GOOD CITIZENSHIP: A Guide to UNIVERSITY SERVICE at Western Carolina University



**TEACHING**

**SERVICE**

**RESEARCH**

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This guide was written to help faculty navigate one leg of the traditional “three-legged stool”, i.e. teaching, research, and service, of faculty work expectations. While teaching and research are covered extensively elsewhere, we thought a central resource for the third leg, service, would also be of value.

According to the Faculty Handbook,

Faculty members at Western Carolina University are expected to be effective teachers, to be practicing scholars in their disciplines, and to provide meaningful service to the university and the community. The particular mix of these activities expected will vary as a function of departmental missions and the role of the faculty member in the department. Tenure-track or tenured faculty members should be active in all three areas.

The authors designed this guide to help you consider what your experience with ‘meaningful service’ can be.

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\*This document covers academic governance within the University. Other forms of service, especially professional and community service as well as academic advising, are encouraged and/or required at WCU but are not discussed here. Please see the WCU Faculty Handbook as well as departmental or programmatic guidelines for more information.

Excerpt from Speech to the Faculty by Chair of the Faculty, Richard Beam (2006)

Service is difficult to define. I would define it as that work which we do because it needs doing. It’s that work which we do for the betterment of society. I would (and will) argue that there are many forms of service and all should be valued. Certainly, work done to advance our professions through various professional associations is important, as is the donation of our time and skills to advance the community, region, or nation, economically and socially.

 On the other hand, I would argue that there is important service to be done on campus, as well. It may be advising our students, both in the selection of classes and in broader career guidance. It may be advising a student organization or just being a friend to a student in need. It may be participation in the affairs of the university through faculty governance, committee work within the university, the colleges and the departments, or in many other forms. All are important to me, and, I believe, to the university. All should be rewarded, or, at least, recognized as valuable.

 Oh, yes. I know all of the reasons for doing as little of this university service as possible: “It takes time from my research.”; “I have too little time already to do my important stuff.” (whatever that “important stuff” is), “The faculty have no real power anyway, so what does it matter?”

I beg to differ. Important decisions are being made all around us every day. While we, as a faculty, do have little real power in the sense of control (that’s a matter of law, not of an individual’s choice), the fact is that we, as a faculty, can have considerable influence.

 I think that many of us who have been around a while will recognize that there are very few cases (I can’t really think of one) where our current administrative leaders have not taken the input of the faculty, as expressed through the Faculty Senate or in other forums, seriously. And, generally, they have responded in a manner which reflects the desires and needs of the faculty whenever it was possible. Mind you, I speak from experience with administrations where this was not always the case.

 On the other hand, decisions must be made and, if we as a faculty abdicate our right to have well reasoned input, we will find that such decisions will be made without it because they must be made. If we wish to have influence, we must make the time to participate and to see that that participation is valued. This is service which, I believe, is as important to Western Carolina University as editing a journal, chairing a professional association committee or working on a development project.

Why is University Service Important to Academic Governance?

In addition to research and teaching, service is considered one of the three ‘legs of the stool’ of faculty work in higher education. While it often does not receive as much attention or study as the other two legs, it remains an integral part of faculty and campus life. A major aspect of the service leg is participation in Academic Governance.

In 1966, the American Association of University Professors codified a statement on the role and significance of faculty governance in the administration of University affairs. You can read the full statement at their website ([www.aup.org](http://www.aup.org)); an excerpt follows below.

“This statement is a call to mutual understanding regarding the government of colleges and universities. Understanding, based on community of interest and producing joint effort, is essential for at least three reasons. First, the academic institution, public or private, often has become less autonomous; buildings, research, and student tuition are supported by funds over which the college or university exercises a diminishing control. Legislative and executive governmental authorities, at all levels, play a part in the making of important decisions in academic policy. If these voices and forces are to be successfully heard and integrated, the academic institution must be in a position to meet them with its own generally unified view. Second, regard for the welfare of the institution remains important despite the mobility and interchange of scholars. Third, a college or university in which all the components are aware of their interdependence, of the usefulness of communication among themselves, and of the force of joint action will enjoy increased capacity to solve educational problems.”

Some Definition of Terms:

GOVERNING BODIES:

Committee-A committee is a small, deliberative assembly. University committees usually serve to provide governance, project management, coordination, and/or research. This is the most common form that University governance takes.

Council-The difference between a committee and a council is not always clearly delineated in practice, but in general councils are expected to govern and, especially, to lead. The WCU Faculty Senate, for example, works on a council system. Councils are often larger than committee, but, again, there is wide variance in practice.

Standing Committee/Council-These are permanent committees are councils that exist, at least in theory, in perpetuity. A list of the standing committees and councils at WCU follows in the latter part of this guide. They usually deal with issues and policies that are an integral part of University governance.

Ad Hoc Committee/Council-These are committees or councils that are brought together for a specific purpose and are disbanded once that purpose has been completed. In other words, these are temporary committees, but what constitutes ‘temporary’ can vary widely. Some ad hoc committees serve for several years, some meet for just a single session. The QEP committees, for example, are ad hoc (because the QEP mission changes over time) but cover multiple years (accreditation is typically in 10 year cycles).

Advisory Board-These are groups that provide advice, guidance, leadership and input to directors or other bodies on campus. Many administrative bodies on campus, such as the Coulter Faculty Center or Academic Support Services, have faculty advisory boards to help them guide what they do.

Task Force-A form of ad hoc committee, usually focused on accomplishing or implementing a particular (and timely) task. For example, the Provost’s Task Force on College Restructuring developed a plan (since enacted) to change the structure of the colleges on WCU’s campus. The plan included the creation of the College of Fine and Performing Arts.

