

How important is service in the promotion and tenure process?

Chris Luchs
Ball State University

Suzanne Seymoure
Ball State University

Walter Smith
The University of Tampa

ABSTRACT

Performance evaluations of faculty members are typically comprised of three crucial components: teaching, research, and service. The results of previous studies show the considerable importance of both the teaching and research components in promotion and tenure (P&T) decisions. The results of these studies also reveal that research is the most important factor at many schools when it comes to P&T decisions. Teaching effectiveness is a close second. Service has typically been found to be the least important of the three components when considered in P&T decisions. Given the focus of previous research on the teaching and research components, the role of service in the P&T decisions is largely ill defined. The objective of this study is to specifically examine the use of service in P&T decisions. A survey was sent to business faculty and found that service is an important factor in P&T decisions. The service component is more important in the promotion to full professor decision than the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions. In addition, the results indicate few differences in the valuation of service for certain P&T decisions based on demographic factors. These results should be of interest to faculty members as they progress through the P&T process and to chairs and P&T committees as they assign and evaluate service.

Keywords: Service, promotion and tenure, faculty evaluation

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that promotion and tenure (P&T) decisions are typically based on teaching, research, and service. A great deal of research examines the evaluation of both teaching and research in the P&T decisions (Comm & Mathaisel, 1998; Englebrecht et al. 1994; and Tripathy & Ganesh, 1996). The results of these studies reveal that teaching performance is often evaluated on the basis of student ratings and to a lesser extent other means; such as, peer-review. These studies also show that the evaluation of research is typically conducted on the basis of quantity and quality. Both the teaching and research components of the faculty member's job tend to also have acceptable benchmarks for P&T decisions (Terpstra & Honoree, 2009). Granted these benchmarks may not always be explicitly stated but still their importance is understood.

Researchers are only beginning to specifically examine the role of service in the P&T process. An earlier study, Luchs et al. (2004), examined the role of service in P&T decisions in accounting departments. The results of that study indicated a significant role of service in P&T decisions, especially for small schools that offer only a bachelor's or master's degrees. Neumann & Terosky (2007) interviewed 40 faculty members from a wide range of disciplines and found that both the importance and magnitude of service increase after the tenure decision. A better understanding of the role of service in the P&T process could help departments better spread the service load amongst the faculty.

The purpose of this study is to examine how service is used in the P&T process. A survey was sent to business faculty regarding the importance of service in P&T decisions. The survey specifically looked at the relative importance of service on the different P&T decisions. The results indicate that service ranged from "slightly important" to "important," depending on the P&T decisions. The results show the importance of service is dependent on the P&T decision in question. Service appears to be more important in the promotion to full professor decision. In addition, the value of service is mostly uniform across the various demographic factors collected. This paper illustrates that despite the ranking as third among teaching, research and service in the P&T decisions, service is still a vital component in the evaluation process. The remainder of the paper is organized as follows. Section 2 provides a discussion of the relevant literature. Section 3 describes the methodology and results. Section 4 provides a summary and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There is a large collection of literature that examines the impact of teaching and research on the P&T process but only a limited amount of research that examines the role of service in P&T decisions. A likely reason for this is that most schools tend to rank service as the least important element of those three in P&T decisions. Comm & Mathaisel (1998) surveyed deans at Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accredited schools and found that research was the most important criteria for P&T decisions. The authors also document that research becomes more important for the promotion to full professor decision than the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions. Green (2008) surveyed deans and directors of fully accredited social work programs and found several common weightings with regards to the importance of teaching, research, and service in P&T decisions. The most common weighting system ranked research as most important, followed by teaching, with

service being least important of the three elements. The second most common weighting system placed equal emphasis on teaching and research, while service was still the least important aspect in P&T decisions. The third most common weighting system placed an equal emphasis on all three components. A final weighting structure ranked teaching as the most important, research second and service as the least important. The author found no instance of service being the most important component individually. Terpstra & Honoree (2009) surveyed faculty at 135 randomly selected institutions that use merit systems to reward their faculty and the most important component used to reward faculty (promotion, tenure, and pay) was research 31% of the time, equal weighting of research/teaching/service 28%, equal weighting of research/teaching 18%, teaching 15%, and equal weighting of teaching/service 8%. The overall consensus is that service ranks as the third most important criteria to determine merit at most schools.

