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## **PROMOTING THE AUSTRALIAN ACADEMIC PROFESSION**

*Promoviendo la profesión académica australiana*



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### **Abstract:**

In a context of the casualisation of the workforce, increased technology-mediated teaching, and higher research expectations, the authors explored the changing nature of Australian academic service - that is, service to the university, the community and the profession/discipline. As one element of promotion in universities, academic Service in the higher education sector is ill defined, and poorly described in comparison to the Research and Teaching elements of an academic's role. While the authors saw some evidence of Australian universities paying greater attention to the 'Service' Domain, there remains inconsistent and ambiguous documentation and guidance provided by universities about this Domain. From their review of promotion documentation of 24 percent of Australian universities, the authors identified four key elements which universities could provide to assist academics to develop their promotion applications with respect to their service achievements: descriptions of expected practices in each area of service, and at each academic level; details of evidence that can be used to demonstrate the practices and their impact; case studies which demonstrate the practices, evidence and impact expected at each academic level in the Service Domain; and a definition of Service. As academic work is dramatically altered in consequence of a global epidemic, it is critical to identify specific practical steps institutions can take to assist staff to advance in their careers.

**Key word:** *academic promotion; community engagement; professional association; public good; service.*

### Resumen:

En un contexto de informalización de la fuerza laboral, aumento de la enseñanza mediada por la tecnología y mayores expectativas de investigación, los autores exploraron la naturaleza cambiante del servicio académico australiano, es decir, el servicio a la universidad, la comunidad y la profesión o disciplina. Dado que es un elemento de promoción en las universidades, el servicio académico en el sector de la educación superior está mal definido y pobremente descrito en comparación con los aspectos de investigación y docencia en el quehacer de un académico. Si bien los autores observaron evidencia de que las universidades australianas prestan mayor atención al dominio del "servicio", las universidades siguen otorgando protocolos y orientaciones poco consistentes y ambiguas sobre este dominio. Basándose en su revisión de los documentos de respaldo de promoción del 24 por ciento de las universidades australianas, los autores identificaron cuatro elementos clave que las universidades podrían proporcionar para ayudar a los académicos a desarrollar sus postulaciones de promoción con respecto a sus logros de servicio: descripciones de las prácticas esperadas en cada área de servicio, y para cada nivel académico; detalles de evidencia que puedan usarse para demostrar las prácticas y su impacto; estudios de caso que demuestren las prácticas, la evidencia y el impacto esperado en cada nivel académico en el dominio del servicio; y una definición de servicio. Como el trabajo académico se ha visto alterado dramáticamente como consecuencia de una epidemia mundial, es fundamental identificar los pasos prácticos específicos que las instituciones pueden tomar para ayudar al personal a avanzar en sus carreras.

**Palabras clave:** *asociación profesional; bien público; participación comunitaria; promoción académica; servicio.*

## 1. Introduction

The past 30 years in Australian universities, as in most developed countries, have seen major changes in the nature of academic work (Bexley, James & Arkoudis, 2011; Altbach, 2003; Ramos-Monge, Audet, & Barrera-Martinez, 2017), such that academic identities have become 'contested and highly fragmented' (Shams, 2019, 3). Digital technologies have transformed the traditional teaching pattern of face-to-face lecture/tutorial/laboratory, to online resources and communication, with concomitant reduced face-to-face student attendance. Academic staff now perform many - some would say all - of the administrative tasks once undertaken by professional clerical staff, such as entering grades, and typing 'lecture notes' and PowerPoint slides. They are expected to master the ubiquitous Learning Management Systems (LMS) on which contemporary universities depend. Research output expectations have increased in terms of publications and grant income (Kenney & Fluck, 2018). At the same time, a managerial shift towards more corporate governance structures (Coaldrake & Stedman, 2013; Marginson & Considine, 2000; Smith, 2012; Ramos-Monge, Audet, & Barrera-Martinez, 2017) has engendered more codified 'performance measures' for differing levels of academics, as well as an increasing differentiation of academic roles. These work conditions have exacerbated the 'intensification' of workloads (Tynan, Ryan & Lamont-Mills, 2015).