Board-A Committee with supervisory powers. At WCU, this is used most often in referring to the Board of Trustees (WCU’s governing body) and/or the Board of Governor’s (UNC-System’s governing body).

Faculty Senate-

TERM DEFINITIONS:

Annual Election-University wide elections are held on-line during the Spring semester. College-level elections are usually done at or near the same time frame.

Staggered Terms-In order to provide a mix of experience and fresh insight, many committees use staggered terms, where a proportion of members rotate off and on each year.

Rotating Terms-A somewhat broader term than staggered, rotating membership simply means that membership on the committee/council is not permanent.

ELIGIBILITY DEFINITIONS:

Full-time faculty-These categories are defined in Banner and should be part of your contract when hired. Full-time faculty usually denotes those faculty who carry a full-time teaching load (usually 3/3). While there are exceptions, part-time faculty are not usually expected to engage in University service.

Tenure-track-Another category defined in Banner and spelled out in contracts, these are faculty whom are expected to obtain tenure in their sixth year at WCU. Tenured and tenure-track faculty usually comprise the foundation of University service and the awarding of tenure carries with it service expectations.

Some General Guidelines:

Note: Every department, program, college, or other academic unit has specific objectives and parameters in which they must work. The advice and information contained in this document is considered to be broadly applicable, but the needs and specifications of individual units supersede any information presented here.

1. University service is usually considered to fall in three levels: department, college, and University, with a possible fourth level of service to the UNC system. As a general rule, your participation in University service should grow as you grow as a faculty member. A typical path is for a faculty member to begin their career by providing service to their departments and to gradually expand first to college-level service and finally to University-level service, preferably reaching the latter point before presenting their application for tenure and/or promotion.
2. Service can take many forms. The most common is to serve on a committee or council, but the experience is not limited to these forms. Giving presentations, creating documents, working in the community, mentoring, and other activities can also be considered service, though standards vary by discipline.
3. Membership on committees and other service groups often have proscribed representation, usually either by rank (Assistant, Associate, Full, Emeritus Professor), status (Non-tenure track, tenure track, tenured, pre-Tenure), college (Arts & Sciences, Education and Allied Professions, Fine and Performing Arts, Business, Health and Human Sciences, Kimmel School, Graduate School, Hunter Library, Honors), or discipline (Recreational Therapy, Business Law, Mathematics and Computer Science, etc.). Before you can serve on any committee or council, you will need to see if you fit the vacancies in the desired areas of representation.
4. Membership of many committees is done on a rotating basis, so that some members remain from year to year while some rotate off and need to be replaced by new members. Two or three year terms are common on many committees. Ad hoc committees may have shorter and/or unspecified term lengths (i.e. the committee continues to meet until the work is completed).
5. Members on committees and councils are usually determined either by election, nomination/appointment, or on a volunteer basis. The list that follows these guidelines contains some information on which committees use which methods. Elections for many University committees take place during the Spring semester and utilize a common roster.
6. Service is integral to the health of the University and to the career of a faculty member, but, as in most things, balance is important. Each department/program has different expectations as to the relative balance of teaching, research, and service and you should consult with your department head about what is expected of you. You should never do service to the detriment of development in the other two areas.
7. Service is required for tenure, promotion, and advancement at WCU. That being said, it should not be done simply because it is required. Those that find service to be most constructive try to choose service activities that are meaningful to their work as a teacher, researcher, local resident, or other roles. It is worthwhile to be intentional about your service and to seek out those activities that connect to other aspects of your life and work. This guide was developed with the purpose of helping faculty to be intentional about their service by providing a broad overview of the opportunities available.
8. Service can also be integrated with research and teaching in other ways. WCU recognizes the Scholarship of Engagement as a significant form of research and rewards faculty for including students in their research, teaching, and service activities. For more information, see the WCU Faculty Handbook and your departmental tenure and promotion documents.

**DEPARTMENT LEVEL**

Department level committees vary considerably by discipline, college, etc. Your department head should have a complete list of current department committees. Membership, terms, and eligibility (for most committees) also vary, so that information is not included in this document.

REQUIRED COMMITTEES:

Departments at WCU are required to have the following committee:

\*Collegial Review Committee

RECOMMENDED COMMITTEES:

Departments at WCU are encouraged (per the Faculty Constitution) to have the following committees:

\*Curriculum Committee(s)

\*Strategic Planning Committee

\*Student Advisory Committee

FREQUENT COMMITTEES

Many departments also contain committees in the following areas (names may vary):

\*Library Committee
Description: Library committees typically work with the department’s library liaison on the acquisition and development of library resources

\*Technology Committee
Description: Technology committees typically work with issues related to departmental technology needs, including faculty computers, software software and acquisition, classroom/lab computers, and technological policy.

\*Awards Committee(s)
Description: Awards committees typically work to publicize and identify exemplary faculty, staff and/or students to receive department-level awards and honors.

OTHER COMMITTEES/SERVICE:

Departments typically have a host of other standing and ad hoc committees, depending on disciplinary or programmatic needs, timely issues, and departmental initiatives.

In addition to committee work, there are also opportunities to provide departmental level service in the form of Web Page Maintenance, Newsletter production, Secretary/Note Taker, specific advising duties, program leadership, and similar responsibilities.

**COLLEGE LEVEL:**

Just like departments, colleges vary as well but standing committees in the colleges are included as a part of this guide.

REQUIRED:

\*Dean’s Advisory Committee
\*Student Advisory Committee
\*Elections Committee
\*Collegial Review Committee
\*Strategic Planning Committee

RECOMMENDED:

\*Award(s) Committee

\*Assessment Committee
\*Technology Committee

Colleges typically have a host of other standing and ad hoc committees, depending on disciplinary or programmatic needs, timely issues, and college and University level initiatives.