Alshare et al. (2007) surveyed deans of business schools that were either AACSB accredited or AACSB candidate schools to measure the actual weights assigned to research, teaching, and service by the deans. Their results found that research received the highest weight at research-centered institutions and teaching the highest weight at teaching-centered institutions while service was always the third rated element. The mean weighting for all P&T decisions for research institutions was research 58%, teaching 32.5%, and service 9.5%. For teaching institutions, the mean weighting was research 42.5%, teaching 48%, and service 9.5%. When considering all classifications (promotion versus tenure, research versus teaching, public versus private, and AACSB accredited versus AACSB candidate schools), the service component weighting ranged from 7.7% to 10.7%. The difference in the weighting of service was not significant for any classification and the overall mean was approximately 9.5%. The authors also found that only 1% of all teaching schools weighted service at more than 50% and none of the research schools weighted service at more than 50%. The study did find that the weighting for research has been increasing over time while the weighting for teaching and service has been decreasing. Tripathy & Ganesh (1996) surveyed chairs of finance departments and finance faculty who were either currently serving or had recently served on P&T committees or merit evaluation committees. The survey asked participants to indicate the emphasis on teaching, research, and service at their school by assigning percentages to each element. The average percentages for P&T decisions were 52%, 35.5%, and 12.5% for research, teaching, and service, respectively. Schultz et al. (1989) surveyed accounting faculty and business school deans to study the importance of the three components. The faculty and deans were classified into three time periods according to when they started their academic careers (1961-1966, 1971-1974, and 1980-1981). All faculty and deans were asked to allocate 100 points between research, teaching, and service based on their experience in P&T decisions. The results indicated that faculty and deans that started their careers in the most recent time period reported more emphasis on research and less on teaching and service as compared to faculty and deans that started their careers in the first two time periods. Interestingly, the study also examined how deans weighed the impact of faculty activities on their market value and found that service accounts for only 9-10% of the total market value of faculty.

Luchs et al. (2004) examined the use of service in P&T decisions in accounting departments. They find that the importance of service lies between “slightly important” to “moderately important” for promotion to associate professor decisions. Similar results were found for the use of service for the tenure decisions. For the promotion to full professor decision, service is perceived to be “moderately important.” Further analysis of the use of service by faculty of accounting departments revealed significant differences based on

demographic factors. Smaller universities tended to weight service as more important than larger schools. In addition, the demographic factor of highest degree offered was significant in determining the role of service for the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions. Accounting departments that offer bachelor's or master's degrees tended to place a greater emphasis on service than those PhD granting departments. Neumann & Terosky (2007) conducted in-depth interviews with 40 recently tenured professors from research intensive universities. The subjects represented a wide range of disciplines. Overall, the respondents reported increased service requirements post-tenure. The increase in service requirements manifested itself in both the number of hours devoted to service but also greater responsibility by serving on university and/or college committees or administrating programs.

Based on the results of prior research, service has been found to be the least important aspect of the three components for P&T decisions at most institutions. Based on this finding, it's not surprising that service is not well defined and the least researched of the three criteria (Neumann & Terosky, 2007). While service has been found to be the least important of the three components in P&T decisions, there is evidence (See Lynton, 1995; Rice, 1986; and Sherman & Torbert, 2000) of the growing importance of service.

METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The sample for this study was randomly selected from a database available from Infogroup USA. This database includes general business faculty members. As shown in Table 1, 3,453 emails were sent to potential participants. Of those emails, 152 were undeliverable. Of the emails that were delivered, 459 were opened. A total of 115 completed survey instruments from business faculty were received. The overall response rate when including all valid emails was 3.48%. The effective response rate when including only those individuals that opened the email was 25.05%. Survey participants were asked questions concerning the importance of service and demographic information. Most of the survey questions were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 and 5 represented "Not Important" and "Very Important," respectively.

Table 2 provides the demographic information collected from the participants. The largest group of respondents (46.8%) is from medium sized schools with enrollments of 5,001 to 20,000 students (as measured by full-time equivalents). Most respondents were from public institutions (70.3%). Similarly a majority (78.1%) of respondents worked at colleges and schools accredited by AACSB. Overall, 57.9% worked at colleges and schools of business where the highest degree awarded is the master's, and 29% of the respondents worked at doctoral granting colleges and schools of business.

Faculty members were asked to identify the importance of service concerning the promotion to associate professor, promotion to full professor and granting tenure decisions. Table 3 presents the results for the promotion to associate professor and promotion to full professor. Column 2 of Table 3 presents the mean importance of service in the promotion to associate professor decision is 2.6957. This value lies between the "slightly important" and "moderately important" points on the Likert-type scale. The results separated by demographic factors are also presented in Table 3. Kruskal-Wallis tests (not reported in the tables) found limited differences in the importance of service based on the demographic factors collected. For the promotion to associate professor decision, only the highest degree offered was found to result in significant differences based on the demographic characteristics. These limited demographic

differences in the results suggest that service is treated and valued in a relatively uniform manner across the various demographic factors. For example, both small and large schools appear to incorporate service in a similar manner in the P&T decisions. Responses as to how service is valued for the full professor decision are provided in Column 3 of Table 3. The overall mean value of service at the full professor promotion level is 3.1913. This value lies between “moderately important” and “important” on the rating scale. For the promotion to full professor decision, only the nature of the school (public versus private) resulted in significant differences for the importance of service according to the Kruskal-Wallis test. Column 4 of Table 3 presents the differences in the means for how important service is for the promotion to associate professor and full professor decisions. Overall the mean difference in the value of service is 0.4956. Column 5 presents the t-statistics for a paired t-test examining whether there are significant differences in the use of service between the promotion to associate and promotion to full decisions. The t-statistic for the test of overall means is 6.093. This result would suggest that service is significantly more important in the promotion to full professor decision than in the promotion to associate professor decision. In examining the results of testing for the differences in means, it appears that many of the different types of schools (based on the demographic factors) value service as more important in the full professor decision. The only exceptions are for non-AACSB schools and those whose highest degree granted are the bachelor’s degree. For these schools, there is no significant difference in the use of service between the associate professor and full professor decisions.

Data on the use of service in the granting tenure decision is presented in Column 3 of Table 4. The overall value for service for the granting tenure decision is 2.7043. There are limited significant differences in the use of service for the granting tenure decision based on demographic factors. Similar to the use of service in the promotion to associate professor decision, the Kruskal-Wallis test reveal differences in the importance of service in the granting tenure decision based on the highest degree offered by the school of business. In both the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions, schools that their highest degree offered is the bachelor’s degrees valued service as being of greater importance than schools offering master’s and doctoral degrees. Column 4 of Table 4 presents the differences in the means for the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions. Overall, the difference in the means for the value of service for these two decisions is 0.0086. Column 5 of Table 4 provides the statistics from testing whether there is a significant difference in how service is used between the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions. The t-statistic testing the difference in the overall means is 0.173, suggesting there is no significant difference in the use of service for the promotion to associate and granting tenure decisions. The results testing for differences in the means based on different demographic factors also reveal no significant differences. Taken together these results would suggest that the value of service is not significantly different in the two decisions. The lack of significant differences in results for promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions may be due to the fact that schools often make these decisions at the same time and therefore would use similar benchmarks, with regards to service, for the two decisions.

