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# **TOWARD MORE EQUITABLE FACULTY SERVICE: Recommendations towards Recognizing, Valuing, and Making Service Visible at UBC**

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## **SUMMARY**

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This report was produced as part of a 2019-2021 UBC Equity Enhancement Fund project. The report is drafted by UBC faculty and staff and is an independent assessment of what is needed to ensure equitable consideration of faculty service in tenure and promotion, and merit. For full report, please see here:  
[https://equity3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/05/Updated\\_Report\\_Faculty\\_Service\\_at\\_UBC\\_May\\_02\\_20221.pdf](https://equity3.sites.olt.ubc.ca/files/2022/05/Updated_Report_Faculty_Service_at_UBC_May_02_20221.pdf)

# INTRODUCTION

A key priority in UBC's strategic plan is to “cultivate a diverse community that creates and sustains equitable and inclusive campuses”.<sup>1</sup> Many initiatives have been taken to reach that goal. One area which has been neglected, however, is the inequality and misrecognition of faculty members' service contributions. While research and teaching are considered priorities, service is also central to maintaining “inclusive excellence” at UBC and is deserving of attention and intervention.

In this project, supported by UBC's Equity Enhancement Fund, we examined how faculty service is understood, recognized, and rewarded in tenure and promotion (T&P) and merit/PSA at UBC, with a particular focus on the Faculties of Arts and Education. This study was undertaken as a response to concerns voiced by faculty members—especially those who are Indigenous, racialized, women, and otherwise equity-seeking—regarding a perceived lack of fairness, recognition, support, and clarity in how the service work they do relates to decisions regarding T&P and merit/PSA allocations.

The expectations of faculty workload are changing due to: a) demands for greater research ‘output’; b) new teaching and curriculum initiatives associated with equity, diversity, and inclusion; c) commitments to Indigenization and the TRC's Calls to Action; and d) increased emphasis on community engagement. Overall, there is a shifting sense of what it means to be a professor. In our project, we wanted to gain better answers to the following questions:

- What is understood as service by UBC leaders and administrators?
- How is service being factored into, and recognized as a part of faculty members' overall workload?
- What is being “counted” as service in T&P and merit/PSA?
- What kinds of work are being rewarded and how?
  - How are faculty members being recognized in the diverse forms of work they are undertaking?
  - Are these forms considered ‘service’ or something else?

The project involved: a literature review; an analysis of policy documents on faculty workload and faculty service from across Canadian research universities (U15); an examination of UBC policy documents related to service and of UBC's Strategic Plan; and, semi-structured interviews with 11 senior administrators across UBC and 13 academic leaders in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education. Based on these findings, we hope to spark a dialogue about how UBC can achieve its goal of inclusion and diversity by recognizing and rewarding faculty members' service contributions. “Service activities are critical in the pursuit of a more equitable and inclusive academic environment. We must ensure that the efforts required by these activities are properly recognized” (Armani et al, 2021, p. 960).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://strategicplan.ubc.ca/strategy-4-inclusive-excellence/>

# LITERATURE REVIEW & FACULTY SERVICE AT OTHER U15 UNIVERSITIES

Our review of a broad array of literature on faculty workload, faculty service, equity in academia, and equality in distribution of faculty workload shows that service is a catchall term which has multiple, in some cases contradictory, interpretations including:

- embracing all faculty activities (Oldfield & Baron, 2000; also see Cohan, 2018; Waring, 2013)
- “everything that is neither teaching, research, nor scholarship” (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995, p. 222)
- as a part of scholarship, defined as the “scholarship of engagement” alongside the scholarship of discovery, integration, and teaching (Boyer, 1990; Boyer et al., 2016).

Based on our reading of the literature and of U15 collective agreements, faculty service can generally be broken down into the following categories: University Assigned or Invited; Professionally Invited or Elected; Community Invited or Elected; Service in Research; and, Service in Teaching. All work considered “service” conveys different levels of prestige, may be counted or hidden, and may have very different levels of benefit with regards to T&P and merit/PSA.

Faculty service is an area with many explicit and hidden equity issues, with many service activities going unsupported and unrewarded (Henry et al., 2017; Hutchins & Kovach, 2019; Kelly & McCann, 2014; Vescera, 2019). Previous research suggests that Indigenous and racialized faculty may have disproportionately heavy workloads; one study out of the US claimed that, on average, “associate [professor] women of color spend the most time on these [service] activities, and associate white men the least” (Misra & Lundquist, 2015, para 10). Both women and racialized faculty are more likely to be stalled at the rank of associate professor, and many studies show that among other professorial ranks, associate professors tend to be the most unsatisfied and “overworked” (Henry et al., 2017). Studies show that, on average, women faculty perform more university service overall (Guarino & Borden, 2017; Misra et al., 2011), and often: i) serve in positions that hold little to no prestige (O’Meara et al., 2017; Pyke, 2011), ii) take on more unofficial mentorship roles of minoritized students (Dengate et al., 2019; Vescera, 2019), and iii) do more relationally-oriented service that tends to be less valued than task-oriented forms of service (Hanasono et al., 2019).

