

**Service and the Scholarship of Service
to the University, Society,
and the Profession**

Penn State Altoona

Division of Education, Human Development, and Social Sciences

Vision for Service

Service is essential to the proper functioning and future well-being of Penn State Altoona. Without the active participation of faculty in governance and other activities, Penn State Altoona cannot adapt to the ever-changing needs of students, the community, and society as a whole. The strength of the institution relies heavily on the commitment of faculty to act as a community of interdependent members rather than as a body of independent individuals. Further, as one College linked to all others in the Pennsylvania State University, maintaining a distinct identity and reputation as Penn State Altoona is critical to success in the increasingly competitive environment of higher education. Involvement of faculty in College and University affairs gives Penn State Altoona a voice in decisions that have long-standing impact. Service is not simply an individual goal, but an opportunity to shape and advance the mission and goals of Penn State Altoona.

It is valuable to view service as an essential component of a long-term professional trajectory centered on commitment to the University, society, and profession. Service should not be viewed as a series of disconnected actions or activities that are simply afterthoughts or “add-ons” to a busy schedule. Faculty members are encouraged to assess each potential service opportunity not only on its stand-alone merit, but also in relation to the significance it may hold for the long-term goals of the faculty member and the institution. While some service opportunities may seem of minor consequence in the short-term, they may provide the experience and exposure necessary for another position or opportunity in the near or more distant future. Thoughtful as well as strategic selection of service sets faculty on a long-term trajectory of increasingly influential and significant service applicable to the faculty member’s interests and expertise. Faculty members should develop targeted, long-term service goals in collaboration with the Division Head and other mentors as early as possible that result in a service “portfolio” peppered with short- and long-term service activities and projects.

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to outline a clearly stated message regarding the value of service as part of a long-term professional trajectory for faculty. In addition, this document introduces some relevant distinctions to consider while selecting service opportunities, how faculty might best report service contributions, and concludes by considering what is and is not report-worthy service. Finally, by clarifying the importance, value, and role of service in the professional lives of faculty, the expectation that faculty members effectively and accurately report their service activities becomes paramount.

Background

Concrete evidence of an active service record is required for tenure and promotion at Penn State Altoona and for attaining positive annual reviews for all members of the faculty. Service is broadly defined as the act of supporting through effort the University community, our broader society (as either a representative of the University or through the use of relevant expertise), and a faculty member's chosen academic profession beyond the scope of that faculty member's official teaching and/or research expectations. Faculty may refer to the appendix of this document for examples of activities considered to be service and the scholarship of service to the University, society, and the profession. While members of the division cannot and do not discourage any faculty member from selecting one service activity over the other – or selecting not to serve in any capacity – it is generally recognized that faculty members should consult a mentor or member of leadership when considering service opportunities.

At Penn State, the assessment of service activities is conducted annually for all faculty through the Faculty Activity Report (FAR) and every two years for tenure-line faculty as part of their review process.¹ Specifically, the Division Head is responsible for assessing the service contribution of each division member as presented in the FAR. In addition, tenure-track faculty have three levels of review, Divisional, College and University, though they undergo only the first two levels at the 2nd and 4th years. Each level of review consists of a review by a committee of faculty followed by administrative review by the Division Head at the 1st level, the Dean at the 2nd level and the President at the 3rd level. For the faculty dossier, the importance of discussing service, research, and teaching activities with the Division Head should be noted, as these activities can only be assigned to one professional domain, in contrast to the FAR where activities may overlap categories.

¹ See AC23: <https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac23>

Relevant Distinctions

The following criteria can help to guide faculty regarding the evaluation of the quality of the candidate's service in the Division. Please note that such distinctions in service opportunities should not mask the reality that all service contributions are crucial for the smooth functioning of departments, divisions, our college, and the University.

