

Rewarding Faculty Members for Profession-Related Public Service

Professionally based public service is undervalued at most universities. Why? What can be done about this?

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Within higher education institutions throughout the nation, the mission of teaching is usually accompanied by other related activities, which may vary according to the size of the institution and its source of funding. In most states, the teaching role includes requirements to conduct research and to provide public service. This basic tripartite mission is found not only in the major public universities but in other four-year and graduate public and private schools. The public-service mandate may be for service statewide or in specific geographical regions or for specific activities. In addition to allowing citizens, organizations, and government agencies to benefit from the institution's knowledge and resources, the provision of public service also maintains a strong partnership with state and local government agencies to help address and resolve public problems. For many institutions, the improvement of public service and the encouragement of the faculty and staff to take an active part in the delivery of public service are high priorities.

When public-service programs are critically discussed, talk of faculty rewards is almost inevitable. It is contended that public service should be but is not well rewarded in most university environments, and this absence of reward prevents the full development of outreach programs.¹ Herein will be discussed some reasons for the low regard for public service in the university reward system and some steps that can be taken to change it.

The subject of this analysis, however, is "profession-related public service," not the broader set of activities often included under "public service." Part of the difficulty in evaluating public service is the general lack of attempts to distinguish between activities that are and are not profession based. In

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Evaluating Faculty Performance. Richard I. Miller states, "For purposes of evaluation, public service and professional activities are usually lumped together, or public and university services are combined. Such procedures do not allow sufficient differentiation."² Profession-related public service is that service which requires the specialized education and experience that qualifies a person to be a faculty member.

There is a need on many campuses for attention to developing a more formal system of rewards for profession-related public service. Some of the rewards currently offered include

- Giving faculty members release time from the performance of some of their regular duties
- Monetary payment to faculty members comparable to payment to an outside consultant
- In-kind assistance to faculty members, such as secretarial or graduate assistant support
- Awards (with or without a cash component) for outstanding professional service.

As incentives, some of these rewards may be quite important. Nevertheless, they are likely to be inadequate without an accompanying formal reward system.

Several reasons may account for the fact that professional service is not highly rewarded in tenure, promotion, and salary decisions in most universities. They include:

1. Public service is so loosely defined that profession-related and nonprofession-related services are not distinguished from one another.
 2. Because good measures of professional public service do not exist, it is difficult to distinguish the excellent from the good, the good from the mediocre, or the mediocre from the poor.
 3. Professional public service is not highly valued by university faculty members and administrators and, thus, not well rewarded.
- Most likely, items one and two above contribute substantially to item three.

Therefore, if professional public service were more crisply defined and if good qualitative measures were developed, the value accorded it and its importance in faculty performance evaluation would increase.

Addressing the definitional problem
Public service, as it ordinarily occurs in a college or university, means different things to different people. It is, therefore, nearly impossible to use the *public service* label to focus attention on professionally based service for client groups. Several perceptions interfere.

- Public service is often thought to mean, or at least to include, university committed assignments, campus politics, and so forth.
- Public service is often thought to refer only to work performed free, with no cost to the service recipient and/or with no remuneration to the persons providing the service.
- Public service is often thought to be synonymous with good citizenship.

1. Among many other written documents, this position is maintained in Samuel K. Gove and Elizabeth K. Steward, eds., *The University and the Emerging Federalism: A Conference on Improving University Contributions to State Governments* (The Institute of Government and Public Affairs, University of Illinois, 1972); Marianne B. McCarthy, "Continuing Education: Service as a Component of Faculty Evaluation," *Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years*, May 1980, pp. 8-11, 24-25; John N. Lein, Thomas Cullen, Angela Liston, and Patricia Lind, "The Faculty and Continuing Medical Education: An Attitude Survey," *Journal of Medical Education*, Vol. 56, September 1981, pp. 737-41; James C. Votruba, "Faculty Rewards for University Outreach: An Integrative Approach," *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 49, No. 6, 1978, pp. 639-48; Donald E. Hanna, "Strengthening Collegiate Faculty Rewards for Continuing Education," in James C. Votruba, Ed., *Strengthening Internal Support for Continuing Education* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1981).

2. Richard I. Miller, *Evaluating Faculty Performance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1972), p. 64.

- Public service is often thought to apply only to work in the public sector—i.e., government or community groups—and not to work that is done for profit-making organizations.
- Public service is often thought to be distinct from instruction and research when, in fact, most public service is instruction or research or both.