Performance funding mechanisms such as that released ‘for consultation’ in 2019 by the Australian federal government (Department of Education and Training, 2019), which include graduate employment rates, place additional pressure on universities to tailor their curricula even more closely to a job market and an economy that they do not control and which can change rapidly, as 2020 has shown. Public funding of the Australian university system is declining in real terms (Universities Australia, 2017), more so since the ‘funding freeze’ in 2017. In our competitive student market, the funding reduction combined with an increased proportion of university budgets devoted to IT and marketing (Cervini, 2015), has led to a major increase in the use of casual/sessional staff, who do not attract the non-discretionary salary commitments of ongoing and contract staff appointments. Superannuation contributions for sessional staff are lower than for ongoing and contract staff; casuals are paid only for fixed hourly tasks, e.g. one rate for a ‘first lecture’, a lower rate for a ‘repeat lecture’; payment for marking allocates a maximum time per individual assessment. The increase in sessional staff as a proportion of university staffing reflects, of course, a broader employment trend towards the ‘gig economy’, demand driven and task-based employment, with staff stringing together multiple contractual appointments. In universities, sessional staff are, in the main, ‘teaching only’, or ‘teaching focused’: ‘By mid-2018, an estimated 94,500 people were employed at Australian universities on a casual basis, primarily in teaching-only roles’ (Wardale, Richardson, & Suseno, 2019).

In response to these varied pressures, universities have introduced new categories of contract and ongoing employment - ‘research only’, ‘teaching only<sup>1</sup>’, as distinct classifications. These new categories stand in contrast to the historical academic role of 40 percent research, 40 percent teaching and 20 percent ‘service’, which reflected the role expectations for each level of employment, from assistant lecturer (Level A in the Australian context) to professor (Level E). The change to ‘teaching only’ roles came about partly in recognition of the fact that many staff on ongoing appointments were not ‘research active’, and were not delivering expected outcomes in publications and grant income for the research time they were allocated. Anecdotally the authors are aware that in many universities, the ‘teaching only’ category of staff are now allocated a minimum of 60 percent for teaching, up to 20 percent for ‘Scholarship’, and up to 20 percent for ‘service’. One extensive survey found that just over 17 percent of Australian university respondents were classified as ‘teaching only’ (Kenny & Fluck, 2018), but that proportion is increasing as more universities negotiate with their union and non-union members.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2019 Council of Australasian University Leaders in Learning and Teaching (CAULLT) review of Australian universities determined that ‘teaching only’ staff are referred to in a range of ways including “Teaching focused academic; Scholarly Teaching Fellows; Teaching academic/Teaching academic (Clinical/Professional); Academic Developer; Teaching intensive; Teaching focussed academic; Teacher; Lecturer, teaching focussed; Senior Tutor/Tutor/Professional Teaching Fellow; Teaching specialists; Teaching Scholar; Education Specialist; Scholarly Teaching Fellow; and Education-Focussed” (Australian Universities’ Provision of Professional Learning: Environmental Scan, 7). <https://www.caultt.edu.au/other-resources/>

While the role of sessional staff is largely confined to teaching, service to the university, the community and the discipline, has, over the years, fallen on the decreasing number of academics in ongoing and long-contract roles (Lester & Horton Jnr., 2018). While historically, academics applying for promotion needed to focus on their research outputs and impact to be successful (Alperin et. al., 2018), over the last decade the present authors have seen promotion requirements for the academic service role evolve to better reflect the range of activities (teaching and service) performed by academics.

Promotion within an academic career has received little attention as an issue in higher education. As Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Menendez (2014) note, most such research has been conducted in the US, in research-intensive institutions, which do not reflect the conditions in comprehensive systems such as Australia's. Yet promotion policies and practices measure 'what is valued' by a university. 'Institutions and their strategies play a key role in shaping what is valued at each moment in an academic career' (Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Mendenez', 2014, 81). Promotion criteria therefore are an important lens in considering change in academic work. (It is of interest that in Cruz-Castro & Sanz-Mendenez' (2014) study, 'institutional service' was not statistically significant in promotion prospects in Spanish public universities.)

