

Contract Faculty College Service and Professional Development

Recently, AFA has been getting a lot of questions regarding college service obligations for contract faculty. The most common misconception is that all full-time faculty are required to serve on a committee. We would like to take the opportunity to clarify the College Service and Professional Development obligations for full-time faculty, and to point out there are many options for college service and professional development from which faculty may choose.

Probationary Faculty (Faculty in Tenure Review)

The college service requirements for faculty in tenure review are outlined in Article 30.03.C of the Contract. It is important to note the language that points out that a faculty member in tenure review has an important role in designing their college service plan: *The faculty member, in consultation with the tenure review team, has the freedom and flexibility to design a college service plan.* The probationary faculty member has a right to this significant role in the process. No member of the tenure review team, nor the team as a whole, may solely dictate what the college service plan will be.

Article 30.03.C.1-30.03.C.4 outlines what the college service plan “will” include, but it is important to note the preceding qualifying language about freedom and flexibility and the language “whenever possible” that immediately precedes points 1-4. There are plenty of situations where one or more of points 1-4 would not logically apply to an individual faculty’s experience or interests, there is not a need for that particular work to be done, and/or the faculty member envisions a different plan. The bottom line is that the college service plan should be *collaboratively* designed in such a way that it is the best fit for each faculty member.

There are many good and important reasons for faculty to choose to serve on a committee (see below). Nonetheless, AFA feels the need to clarify that *there is no requirement that all faculty members in tenure review must serve on a committee.* Furthermore, the service requirement is not limited to Senate Consultation Committees or any other type of committee, council, or workgroup. Though serving on a committee is often an appropriate and rewarding way for faculty in tenure review to fulfill their college service requirement, in some cases a faculty member’s development and contribution to the college is better achieved through other activities. The tenure review process is intentionally designed to empower probationary faculty, in collaboration with their tenure review team, to exercise professional judgment in developing a college service plan that matches the needs of the specific faculty member, the program, and the college.

We recognize that the contract language regarding probationary faculty college service is confusing and can appear contradictory, and AFA hopes to be able to negotiate clarifying adjustments to that contract language in the near future.

Tenured Faculty

Beyond a core of universal requirements outlined in Article 17.02.A.1-7 (such as attendance at department meetings), tenured faculty have complete autonomy over their college service.

The regular faculty college service and professional development obligation *combined* totals an *average* of five hours per week (87.5 hours per semester, or 175 hours for the academic year). Article 17.02.B outlines some of the options for self-selected college service such as serving as a faculty advisor to a

student club and service on District-wide committees. Note that the list is not exhaustive and that other forms of college service may be chosen.

17.03.C.1-8 outlines options for faculty professional development activities (beyond required participation in PDA and Flex activities) such as attendance at conferences or independent study in one's discipline. The list of professional development activities is also not exhaustive and, like college service, professional development activities are also entirely self-selected.

Why Faculty Might Choose to Serve on Committees to Fulfill Their College Service Obligation

The above discussion emphasizes the intentional flexibility of faculty members designing their college service and professional development activities. Although committee service is not a specific requirement for faculty, there are good reasons to serve on committees, especially district-wide committees.

Serving on a district-wide committee or council is the most available and direct way for faculty members to influence the policies, practices and decisions of the district. Our councils and committees represent the nuts-and-bolts practice of shared governance. They are a principal vehicle through which faculty voice is heard. It is vital for the health and quality of our institution that these conversations and decision-making processes are infused with faculty perspective, which depends on many faculty participating. It is also an excellent way to get to know colleagues across the campuses and broaden one's awareness of other disciplines, as well as expand one's experience of the diversity that is SRJC.

The Academic Senate and AFA both appoint faculty to district-wide committees and councils, president's consultation committees, and special task forces and work groups to solve particular problems. All too often, a small number of faculty are on a large number of committees, which is not healthy or sustainable for the democratic processes we seek to embody. AFA and the Senate would like to encourage faculty members to choose district-wide committee service as a part of their college service activities when such service aligns with their interests, experience, and schedule.

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