

**White Paper: Faculty Service @ Saint Louis University – Values, Visibility, and Equity in Workload**  
**November 22, 2021 [First Draft]**  
**April 7, 2022 [Revised Draft]**  
**August 23, 2022 [Final]**

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Saint Louis University (SLU) is a private, Catholic, Jesuit University. SLU mission centralizes “service to others” and the “pursuit of truth.” SLU strives for excellence in our academic and community-facing activities where equity and justice are a common goal. Efforts towards equity on and off campus have a long standing tradition at SLU including the initiation of the SLU TRIO program in 1984, 1818 program, OccupySLU, among many others. This work happens with students, faculty, staff, and administration. For tenure and non-tenure faculty, “service to others” is an expected part of their annual workloads and commonly called service. It is inclusive of professional, university, departmental, and public or community-based service that utilizes their academic expertise. In 2020, SLU undertook the creation of a new university faculty workload policy that sought to define service and provide guidance to colleges, schools, and departments. The new policy was finalized and active on June 1, 2021 and now requires that individual academic units create their own workload plans for faculty as it aligns with the needs, values, and promotion and tenure expectations of their unit.

This study and accompanying report aim to aid in these workload policy creations given how faculty service assignments and expectations can create invisible inequities leading to barriers in professional advancement for women and faculty from minoritized racial groups. Inequities on campus stand in contrast to our mission and future aims. Thus, this study provides a proverbial “look in the mirror” for aiding workload and promotion and tenure policy creation and their implementation.

**Studying Faculty Service @ SLU**

Faculty workload includes time in teaching, research, service, and administrative tasks. However, this workload distribution varies by individual faculty, discipline, college, and university depending on many factors and leading to ambiguity and inequity (O’Meara et al., 2019). Many studies to date show inequities in workload by gender and race, with women (O’Meara et al., 2017) and faculty from minoritized racial groups (Wood et al., 2015) engaging in more service. In particular, women from minoritized racial groups (e.g., Black/African American, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous/First People) experience particular demands for service in order to represent both women and a racial group (Hurtado & Figueroa, 2013; Turner et al., 2008). Yet service continues to be undervalued in the tenure and promotion process (Kanter, 1989; O’Meara et al., 2019). The outcome of this inequity in service workload is increased stress, increased length of time to advancement, and lower retention of women and faculty from minoritized racial groups, in particular (Eagan Jr & Garvey, 2015; Watts & Robertson, 2011). There is less research on the workload and advancement of faculty who are part of minoritized sexual and transgender/gender expansive groups (e.g., lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer; LGBTQ), though what is available suggests LGBTQ faculty who are “out” (or visible as LGBTQ), report being asked to serve on departmental and university committees because of their minoritized identities (Garvey & Rankin, 2018). The overabundance of service workload, the lack of reward or recognition for their efforts, and hostile campus climates are associated with a lack of retention and work satisfaction for faculty from minoritized groups (Garvey & Rankin, 2018; Turner et al., 2008; Victorino et al., 2013).

There are ways to mitigate inequity in faculty workload and advancements. One such step is defining, or making visible, what service workload is and how it is valued by academic leadership who evaluate faculty, assign workload, and review the promotion and tenure processes. This study aims to achieve this step for SLU across department, schools, and colleges in order to guide policy formulated by the Office of the Provost. In

addition, we believe our findings will be generalizable to other universities who are struggling to define service workload and develop a culture within which service is equitably distributed and valued.

### **Method**

This study took a qualitative, descriptive approach (Colorafi & Evans, 2016) where the focus is on description of the "everydayness" of faculty service. In this way, the goal was to develop concrete, meaningful descriptions that situate service activities within the academic worlds of particular academic units. Being-in an academic context and performing service activities carries particular meaning and value, as a result. Thus, we aimed to understand this from the perspective of those in academic leadership who make judgments about service activities as part of the faculty workload assignments and in reviewing promotion and tenure applications. Human subjects research approval was obtained from the SLU IRB (#32059).

