Chapter 34
Faculty Organizational Service:
Problems and Solutions

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this chapter is to list and review some of the problems facing university faculty as they engage in their organizational service activities. University faculty members typically engage in three types of activities: (1) teaching and instruction, (2) research and scholarly compositions, and (3) service and organizational functioning. This chapter focuses on the third type of activities for university faculty members, namely, service and organizational functioning. For the purpose of simplicity, the expression "organizational service" will be used to replace the longer expression "service and organizational functioning." This chapter will provide a list and a review of problems in organizational service for university faculty members. In addition to a listing of problems, the chapter will present possible solutions for the problems.

INTRODUCTION

The purposes of the article are to describe features of organizational service for regular faculty members at a research university, to review problems associated with such organizational service, and to offer candidate solutions for such problems. This critical analysis of faculty organizational service is not intended to disparage faculty organizational service for faculty but rather it is intended to improve it. The informational basis for this critical analysis is not merely a selection of the research literature on faculty organizational service but also the decades of experience of the author at research universities.

BACKGROUND

University faculty are typically expected to engage in three categories of activities: (1) research and scholarly inquiry; (2) teaching and advising; and (3) service and organizational functioning. At a research university, the first two categories are the most important and most valued for regular faculty members (i.e., faculty members who do not have administrative positions such as that of college dean or department chair). The third category is the least valued for regular faculty members but it is still important.

A typical breakdown of academic time for a regular faculty member at a research university is the following: (a) research and scholarly inquiry – 40% of academic time; (b) teaching and advising – 40% of academic time; and (c) service and organizational functioning – 20% of academic time. Based on a typical 40-hour work week, that typical breakdown of academic time indicates that a regular faculty member should typically spend 8 hours of academic time weekly on service and organizational functioning activities.

The focus of this article is the third category of faculty activities—namely, service and organizational functioning. That category of activities may include service to the discipline of the faculty member (e.g., editor of an academic journal, organizer of academic conferences), service to the community (e.g., consultant to city agency, volunteer to a clinic), and service to the university, college, or department (e.g., member on a university task force, member on a college committee, chair of a departmental committee). The total of all of these service activities for a regular faculty member at a research university should typically amount to eight hours of academic time weekly. For the purpose of simplicity, the expression "service and organizational functioning" will be simply termed "organizational service".

The role of faculty service in faculty academic life has been featured in much scholarship on higher education. For example, Lynton (1994) has argued that faculty service should include service to the community and that each university and every constituent academic unit should clearly indicate how such service is basic to its mission. Holland (1997) reviewed various forms of faculty service including faculty organizational service and provided a model that interrelated organizational factors and forms of faculty service to expressions of institutional service to the community. Such institutional service to the community is of great concern to higher education administrators.

Ernest Boyer (1990, 1996) has written eloquently on the topic of faculty scholarship and service. He has argued that faculty service should not be limited to service to the university or to the discipline of the faculty member, but should also include service to the community in particular or society in general. Ward (2003) continued in that line of reasoning by articulating the role and importance of faculty engagement with the community. Although Boyer's expanded view of faculty service is generally accepted, this paper focuses on faculty organizational service for the university and its units, because that type of faculty service has garnered the most recent discussion (e.g. Meyer, 2018; VanDette, 2015).

The Topic of Faculty Service

To better understand faculty organizational service, a description of the social context for faculty organizational service is warranted. That social context is basically the university. Any university is neither a democracy nor a republic, but rather it is an oligarchy run by an administration answerable only to a board of regents composed of citizens in the community. The administration of any university makes decisions and judgments that are to be accepted by regular faculty members and that can only be overridden by the university board of regents. In any university that does not have a faulty union to protect

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