All of these perceptions of public service tend to inhibit evaluative attention to professionally based work for university clients, largely by diluting the professional component of public service. Hence, it may be necessary to abandon the term *public service*. Perhaps terms such as *professional application* or *knowledge services* could be used to designate those portions of service that are professionally based.

One step toward resolving this definitional confusion, much of which results from lumping activities of different value into the same categories, is to develop finer distinctions through a larger number of categories. The Faculty Performance Matrix below offers such a refinement by creating nine performance cells rather than the traditional three.

The matrix offers several advantages as a definitional framework for faculty evaluation. First, it provides clearer distinctions. It helps clarify the confusion often generated when the attempt is made to subsume all faculty performance under the three categories of teaching, research, and public service; for example, it shows that "service" and "professional application" need not be synonymous. Many activities conducted for professional clients are clearly instructional or scholarly in character. In turn, many activities often included in the service category are not professionally based. As the matrix indicates, professionally oriented work in the university can be predominantly instruction, research, or service. Further, service can be academic, professional, or avocational. The focus of this discussion, profession-related public service, is on those activities in the "professional" column of the matrix.

A second advantage of the matrix is that it acknowledges the value of different pursuits. For example, one university, school, or department could choose to emphasize instruction, whether that involved credit instruction, continuing professional education, or hobby courses. Another might attempt to promote a well-rounded professional program including academic and professional instruction, basic and applied research, and service to professional groups. Still another might give first priority to academic scholarship. Thus, the matrix can be adapted to many different systems of values and priorities.

The matrix can also be used by individuals to define their own unique configuration. For example, even if an institution required a contribution in teaching, scholarship, and service, an individual might be allowed to choose among academic, professional, and even avocational pursuits. A person in this situation might, for example, emphasize academic teaching, professionally oriented or applied research, and service through professional consultation.

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Another important advantage of the matrix is that it enables the identification and highlighting of profession-related work that otherwise might be buried and ignored. In a traditional framework, for example, it is not uncommon for client-oriented applied research to be ignored or discounted because it is not academic—e.g., not published in a refereed journal—and has no impact on the public service category because it is assumed simply to be good citizenship. In the matrix, applied research becomes a profession-related evaluative category in its own right that can be given substantial weight.

In establishing a performance appraisal system that includes professional service, one may face two different situations. One involves a single faculty with all members hired under a university's academic program. The second contains two faculties, one hired under the academic program and the other employed for professional service, research, or other duties. In the first, academic faculty members are the only ones engaged in professional service while, in the second, both academic and nonacademic faculty members are involved. In the latter, it is necessary to decide whether both faculties will be evaluated under the same system or whether two evaluation systems will be used. The matrix can be used as the basis for designing two evaluation tracks or as the framework for a single system acknowledging that weights may vary from individual to individual.

Distinguishing good from mediocre: the measurement problem. As mentioned previously, qualitative measures for professional services are weak. A committee may perceive that it has no basis for determining whether a given performance is poor or excellent. A good argument could be made

that measures of credit instruction and academic research are not especially strong or appropriate; however, measures are available in those areas if evaluators choose to use them. Student evaluation of teaching performance has become nearly universal, and the number of articles published in refereed journals is a common standard of evaluation. Unfortunately, profession-related public service has no equivalent measures that are so easily employed or accepted.

Profession-related public service includes professional continuing education and training; applied, problem-oriented research; and consultation, technical assistance, and client services. Accordingly, the following factors should be considered in the evaluation of performance and the development of improved measurements:

- impact
- intellectual and professional soundness
- administrative efficiency and effectiveness
- marketability and client appeal

Impact. This factor pertains to the effect of performance. What difference did your work make? Was a management study used to reshape the organization? Did a policy study alter legislation or agency guidelines? Did participants perform more effectively after the training program? And so forth.

Impact is not always easy to discern, especially in the time frame required for faculty evaluation. Several factors account for the difficulty: impact may not occur or be observable immediately; professional faculty work may not be implemented until after the evaluation period has passed; and cause and effect may be difficult to determine. A dozen "causes" may be competing for credit for some favorable result and a similar number scrambling for cover in the face of a failure. Further, even if a favorable result can be attributed to an individual faculty member, what value should it be given in an evaluation? Despite these questions and problems, impact does have potential use in faculty evaluation, at least in some cases.