### **Procedures**

This study followed four distinct steps: 1) interviews with department chairs or those overseeing workload assignments and faculty reviews (here forward called "interview participants"); 2) analysis for initial themes drawn from the interviews; and 3) dissemination of initial themes drawn from the interviews to university stakeholders and the faculty-at-large for comment, refinement, and feedback; and 4) final theme development and implications drawn. First, interview participants were recruited through leadership meetings and via email where recruitment flyers were distributed. This yielded 30 volunteers for the interviews and 26 completed the one-time, semi-structured interview (see Table 1 for interview protocol) conducted by the first author. The interviews took place during August, September, and October of 2021 via Zoom and were audio recorded. No incentives were offered for participation. Interviews lasted 20 to 44 minutes. Most interviewees became more candid as the interview went on, although a few seemed to maintain "talking points" and some seemed concerned about loss of confidentiality.

Upon completion of each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed by Zoom and then corrected for accuracy and cleaned by a research assistant or the first author for identifying information. Both the recordings and transcriptions were stored on an encrypted computer and Google Drive Folder that was only shared between the authors and a research assistant. Analysis of the interviews commenced with coding and initial thematic development (described below). When choosing quotes for the themes, care was taken to use quotes that did not identify a participant.

Next, dissemination of the initial thematic findings to university stakeholders and faculty were completed. This was done through meetings with one large (87 attendees including provost leadership, deans, and associate deans) and two small groups (18 attendees including department chairs and faculty gender equity committee members) of stakeholders. Notes were taken by the first author who presented the study and findings at all the meetings. Meetings took place in the spring of 2022. Then a campus-wide, web-based Qualtrics survey was sent to all faculty seeking those who were full time employed faculty, on the tenure, or non-tenure track, and at any rank (assistant, associate, or full). The survey included the three initial themes, associated quotes, and some commentary developed by the authors. Faculty completed the survey with comments via open text box (e.g., "Comments and reactions to Theme 1") for each theme in the spring of 2022.

### **Thematic Analysis**

Analysis followed the thematic analysis steps outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). During each interview, the first author took extensive notes and documented evocative language and examples offered about service activities and how they are valued. After each interview, the first author took reflective notes about the experience. This was the beginning of the data analysis. These notes were used when reviewing interviews for coding, identifying quotes, and for developing initial themes. Then the notes with quotes and codes were reviewed two times by the authors to generate commentary and reflection for thickening the thematic descriptions with salient examples.

Next, initial themes were shared with university stakeholders including faculty, deans, department chairs, and associate provosts for generating new meanings, diverging explanations, and amend our final themes and conclusions. This was shared both through formal presentations in meetings to various groups and via a web-based sent to all faculty. Comments left by faculty on the survey were coded for agreement, diverging perspectives or examples, and used to define a meta-theme. In addition, the comments served to refine themes, offer concrete implications, and provide stories about the impacts and tensions experienced in faculty service activities.

### **Context**

The context of this study seemed significant for shaping what was discussed and how participants were experiencing faculty service activities. First, the university is a private, religiously affiliated institution located in the Midwest of the United States of America. There are cultural values associated with both the location and racial history of the region. In addition, the university has an espoused goal to increase their reputation as a research institution and is currently a Carnegie Research 2 ranking (designates “Doctoral Universities: Higher Research Activity”). In addition, SLU, like many others, has seen recent years of lost faculty and staff to early retirement and hiring freezes; thus, faculty in many departments described feeling overextended. From 2020 to 2022, a global pandemic created a loss of faculty time, energy, and concerns about mental health of faculty, staff, and students. The latter shifted resources and the focus of faculty and departmental activities.

Where possible, we identified how this context mattered in the findings, and the analysis attempted to find transferrable findings to general faculty and departmental life. In many ways, this context created a heightened awareness of faculty service given its absence and changes in recent years. To protect the identity of the interview and faculty participants from minoritized racial and ethnic groups who were part of the study, their racial identities were not connected to quotes in the findings. Quotes are noted by either interview participant (e.g., department leadership who were interviewed) or faculty participants (e.g., faculty who took part in and commented on the web-based survey).

