Report on Faculty Service at TCU
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Tenure, Promotion & Grievance Committee
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Our Charge
In Fall 2010, the Tenure, Promotion, and Grievance Committee of the Faculty Senate was charged with investigating the role of faculty service at TCU. In order to gather information on how faculty members perceive the role of service, the TP&G Committee constructed a survey that was distributed to all full-time faculty in Fall 2011. In addition to analyzing the survey results, the TP&G Committee also reviewed Tenure and Promotion policy statements available on the Provost’s website. The report below summarizes our findings based on these two sources of information and offers some preliminary recommendations regarding how faculty service should be assigned and rewarded. Although the survey administered by the TP & G Committee drew responses from some full-time, continuing, non tenure-track instructors, policy statements regarding service expectations for such instructors are not yet available for all departments who employ them. This report, then, focuses on the service responsibilities of tenure-track faculty. We recommend that the service responsibilities of full-time instructors with renewable appointments be studied and reported on in the future.

Introduction
Over the years, the roles that professors play have expanded dramatically, requiring competencies well beyond the traditional skills associated with teaching and research. Many of these new professional and service responsibilities have evolved alongside societal demands on universities themselves, including globalism, technological innovation, and the need for ethical leadership. Moreover, service at TCU represents a natural extension of the teacher-scholar model of the professoriate. That is, the synergy between teaching and research or creative activity should energize the engagement of faculty members in the institution, in their respective disciplines, and in the communities they represent. Consequently, faculty service is tied directly to TCU’s mission of educating individuals to think and act as ethical leaders and responsible citizens in the global community.

TCU faculty members recognize the importance of service—to one’s department, college, and university, as well as to one’s academic discipline and to the community outside the university. Given the importance of service at TCU, tenure and promotion policies across the university make clear that multiple forms of service are expected of all tenure-track faculty at all ranks. What is also clear, however, is that the degree to which service is valued by individuals, programs, and departments varies. For example, some departments encourage active service of untenured faculty members whereas other departments limit service responsibilities of those not yet tenured. In regards to individual faculty members, some are content to do the minimum service required; others seek out opportunities for service and leadership. An additional variation in service assignment occurs when those who provide thoughtful, responsible service are asked or encouraged to do more, while those whose service performance is less stellar are assigned to do less.
These variations—in departmental expectations for service, in the valuing of service by individuals, and in the assignment of service depending on performance—have led to concerns about fairness and equity in the assigning of service and about whether service is appropriately rewarded. If service is to remain an essential part of faculty assessment and not just an appeal to good citizenship for the community, clarifying each department’s service assignment and assessment procedures will ensure more sincere good faith incentive to “serve.”

Faculty Survey on Service
In 2010-2011, The Tenure, Promotion, and Grievance Committee generated a survey in order to gain more insight into the perceptions of service responsibilities among TCU faculty. The Service Survey was created over a period of several months with contributions from Senate Committee members and some of their constituents. The 17-item survey is organized into various sections; the goal was to access faculty members’ perceptions of service-related responsibilities. The first 10 items queried faculty about their perceptions of the value and evaluation of service. The remaining questions elicited demographic information such as rank, college, and gender. One open-ended question allowed for additional comments on faculty service at TCU. A total of 335 participants completed the Service Survey out of 544 eligible faculty members (61.6% response rate). Of those responding, 24% were full professors, 29.1% were associate professors, 22.2% were assistant professors, and 5.5% were continuing, non-tenure track faculty. There appears to be equal representation by gender (males = 138; females = 137); however, 60 participants did not respond to this question.

Overview of Survey Results
Survey results suggest that most participants do not perceive themselves to be overburdened by service, with 53.9% describing their service load as moderate and 13.9% describing their service as light. However, 32.3% of respondents described their service as heavy. When asked about the average hours participants spent on service per month, 73.6% reported doing 9 or more hours of service per month, with the largest category of service reported being departmental service: 46% of respondents reported spending 9 or more hours per month on departmental service. Additionally, 15.9% spent 9 or more hours per month on college service, 18.5% spent 9 or more hours on university service, and 17.9% reported spending 9 or more hours on service to the local community.

