

**Summary: What Associate Professors need to understand about institutional service commitments**

- Carefully consider the implications of the service requests you receive on your career goal before requesting or accepting a nomination.
- When make decisions about committee service, enquire about the committee workloads and perceived value.
- When making decisions about administrative appointments include in your deliberations the impact of the change in the appointment or your workload, portfolio development and time to promotion
- Devote time to discussing institution service commitments, including administrative appointments, with your department chair during annual reviews.



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## Resources for Associate Professors

Asking for guidance about service commitments

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What institutional service issues confront Associate Professors?

Associate Professors frequently ask questions such as "What is the right amount of institutional service? How does the P&T committee view institutional service?" These questions are impossible to answer directly. However, your mentor/chair/dean can provide tangible guidance that can help you make informed decisions about institutional service commitments. These materials aim to provide discussion topics and guidance ideas that associate professors employ to achieve promotion to Full Professor.



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## What do we know about the path to promotion to Full Professor?

Evaluations of factors associated with successful and timely promotion to Full Professor have only received attention in recent years, because traditionally institutions have placed greater emphasis on promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor. Further, much of the data available relates to mid-career faculty, a group that contains Associate and Full Professors<sup>1-5</sup>.

## What are the requirements for institutional service for Associate Professors?

Institutional service is one of the four faculty responsibilities that may be included in the Position Responsibilities Statement: teaching, research/creative activities, extension/ professional practice, and institutional service. Promotion from Associate Professor to Full Professor requires "significant institutional service"<sup>6</sup>, compared to "satisfactory institutional service"<sup>7</sup> for promotion from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. This component of an Associate Professor's role is critical to the academic institution, as departments and colleges often rely upon Associate Professors to serve on committees that form a large part of the governance of the university. Associate Professors from departments that traditionally protect Assistant Professors from institutional service may be most unsure about how to achieve the "significant institutional service" requirement, and still meet teaching, research, and professional practice obligations.



## How does the Promotion and Tenure Committee view institutional service?

Departments have their own culture of institutional service. Your mentor should be aware of this culture and help you understand how service on particular committees has been reviewed in prior dossiers. Your mentor or chair should also discuss with you how institutional service should fit with the dossier generally. Some departments encourage faculty to serve on a committee outside their main area of scholarship. The aim of this may be to bring you into contact with members of the department, college or university that you may not frequently interact with and this interaction may be beneficial. Alternatively, some departments encourage institutional service only in the main area of scholarship to re-enforce that focus area. Discussion of the approaches to picking service appointments will again be useful and help the you decide which committee assignments to seek.

## What is the time commitment associated with particular service activities?

Institutional service encompasses a large range of activities and different time commitments. For example, the time commitment for a departmental committee is likely different from the time commitment for a university-wide committee. Similarly, some committees have sub-committees that require substantially more input than others. Chairmanship of a committee can mean the faculty member is automatically a member of other committees therefore increasing the time commitment. Make sure that you clarify these issues before deciding which committee assignments to seek. Your mentor or department chair is a good source of this information.

## What is the impact of administrative appointments on promotion to Full Professor?

Some institution service roles are actually administrative positions that require appointments such as a Director of a Center, Assistant Dean, or Associate Dean. Such positions provide excellent career advancement opportunities for faculty who intend to move into university administration. If you are considering such a position, you need to discuss the impact of such positions on your ability to develop a dossier of scholarly work consistent with promotion to Full Professor. This is particularly important if you have aspirations for administrative positions, as the majority of universities require Full Professor status for administrative positions above Associate Dean.



## Documenting "significant institutional service"?

The promotion dossier will require documentation of "significant institutional service"<sup>6</sup>. You should discuss with your mentor and chair how to document "significant institutional service". Most likely, in your prior dossier, a list of committees sufficed as evidence of "satisfactory institutional service,"<sup>7</sup> however to document "significant institutional service", different documentation may be required. It is good practice for Associate Professors to include in the annual faculty review documentation of dates, locations and outcomes of committee meetings will be helpful when preparing the promotion dossier.