- 1. The scope of a service opportunity:** There is a relevant distinction between short-term and long-term (or ongoing) service activities. For example, a faculty member may serve for a single day as a judge for the annual Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities Fair, which is considered a short-term service opportunity. Alternatively, a faculty member may serve for multiple years as an elected member of the Altoona College or University Faculty Senate, which is considered a long-term service opportunity. *Faculty members should consider both short-term and long-term service activities, and how best to balance those opportunities.*
- 2. The attainment of a service opportunity:** There is a relevant distinction between being elected to a service position, being invited to a service position, and volunteering for a service position. Elected positions in the University (for example, serving locally as an elected member of the Penn State Altoona Faculty senate or serving the University as an elected member of the Faculty Advisory Committee to the President) and in the profession (for example, serving in an elected capacity such as the treasurer of a professional society) are service opportunities held in special regard. Elected positions on a local, national, or international board are also highly regarded service opportunities provided the faculty member either acts as a representative of the University or provides relevant expertise. Volunteer opportunities, provided they contribute to the University, the faculty's profession, or society broadly (though the faculty member must, in the course of the service activity, either act as a representative of the University or contribute relevant expertise) are also important, especially if the faculty member is "invited" to the opportunity, for example, to serve on a taskforce or contribute to a panel discussion. *Faculty members should consider volunteer, invited, and elected service activities, and how best to balance those opportunities.*
- 3. The leadership potential of a service opportunity:** There is a relevant distinction between being a "member" and being a "leader" in a service capacity. Leadership refers to serving in a position of influence with the responsibility to direct and guide others towards a clear and defined goal. A member, in contrast, contributes towards this goal but is not responsible for directing and organizing the actions of others. Serving in a leadership position is a service opportunity held in special regard. For example, an elected member of the Faculty Senate at Penn State Altoona could run for Chair of the Faculty Senate or an elected member of the University Faculty Senate could volunteer to serve as Chair or

Vice Chair of one of the standing Senate committees as a means to increase their service contribution. Taking the long view, service at the University level increases the likelihood that key issues important to Altoona faculty, students, and staff (and possibly other commonwealth campus members) rise to the surface for meaningful consideration. However, leadership at either College or University level is a valued service contribution. Similar opportunities exist in many professional societies. *Faculty members – in consultation with faculty mentor, program coordinator, and/or Division Head – should consider pursuing leadership opportunities once sufficient time in a committee or professional organization has passed.*

- 4. Meaningful contributions within a service opportunity:** Membership in a professional society alone rarely constitutes service according to Penn State guidelines, unless the faculty member renders a service by acting as a representative of the University or by providing relevant expertise, for example, by sitting on a journal editorial board or by organizing sessions or panels for a professional conference or meeting. Additionally, membership on a college committee or University taskforce does not automatically denote a meaningful contribution. For example, if a faculty member is invited to join a University taskforce, but fails to attend any meeting or contribute meaningfully to the efforts of the taskforce, then service has not been rendered and, therefore, should not be reported, or should be reported but specifically addressed during annual review. *Faculty members should take an active role in all service endeavors.*

Best Practices for Reporting Service

Guidelines for reporting service are intentionally flexible at Penn State. For example, reviewing a journal article relevant to a faculty member's field of study can be reported as the scholarship of service to the profession; in this specific instance, the same activity can also be reported as a "research" contribution; importantly, however, such activity cannot be reported as both service and research simultaneously, which means the faculty member – in consultation – must select how to report their efforts. Faculty members are encouraged to use the inherent flexibility of the guidelines for reporting service to their advantage when preparing their annual FAR and/or faculty dossier.

There is value in reporting service in context. In an annual FAR, a faculty member can report that the year they just served on the Faculty Senate at Penn State Altoona is their, for example, 2nd or 8th consecutive year of service as a senator. Continuity and longevity in service, relative to the amount of time a faculty has been with the college, helps to provide much needed context for evaluating a faculty member's service contribution. Briefly clarifying that the faculty member volunteered for, was invited to, or was elected for a service activity during annual reporting also helps to further clarify

the service context. Specifying whether the faculty member is a member or leader of a University committee or professional society also provides context.