Several types of evidence might be used in the effort to gauge impact:

- evaluation studies, including on-the-job assessments of training effectiveness

Faculty Performance Matrix

A Guide To the Analysis of Faculty Performance in the Areas of Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

Activity	SPHERES OF APPLICATION		
	Academic	Professional	Avocational/Citizenship
TEACHING (Classroom and other activities closely related to instruction)	Credit courses, on and off campus	Professional continuing education and training	Personal interest and leisure courses
SCHOLARSHIP (Research and dissemination of knowledge in publications or other tangible forms)	Publication based on basic or disciplinary research; scholars and students as primary audience	Products of applied research; practitioners as primary audience	Writing about personal experiences, hobbies, and other topics not related to academic or professional duties
SERVICE (Individual effort, group or committee activity, administration)	University administration, committee work, and other responsibilities, identified by organizational level. Contributions to academic societies	Professional practice and service to clients; advisory and consultative services to government or professional agencies and organizations. Contributions to professional societies	Nonprofessional contributions in civil, religious, other activities

- letters or other documentation from service recipients
- some items in workshops and training program evaluations
- interviews of service recipients.

Intellectual and professional soundness. One might argue that intellectually and professionally sound work will have the greater impact, making the "soundness" dimension redundant. However, for a variety of reasons, including time lag and intervening factors, this may not be the case. Thus an internal quality review is appropriate and important. Does the work represent state of the art? Does it meet appropriate professional standards? Does it exercise the faculty members' intellectual skills?

The difficulty with this dimension, of course, is that it requires work and judgment on the part of reviewers or someone they designate. In research, an assumption that a journal editor has already made the qualitative judgment allows a simplistic university review. However, without a system for this delegated judgment, not usually available for profession-related public service, a greater burden is placed on reviewers.

In evaluating intellectual and professional soundness, the following might be considered:

- copies of workshop syllabi, training materials, research reports, and so on
- components of training evaluations
- observation of workshop performance
- evaluations of work by appropriate external scholars and professionals.

Administrative efficiency and effectiveness. In many, if not all, professional service roles there is an administrative component. How effectively is this role carried

out? Are activities well planned? conducted in a timely fashion? Does the activity conform to the budget? And so forth.

- Performance assessments can be based on
- reaction by clients to administrative effectiveness
 - evaluation by supervisor, peers, subordinates
 - administrative documents such as plans and reports.

Marketability and client appeal. Like credit instruction, profession-related public service must pass a market test. Old clients must be satisfied and new ones attracted. What score does a faculty member's work get on the market test? Are his or her services in demand? Do his or her continuing education programs attract the targeted audience? Is this person invited to do repeat work?

Clues on this dimension may be obtained from

- components of instructional evaluation
- records of repeat work requests
- letters from clients
- interviews with service recipients.

The value question. Definitional clarity and a basis for qualitative judgment are necessary but not sufficient in themselves. Profession-related public service must be valued if it is to be rewarded. In a brief essay, Walter V. Hohenstein suggests six reasons for the low status of service in the evaluation of faculty activities. The reasons he cites are

1. Lack of tradition
2. Lack of inclusion in training
3. Complexities and breadth of the service function
4. Difficulty of measuring and comparing

5. Peer system of evaluation currently in use

6. Confusion between time spent in service and the results of that service

7. Failure to provide equal visibility to enhance career mobility

8. Failure to achieve a "multiplier" effect. Hohenstein's third and fourth suggestions recall the definitional problem and the difficulties of evaluation discussed above. His sixth item, which entails faculty members describing their service work only in terms of an input, time spent, rather than in terms of products and outcomes, is adequately addressed by the above discussion of evaluative dimensions and their documentation.³

Lack of tradition. Tradition does have an important impact on behavior, and tradition cannot be manufactured instantly. Therefore, its ill effects can only be overcome with the passage of time. Through the extension service, the expansion of continuing education programs, the continuing importance of management centers for business training and institutes of government for public-sector applied research and service, an American tradition of professional public service may well be on its way.