Within the context described above, the present paper explores the current Service Domains that Australian universities use to reward and recognise the 'service' work of academics in ongoing and contract roles (those in sessional roles are not eligible for promotion). The term 'service' was traditionally used in promotion documentation in Australian universities to indicate the 'public good' dimensions of university missions. In the last decade the term 'engagement' has increasingly been used to replace the term 'service' to the community and/or the profession/discipline, to better reflect the non-teaching and research work that academics do. In our exploration of promotion criteria, we found that the term 'engagement' is increasingly being used, with reference to service in three areas: to the university; to the community<sup>2</sup>; and to the discipline/profession.

In this paper we refer to the 'Service/Engagement' Domain. We use the term 'Domain' to refer to the broad areas within which academics traditionally have worked - Teaching, Research and Service. We use the term 'criteria' to refer to the elements of each domain. For example, traditionally in the Research Domain, promotion criteria would include research outputs, grant income and supervision of higher degree research students.

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<sup>2</sup> Where community includes business, industry, the Arts, cultural groups and organisations and government, although as Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead (2006, 220) note, "'community' is remarkably elastic in its deployment'. Indeed, in the authors' early university experience, community service included writing reviews for a local paper in one's area of expertise, membership of Parents' and Citizens' Associations, even chairing after school care groups.

## 2. Definitions

To begin to understand the Service/Engagement Domain used in promotion in the contemporary Australian university, we first need to consider definitions of what constitutes that dimension of the academic role. Commentary falls into two broad perspectives: a) a ‘public good’ in which university staff supply their expertise for the benefit of the wider society in a variety of areas, and b) a symbiotic relationship with the professions/disciplines and businesses/industries in which research and funding are sought to demonstrate their ‘societal relevance’ (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco & Swanson, 2012, 7).

Not coincidentally, these contrasting perspectives also reflect the very purpose of universities. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defined community engagement as “the collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity” (Driscoll, 2008, quoted in Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco & Swanson (2012, 229). The latter authors go further to specify that ‘community engagement’ must not be a separate activity, but must ‘cut across’ (op.cit) research, teaching and service. Macfarlane, citing Kennedy, offers a broad span of activities, both external and internal to the university:

In the context of working in large publicly funded institutions, Kennedy identifies a range of obligations both in relation to the community external to the university, including service to industry, professions and in outreach work, together with participation in support of institutional policy, faculty administration and student affairs. (Macfarlane, 2007, 262).

Macfarlane (2007, 264) also considers that academics have regard ‘to the extent to which the activity is regarded as ‘scholarly,’ i.e. subject to research itself. Yet workload agreements in Australian universities continue to separate these Domains of the academic role.

In the US context, some authors, along with the Carnegie researchers, extend the ‘public good’ dimension to mutual research and scholarship *with* community and professional groups:

Today’s engagement is scholarly, is an aspect of learning and discovery, and enhances society and higher education. Undergirding today’s approach to community engagement is the understanding that not all knowledge and expertise resides in the academy, and that both expertise and great learning opportunities in teaching and scholarship also reside in non-academic settings. By recommitting to their societal contract, public and land-grant universities can fulfil their promise as institutions that produce knowledge that benefits society and prepares students for productive citizenship in a democratic society. (Fitzgerald, Bruns, Sonka, Furco & Swanson (2012, 7).

Such views would accord with Boyer’s (1990) notion of the scholarship of application. The second view, more commonly seen in Australian universities, is often ascribed to the neo-liberal approach (Slaughter & Leslie, 1997) to government funding

of universities as ‘part of a wider requirement that universities source funding from alternative (non-government) sources, and a ‘third way’ agenda that encourages local, and entrepreneurial, partnership arrangements rather than large-scale public services’ (Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead, 2006, 214). These authors also note that regional universities in Australia in particular emphasise their local community connections as part of a government agenda to support non-metropolitan regions (Brennan, 2012; Winter, Wiseman & Muirhead, 2006).