### **Rigor**

The role of the authors as faculty members allowed us to enter the study as part of this lived world and aided in contextualizing the findings (Crist & Tanner, 2003). Bias is inevitable in any research study (including quantitative approaches) in implicit and explicit measurement and analysis choices (Wilholt, 2009). In qualitative research, this becomes part of the process of analysis and study (Smith & Shinebourne, 2012). For this study, we used a team approach, two coders reviewing all the data gathered for analysis, and each kept reflective notes to aid in interpreting the findings from within our shared academic worlds. Initial themes were further refined through member checking with university stakeholders at meetings and a campus-wide survey completed by faculty, as described above. The survey comments from faculty provided a check on assumptions and perspectives given in the initial interviews with department leadership and the authors’ position as faculty members. This also became a check on saturation and meaning of the data in the coding (Hennink et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2018).

### **Participants**

Interview participants were predominately racially white and non-Hispanic/Latinx (81%) with 34% identifying as women. Most schools and colleges were represented in the study; though this does not mean all faculty and departments were represented in the findings. The interview participants ranged in their time as faculty at the university from one year to 44 years and as a department chair or similar role from less than one year to 19 years. Departments, programs, and schools/colleges represented in the sample varied greatly by size with some identifying three full time faculty to over 30. Several mentioned managing additional adjunct faculty that varied by semester and year. Faculty participants ( $n = 151$ ; gender: 105 women, 43 men, 3 prefer not to say; racially/ethnically: 126 White, 3 Black/African American, 11 Asian, 6 Latinx/Hispanic, 5 prefer not to say or another) who took part in the web-based survey ranged in time employed at the university across increments – 46 at 10-20 years, 36 more than 20 years, 38 at 5 to 10 years, and 31 at 0 to 5 years.

Table 1. Interview Protocol

1. First, tell me a little bit about yourself, rank and title, academic field, how long you've been at SLU, what department you oversee, and your age, race/ethnicity, and gender?
2. Tell me what faculty service looks like in your department.
3. What do you value about faculty service?
4. Where do you see problems or challenges with faculty service?
5. How is service considered in promotion and tenure?
6. What are your initial reactions to the idea of a tenure and/or non-tenure faculty position that is service oriented?

### Confidentiality

Upon completion of each interview, the audio recordings were transcribed by Zoom and then corrected for accuracy and cleaned by a research assistant or the PI for identifying information. Both the recordings and transcriptions were stored on a SLU encrypted computer and then a SLU Google Drive Folder only shared between the PI and the research assistant. All identifying information of participants, including recordings, will be destroyed after dissemination is complete. When choosing quotes for the themes, care was taken to use quotes that did not identify a participant based on the examples given or language. Quotes are noted by an assigned number given to participants with no demographic or other data provided.

### Findings

The analysis identified one meta-theme – *Values in tension* – and three themes – *The paradox of faculty service: valued “check boxes” and invisible “caregiving”*; *“We are stretched thin,” “Workload nimbleness” and confusion*; and a subtheme of *inequity in burden and advancement*. Taken together, the themes articulate the facets of faculty life that often remain unaccounted for and are in competition with the performance expectations for teaching and scholarship regarding promotion and tenure. The themes also reflect the various ways that faculty are advised to manage their workload given promotion and tenure expectations and the impact of a service-oriented mission of the university on departments who are also striving to create functional academic units.

### Values in Tension

The meta-theme of *values in tension* describes an inherent aspect of faculty life where service is valued, connected to the university mission, and competes for time and energy with other, more visible and valued aspects of faculty life (e.g., scholarship, teaching). The university mission is often lived out in faculty service roles and activities because they are community facing or create community on campus. This seemed to be especially salient for practice disciplines (e.g., medicine, nursing, graduate and undergraduate healthcare programs). However, we found faculty service of all kinds (e.g., committee role, professional organization, high school outreach, industry engagement, etc.) contributed to the university's reputation, faculty development, student success, functionality of the institution, and a shared ethos of mission-driven service and “good will.” Undermining the value of faculty service was the wide divergence in how well it was encouraged and supported by academic structures. For example, almost universally the department leadership interview and faculty participants commented on promotion and tenure guidelines that evaluate service with a “check box,” which is fulfilled in an instrumental or strategic manner.

