



Summary of Analysis of Faculty Evaluation Documents

This review of official faculty evaluation documents and discussions with faculty and administrative leaders across a dozen ACS schools surfaced four areas of inconsistency and concern:

- unclear expectations for, or valuing of, service work
- the role and quality of student advising
- the relative importance of civic engagement
- critically important work that is hidden, and therefore not valued in the evaluation process and typically falls to particular individuals or groups

Each is described below.

The role of (and expectations regarding) service work

Almost all of the documents provided listed teaching, research, and service as the three main criteria for tenure and promotion. (Some used different language, e.g., “student development” instead of “teaching” or “professional development” instead of research.) None of the documents stated any explicit weighting (e.g., “40/40/20”) for these criteria, but most ranked the three categories in order of priority, with teaching as most important and research as second most important.

Service was universally ranked as least important among the three main criteria, and in some cases the documents included explicit cautions against prioritizing service over other commitments. For example, the Southwestern document states that while a record of service is expected, “no amount of university service will compensate for deficits” in the other two areas. The Rhodes document stated that teaching and research were most important for pre-tenure faculty, while acknowledging that post-tenure faculty may find themselves with particularly heavy service burdens that take time away from the other areas. The document notes that “while such shifts are appropriate, they should be carefully monitored” and that “heavy service commitments ought not to last more than six years.”

Of the three main criteria for tenure and promotion, **service work was the least well defined, both in terms of what was included as “service” and how such work would be evaluated and/or valued.** The explicit and implicit cautions against engaging in too much service work may be especially confusing, frustrating, or demoralizing for our faculty when institutional values proclaim highly personalized attention to students, expectations for community impact/engagement, and requests to participate in implementing exciting new, but labor-intensive, strategic initiatives, even when such initiatives align with a faculty member’s personal values and aspirations. There is also broad agreement that the “hidden burdens” of service work are not distributed equitably across the faculty (see below).

The role of student advising

For all of the institutions studied, there are explicit promises of individualized/personalized attention, advising, and/or mentoring. And yet for many schools, for example Birmingham Southern, Centenary, and Centre, evaluation of advising is considered within the broader category of service, which as noted above is ranked the lowest of the three “buckets” of work. Others – for example Hendrix and Trinity – include advising under the category of teaching. Given the tendency for teaching to be viewed as more important than service, particularly for pre-tenure faculty, this categorization for advising may align better with institutional values and promises. The Hendrix document specifically notes that student evaluations of advising are included in the tenure and promotion process.

However, **for the most part the documents are unclear about how (if at all) the quality and quantity of advising work is assessed, nor is there clarity about how important it is to the faculty review process.** Therefore, those faculty who are known by students for high-quality advising often do more of it with little tangible reward or acknowledgement. Again, there is dissonance in what we say we value as institutions and what we value in faculty evaluation.

The importance (or lack of importance) given to civic engagement work

Some (although not all) faculty evaluation documents explicitly mention community service or civic engagement as relevant to the tenure and promotion process. In the Furman document, “community service” is listed alongside “advising and mentoring” and “contributions to diversity and inclusion” in a separate category of “supporting activity.” The call for community service aligns appropriately with the Furman Advantage promise of “community impact,” but the level to which it is valued may be difficult for a faculty member to discern when relegated to a catch-all category of “supporting activity.” Some schools (Rollins, e.g.) leave room for community service by noting that “service to the college can take many forms,” others (Centre, e.g.) encourage reporting of service to “your professional academic community or the off-campus community,” while others (Millsaps, e.g.) – specify that “off-campus service” may be included “as long as it has an impact on the college.”

On the whole, however, **what counts as “civic engagement” or “community service” often remains unclear, and it is difficult to discern what types of service outside the institution are valued inherently or only for their positive impact on the campus community and/or the institution’s reputation.**

Hidden burdens that are likely to fall disproportionately on particular groups

It is becoming increasingly clear that each of our ACS institutions is seeking to build a more diverse faculty that benefits from an inclusive, equitable, and supportive work environment. Therefore, it is critical that we match this institutional goal with our evaluation practices, which requires valuing the hidden work that falls to individuals who students seek out for extra support. Often, this unofficial advising and mentoring falls to faculty members from underrepresented groups, along with women faculty members. In addition, proactive attempts to include diverse voices on *ad hoc* and search committees can also over-extend our underrepresented faculty. While institutions are asking faculty to describe their contributions to diversity/inclusion initiatives (Furman University, Centre, e.g.) in their annual/biennial self-evaluations, it is currently unlikely that heavy investment in student support will outweigh its potential negative impact on course prep and/or research. And yet our efforts to diversify our faculty are explicitly to provide role models and mentors to our underrepresented students.

Again, there is dissonance in our institutional goals and values and what we value when we evaluate an individual faculty member. Similar lack of clarity exists about activities that might fall under campus-wide student success commitments (e.g., The Furman Advantage, Centre Commitment, Sewanee Pledge). Common across institutions is the likelihood that faculty who are **un-tenured, female and/or from underrepresented groups (whether tenured or not) are particularly burdened in these respects, inasmuch as they feel they have to (or want to) do everything, not just those things that might fit neatly into our traditional categories of teaching, professional activities, and service.**