Our analysis of Collective Agreements and documents regulating T&P at U15 universities shows that most of them view faculty workload as a traditional union of teaching, research, and service, and associate service with activities that are outside of research and teaching (University of Waterloo, 2019; University of Toronto, 2016; University of Ottawa, 2018). In T&P, the majority of U15 universities consider faculty service as “also important,” giving it credit only after faculty members’ research and teaching receive enough points. In terms of equity, diversity, and inclusion, most of the U15 acknowledge the differences in service workload of junior and senior faculty members. In addition, the University of Manitoba (2018) included fulfilling gender-balance requirements on committees and implementing a reasonable workload adjustment; however, no other statements we read discussed equity issues so directly in the policy documents. Our analysis revealed a gap between the need to address equity issues in the distribution and acknowledgement of service tasks and the existence of policies which might ensure such equity. We also note that treating service as disconnected to teaching or research may result in some service activities not being captured.

# FACULTY SERVICE AT UBC: POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PERCEPTIONS AT AN INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

At an institutional level we examined: UBC's Collective Agreement (CA), the Senior Appointments Committee Guide, UBC Statement of Vision and Values, and the UBC Strategic Plan "Shaping UBC's next century." We also interviewed 11 senior administrators from UBC on how they understand service, how service is accounted for in T&P, and to learn more about how policies regulate service.

The CA (2020) envisions faculty service as one of the key components of faculty workload alongside teaching, scholarly activity, and educational leadership (p.14). At the same time, in T&P, faculty "are judged principally on performance in both teaching and either scholarly activity or educational leadership." (p.65). The CA clearly states that "[s]ervice to the academic profession, to the University, and the community will be taken into account but, while service to the University and the community is important, **it cannot compensate for deficiencies in teaching, scholarly activity, or educational leadership** [emphasis ours]." (p.65). Such statements, in our view, undermine and dismiss the significance of faculty members' service contributions to creating an inclusive and equitable work and learning environment. This discrepancy between considering service a compulsory component of a 'regular' faculty workload, and a supplementary component in T&P, creates confusion and opens a space for multiple interpretations and misrecognition of the significance of service.

We noticed a spectrum of opinions regarding the definition of service among academic leaders that mostly fall under one of four categories. Service was viewed as i) a required part of the unit-Faculty- university operation; ii) mostly administrative work; iii) voluntary work in the institution, profession, community that needs to be done; and iv) professional impact or impact on the community made by activities outside of teaching and research/educational leadership. These definitions do not necessarily contradict each other; however, they reflect different expectations in regards to faculty service, which might affect how service is recognized and rewarded, especially in the absence of transparent policies at the faculty and department levels.

# FACULTY SERVICE IN THE FACULTIES OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

Our study of the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Education focused on: i) how service is defined, accounted for, and rewarded; ii) what data are collected and analyzed about service; iii) what policies are in place; and iv) what issues regarding service are identified at the faculty level, and in different departments, especially concerning equity issues. Our study shows that whereas both Faculties rely heavily on the Collective Agreement guidelines regarding service in T&P, how service is considered part of faculty workload differs, as do departmental approaches to recommending merit and PSA pay.

To ensure that faculty members' service is counted in Merit and PSA, the Faculty of Arts applies Faculty-level regulations obliging their units to have written policy for allocation of Merit and PSA. The examination of three departmental policies shows different levels of attention paid to service: one unit, for example, only has a brief statement whereas another includes detailed guidelines with a list of service roles, and minimum and above minimum service expectations. Different departments provide different approaches to course release for service work, and different types of support for service. The Faculty of Education defines service as activities that "must be performed to maintain the operations of the institution" (Guidelines for Faculty Workload Planning, 2020, p.8) and service to the community, academic, and professional organizations. Both Faculty level guidelines set a norm of 20 per cent of service load for all ranks in the Research and Educational Leadership streams but leave the decisions on criteria for Merit and PSA to individual units (informed by the Collective Agreement). Our further analysis of three departmental policies shows that different units within one Faculty might have a different understanding of faculty service. For example, whereas some units consider some activities as a contribution to research, e.g., editorial and reviewing activities, others account for them as faculty service.

The examination of policy documents showed that the Faculties of Arts and Education use templates for annual reports of all faculty activities including service activities. In addition to this "basic" record, some units also use extended annual reports, e.g., one department in the Faculty of Education asks faculty members to complete a six-page non-structured annual report about the tasks that they have performed during the year. Some units apply a point system for looking at each faculty member's service load, accounting for different amounts of work each service activity, or committee, might take.

Interestingly, a little over half of our respondents within both Faculties commented that they had seen no equity issues in faculty service workload distribution, especially in recent years. At the same time, respondents made a number of references to heavy service loads, as well as to self-directed service commitments (e.g., student mentorship, running of workshops, striking of committees, community service, serving on certain committees), of women, racialized, and Indigenous faculty. Some also expressed concern of service workload for faculty with disabilities. Through our research, we saw no evidence of any units that systematically track their faculty members' workload from equity, diversity, and inclusion perspectives. Even the departments with a point system and extended annual reports admitted that no analysis of data is done regularly.