*“There is so much work that is time-consuming and emotionally taxing that is the heart and soul of [the university] and it's departments and programs. Many of the faculty who engage in this work were drawn to the mission of this university but this university's commitment to this mission feels surface level because this portion of our evaluations and T&P [tenure and promotion] assessments accounts for so little.”* (faculty)

Because promotion and tenure guidelines across departments clearly favored scholarship, interview participants noted discouraging junior faculty and funded faculty researchers who contribute to the university's reputation and finances from taking on service. Ironically, participants also told stories of losing excellent faculty to more

prestigious universities because, in their service roles they became strong leaders and were committed to community engagement but did not produce traditional forms of scholarship.

To understand this phenomenon holistically, two of the department leadership interviewees offered an apt metaphor for faculty service – *caregiving*. Caregiving provides functionality of an environment to support and nurture the growth of others while often remaining unseen and unacknowledged despite the benefits experienced by others for the work. In an academic setting this includes faculty service that makes possible the growth of students, peers, staff, programs, community organizations, and the overall university. *Values in tension* remained salient here as most faculty participants identified clear issues of equity in attempting to balance the varied caregiving needs of the university, community, and their individual advancement:

*“I concur that ‘innovation in account and valuing service’ is essential for the university, for colleges and school, departments, and individuals. Our current approach to workload accountability is a form of exploitation when we neglect these aspects of work while selectively counting others. Service, large and small, is indeed the glue that holds the entire mission together and advances it in meaningful ways.”* (faculty)

Several commented how the university “celebrates and rewards research dollars” versus non-reimbursable service activities (e.g., serving on a community organization board). This is reflected in the promotion and tenure process where tensions arise in what is given the most consideration. Largely, all participants agreed traditional scholarship (namely, publications and grant awards) and teaching awards were given more consideration by departmental and university committees when it comes to merit pay increases and in promotion decision making.

The three themes to follow further describe the various *values in tension* that emerge as it relates to service activities. These themes describe visibility and “what counts” for service, differences in who is asked to perform service activities, a general feeling of not having enough and being asked to do too much, and (the lack of) nimbleness in an academic system. In the end, the themes identify points of tension at various systemic and academic levels creating a constriction of possibilities where generosity and flexibility could also reside.

### **The paradox of faculty service: valued “check boxes” and invisible “caregiving”**

The visibility of faculty service activities varied greatly in participants’ descriptions and the degree of value assigned by the participant seemed to stay the same. Some service activities could be easily documented on a curriculum vitae. The commonly known (and visible) service activities of internal committee work and professional engagement with industry and national organizations were referenced often. Most considered this to be valuable for maintaining faculty and university visibility and influence on multiple levels. For example, these activities included journal editor or advisory board, grant reviewer, officer for national or regional association, and department or university committee.

Yet there appeared a whole other category of service activities that were less visible. Participants gave these activities many names – “*a big bucket where all unpaid or unrecognized work goes*” (interview participant), “*the glue that holds your path together*” (faculty participant), and “*it’s the third prop on the stool that always gets short shrift*” (interview participant). All of these activities equated to work that remained in the background of other roles or accomplishments including attending student recruitment events that brought increased enrollment; outreach to area high schools for promoting science and technology education; recruiting first generation students, picking up pizza for the student welcome event, and agreeing to mentor the department’s student association. One participant noted: “*you can’t quantify it, but if you don’t have it, you certainly miss it*” (interview participant).