These results suggest that most faculty view their service loads as reasonable; however, open-ended comments reveal that some faculty members feel burdened by service responsibilities. One respondent noted that “Service is important but should not become so time consuming that it takes away from scholarship. Service has far exceeded the 20% stated for tenure track and tenured faculty.” Another commented that “There have been increased service expectations from departments without additional resources (like assessment, alumni development, marketing, and on and on).” Even among faculty who believe their service is reasonable, there are concerns that 1) expectations regarding service are unclear 2) service is distributed inequitably, and 3) service is not valued or rewarded as much as it should be.

These concerns seem due in part to the fact that university, college, and department policy statements on service vary in how they describe service. Although there is a definite expectation that faculty members will be involved in service, this is the single cohesive element that exists between these service policies. As one responded noted, “There are inconsistencies across departments and colleges in the expectations for university, college and other forms of
service. Moreover, there are built in gender differences in the kinds of service assignments—we should work to credit service in ways that aren't undercounting service for women.”

How much service is expected?
According to the survey, many faculty members feel that service expectations are not clear. When asked whether service expectations were clearly defined by their department 62% of full professors who responded (n=66) agreed that service expectations were clearly defined, while 34.8% disagreed. For associate professors (n= 81), fewer than half, 40.7%, agreed that service expectations were clearly defined while 53% disagreed. Among the 61 assistant professors who responded, 50.8% agreed that service responsibilities were clearly defined while 41% disagreed. The remaining participants chose “I don’t know” when asked whether service responsibilities were clearly defined.

When asked how important service should be as a component of evaluation at each rank, 54%, of participants answered that service should be “very important” for full professors (37.1% said somewhat important); 43.5% of participants answered that service should be “very important” for associate professors (50.2% said somewhat important); and 21.2% said service should be “very important” for assistant professors ((62.3 % said somewhat). These findings suggest that many faculty believe that service should become more important as rank increases. Specifically, the greatest percentage of respondents, 40%, said that service expectations should increase with rank, 23.9% said service expectations should remain the same, and 33.1% said service expectations should depend on the individual.

When comparing ranks, associate professors more than faculty at other ranks feel that service expectations are not clear. Associate professors are aware that as tenured faculty, they are expected to do more service than untenured faculty. But how much more? And of what kind? One explanation for this lack of clarity may be that unlike assistant professors, associate professors do not typically receive detailed, annual evaluations regarding progress toward promotion. Some also claim not to receive detailed feedback in annual merit review.

That service expectations are least clear for tenured professors especially at the associate rank is further demonstrated when dividing responses by years of employment at TCU. Of faculty members at TCU for more than 16 years (n= 72), 54% agreed and 40% disagreed that service expectations were clear. Of faculty members at TCU for 6-10 years (those typically at associate rank or going up for tenure, n=63), 40% agreed and 52% disagreed that service expectations were clearly defined. Of faculty members at TCU fewer than 5 years (n=91), 54% agreed and 33% disagreed that service expectations were clear; 13% chose “I don’t know.” Those at TCU 11-15 years (n= 50) responded in roughly equal numbers with 23 agreeing and 26 disagreeing that service expectations are clear.

Although as noted above, some respondents, especially at lower ranks, felt that the amount of required service was excessive, survey results indicate that faculty have the greatest concern about expectations regarding service that is perceived to be recommended or encouraged. While the majority of faculty responding (58.1%) said that departmental service is required, only 28.3 % said college or university service is required, with 51.9% reporting that such service is recommended or encouraged. Only 8.5% of respondents said that service outside the university is required, while 48% said that it is recommended or encouraged. Without clear direction, faculty can find it difficult to decide whether to accept or seek service responsibilities that are
recommended or encouraged, especially in the absence of feedback regarding how or whether such work “counts” in annual merit review or tenure and promotion decisions.

From the open-ended comments:

“Many faculty have been at TCU for decades at the Associate level and because of the lack of value for the service that has been expected of them at TCU, which takes away from a focused research agenda, although most have good research publications), the tenure track faculty is having to meet an unrealistic expectation. . . . This is a situation that needs to be dealt with because the mood of the campus is that those faculty who have done everything expected plus more and over a long period of time are now being considered without value because they did not take the time to also do excessive amounts of research.”

“Inequalities in service loads across and within departments need to be addressed at TCU. Some departments have much higher service burdens than others—how does this affect promotion and tenure? Similarly, different individuals have different service loads within departments. It seems as if most often being a good citizen and caring about your community is penalized through delayed or nonpromotion. In a related vein, being an effective worker in service duties leads to being assigned more of them—in effect, a penalty is imposed upon the person. I’d like to see some analysis of gender and service at TCU, as well as the relation of these factors to promotion rates. The service loads of associate professors particularly needs to be addressed. In my experience, associate professors often carry the heaviest share of service, with the result of delayed or nonpromotion because of lack of research productivity.”