In 2016, Norton & Cakitaki noted that many Australian universities have been relatively ‘silent’ on the matter of what practices ‘count’ in promotion as appropriate ‘community engagement’ or ‘university service’. Nevertheless, academic focus on engagement and service is not insignificant, most especially for those ongoing staff who are also increasingly expected to assume more internal service duties (such as subject and program coordination) because of the increased numbers of sessional staff, and the complexities of leadership and administration involved as staffing profiles have been distorted. Academics report an increased committee workload subsequent on the pressure to improve the ‘student experience’ and foster diversity and inclusion, as well as demands for more Work Integrated Learning opportunities requiring intense liaison with employers, curriculum re-design, and growing student employment and support expectations (Lodewijks, 2011). For Australian staff there is often an additional requirement to liaise with international partners and students, with the added complexities of cultural and time zone differences to negotiate.

Norton and Cakitaki (2016) have studied the contribution ‘Service’ makes to the academic role. “One input indicator comes from academic time-use surveys.... in which the latest, from 2015, found that academics spent on average 5.3 hours a week on community and university service, out of an average 50.7 hours of work reported. An earlier survey (2011) of academics found that more than half believed that community service should be recognised in promotion, though only 15 per cent said that it was rewarded. Community service/engagement is an important part of university culture and practice”, but unlike teaching and research, it has not been ‘measured’ in the same way as those domains have (NTEU, 2015c referenced in Norton & Cakitaki, 2016, 18). Ambiguity abounds in the area: in their study of Curtin University’s promotion criteria for teaching, Vardi & Quin (2011) reveal that their practices for teaching include aspects that in other institutions are classified as ‘service’; for example, editing a professional journal can be ‘counted’ in research or service.

Some Australian universities, such as the Australian Catholic University have founding statutes that include university engagement objectives such as (*inter alia*):

- (c) *To emphasize in all its works the intrinsic value of the human person;*
- (d) *To foster graduates who are competent, ethical, committed to the common good and attuned to the sacred; and*

*(e) To promote particularly those areas of research, teaching and learning relevant to the intellectual and social works of the Catholic Church. (ACU Constitution, 2018, 2).*

Further, the standards for university registration elevate some engagement activities in some regional or more recently created universities (such as Charles Darwin University), from desirable to necessary, for example, requiring demonstrated engagement with local and regional communities, and a commitment to ‘social responsibility’ in their activities (Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education 2013).

### 3. Method

We found little literature on the ‘Service/Engagement’ Domain of academic work in Australian universities. The authors carried out a desktop review of promotion documents from 24 percent (10) of Australia’s 42 universities. This sample was representative of the different types/groups of Australian universities, including the Australian Technology Network, the Innovative Research Universities, the Group of 8 universities, dual sector universities, regional, rural, and metropolitan universities, and were drawn from every Australian state and territory.

The development of the questions that we sought to answer was an iterative process. Before commencing the document review we sought to answer the first four questions below. In the process of reviewing the documents, we developed questions 5-7 about the Service/Engagement Domain.

1. *What nomenclature was used for the non-Teaching and Research Domain(s)?*
2. *Are academics required to weight each of the domains, and if so, what proportion of one’s role can be allocated to the Service/Engagement Domain?*
3. *Are explicit Service/Engagement practices and evidence types at each academic level detailed for applicants applying for promotion?*
4. *What resources, other than those in 3), are provided to support academics in writing about their Service/Engagement achievements and impact?*
5. *Is there a discernible bias towards entrepreneurial activities as a component of ‘service’? For example, ‘income’ ‘entrepreneurship’ and ‘in-kind support’?*
6. *Do regional universities have a particular remit for promoting Indigenous participation?*
7. *How does academic staff development figure in promotion criteria? Do any universities make specific provision for academic staff developers in academic positions, given such academic staff may not ‘teach’?*

## 4. Results

All universities in our sample require promotion applicants to demonstrate that they are already working **at the level to which they seek promotion**. Only one university referred to the applicant's current level, requiring applicants to demonstrate a 'high' performance at their current level, and a 'satisfactory' performance at the level to which they sought promotion.