Some resisted having to count service activities, calling it “bean counting” (interview participant) and time consuming. Instead most interview participants, when discussing this kind of more invisible but still valued faculty service, wanted faculty to “pull their own weight” and create a collective effort without needing to quantify it. When faculty were asked in the survey about this phenomenon, they pointed to financial constraints that contributed to changing attitudes about service roles and activities and perhaps agreement to not count all

service activities. Though this was mostly due to feeling overly “watched” and “micro-managed” in their workload efforts:

*“We had a culture of collective effort in our department which worked very well until budget pressures increased workload and the concurrent bean-counting began. Now, some faculty are refusing to do service work.”* (faculty)

Some participants described trying to create a culture of service in the department that is connected to the university mission. For example, one interviewee defined faculty service as “intrinsic to our identity as a department.” It seemed to create a tolerance for more invisible service. Yet in this effort, there were several participants noted how service, even if fitting in the mission and identity of the department and university, can be time consuming and not generate traditional forms of scholarship for consideration in promotion and tenure:

*“You can do significant work with others or with community groups, but if you don't somehow get paid to do it or you don't get a publication out of it, it doesn't count for anything I mean it wasn't a line on my CV.”* (interview participant)

Faculty also noted this tension and concern that service recognition would undermine scholarly productivity and reputation:

*“In my experience, such service is fully appreciated and is recognized by Deans and Department chairs. It does not however ‘count’ the same as excellence in research, winning new grants, funding student research, earning recognition for outstanding teaching, or leading a committee of a national professional organization. While the forms of invisible service that you describe in Theme 1 are important to a department and the University, they are not as important to institutional academic reputation or long-term professional development of an individual as a faculty member. I am concerned that people who are looking for ‘invisible’ service to count more are ones who are short in achievement of the areas that matter more or work for a department chair with weak management skills (who fails to provide the appropriate recognition for service contributions).”* (faculty)

When it was time for annual reviews or promotion and tenure, 24 (of the 26) department leadership interview participants agreed that faculty service was poorly represented and undervalued, especially in relation to more clearly defined criteria for teaching or scholarship. Several participants seemed resigned to this as “*the way it is*” while others thought innovation in accounting for and valuing service was needed and possible. In an effort to make up for the lack of reward, some interview participants described efforts they made to acknowledge faculty who readily served by granting them influence on departmental decisions and writing strong letters of support for promotion. Faculty noted accounting for service may not be needed and saw their effort as simply “*doing the right thing*” to “*help the department run in a smooth and supportive manner.*”

### **“We are stretched thin”**

The theme “we are stretched thin,” a direct quote from a department leadership interview participant, refers to a common experience where there are not enough faculty or staff to “make things work” (interview participant) in the department. Being “stretched thin” was connected to recent losses of faculty and staff to early retirement, hiring freezes, mental health needs of students, and increased demands and stress on faculty due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“For years faculty have been pressing for a dedicated counseling staff member in our school to help our students with anxiety and depression. Rather than doing that (which would cost money) the teaching faculty were asked to take a suicide prevention course. (There was no pay for this course). The underlying issues remains unaddressed.”* (faculty participant)

Given the invisibility and undervaluing of some types of service and lack of faculty and staff to create functional departments, faculty and leadership participants seemed overwhelmed. A few seemed cynical with

little hope that things would change. Participants referenced needing to complete tasks that typically an administrative staff member may have done in the past; for example, maintaining financial and budget statements and party planning for welcome events. Participants felt shouldered with these tasks and relied on faculty service heavily to complete these and other important university tasks (e.g., curriculum development, committee work). The end result of being “stretched thin” was burnout and resentment.

*“People are being called upon again and again, and especially after last year I'm just feeling burnout and resistance from people. I can only ask people to do so many things, and yet things have to get done.”* (interview participant)

Several interview participants talked about knowing who would say ‘yes’ when asked because these faculty had “*professional pride*” and “*community mindedness*” (interview participant). They found themselves relying on the “*good will*” of faculty to volunteer.

Four department leadership interview participants lamented how they knew this was not ideal, but they did not have other good options and one commented that they were “*waiting for a problem.*” It was clear no one wanted to operate this way, but they felt unsupported, and even undermined, by the larger college and university who had offered early retirements, froze hiring, and provided no pay raises for several years in a row. This was reflected in faculty comments as well including growing concern that faculty attitudes are changing about service roles. For example, some noted active avoidance of service roles and activities that did not serve individual advancement and may keep faculty from developmental experiences to ready them for administrative roles.

