Motivations for Public Service Among Highly Engaged Faculty
Marc Schenker, MD & Elizabeth Reosti, M.A.
University of California, Davis

Introduction
It’s no secret that Outreach and Engagement (O&E) is often the least rewarded aspect of a research university’s mission and subject to multiple barriers (Colbeck and Michael 2006; O’Meara 2008). The question remains of why, then, do some faculty members dedicate significant time and effort to O&E?

The answer to this question is crucial to sustaining this core function of public universities. To better understand motivations of O&E, we conducted a survey of a select group of faculty who have received institutional acknowledgement for their O&E efforts.

Survey Design
• Each year the UC Davis Academic Senate recognizes who have made significant contributions to the broader non-academic community with the Academic Senate Distinguished Public Service Award
• This award is intended to award “the unpaid, focused and sustained direct extension of a faculty member’s disciplinary or technical expertise to the public and non-profit sector.”
• This award has been given to 69 faculty members since 1990. The 65 living recipients of this award represent a purposeful sample of recognized elites in their academic O&E accomplishments.
• In February 2015, we distributed a 29 question survey to the living recipients of this award to better understand the individual and institutional values toward outreach and engagement as well as information on the scope and purpose of each faculty member’s outreach and engagement efforts.

Key Findings
• Faculty from the School of Medicine and College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences make up approximately 50% of the awardees
• Faculty from social sciences, engineering, mathematical and physical sciences, law, humanities, arts and cultural studies, biological sciences, education, and veterinary medicine make up the remaining 50% of awardees.
• Of all past recipients, 77% are male and 23% are female

Influencers of O&E
Respondents universally said that personal values, a sense of responsibility, and feeling that their work has purpose were the most important motivating factors for conducting O&E

Conclusion
Respondents reported that Emphasis on research and research publication, Department or colleagues do not consider engagement as contributing to scholarship, Low percentage of recognized outreach or extension work assignment as the most significant barriers to their O&E work

References