Table 5 presents the results of analyses comparing the granting tenure and promotion to full professor decisions. Confirming the results presented in Tables 3 and 4, there is an overall significant difference in the use of service in the promotion to full professor and granting tenure decisions. Column 4 of Table 5 presents the difference of the two means of responses for the two decisions. The overall difference between the means is 0.4870. Column 5 of Table 5

provides the t-statistics comparing the two sets of means. The overall difference in means is significant, suggesting that service receives greater value in the promotion to full professor decision than in the granting of tenure decision. Overall, the results for the differences based on demographic factors are similar to the analyses of the demographic factors in Table 3. The only demographic factors with no significant difference in the use of service for the promotion to full professor and granting of tenure decisions are for the non-AACSB schools and bachelor's degree only schools. These results confirm those from Table 4 suggesting that service is similarly valued for the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions.

CONCLUSIONS

Faculty members are evaluated on three major components: teaching, research, and service. Previous studies have documented the importance of teaching, research, and service in P&T decisions. While all three components are important, much of the emphasis of previous research has focused on teaching and research. Our approach is unique in that we specifically examine the role of service alone. This approach allows for greater understanding of this component in P&T decisions.

A survey was sent to randomly selected business faculty across the country. The results indicate that service is between "slightly important" to "moderately important" for both the promotion to associate professor decision and granting tenure decision. For the promotion to full professor decision the responses revealed that service was a "moderately important" to "important" factor in the promotion decision. This finding indicates that service is perceived to have greater importance in the promotion to full professor decision than in other decisions related to P&T. In addition to collecting and analyzing data for the overall results, demographic information was also collected. The demographic information collected was school size, nature of school (public vs. private), accreditation status and highest degree offered. These results suggest that service, despite its lower rankings in previous research, is an important component in the P&T decisions.

The results presented in this paper are contradictory to some of those in a previous study (Luchs et al, 2004). Luchs et al. (2004) examined the use of service among accounting faculty. The results of the prior study show significant differences in the use of service based on school size and highest degree offered for both the promotion to associate professor and granting decisions. While the current study confirmed the results that the highest degree offered by the school is significantly associated with the use of service in the promotion to associate professor and granting tenure decisions, university size appears to not have a significant effect on the importance of service. The results of this study found that only the nature of the school (public versus private), impacted the importance of service in the promotion to full professor, with private institutions valuing service to a greater degree than public institutions. The previous study (Luchs et al, 2004) found that in the promotion to full professor decision, the importance of service is significantly different based on the size of school and accreditation status demographic factors. There are several important differences between the earlier study and this one. First, the previous study surveyed only accounting faculty. This study incorporates responses from all specializations within the college of business. Future research is needed to specifically examine whether there is any significant difference among departments in how service is used in their P&T decisions. Second, data for the previous study was collected during the 2002-2003 academic year. Anecdotal evidence suggests that as operating budgets are reduced, support staff

is also reduced. Thus, faculty may have to take a greater role in service activities, such as, advising students. Another difference between the current time frame of the present study and the previous one is the greater importance in assurance of learning and distance education. These changes will also place greater demands on the faculty. Overall the results of this study suggest that the value of service is not significantly different based on demographic factors. Based on the results of this survey, it appears that service is just as important in smaller schools offering a master's degree as it is in large doctoral granting schools. The findings of this study indicate that the P&T decisions incorporate service differently based on the decision being made. Additional research is necessary to determine what constitutes service as well as the perception of what should be included in the decisions instead of what is currently included in them.

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Table 1
Sample Selection

Transmitted E-mails	3,453
Delivered E-mails	3,301
Opened E-mails	459
Number of responses	115

Table 2
Sample Demographics

School Size			N
Less than 5,000 students 30.6%	5,001 to 20,000 students 46.8%	More than 20,001 students 22.5%	111
Public versus Private			
Public 70.3%		Private 29.7%	111
Accreditation			
AACSB 78.1%	Other Accreditation 14.3%	Non-Accredited 7.6%	105
Highest Degree Offered by School of Business			
Bachelors 13.1%	Masters 57.9%	Doctoral 29.0%	107

Table 3

Do significant differences exist between the importance of service between the promotion to Associate professor and promotion to Full professor decisions?