*“I've recently felt I had to stop engaging in activities, mostly service, that didn't provide either income or meaning. I had always been willing to do service that was meaningful because it made the job better. Recently, with being stretched so thin, I just couldn't do things that didn't ‘count.’ I am too burned out to do any more than I have to.”* (faculty participant)

The faculty commentary on this theme added a possible solution – put succinctly by one faculty participant: “*The faculty and administration want to do too much for the amount of funds that either the university has at its disposal or is willing to spend. Either less work has to be done, or more funds spent.*” The expectations from the university leadership only exacerbated the feeling of “being stretched thin” particularly in the context of feeling undervalued for service work. Some faculty discussed a desire to quit all the extra service work that goes unrewarded.

*“It is time for faculty and departments to ruthlessly define what are essential activities. We can and should recognize and probably mourn what we can no longer do or sustain, but the price of denial is too high.”* (faculty)

While others noted, this phenomenon of feeling stretched is a national trend in other industries as well and, in fact, may not be new at all but how the academic machine has worked for decades.

### **Subtheme: Inequity in burden and advancement**

As with caregiving in the wider world, some noted the burden of service fell on women faculty and those who do service well. Most women and two male interview participants quickly identified the inequity by gender when it came to willingness to volunteer in service capacities.

*“I mean, I do a lot of service, but a lot of it's by choice, and it seems like the women end up picking up the slack or service.”* (interview participant)

Faculty participants identified in their own experience and noted the known literature on advancement for faculty from additional marginalized groups:

*“This practice of asking the people who will say yes, rather than distributing the work equitably in the department is exactly what keeps women, BIPOC, and LGBTQ+ faculty from advancing.” (faculty)*

Three department leadership interview participants noted that some faculty are not “good representatives” to put on university committee or “don’t play well with others” so they relied on faculty who would perform better. This seemed to reflect the varied attitudes of faculty when it came to service roles and the impact on others:

*“The reward for being a terrible colleague is to not have any expectations to do service. Yet another form of exploitation of the faculty who are most junior or most committed to their students.” (faculty)*

Faculty comments also offered other possible reasons for differences in faculty willingness to take on service roles – the mental and practical capacity due to childcare responsibilities, invisible or visible disabilities, chronic and mental illness, and power dynamics on the basis of gender or race that make it difficult to say ‘no’:

*“I have noticed my colleagues who are not POCs [people of color] not only do not have any qualms about saying ‘no,’ but it always seems to be received just fine. I don’t always feel heard when communicating such conflicts which sometimes leads me to choose not to say anything.” (faculty)*

Additional service, given its lack of value in annual reviews, merit raises, and promotion and tenure process, sets up some faculty for barriers to advancement. In talking about promotion and tenure, one interview participant commented:

*“All I can say is when I was going up for tenure it felt like what I was really being measured on was scholarly productivity and quality and the other stuff was sort of like, as long as I wasn’t screwing up and like having students hate me and I had nothing to show for service that I was probably fine.”*

Some participants described actively mentoring junior faculty away from service whereas others noted a need to begin to value, pay, and promote faculty on the basis of excellent service and teaching. There seemed to be two lines of competing thought – work the academic system as it is or change the system entirely. The latter also often included additional comments about leaving the university and an academic career entirely if the system did not change. Exhaustion and burnout seemed present as well related to inequity experienced.