### 1. *What nomenclature was used for the non-Teaching and Research Domain(s)?*

We asked this question because, as outlined above, what is 'measured' reflects what management 'values', and terminology guides staff activities. From the documents, we determined that while the nomenclature for the Teaching and Research Domains was relatively consistent across our sample, the nomenclature of the Service/Engagement Domain varied considerably between universities including: service; engagement; service and engagement; academic leadership and service; community engagement and professional service; business development, professional consultancy, and industry links; and university, professional and community service. Two universities named two separate 'Service/Engagement' domains with one of those universities having both an 'Internal service to the university' domain and a 'Community engagement and professional service' domain, while the second university had a 'Community engagement' domain and a 'Business development, professional consultancy, and industry links' domain. A third university articulated different types of engagement by including three criteria within their Engagement domain: 'Engagement within the university', 'Engagement with the community' and 'Engagement with the discipline/profession'.

Only one of the ten universities in our sample included 'leadership' in the Service/Engagement Domain name. The other nine universities explicitly embedded leadership requirements within the descriptions of practices, at least for those applicants applying for promotion to levels D (Associate Professor) and E (Professor), and three universities required leadership to be demonstrated by those applying to level C (Senior Lecturer).

All but one university in the sample referred to 'teaching only' roles - please note the different nomenclature indicated in footnote 1. While academics in those roles generally did not have to demonstrate their performance in the Research Domain (there were two exceptions), all academics were expected to demonstrate their achievements (to some extent) in the Service/Engagement Domain.

### 2. *Are academics required to weight each of the domains, and if so, what proportion of one's role can be allocated to the Service/Engagement Domain?*

Academics with high administration/management roles, such as program coordinators for very large programs, Heads of School, Associate Deans Teaching etc., have had difficulty applying for promotion because the heavy, often invisible work that they do in their service roles limit their time for research and/or teaching. In response, some universities have provided promotion applicants with the opportunity to weight



each domain in terms of their individual role. Consequently, we looked to see how many universities allowed staff to weight their contribution to each domain.

Four universities required academics to weight each domain they applied under, such that the domains totalled to 100 percent. One university allowed up to 50 percent for 'Service', presumably to capture heavily administrative/management positions, or exceptional community/entrepreneurial activities; in this same university, Service could constitute as little as 10 percent if an academic was predominantly Research/Teaching oriented. One university required applicants to categorise their contribution to each domain as satisfactory/excellent/outstanding etc. That university then had requirements for each academic level - for example, applicants applying to Level E might have to demonstrate outstanding contribution in two of the domains and satisfactory contribution in the third domain. Five universities did not require academics to weight the domains.

Please note that **3. *Are explicit Service/Engagement practices and evidence types at each academic level detailed for applicants applying for promotion?***, is discussed within the recommendations.

**4. *What resources, other than those in 3., are provided to support academics in writing about their Service/Engagement achievements and impact?***

There was a notable difference between universities in terms of the resources provided to guide academics with respect to the practices and evidence that they might use to argue their case in the Service/Engagement Domain. Four universities provided limited descriptions of expectations; three universities provided one or two pages of practices and/or evidence for the domain; and three universities provided substantive guidelines of the sorts of practices, evidence and impact that applicants might provide in their applications. Only one of the 10 universities in our sample provided examples of practices for each academic level.

**5. *Is there a discernible bias towards entrepreneurial activities as a component of 'service'? For example, 'income' and 'in-kind support'?***

In the context of institutional competition and 'academic capitalism' described at the beginning of the paper, we expected to see explicit mention of income as a criterion for service. However, income generation per se is explicit in the Service/Engagement documentation for only two of the 10 universities in our sample, while one other university, in its Promotion Plan documentation for potential applicants to Level B/C, gives 'Revenue targets'. It may be that the generation of all income and in-kind support is expected to be noted under the Research Domain, which is where most of our universities mention 'income' in their promotion documentation. Or it may be that the concept of service to most Australian universities does not include the generation of income. Of course, it is also possible that it is simply an oversight by most of the universities in our sample not to include *income and in-kind support*.

**6. *Do regional universities have a particular remit for promoting Indigenous participation?***

In light of the additional government funding to those universities with a strong commitment to Indigenous participation, we expected explicit mention of Indigenous outreach activities, but these activities may have been subsumed under community engagement. While three of the universities in our sample are regional (i.e. not located in metropolitan areas), only one of those universities, and the only one in the entire sample, referred specifically to engagement with Indigenous communities within their Service/Engagement Domain.