When responses are divided by college rather than rank, it is clear that some colleges do a better job than others of making expectations for service clear. While one college had virtually unanimous agreement that service expectations are clear, in three colleges, a majority of respondents disagreed that service expectations are clear. Participants point to a lack of written expectations for service as one reason for this lack of clarity.

Representative comments include:

“Expectations are generally unwritten.”

“It is somewhat unclear what the expectations for TCU are for service for tenure.”

“It would be nice to see a written policy that describes in greater detail what the [service] expectation is for promotion/tenure.”

How is service valued?

One challenge in defining service expectations is that many different kinds of service are possible, and such service may be assigned, invited, or voluntary. In choosing how much elective service to do, faculty consider the degree to which such service is valued by their departments. When asked to what degree their departments value different kinds of service, 64.4% reported that departmental service is of great value. College service was also perceived to be of great value by 51.2% of respondents, university service of great value by 48%, and national service of great value by 39.6%. While these other forms of service are perceived by participants to be valued greatly by their departments, faculty reported spending substantially more time on department service than other kinds of service. For example, only 8.1% of faculty reported spending more than 9 hours a month on national service, with 35.4% spending less than 3 hours
a month and 34.4% spending no time on national service. **Departments and colleges need to be clear about what kinds of service are valued, especially if some are valued more than others.** At the same time, if departmental service is substantial, expectations for other forms of service should be tempered. The comment below expresses concern regarding differences in kinds of faculty service:

“I am troubled by the number of colleagues I encounter who appeal to service to the guild as a way to avoid or eschew service to the university. As I see it, and I say this as someone who offers quite a bit of time to the guild, nationally and internationally, I would like to see the University emphasize service to the university as the primary service responsibility for TCU faculty. Sometimes I look around me on various committees and, to be candid, I spot the "usual suspects." We need some way to involve more and diverse faculty in helping the university function, and begin to question faculty who beg off campus service because they are busy serving others off campus.”

Although survey findings indicate that many faculty believe their departments value service, **open ended comments express concerns that service is not valued enough or is said to be valued but is not rewarded:**

Representative comments include:

“I think we say we value service, but we don't really because service is not rewarded on the tenure/promotion side. Service seems to be a "check the box" activity. However, departments and colleges could not function without significant service of at least some members.”

“We are often asked to do service because of its inherent value (to students, departments, and the mission of the university), and yet it is rarely openly appreciated or tangibly rewarded. Raises and promotions are more immediately and directly tied to research and publication, which of course are essential, but cultivating these seems to encourage a different set of values --those who teach less, do less service, and isolate themselves to some degree from university life tend to be more productive writers, and consequently reap greater rewards. The burden of service – especially when it is ‘recommended’ or ‘encouraged’ rather than required – falls disproportionately on women, who tend to value the success of the community as a whole rather than their own as individuals.”

“Service is supposedly important to TCU, yet practically speaking, it counts for next to nothing in terms of tenure and promotion (at least in my department). That means those of us who care about service end up doing a lot of it, yet are assessed the same as other members of our department who do almost no service. I know life isn't fair, but it seems to me we ought to adjust the tenure requirements to either actually count service as important toward tenure, or make it explicit that we don't care about it at all and it counts nothing toward tenure. At least then we'd know the score explicitly.”

**How is service evaluated?**

Closely related to the question of whether service is valued is how it is evaluated and rewarded. When asked whether there were discrepancies between written policies and how service was
actually assessed, 23% of faculty agreed or strongly agreed that there were discrepancies; 28.4% disagreed or strongly disagreed; 24.4% neither agreed nor disagreed and 24.4% chose “I don’t know.” In general, then, it seems that the lack of written policies regarding service is a greater problem than any discrepancy between written policies and how they are implemented.

Faculty respondents were asked whether their service was fairly assessed. At all ranks, more faculty agreed or strongly agreed that their service was fairly assessed than disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked whether service was adequately recognized by their departments, again more faculty members at all ranks agreed or strongly agreed than disagreed or strongly disagreed. When comparing responses by rank, however, professors at the associate level (26%) were more likely to disagree that their service was adequately recognized than either full professors (10%) or assistant professors (20%). This finding corresponds with the finding discussed earlier that associate professors express the most concern that expectations for service at their rank are not clearly defined nor adequately rewarded and that service responsibilities may inhibit the ability to work toward promotion.