Lack of inclusion in training. Whereas research is at the heart of Ph.D. programs that produce new faculty members, and teaching is at least observed if not practiced or studied, professional service is not commonly a part of graduate education although some graduate students do get apprentice

3. Walter V. Hohenstein, "Service: The Neglected Person of the Academic Trinity," *National Forum*, 40:18-19.

work through assistantships in centers, institutes, and bureaus.

A more conscientious incorporation of professional public service into graduate programs may provide an important long-range opportunity for improving its status.

Faculty members who do double time with academic instruction and professional service work are in a good position to build such concerns into their courses. Fields that have a strong professional orientation, such as public administration, could more formally build service skills into their curricula. Program additions could include education in relevant methods of analysis, such as "action research" and management analysis; presentation skills, such as training and briefing; consultation, such as counseling and interviewing. Traditional dissertations could be given an applied or policy orientation without loss of rigor.

Peer systems of evaluation. An attempt to modify the effects of the peer system on the value given to professional public service might result in departure from the peer system itself or changes in the conditions under which that system operates. Of course, peer review is so entrenched that an effort to abolish it is unlikely to be productive. Changing the conditions of its operation, however, may provide results.

The peer system does not typically operate on the basis of independent evaluations from reviewers outside the institution, but rather on the collective judgment of fellow faculty members. Teaching appraisal relies largely on student evaluations systematically compiled from questionnaires. However, it is rare for reviewers to observe and evaluate teaching performance directly in the classroom. Research is typically evaluated not through careful reading of written material by review committee members, but by means of the acceptance of the judgment of editors whose journals are ranked according to some unspoken agreement about degree of prestige.

Those involved in profession-related public service, rather than bemoaning the fact that their work is not given its due, should develop their own system(s) of primary judgment, which can form the basis on which review committees make secondary judgments.

Some developments of this sort are already under way. The Southern Consortium of University Public Service Organizations has developed a publication review program to evaluate the quality of materials produced for professional service purposes. Books, monographs, handbooks, training packages, and nonprint products such as videotapes are given editorial review. The editorial board is composed of individuals with recognized academic credentials, service

organization professionals, and practitioners. If a manuscript is approved, a statement indicating organizational approval is included in the publication, and a list of publications certified by the editorial board is circulated annually. This effort is one step toward building in first-line judgment of professional service quality, which can be used by on-campus faculty review committees. As such, it is a direct parallel with systems operating as key support mechanisms for peer review in other parts of the faculty evaluation process.

Failure to provide equal visibility to enhance career mobility. One of the critical factors in faculty evaluation, sometimes explicitly included, is whether a faculty member is known and respected by persons outside the campus and to what extent—local, state, regional, national, or international. Such name recognition provides psychic income and a boost in an increasingly tight job market for the person who may wish to advance his or her career by moving to another institution. Publication in accepted journals and books provides wider public exposure than does professional public service. Hence, increasing the status of professional public service at one university may not add significantly to faculty mobility if a similar change is not made at other institutions.

Failure to achieve a multiplier effect. An invention or scientific finding may be used by millions of people, and a discovery may be the springboard for many future discoveries. A best-selling text will influence thousands of students even though the author of that book may interact with far fewer people in actual classroom instruction. In terms of visibility, most professional public service is more like classroom instruction than a scientific breakthrough or best-sell-

ing text. The potential for a chain reaction is rare: the numbers of people directly affected are relatively few. This comparison makes research more attractive than either teaching or professional service because there is more potential for massive public impact. The comparison is probably an illusory one, however. Although in research the potential for the big strike is there, that level of success is rarely achieved. For every best-selling text, dozens achieve only marginal success, or do not get past the publisher's review desk, or remain unfinished in file drawers. Research and writing is a high-risk enterprise.

While the payoff of research is sometimes exaggerated, the benefits of teaching and professional public service are sometimes underestimated. Teaching can have a profound effect on students; professional service can bring about millions of dollars in administrative savings or affect countless persons through a shift in policy. Of course, the likelihood of massive impact by any given individual in any of the three arenas is small.

Prospects for increased value. At first glance, the reasons for the low status of professional service appear well entrenched. But are they actually so? Substantial change, even in a system so time-honored as the one encompassing teaching, research, and service, is possible. The end of the baby boom and the financial troubles of institutions of higher education have put the stage. There are steps that can be and, in some cases, already are being taken to raise the value of profession-related public service. Such steps will increase the revenue associated with the work and, in turn, the quantity and quality of professional public service offered by universities. ■

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