Asked More Often:
Gender Differences in Faculty Workload in Research Universities and the Work Interactions that Shape Them

By KerryAnn O'Meara, Professor of Higher Education, University of Maryland
Alexandra Kuvaeva, Doctoral Candidate, University of Maryland
Gudrun Nyunt, Doctoral Candidate, University of Maryland
Chelsea Waugaman, Doctoral Candidate, Clemson University
Rose Jackson, MA, The Universities at Shady Grove
Guided by research on gendered organizations and faculty careers, we examined gender differences in how research university faculty spend their work time and the everyday workplace interactions that produce differences, with a particular emphasis on campus service. Our study used a time-diary approach that allowed us to understand faculty work activities at a micro level of detail, as recorded by faculty themselves over four weeks. Though time-diary approaches have a long history in social science research that strives to understand events that occur in a specific period of time (Hofferth & Sandberg, 2001; Juster & Stafford, 1985), they have not been a popular method in studies of faculty workload and time use. In addition to recording their work activities in 5-minute intervals in the time diary, we asked participants to complete an in-take survey to share information about their ongoing work activities. Participants also recorded new work requests that they received during the four weeks and their responses.

Our participants were 111 associate and full professors from 13 universities that are members of the Big 10 Conference, the oldest Division I collegiate athletic conference in the U.S., and the Association of American Universities. Our participants were representative of the invited sample by race/ethnicity. However, women and associate professors were overrepresented, suggesting that faculty with higher service and/or teaching loads were more willing to participate.

Our findings supported previous research that indicated that women spend more time on teaching and service-related activities than men (Acker & Armenti, 2004; Carrigan, Quinn, & Riskin, 2011; Clark & Corcoran, 1986; Link, Swan, & Bozemann, 2008; Misra, Lundquist, Holmes, & Agiomavritis, 2011; O'Meara, Kvaeva, & Nyunt, 2017; Park, 1996; Winslow, 2010). Our study also supported previous findings that associate professors are more involved with teaching and service than full professors and less satisfied with service distribution (Modern Language Association of America, 2009; Stout, Staiger, & Jennings, 2007).

Specifically, we found statistically significant gender differences with women reporting more involvement in teaching-related activities (i.e., chairing masters' theses, comps papers or undergraduate projects) and men more involvement in research- and professional service-related activities (i.e., publishing journal articles, having or planning on submitting one or more grants, serving as a journal editor). Based on faculty time diaries, women reported more hours per week spent on teaching-related activities than men (i.e., reading dissertations/theses/capstone projects/comps paper), while men reported spending more hours per week on research-related activities (i.e., lab/fieldwork/general research preparation). Men also reported spending almost twice as much time as women in professional conversations with colleagues.

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Fig. 1. Type of Request - Male Faculty

Fig. 2. Type of Request - Female Faculty
In regard to rank, we found statistically significant differences between associate and full professors with full professors being more likely to serve in more professional service and research-related roles (i.e., journal editor, off-campus professional presentations, PI of active grant). Associate professors were less likely to believe that the distribution of service work in their department is fair. In their time diaries, full professors reported more total work, more time on research overall as well as more time on select research activities (i.e., manuscript preparation; lab, field work, general research preparation, research group meetings), while associate professors reported more time spent on teaching and advising (i.e., course administration and advising undergraduate students).

Our most interesting finding, however, related to gender differences in workplace interactions shaping workload. Over the four weeks, the 111 participants reported a total of 496 work activity requests (see Fig.1 and 2 for type of requests by gender and Fig. 3 for who the requestors were). Across all four weeks, women received 3.4 more requests for new work activities than men; the requests women received were more likely to focus on teaching, student advising, and professional service. We also found that women received more work activity requests from women and men more requests from men. Women were not necessarily saying yes more often than men, in fact both she and her male colleague said yes about 3/4th of the time (women said yes to 72% of the requests received; men said yes to 82% of the requests received); nor were their reasons for saying yes or no that different. Rather, the women faculty member received more requests; prompting more decisions.

Our findings shed light on how time use is shaped by a number of factors that foster cumulative disadvantage for women faculty careers and reproduce inequality. Imagine a male and female faculty member; both start their academic careers within a gendered research university wherein organizational logic values research over teaching and service (Acker, 1990; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). Before the female faculty member even begins her work week, she is scheduled to be involved in more teaching-related activities while her male colleagues is scheduled to serve as an editor, prepare publications, and engage in professional conversations about research with colleagues. The work week begins and she receives more new work requests than he does. She does not say yes or no more than her colleague; however, she has to consider and come up with more responses. More of the male faculty member's requests will be from off-campus colleagues who can advance his career and involve him in more research activities; more of the female faculty member's requests will be related to teaching and campus service. Though these activities may be fulfilling, they will not count much toward career advancement in her institution or field. Furthermore, more of her requests will be from other women who she recognizes expect her kinship

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and communal behavior (O'Meara, 2016). By the time these two faculty have reached mid-career one has accumulated more of the social capital necessary to advance. They did not start as equals, but what happened in the organizing of work along the way, further enhanced the male faculty member's career advantage, reproducing a gendered organization. Our full-length article outlines implications for new research on gendered social interactions in faculty careers and for gender equity reform in universities.


Dr. KerryAnn O'Meara is Professor of Higher Education, Director of the ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence, and Affiliate Faculty in Women's Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park. Dr. O'Meara received her B.A. in English Literature from Loyola University in Maryland, her M.A. in Higher Education from The Ohio State University, and her Ph.D. in Education Policy from the University of Maryland. Dr. O'Meara research on organizational practices that facilitate the full participation of diverse faculty and the legitimacy of diverse scholarship in the academy. She studies organizational policies, practices, and cultures with an eye toward changing them to be more inclusive, equitable, and agency-enhancing for all faculty. All correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Dr. O'Meara at komeara@umd.edu.

Alexandra Kuvaeva is a doctoral candidate in International Education Policy and research assistant at the University of Maryland. She received her MA in International Education Policy from the University of Maryland. Her research interests include gender, education policies, and impact of globalization on higher education.

Gudrun Nyunt is a doctoral candidate in the Student Affairs concentration and serves as a Faculty Specialist for the ADVANCE Program for Inclusive Excellence at the University of Maryland, College Park. She received her B.A. in Journalism from the State University of New York at New Paltz and her Master's in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of Connecticut. Her research interests focus on educational initiatives that prepare students for engaged participation in a global society and she currently serves as Chair of ACPA's Commission for the Global Dimensions of Student Development.

Chelsea Waugaman is a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership-Higher Education program at Clemson University. She earned her MA in Higher Education Administration from the University of Maryland and her BA in English from Baldwin Wallace University. Her research interests center on the academic profession, specifically on promotion and tenure, faculty career trajectories and development, college teaching and learning, and student learning assessment.

Rose Jackson is the Research and Data Coordinator for the Universities at Shady Grove. She earned her Master's in Higher Education Administration from the University of Maryland and her B.S. in Business Administration from Frostburg State University. Her research interests include the intersectionality of gender and faculty/staff development, student learning assessment and college access and choice.

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