Does Service Count for Tenure?

Noah Borrero

Kevin Oh

Christopher Thomas

Follow this and additional works at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations

Recommended Citation
Borrero, Noah; Oh, Kevin; and Thomas, Christopher (2009) "Does Service Count for Tenure?," Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education: Vol. 35, Article 17.
Available at: http://epublications.marquette.edu/conversations/vol35/iss1/17
DOES SERVICE COUNT FOR TENURE?

Finding Meaningful Service in a Graduate School of Education: Three Assistant Professors Reflect on Their Newfound Connection to the Jesuit Mission

By Noah Borrero, Kevin Oh, and Christopher Thomas

"Service is something you do after you get tenure." "Make sure you help with some committees and that should cover your service requirement." "Just get published and no one will care about your service."

These statements are just a sampling of how service was described to us as we finished our doctoral work at large research universities.

Having never attended a Jesuit school prior to starting our careers as new assistant professors in the Graduate School of Education at the University of San Francisco (USF), we were unclear about what service would really look like. As educators, the idea of serving and conducting research with surrounding communities was what we yearned for as new members of the profession, but we did not know how feasible this would be at the start of our careers.

What we have learned is that service does matter, and the university mission encourages all faculty—new and old—to seize the opportunities to become involved in community service while pursuing a research agenda. This new understanding of service has been exciting and challenging for us and is especially for faculty new to an area and a university, finding service that is mutually beneficial—to the community and the faculty member—takes time. New faculty don’t know the community particularly well; they likely have not had many opportunities to build relationships beyond the university, and quite frankly, they may be more focused on their research and teaching. Thus, new faculty need help to make service a valuable and rewarding aspect of their first few years in the profession.

Finding service in a graduate professional school of education

As new faculty members in a graduate professional School of Education, we have received support that has helped to make service a meaningful part of our young careers. Much of this help has come directly from the faculty members who have taken the time to mentor us and include us in their service projects. We have also quickly come to learn that the foundations of service are built on a mutual investment of time and effort.
Jesuit education helps create abundant opportunities for meaningful service for new faculty. At USF, the university's vision is to educate "teachers who will fashion a more humane and just world." Likewise, the university mission seeks to promote "the values and sensitivity necessary to be men and women for others." And, "a culture of service that respects and promotes the dignity of every person" is a stated core value at USF.

More important than these words, however, is their implementation. Our graduate students, for example, take classes in the evenings and on weekends, as they are not serving classes and programs in the community during the day. Similarly, faculty are encouraged to generate and implement service-learning courses and projects to promote the goals of the university. This is where service becomes a major asset for new faculty at Jesuit universities—not only are we expected to serve on committees and review manuscripts for journals in our field here at USF, but we are encouraged and supported to get involved with community projects to help fulfill the university's motto: "educating minds and hearts to change the world."

This has been enlightening and exciting for us but it also presented us with new challenges that we had not foreseen. We have had to rethink our own visions and understandings of what our work is. We each had aspirations of connecting our work to the community, but really tied into believing this would be something we could do once we became professors. Our experiences have shown us that we can make this connection now. The new challenge has become—how do we do this in a way that is meaningful to us and the communities we serve?

There are so many opportunities to become involved in helping others that we need to be sure not to lose our sense of vision in the work. This year much of our service work called on our own expertise; but we were challenged to connect service with a larger research agenda. We needed to coherently find ways to frame our service in a single research project. We also needed to consciously avoid solely focusing on the service aspect of the opportunity and not on how we could connect the service to our research. The following section provides brief vignettes describing some of our service opportunities that served both local and international communities.

Local connections: Our graduate School of Education has made a commitment to helping improve local schools. Specifically, we are forging a strong relationship with a newly created alliance of Catholic schools serving some of San Francisco's most power...
Borrero et al.: Does Service Count for Tenure?

In the future...

Our new understanding of what service "can be" has put forth a challenge for us. We are all aspiring to do work that serves our communities. In the Graduate School of Education at USF, within the Juitsot community, we have found a place where people truly work with the communities of the world. Service-learning and research all matter, so we must find the balance to be successful at all times. This will be a challenge, but we feel fortunate to be at a place where service to the community truly matters.

### The comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hiring for excellence</th>
<th>Hiring for diversity</th>
<th>Hiring for mission</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

1. First-year new hires are less likely to be hired for a teaching assistant.
2. In the state, the hiring process is essentially a random selection process.
3. Yes, if their family or hiring managers are encouraged to hire the first group as they curious.
4. A site visit考察it at the site. Furthermore, the site visit考察it at a site.
5. An interview考察it at the interview format. The interview考察it at a format that specifically asks applicants about this.
6. It doesn't work, while some work does and vice versa.