

**Executive Summary**  
**Service Equity Task Force**  
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Nationwide, service loads of faculty, especially women- and minority- identifying faculty, are typically unevenly distributed and unevenly regarded. Further, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated all service demands on faculty, which has long-term ramifications on faculty careers (Domingo et al., 2022; O’Meara, 2016). For a list of further evidence, please see Biases in Research and Beyond: Literacy Reference Guide available on the UCCS Office of Research website: <https://research.uccs.edu/service-equity-task-force>. The Service Equity Task Force, led by Faculty Fellows, was established to help define the service issues specific to UCCS faculty and identify tools and strategies to address these issues. This task force represents a joint effort between Project CREST and the Faculty Assembly Women's Committee, with support from the Office of Provost.

In the fall of 2023, Amanda Elder and Nick Fuselier were chosen as Faculty Fellows and led the task force’s efforts, including identifying the service issues specific to UCCS faculty and identify strategies to address any findings as necessary. As a part of this work, the Faculty Fellows established a Service Equity Task Force Advisory Team. The members of this advisory team included faculty members across the university who were at different ranks and held different types of faculty appointments: Robin Kempf, Dana Wortman, Farida Khan, George Rus, and Malukah Marrus. Members of Project Crest were also engaged in this work, particularly Jessi Smith and Sylvia Mendez.

After engaging in a review of the literature on the topic of equity in faculty service, the Service Equity Task Force designed a two-part data collection process: (a) a survey, and (b) focus groups. The Faculty Fellows led these data collection and analysis efforts, resulting in this report as well as a number of recommendations for promoting service equity at UCCS.

Survey: The survey intended to paint the picture of service engagement at UCCS including perceptions of the value of service and its role in annual performance evaluation, promotion, and tenure. The survey investigated 5 key areas of investigation: (a) service engagement and workload, (b) service awareness and clarity, (c) service culture, (d) institutional housekeeping (academic caregiving; unrecognized, un-resourced, informal practices), and (e) Watermark™ use. A total of 130 faculty completed the survey. Although diversity in gender and race was captured, the demographics of the survey participants did not directly match that of UCCS faculty members as women were over-represented, and people of color were under-represented. We also had a large number of respondents who did not disclose their gender or race identities. Knowing that issues of equity necessarily implicate issues of identity (e.g., gender, race), leaves us to question how we grapple with understanding identity-related dynamics when there is hesitation

to share identity markers on surveys (i.e., respondents choosing not to disclose). Key findings from the survey have helped to formulate the recommendations at the end of this summary.

**Focus Groups:** In addition to gathering survey data, focus groups were also facilitated to imagine what enhanced service equity can look like for individual faculty members, units, departments, and colleges. In each focus group, service equity tools that have been developed by scholars (e.g., KerryAnn O’Meara) who study issues of equity in faculty service were offered. Specifically, we sought to understand how these tools, or components of these tools, might be applicable (or not) across our campuses. A total of 24 participants engaged in the focus groups.

Throughout the focus groups, participants commented on various institutional and structural barriers to achieving equity in faculty service work. At the institutional level, it was noted that the service expectations embedded in annual review and promotion criteria are varied. Variances can be found across faculty type as well as across academic colleges. The fact that not every faculty member on campus has the same percentage of workload devoted to service can pose institutional barriers to achieving service equity. Key take aways from the focus groups included

- We should promote efforts to enhance clarity and transparency in faculty service work
- We should proceed with caution when tracking, reporting, and evaluating faculty service work
- We should grapple with institutional barriers to equity in service work (e.g., differences in workload)

### **Recommendations and Tools to Promote Service Equity**

As the work of the Service Equity Task Force concludes, we offer the following recommendations and tools for faculty members and academic leaders to consider. We offer these recommendations and corresponding tools while recognizing the critical importance of *context*. That is, we understand the unique contexts that individual academic units, programs, departments, and colleges possess. Moreover, the service expectations for faculty members across units, programs, departments, and colleges are varied, evidenced in the criteria for service engagement in annual performance review and promotion documents across campus; variances also exist because of differentiated workloads. Thus, our recommendations must be situated within the particular context of a given unit, program, department, and college. Implicit in each of our recommendations is an encouragement to explicitly attend to (and potentially problematize and transform) the (explicit and implicit) expectations, norms, and common practices embedded within a given unit, program, department, and/or college context.

### **Summary of Recommendations**

- With respect to faculty service, we all must remain curious about the ways in which we can attend to and disrupt covert gendered and racialized norms that persist in faculty life.

- Units and the institution should recognize other identities pertinent to a faculty member's ability to engage in service and their impacts on service. Consider how other relevant identities affect the workload of the faculty member, particularly as they relate to annual performance evaluation, tenure, and promotion, as well as general wellbeing and success of the faculty member.
- The institution and units should create and present clarity of service expectations and appropriate award of protection from service for other workload responsibilities.
- Structural inequities in service should be evaluated and addressed, beginning at the level of the institution and then with colleges and units as it relates to service workload baselines and identity "roles" on committees.
- Culture surrounding service should be investigated and addressed, particularly as it pertains to hidden consequences for saying no to service requests, pressuring faculty into service, and recognition of academic caregiving.
- Cultural differences between colleges should be investigated further to understand how this may impact equity in service and determine if it is yet another form of structural inequity, or if it is related just a practical difference that makes sense.
- The institution, colleges, and departments should seek a better understanding of academic caregiving as an essential component to the work of the institution and unveil the type of academic work being done by faculty and account for that work in annual performance, tenure, and promotion reviews. This should include defining common academic caregiving practices allowing faculty to recognize the type of caregiving in which they may already be participating.
- Create a pathway within Watermark™ to make academic caregiving easily reportable, transparent, and available for review.
- Determine the components of service that are required for consistent reporting for annual performance, tenure, and promotion reviews to help avoid service inequity.

### **Service Equity Tools**

The following tools can be utilized by the institution, colleges, departments, and/or individuals to assist with exploration of harm reduction in service.

- Faculty Service Audit
- Committee Expectations Tool
- Faculty On-Campus Committee Service Expectations Rubric
- Department Equity Action Plan
- Academic & Institutional Caregiving: A Reflection Tool

Importantly, enhancing equity in faculty service work must be ongoing. To be sure, achieving equity in faculty service work (or equity in any institutional practice) requires radical and collective engagement that goes beyond a one-year task force or a set of recommendations and

tools. However, along the way to achieving equity in this domain of faculty labor, we can commit to harm reduction strategies that can 1) enhance clarity and transparency within the faculty service experience, 2) reduce the burden of inequity found in service work, and 3) empower us to imagine new practices that promote equity with respect to faculty service.