Faculty reports of service should be formatted succinctly. Reports of service typically consist of no more than one line on a FAR or faculty dossier, and such reports, with rare exception, do not feature elaboration beyond that one line. For example, if a faculty member is elected to join the Faculty Senate at Penn State Altoona, then, on an annual review, the faculty member might report “Elected Member, Faculty Senate, Penn State Altoona” along with the year the service was rendered and, when relevant, the length of a service term in order to provide a broader but succinct context for said service. Further elaboration on service activities, planned service activities, or a faculty member’s philosophy of service is appropriate for inclusion in a faculty member’s Narrative Statement as part of their dossier. Service planned can be indicated in the goals section of the FAR. Both service rendered or service planned should be elaborated upon in conversation during annual reviews.

Faculty members should also be able to articulate the purpose of their service activities – and activity choices – in addition to reporting what they did for service over a specified period of time. Being able to articulate how your *service to the University, society and/or profession contributes to the betterment of the college* is important. For example, each year faculty members (and staff) are provided the opportunity to volunteer for “Move-in Crew;” a chance to welcome the new class of students to campus by aiding the move-in process. The contribution *to the college* can be captured by whether or not a faculty member attends this event, measured in terms of hours at the event or number of students they helped to move-in. How that service to the college contributes to the betterment *of the college* is less obvious but likely more important. Move-in Crew contributes to the betterment of the college more generally by increasing student and faculty interaction, providing parents piece of mind as their child becomes our student, and, thus, such activities contribute to future recruitment and student retention, if only indirectly or in spirit. While faculty members are not asked to explicate in written form the purpose of each of their service activities – and activity choices – they should be able to articulate as much during annual review.

What is and is not Report-worthy Service

Per policy², faculty members are expected to strive toward contributions that are professionally meaningful (rather than only personally meaningful) and contributions that utilize their expertise. If a service opportunity presents itself but acting on the opportunity does not satisfy either of these criteria, then, even though this activity might be considered “service” in broader terms, it is not necessary for the faculty member to report it during annual review or in their faculty dossier. For example, volunteering for a local organization in a capacity that does not utilize a faculty’s expertise or in a role that does not include representing the University likely constitutes

² See Penn State Altoona Faculty handbook: http://www.altoona.psu.edu/academic/docs/proten_policy.pdf

a form of personal rather than professional service, and, as such, it is not necessary for the faculty member to report it during annual review or in their faculty dossier. Additionally, the simple act of attending an event (for example, an on-campus basketball game) or a meeting (for example, a division meeting or program meeting) is no doubt of some value to campus culture, but it is not necessary for the faculty member to report it during annual review or in their faculty dossier.

Service opportunities that a faculty member has accepted – whether invited to, volunteered for, or elected to – but for which no service was required or in instances where the faculty member failed to render services that were required – for lack of meaningful contribution or for lack of attendance – can be reported but should be reported with special notation indicating “no activity” over the calendar year. For example, a faculty member may be invited to serve on a college committee but be unable to attend meetings in a given semester due to scheduling conflicts.

Innovative forms of “digital service,” such as guest blogging or forms of on-line service not yet invented, can be reported so long as the contribution is professionally meaningful or utilizes faculty expertise; however, because many of these opportunities are neither standardized nor widely understood in terms of time commitment, quality control, or their broader impact, it is incumbent upon faculty members to reporting digital service in context, as the faculty member would any other service activity, and be prepared to articulate how the service contributes to the betterment of the college during annual review. How forms of digital service can be incorporated into the Narrative Statement of the faculty member’s dossier is a topic best raised in consultation with faculty leadership.

APPENDIX

Types of Service

Four types of faculty service have been identified:

- (1) Service to the Institution
- (2) Community and Civic Engagement
- (3) Community Outreach
- (4) Service to the Discipline or Profession

Service to the Institution: Program, Division, College, University

Service to the institution involves activities that help generate new, or sustain, build, and/or promote existing, academic endeavors. Note to tenure-track faculty: Some activities may appear to align with both teaching and service, or research and service in the dossier. In these instances, it is imperative that the faculty member discusses what makes the most sense for the individual dossier. For instance, serving as a Distinguished Honors Faculty may serve one tenure line faculty member better as part of his or her teaching portfolio while another may be served better as part of the service portfolio.