“My department doesn’t care about service. It’s about how many publications you have. Thus, a lot of the tenured faculty will dump service responsibilities on those beneath them (to focus on their research), and that ultimately hurts these tenure-track faculty and instructors when seeking promotion. It’s a catch 22…”

There is a strong consensus among faculty at all ranks that “There are circumstances when more teaching or research/creative activity should compensate for less service”: 87% of full professors agree or strongly agree; 78% of associate professors agree or strongly agree; and 91% of assistant professor agree or strongly agree. Conversely, there was also a consensus, though less strong, at all ranks that “There are circumstances when more service should compensate for less teaching or research/creativity” 60% of full professors agree or strongly agree; 70% of associate professors agree or strongly agree; 67% of assistant professors agree or strongly agree. These two findings, together, suggest a strong consensus that evaluation of faculty should include some flexibility in how these three key responsibilities—teaching, research/creative activity—are weighted for assessment purposes. According to current tenure and promotion statements, such flexibility in how teaching, research/creative activity, and service are weighted is available in only a small number of departments.

Representative comments include:

“Promotion decisions discount service to the department, university and professions. These high levels of professional service should count equally to scholarship and creative activity as a route to promotion at all levels of faculty rank.”

“One size fits all is hard to maintain. As I understand it, service is not as important as scholarly and creative research. As long as that is the emphasis, it is difficult to bring to the surface the importance of service.”

“There should be options for those faculty who publish/research at the national level—and provide national service by serving as editors for prestigious journals. Course loads should differ for tenured faculty who no longer publish, and those who publish and are nationally recognized for their work.”
Recommendations
Based on these survey findings and on our study of current tenure and promotion policies available on the Provost’s website, the TP&G Committee offers the following recommendations:

1. The university should affirm that along with teaching and research/creative activity, service is a necessary and valuable part of our role as faculty members.

2. Faculty evaluation policies at all levels—merit, tenure, and promotion—should reflect that service (appropriate to each department and college) is necessary and valuable faculty work. While the nature of service responsibilities will vary, colleges should seek consistency in service expectations wherever possible.

3. Responsibility for faculty governance should be shared, thus departmental, college, and university service should be distributed equitably, with the understanding that service responsibilities should generally increase with increase in rank. Though service to the community or to the profession is valuable and should be rewarded, such service should not be undertaken to the exclusion of participation in faculty governance.

4. Departments and colleges should offer to faculty members at all ranks clear guidelines regarding minimal expectations for service, as well as potential rewards for exemplary service and consequences for substandard service performance. Annual merit review as well as post-tenure review should address how service is affecting progress toward tenure and promotion.

5. There is strong faculty preference for flexibility in how the traditional triad of faculty work—teaching, research/creative activity, and service—are weighted and evaluated. Departments and colleges should address whether such flexibility would be appropriate.

6. Given that service is a valuable component of faculty work, departments should encourage documentation of service so that such work can be assessed meaningfully. Mere listing of service responsibilities is not sufficient for judging the quality of this work.

7. Currently, departments and colleges offer differing descriptions of how service will be evaluated. These differences are often attributable to differences in a department’s mission (i.e. whether a department has a graduate program or responsibilities to the local community). Anyone responsible for evaluation of faculty members, especially college and university advisory committees, should be attentive to these differing criteria.

8. In an effort to make service as meaningful as possible, committees and their structures should be examined to ensure that committee members have sufficient responsibility without being overburdened. Administrators should consider eliminating or reducing the size of committees that do not have sufficient responsibilities.

9. Faculty members should not be expected to disproportionately redirect energies to service, thus interfering with their ability to fulfill expectations with regard to teaching, research, or creative activity. Overload service assignments should be monitored and limited, given that overloads necessarily take time away from other assigned work.
10. Further study is needed in three areas:
   1) Assignment and evaluation of service for non-tenure track, continuing full-time faculty
   2) The impact of service on promotion of associate professors to full professor
   3) Gender differences in the kinds of service performed, especially in relation to gender
differences in the rate of promotion.
The following information regarding tenure and promotion applications and results has been supplied by the Provost’s office.

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