# WHAT COULD WE DO TO IMPROVE FACULTY SERVICE AT UBC?

Based on our literature review, interviews, and document analysis, we recommend actions be taken to achieve three goals: i) to document service, ii) to recognize and value service, and iii) to support service. The following actions are recommended to help reach these goals:

## A. DOCUMENTING SERVICE

- **Transparent definition of faculty service in the Collective Agreement**

We recommend work be done on more clearly defining service in the Collective Agreement to help us to have a clearer understanding of what service means across UBC.

- **Tracking data on faculty service**

Our study revealed a lack of data on faculty service: Who is doing what? How are committee commitments decided upon? What kinds of service is and is not accounted for in T&P or merit/PSA? How is the work of a faculty member being recorded and rewarded (as Service? Research? Teaching? Educational Leadership? Scholarship?). We suggest departments and Faculties begin to track data on who is doing what kinds of service over a five-year period and then track patterns over time.

- **Sharing of policies and practices within and across Faculties**

To support a) a more equitable workload among faculty members regarding service and b) the diverse and important service-related work faculty members do, a culture of transparency is needed in how we assign work and how we account for service and assess faculty work in merit/PSA and T&P. Seeing how other units approach these difficult questions can help us to reimagine our own processes.

## B. RECOGNIZING AND VALUING SERVICE

- **Rethinking service: Unfolding the boundaries**

Service is seen as separate from teaching and research (or from educational leadership activities for educational leadership faculty). However, these categories themselves have been changing in the past decade and rethinking service involves a rethinking of the meaning of teaching, research, and educational leadership. The same is applicable to revisiting the boundaries drawn between ‘service to the university’ and ‘service to the community’; and between “assigned service” and “self-directed activities.”

- **Increasing value of faculty service in T&P**

The established practice of service having little, if any, weight in T&P needs to be revisited. Service plays an important role in a faculty member’s academic activities As *the UBC-Vancouver Faculty Survey on the Effects of COVID-19* (Quayle, 2020) suggests, tenure-track faculty members may be particularly susceptible to increasing service demands and expectations. Similarly, since service is also embedded into activities we tend to categorize as research or teaching, there needs to be greater visibility and recognition of these activities.

- **Bringing UBC policies on faculty service closer to UBC vision, purpose, and value statement, and its Strategic Plans**

Our study shows a gap between i) UBC's Vision, Purpose and Value statement and UBC's Strategic Plan 'Shaping UBC's next century,' and ii) policies on faculty service in the CA and SAC Guidelines, and in those examined in the Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Education. Specifically, UBC's visioning documents contain numerous objectives that imply faculty service but such necessary service is not adequately addressed, nor recognized, in T&P or merit/PSA policies and procedures. We also now are mindful of UBC's Indigenous Strategic Plan and the implications this presents for how we recognize, assign, and reward faculty work more holistically.

## **C. SUPPORTING SERVICE**

- **Consideration of greater supports for faculty service**

Course buy-outs, service reductions in recognition of other service work, administrative support, GAA or TA-support, are all important considerations in both ensuring greater equity in faculty work and in recognizing the time-intensive and important service work faculty members are doing.

- **Greater recognition of service**

Overall, our study suggests the importance of more formal recognition of service work of faculty members. This could involve the creation of service-directed grants, internal awards for service or mentorship, and space allocated for sharing one's achievements in relation to the activities associated with service.

- **Clear unit policies on service that ensure equal distribution of time-intensive roles**

The CA clearly states that service varies from one unit to another (p.68). Written department policies on workload—and its distribution, recognition, and reward, including faculty service—need to be developed with transparent criteria to increase equity and ensure equal rotation of service roles (Curcio & Lynch, 2018; O'Meara et al., 2018).

- **Education on Service**

Educating academic leaders and faculty members around service—how it relates to policies, how it needs to be recorded and regulated, and how it involves equity issues—is one of the ways of increasing awareness of its importance and improving it.

# OVERALL WAYS TO MAKE SERVICE BETTER AT UBC

This study showed that many department heads and academic leaders are concerned with the problem of equity-deserving faculty having heavy committee workloads or being involved in additional time-intensive 'self-directed' service activities (e.g., mentorship, agreeing to serve on committees and initiatives in academia and community). Among the proposed solutions is i) establishing basic standards in service similar to ones in teaching, and ii) finding ways to provide formal recognition and reward for extra service along with providing more ways for people to "more comfortably say no" (see O'Meara, 2002; Pyke, 2011). Additional equity data on faculty service is important for tracking possible discrepancies in work (e.g., to capture whether, and in which ways, disabled, IBPOC, or women faculty are doing more or being rewarded less), as well as the gaps that exist between faculty service workload according to one's contract and what appears on one's CV for T&P, or for Merit and PSA, across different Faculties and schools at UBC.



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