

Motivations for Public Service Among Highly Engaged Faculty

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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.

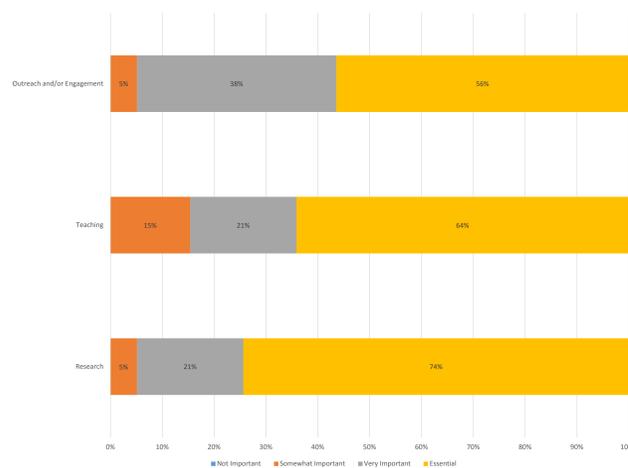
Survey Design

- 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

Perceived Importance of Research, Teaching, and O&E
n=39

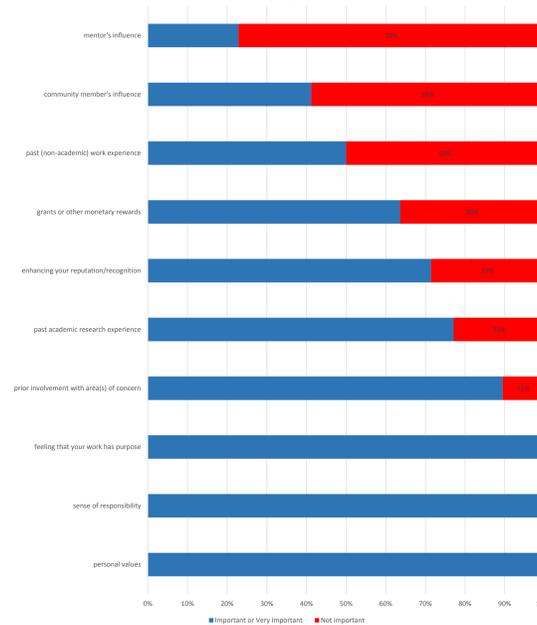


- Only 16.7% of past recipients identified as non-white.
- The relatively low proportion of female and minority recipients of this award is surprising given evidence suggesting that non-white and female faculty members are more likely to be involved in O&E (Demb and Wade 2009, 2012; Doberneck et. al. 2012)

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

Motivators of O&E Work
n=39



Respondents reported **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

Conclusion

Views on Reward System for O&E, Teaching, and Research
n=39

	Needs to be rewarded LESS	No change needed	Needs to be rewarded MORE
On-campus teaching activities	5%	29%	63%
Basic research activities	16%	71%	11%
Academic outreach and/or engagement	0%	16%	79%

- From these results, it is clear that personal values and beliefs are the strongest motivation for engagement activities, with other communal and institutional factors playing a mediating role, or sometimes, as a barrier
- A full 23% of this sample reported they took no specific actions to document their O&E in their scholarly record
- Almost 40% of the sample reported that O&E was not supported on campus, meaning these faculty members were motivated to participate in O&E in spite of negative context beliefs
- Even though 79% of respondents felt that O&E activities should be rewarded more, the percentage of respondents who felt research and teaching should be rewarded less was small, 16% and 5%, respectively

References

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2. Demb, A., & Wade, A. (2012). Reality Check: Faculty Involvement in Outreach & Engagement. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 83(3), 337-366.
3. Doberneck, D., Glass, C., & Schweitzer, J. (2012). Beyond Activity, Place, and Partner: How Publicly Engaged Scholarship Varies by Intensity of Activity and Degree of Engagement. *Journal of Community Engagement and Scholarship*, 4(2).
4. O'Meara, K. (2008). Motivation for Faculty Community Engagement: Learning from Exemplars. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 12(1), 7-30.