	Means		Difference In Means	t-statistic
	Promotion to Associate	Promotion to Full		
Overall	2.6957	3.1913	0.4956	6.093***
Size of School				
Small	2.7353	3.2353	0.5000	2.851***
Medium	2.7500	3.1538	0.4038	4.200***
Large	2.4800	3.2400	0.7600	4.321***
Nature of the School				
Public	2.6410	3.0513	0.4103	4.973***
Private	2.8182	3.5455	0.7273	3.807***
Accreditation				
AACSB	2.7195	3.2927	0.5732	5.836***
Other Accreditation	2.7333	2.8667	0.1334	0.695
No Accreditation	3.0000	3.1250	0.1250	1.000
Highest Degree Offered in School of Business				
Bachelors	3.0000	3.3571	0.3571	1.587
Masters	2.8387	3.3387	0.5000	4.462***
Doctoral	2.2903	2.9355	0.6452	4.284***

*** significant at the 1% level,
 ** significant at the 5% level,
 * significant at the 10% level.



Table 4

Do significant differences exist between the importance of service between the promotion to Associate professor and granting Tenure decisions?

	Means		Difference In Means	t-statistic
	Promotion to Associate	Granting Tenure		
Overall	2.6957	2.7043	0.0086	0.173
Size of School				
Small	2.7353	2.7647	0.0294	0.297
Medium	2.7500	2.7885	0.0385	0.629
Large	2.4800	2.4800	0.0000	0.000
Nature of the School				
Public	2.6410	2.6667	0.0257	0.406
Private	2.8182	2.8182	0.0000	0.000
Accreditation				
AACSB	2.7195	2.6951	-0.0244	0.445
Other Accreditation	2.7333	2.9333	0.2000	1.000
No Accreditation	3.0000	3.1250	0.1250	0.552
Highest Degree Offered in School of Business				
Bachelors	3.0000	3.0000	0.0000	0.000
Masters	2.8386	2.8226	-0.0160	0.256
Doctoral	2.2903	2.2903	0.0000	0.000

*** significant at the 1% level,
 ** significant at the 5% level,
 * significant at the 10% level.

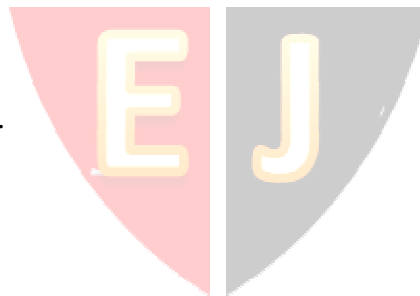


Table 5

Do significant differences exist between the importance of service between the granting Tenure and the promotion to Full professor decisions?

	Means		Difference In Means	t-statistic
	Granting Tenure	Promotion to Full		
Overall	2.7043	3.1913	0.4870	5.117***
Size of School				
Small	2.7647	3.2353	0.4706	2.176**
Medium	2.7885	3.1538	0.3653	3.432***
Large	2.4800	3.2400	0.7600	3.368***
Nature of the School				
Public	2.6667	3.0513	0.3846	3.713***
Private	2.8182	3.5455	0.7273	3.392***
Accreditation				
AACSB	2.6951	3.2927	0.5976	5.260***
Other Accreditation	2.9333	2.8667	-0.0666	0.250
No Accreditation	3.1250	3.1250	0.0000	0.000
Highest Degree Offered in School of Business				
Bachelors	3.0000	3.3571	0.3571	1.235
Masters	2.8226	3.3387	0.5161	3.922***
Doctoral	2.2903	2.9355	0.6452	4.284***

*** significant at the 1% level,
 ** significant at the 5% level,
 * significant at the 10% level.