*“I’d much rather work in a collaborative role and be involved in the things I really enjoy. However, in the back of my mind, I know service and teaching (no matter how good) will not guarantee me job security. I’ve made peace with that, and I am willing to walk away if I don’t feel valued enough to stay.” (faculty)*

In interviews, when asked to consider a service-oriented faculty position, about two thirds of interview participants could readily see how that would fit into their department though expressed concerns about promotion and tenure. In addition, many faculty and interview participants made connections to the undervaluing of non-tenure track faculty and teaching. Faculty noted, *“We need teachers, but only want to promote researchers.”* Some imagined a teaching-administrative role (e.g., program directors, department chairs, etc.) and seeing this as stability for keeping faculty who excel in these roles. One interview participant commented that this could *“acknowledge or give credit to folks who are really good at this thing that we actually really, really need.”* In so doing, another wondered if *“you’ll get higher quality and happier people in administrative roles”* if a path to promotion like this existed. All participants wondered if this could help SLU retain excellent administrators, teachers, and mentors:

*“I have several phenomenal teachers who have been here for a long time, who teach large classes and knock it out of the park and win awards every year. But don’t have the time to publish their two articles, a year and, therefore, are stuck in the system.” (interview participant)*

However, some participants were also quick to consider if the university was ready to make this change because it may require a teaching and service tenure track to protect academic freedom. Others were concerned different tracks to promotion may not allow for the holistic growth of faculty across areas:

*“I am ambivalent about dividing functions of research, teaching, and service, because I believe they interact in significant, enriching ways. Further, ‘separate but equal’ does not always work. While it seems best to allow people to do the work they do and love best, the University must take care to integrate all of these activities.”*  
(faculty)

In addition, faculty and department leadership described concerns that it could sequester service activities to particular faculty and may undercut a cultural ethos of service: *“I would hate to see a caste system where you had the service line here and the tenure track here, but then this line is all white [men] and this line is all women”* (interview participant). The possibility of replicating the current system seems apt if the undervaluing of service continues both in the culture of the university and in how it is rewarded.

### **“Workload nimbleness” and confusion**

Across colleges represented in the study, there was a lack of agreement about the definition of faculty service as a workload unit. This created confusion for what do when changes arose mid-semester or mid-year for faculty (e.g., new grant funded project, election to association leadership, etc.) that needed parallel changes to workload to compensate. One interview participant called this *“workload nimbleness”* to shift with the changing needs of faculty and the department or university. Some colleges and department have undergone significant effort to define clearly what is service as separate from other elements (teaching, research, clinical, administrative), whereas others saw service as part of their discipline and integrated with other types of workload (e.g., healthcare disciplines, addressing gender and racial equity in teaching or service learning projects, community participatory action research, etc.). As a result, some were able to clearly articulate where overlap occurred between roles. In addition, these participants talked about being able to match workload to their faculty’s future promotion and tenure expectations (i.e., *“strategic service”*) and offer mentoring accordingly. In this way they assigned value because it fit what was needed for advancement:

*“Workload is your scaffold to set up this person for their annual review and show how their marking those steps towards promotion and tenure.”* (interview participant)

In departments where workload was less clearly defined, or not defined at all until recently, these participants described marked confusion sometimes about overlap of roles (e.g., administration and service).

*“I am often unsure where my administrative work ends and service begins. My administrative role in my department bleeds into mentoring, comforting, attending to the needs and humanity of our graduate students.”*  
(faculty participant)

Some interview participants identified the need for accountability from deans for reviewing the workload policy and its implementation. While faculty comments identified additional problems with *“workload nimbleness”* beyond service alone, where changes mid-year and lack of clarity in *“what counts”* in various workload categories and revealed values in tension. The values in tension here refer to areas of service important to individuals that do not translate to their university workload and encouraging a more balanced workload while asking faculty to do more.

*“As I completed my annual evaluation, I had to move some items to different sections because my chair indicated they belong elsewhere. Many of the things I do, especially outside of the college are not even tracked for workload purposes. I got the impression as I drafted my evaluation that 1) I did way more than the one workload unit allotted, 2) doing more service was okay as long as I ‘took it out of my own hide’ and 3) to do less now would be considered a negative.”* (faculty)

Interview participants described feeling stuck and unable to make changes as opportunities arose for faculty. For example, one described a faculty member who was nominated to a prestigious national committee in their field and this created a conundrum in how to adjust their workload mid-semester. Definitions of service alone did not resolve the implementation of a workload policy that could flexibly respond to the professional needs and reward excellence in service of individual faculty.