**7. How does academic staff development figure in promotion criteria? Do any universities make specific provision for academic staff developers in academic positions, given such academic staff may not ‘teach’?**

Many if not most staff developers<sup>3</sup> have historically had difficulty preparing to apply for promotion. Their role is often heavily service oriented, and the teaching of academics is not considered to be ‘teaching’ in the traditional sense, unless it occurs within an accredited program such as a Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education. Both authors have experienced situations in which research was expressly excluded for academics in academic staff development roles. We were interested, therefore, to see if universities recognised ‘staff development’ within the Service/Engagement Domain. Five universities make reference to ‘staff development’ in their Service/Engagement Domain documentation. Four of those universities refer to the provision of staff development opportunities as an example of service to the university, i.e. a traditional academic providing staff development opportunities for colleagues may include these practices as evidence in the Service/Engagement part of their application. One university indicates that staff applying for promotion must have completed all mandatory university staff development requirements. While not surprising, it was disappointing for the authors, as career academic staff developers, to see that colleagues in these non traditional academic roles will continue to struggle to achieve promotion for their work.

## **5. Recommendations for universities reviewing their promotions framework**

In reviewing the promotion documentation from our sample of universities, we looked to see what in the different documents would most assist an academic to address their university’s Service/Engagement Domain requirements. We identified the following elements: descriptions of expected practices in each area of Service/Engagement, and at each academic level; details of evidence that can be used to demonstrate the practices and their impact; and case studies which demonstrate the practices, evidence and impact expected at each academic level in the domain. We also identified the need for Australian universities to define Service/Engagement.

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<sup>3</sup> Academic ‘staff development’ is also referred to as ‘faculty development’, ‘academic development’, ‘professional development’ and ‘education development’ in English speaking countries. In this paper, the term ‘staff development’ is used to refer to the developmental activities informed by the discipline of teaching and learning in higher education (Fraser, 2001).

### a) 5.1 Practices expected at each academic level for each area of service

#### 3. *Are explicit Service/Engagement practices and evidence types at each academic level detailed for applicants applying for promotion?*

Ideally, academics prepare for promotion for several years in advance of submitting their application, identifying deficiencies in their evidence and rectifying these over time. We believe that their preparation would be assisted if their university provided clear expectations of the sorts of practices, evidence and impact which the university recognises as relevant contributions to the Service/Engagement Domain, preferably at each academic level.

Five of the 10 universities in our sample provided very limited, generic descriptions of the university's expectations of practice in the Service/Engagement domain. As a marginal improvement on that documentation, two universities provided one or two pages of examples of practices for the Service/Engagement Domain. Three universities provided what we regard as substantive guidance for academics about the types of practices that would demonstrate their achievement in the Service/Engagement Domain for each area of service: to the university, to the community, to the profession/discipline. Two of those three universities illustrated expected practices at each academic level. We believe that academics applying for promotion would find substantive lists of practices helpful in identifying their contribution to the university in this domain. Prospective applicants, several years out from applying, would be in a position to identify those areas recognised and rewarded by their university. They could then focus their future Service/Engagement work on the type of achievements recognised by the university and be able to collect their evidence of the outcomes and impact of that work.

One university provided a database for academics to register their community engagement. This resource potentially supports the development of a culture of recording and evidencing Service/Engagement practices and their impact.

### b) 5.2 Evidence examples

#### 3. *Are explicit Service/Engagement practices and evidence types at each academic level detailed for applicants applying for promotion?*

In 2012, the Australian government funded a significant, national project for our higher education sector which identified seven different criteria of teaching (e.g. design and planning learning activities), the teaching practices associated with each criterion, and the evidence that could be used to demonstrate those practices (Chalmers et al., 2012). No similar work has been completed for university/community/profession/discipline service and engagement. Anecdotally, academics can struggle to identify the sorts of evidence that demonstrate both the outcomes and impact of their contributions in this domain. We found that half of our sample of universities guided academics in this area, by providing lists of evidence examples. No university provided examples at each academic level, and the authors argue that many of the same types of evidence could be used at different levels. For

example, under service to the university, evidence showing an academic's contribution to 'staff development' could be used by academics applying for promotion to any level. Therefore, it is reasonable for universities not to provide evidence examples for each academic level, given the repetition that this would likely entail. With only half of the sample providing lists of the types of evidence that academics might use to demonstrate their achievements and impact in the Service/Engagement Domain, there appears to be room for improvement in this area in the Australian higher education sector.

