Evaluation of Scholarship

Interdisciplinary, collaborative, and engaged scholarship is increasingly emphasized by funding agencies and the public. A number of studies have shown that more institutions are hiring for interdisciplinarity, and that faculty want interdisciplinary research to be evaluated and recognized more effectively, but that their academic reward systems have not caught up (National Academy of Sciences (U.S.) & Institute of Medicine (U.S.), 2005).

Major findings:

- Less than half agreed that their unit supports engaged scholarship (46.8%) or cutting edge research (43.2%).
- Associate Professors generally reported significantly less favorable views of assessment in these areas.

Many faculty felt interdisciplinary and engaged research is not evaluated consistently and positively in their unit. One faculty member received advice from her mentor to avoid collaborating altogether to show independence as a scholar.

Only 54.4% agreed that their unit supports interdisciplinary scholarship, 46.8% engaged scholarship, and 43.2% cutting edge research. Additionally, there were several differences by rank, with Associate Professors less likely to report feeling that collaborative research or cutting edge research is rewarded.

“There is a presumption that I should publish [in the original discipline] journals. Instead I am appearing in [several other journal areas] and that is a tension that is going on in my department for me.”
“Since we are doing cutting edge work that is not only (one discipline) but also (another discipline) based, as well. To publish in the journals that my college deems as credible has been very problematic.”

MANAGEMENT OF TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND SERVICE RESPONSIBILITIES

Many studies have shown that faculty who report manageable and fair workloads are more likely to be satisfied and indicate intent to stay at an institution (Rosser, 2004; Rosser & Townshend, 2006; Daly & Dee, 2006; Seifert & Umbach, 2008; Xu, 2008a).

Major findings:
- 90.5% of faculty felt in charge of their research.
- 66.8% reported having control over managing their teaching responsibilities.

Most respondents felt ownership and control over their faculty roles and responsibilities. Ninety percent of faculty reported feeling in charge of their research, 66.8% reported control of managing their teaching responsibilities, and 52.3% of respondents reported feeling in control of their service participation.

DIFFERENCES: GENDER & RANK

There were several differences in respondent’s experience of management of teaching, research and service by gender: women were less likely to report being in control of their teaching and service activities, and felt less able to say no to additional service activities without negative consequences.

There is great inequity in my unit in regards to workload, salary and administrative responsibilities... It is difficult to balance teaching, service and professional scholarship, in addition to maintaining [a personal life].

There were differences by rank in every item: Associate Professors were less likely to feel in control of their teaching responsibilities, service activities, and direction of their research. Further, they felt that there was less support in their departments for effective teaching, and it was less possible to say no to additional on-campus service activities without negative consequences.

The teaching and service load in our unit is extreme and leaves very little time for advancing one’s professional work. Teaching rarely connects with faculty interests and is inflexible. Rather than trying to assist faculty and find ways to reduce this load as other administrators on campus do, the administration creates rules that are inflexible and burdensome.

REFERENCES


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