*“The issue of nimbleness is not limited to service - what if a grant is funded in March or if a faculty has to take on extra teaching mid-semester due to an illness? Workload is something that should be considered across multiple years to allow some greater flexibility and adjustments over time.” (faculty)*

Finally, “service” activities generating additional income creates another question – should it count for service? Some interview participants saw this as a product of the profession that provides clinical services, whereas others, including many faculty participants, thought payment for services changed the workload category to external consultation.

### *Limitations*

As with any study, there were strengths and limitations to this approach. First, participants may not have represented all faculty of the department or offered a limited view due to their time in the department. There was a wide range of years in their roles and size of the department faculty and we did not gather descriptive data on the faculty size and ranks of individual departments. Finally, the faculty as a whole are not represented in this first study on service and workload.

### **Summary**

This report offers an initial description of faculty service, its challenges and promise as a vital extension of our Jesuit mission at SLU. The report is meant to generate dialogue, change, and continued research into a central question – how to live the mission here, now as a community. Despite a general consensus by participants that they believed in and saw the value of faculty service, it became difficult for faculty to remain generous with their time when they were aiming for advancement (via promotion/tenure/merit) predicated on traditional forms of scholarship.

Caregiving offers a metaphor for understanding faculty service. Caregiving is often messy and difficult to articulate or quantify within traditional ideas of scholarship or academic life. And caregiving is necessary for creating functionality, leadership, and institutional building of academic departments in line with the broader Jesuit mission and values of SLU. Like caregiving in general, service entails being a good citizen of the department, university, and profession but often goes undocumented or remains invisible to colleagues and university administrators who benefit from the it. Based on this study and previous literature (Guarino & Borden, 2017), women faculty were named as frequent and reliable volunteers.

Finally, new language was offered during presentations to stakeholders on campus. Namely, “institution leadership” and “service leadership” as possible changes to how we name the activities within a well-defined service workload. Stakeholders further described “poor” and “excellent” service on the part of faculty. Poor service (regardless of the activity) lacked engagement and seemed more passive and less collaborative in nature (e.g., showing up for committee meetings but being unprepared and not contributing or being combative). Excellent service (again regardless of the activity) was focused on finding solutions, showing up ready to work, and being collegial with others. Some also talked about excellent service having a known impact on the community it is directed at and this impacted needing to be made more visible. Excellent and impactful service could be labeled “institution building” and could be considered in faculty evaluations and on promotion and tenure deliberations, as opposed to the usual “check box” approach.

### **Next steps**

1. Continued research that is inclusive of service activities, attitudes and values associated with participating in service activities, current experience of burnout and lack of resources. An online survey or a series of focus groups could assist in a broader collection of experiences.
2. Conducting a review or analysis of department workload policies for identifying visible and less visible service activities and their allocation.
3. Craft recommendations for the Office of the Provost on workload policy implementation and changes to the promotion/tenure process.

### **Preliminary Recommendations**

1. Tracks to promotion for teaching, administration, and service to establish value in these significant areas of workload that overlap with service (and the caregiving of the university).
2. Description of service needs to respect wide variations in academic departments that makes visible valuable activities of *caregiving, service leadership that is institutional building (e.g., shows excellence and impact on communities served)*.
3. Need for a cultural shift that promotes good citizenship of faculty members for the benefit of the whole even as it may appear to contradict financial interests or individual success.
4. Integration of “good citizen” in mentoring programs and training for deans and chairs.
5. Cross-mentoring and training of department and college/school leadership about workload, promotion/tenure, and faculty mentoring.
6. The university as a whole, and at the highest levels of administration, need to consider how to support and reward excellence in faculty service.
7. Faculty describe how they participated in faculty service activities that connects to impact on profession/students and general climate of department/university in review and P & T materials, not just that they attended. This would describe excellence, contributions, and impact on the community serviced.
8. University promotion and tenure committee offer feedback to departments about individual reviewers - the degree to which they followed the promotion/tenure guidelines and if they diminished the value of service.

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