Examples of institutional service include but are not limited to:

- Participation in College and/or University-wide governance bodies and related activities
- Providing administrative support work (college representative, faculty mentoring)
- Contributing to the University's programs to enhance equal opportunity or cultural diversity
- Serving on a task force addressing an issue facing the college community
- Leading faculty governance activities
- Serving as an appointed or elected administrator or head of any academic group at the campus, department, division, or University levels
- Chairing or serving on a faculty senate or division committee
- Chairing or serving on a search committee for faculty, staff, and administrative positions
- Chairing or serving on a peer review of teaching committee
- Bringing new campus or university initiatives to fruition
- Representing the university in a public media forum
- Contributing to student welfare through assistance to Student Affairs initiatives (e.g., Move In Day) or as an adviser to student organizations
- Serving as a faculty mentor or judge for the Undergraduate Research Fair

Community and Civic Engagement

Community and civic engagement involve contributing to the public welfare beyond the university community calling upon the faculty member's expertise. Community and civic engagement demonstrate the principals of *reciprocity* and *mutuality*; that is, those engaged in service are both “giving and receiving” through their service experience, and recognize the service experience as a collaborative experience where both entities bring expertise to the project. This type of service meets a need defined by the community, rather than simply the interests of the faculty member.

This type of activity may be independent of teaching and research or an integration of one or both. Community-based learning projects implemented in courses may combine community need, professional expertise of faculty, and meaningful outcomes, making it community engagement as well. In addition, a research and service agenda can be coordinated effectively particularly for research published in the area of “public scholarship” or the “scholarship of engagement.”

Examples of community engagement include but are not limited to:

- Participation in community affairs as a representative of the University
- Service to governmental agencies at the interactional, federal, state, and local levels
- Service to business and industry
- Service to public and private organizations
- Service to citizen and client groups
- Testifying as an expert witness
- Participating in collaborative endeavors with schools, industry, or civic agencies
- Consulting with private and public, profit, and not-for-profit organizations by applying expertise to enhance the efficiency or effectiveness of the organizations served
- Assisting the public through a university clinic, hospital, laboratory, or center
- Providing public policy analysis for local, state, inter/national government agencies
- Making research understandable and useable in specific professional and applied settings
- Publishing in non-academic media, e.g., newsletters, radio, television, and magazines
- Giving presentations or performances for the public
- Testing concepts and processes in real-world situations
- Evaluating programs, policies, or personnel for agencies
- Presenting seminars on problems, issues, and concerns for general public or trade groups
- Participating on governmental or social service review panels
- Engaging in economic or community development activities

Community Outreach

Community outreach involves fulfilling a role in the wider community as an *active representative of the College*. Volunteerism and acts of good citizenship do not, in themselves, constitute community outreach unless they are undertaken as part of one's professional responsibilities to the institution. The distinction between engagement and outreach has primarily to do with the extent to which the activity involves disciplinary expertise applied to real-world issues (engagement) versus serving as the institution's representative in a community setting (outreach).

Examples of community outreach include but are not limited to:

- Recruiting or informational visits to area high schools
- Opportunities for students to shadow professional experiences on campus
- Civic board memberships where such membership specifically represents university participation in the organization
- Creation or maintenance of specific and directed community outreach efforts

Service to the Discipline or Profession

Service to the discipline or profession involves activities designed to enhance the quality of disciplinary or professional organizations or activities.

Examples of service to a discipline or profession include but are not limited to:

- Organizing conferences or service on conference committees
- Active participation in professional and learned societies
- Serving as an appointed or elected officer of an academic or professional association
- Serving as an organizer or leader of workshops, panels, or meetings in areas of professional competence
- Contributing time and expertise to further the work of a professional society or organization
- Promoting the image, prestige, and perceived value of a discipline or profession
- Participating in accreditation and assessment activities
- Editing a professional journal and/or serving on the editorial board of a professional journal
- Refereeing manuscripts, conference submissions, or grant proposals submitted to journals, professional meetings, and internal and external funding organizations

Division Service and the Scholarship of Service to the University, Society, and the Profession Guidelines

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