

Summary: What can Mentors do to help Associate Professors understand institutional service commitments?

- Carefully consider the implications of any additional service requests on the faculty member's career goal before requesting or accepting a nomination.
- Actively help faculty members make decisions about committee service by discussing committee workloads and perceived value.
- Actively help faculty members make decisions about administrative appointments by discussing the workloads and impact of portfolio development.
- Devote time to discussing institution service commitments, including administrative appointments, in annual reviews.

References and Resources

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Resources for Chairs, Deans and Mentors

Providing guidance about service commitments to Associate Professors

Prepared by Annette O'Connor, Faculty Fellow,
Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost
and the ISU ADVANCE Program



1550 Beardshear Hall
Iowa State University
Ames, IA 50011-2021
Phone: 515-294-6151
Fax: 515-294-6427

Email: advance@iastate.edu
Web: www.advance.iastate.edu

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What institutional service issues confront Associate Professors?

Mentors are frequently asked 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, the Mentor can provide tangible guidance that helps Associate Professors make informed decisions about institutional service commitments. These materials aim to provide discussion topics and guidance ideas that Mentors, Chairs and Deans may employ to help Associate Professors 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 Professors¹⁻⁵.

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"⁶, compared to "satisfactory institutional service"⁷ 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. The Mentor should be aware of this culture and discuss it with the Associate Professor. The Mentor and mentee can discuss how service on particular committees has been reviewed in prior dossiers. The Mentor and mentee should also discuss how institutional service fits with the dossier generally. Some Associate Professors may benefit from serving on a committee outside their main area of scholarship. This may bring the Associate Professor into contact with members of the department, college or university they 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 Associate Professor decide which committee to nominate for.

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 to 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. These are issues that may be readily apparent to the Mentor, Chair or Dean, however clarification of these issues is useful in helping an Associate Professor decide which committee to nominate for.

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

Some institutional 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. Mentors need to discuss the impact of such positions on the ability of the candidate to develop a dossier of scholarly work consistent with promotion to Full Professor. It is particularly important that Associate Professors with aspirations for administrative positions are made aware that the majority of universities require Full Professor status for administrative positions above Associate Dean.



Helping Associate Professors document "significant institutional service"?

The promotion dossier will require documentation of "significant institutional service"⁶ Mentors and mentees should discuss how to document "significant institutional service" Frequently, in the prior dossier a list of committees may have sufficed as evidence of "satisfactory institutional service"⁷ for advancement from Assistant Professor to Associate Professor. However to document "significant institutional service", different documentation may be required. Encouraging faculty to include in the annual faculty review documentation of dates, locations and outcomes of committee meetings will be helpful when preparing the promotion dossier.