### **c) 5.3 Case Studies**

*4) What resources, other than those in 3), are provided to support academics in writing about their Service/Engagement achievements and impact?*

In our review, we found that only one university provided examples of previously successful applications. We speculate that universities do not provide these examples out of concern that: 1) individuals may copy applications; 2) academics may query how the applicant was granted a promotion; 3) disciplinary differences would make it difficult to provide one or two 'generic' examples, and 4) the examples provided may be so 'exemplary' that many academics may feel that they could never attain the achievements and impact detailed in the examples.

For the Service/Engagement Domain, one university provided an example of one or two pages of a practice, the achievements and impact from that practice, for each academic level and for each criterion within the domain: service to the university, to the community, to the profession/discipline. These examples were drawn from the work of the university's academics, and came from many different disciplines. This resource appeared to the authors to be a valuable resource, particularly for those academics who are applying for promotion for the first time.

Other resources that applicants may find useful when writing their promotion applications included a list of academic promotion mentors provided by one university, and digital recordings of colleagues giving advice on how to write promotion applications, provided by two universities in our sample.

### **d) 5.4 Defining Service/Engagement**

Finally, with only one exception, our sample universities provided no definition of Service/Engagement. With the different names given to the domain across our sample, we expected that each university would define Service/Engagement in ways specific to their promulgated mission, however, this was not the case.

## **6. Conclusions**

Anecdotally, the Teaching and Service Domains have been seen by many academics as the poor cousins to the Research Domain with academics seeking promotion, strategically putting their time and resources into their research. In recent years, with the advent of ‘teaching only’ positions and significant national uptake of the Australian University Teaching & Criteria & Standards (Chalmers et. al., 2012), Australian universities have developed more detailed practices and evidence requirements for those seeking promotion based primarily on their teaching. At the same time we have seen some evidence of greater institutional attention to the Service/Engagement Domain. While significant changes, some might say improvements, have been made in Service/Engagement promotion documentation, it is often inconsistent, and at times ambiguous and vague. For example, it is hardly helpful to ask for a ‘high level’ of community engagement without some examples of what this might be. Equally, it is difficult to quantify the ‘outcomes and impacts’ of editorial activities, for example, or government-commissioned reports, which might take years to be implemented. Yet outcomes and impacts are the metrics commonly employed.

Mamiseishvilli, Miller & Lee (2016) note that in the US context, Service is under-researched. Our literature search revealed that it barely features in Australian higher education research literature. We believe that Service/Engagement needs to be examined through a national project, similar to the Chalmers et al. (2012) Australian University Teaching & Criteria & Standards project. A cross- institutional project of this nature could develop practices, evidence lists, examples and case studies which could be used across the sector. An important aspect of such a project would be recognition that generic promotion criteria do not make allowances for disciplinary differences, which, as Glass, Doberneck & Schweitzer (2011) argue, can be significant, with social sciences staff, for example, being less likely to engage with business and industry, and health program staff being more likely to report ‘public good’ community service activities. Essentially, such a project could also develop a commonly accepted definition of Service/Engagement.

As universities and colleges globally respond to an increasingly digitised work environment, for both staff and students, and academic life is further atomised into its constituent elements in performance measures, all national higher education providers will grapple with issues in human resource policies and practices, including their promotion criteria. Accordingly, they will also need to examine whether the details of their promotion policies are ‘fit for purpose’ in respect of defining and exemplifying the Service/Engagement Domain. This paper sampled a representative number of Australian university promotion policies in order to provide a starting point for improvements and guidance to the Australian higher education sector as a whole.

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