, University of Michigan, Co-Chair; Edvard Blakely, University of Southern California; Marcia Marker Feld, University of Rhode Island; Gary Hack, University of Pennsylvania; Wim Wiewel, University of Illinois at Chicago.

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