

## A Closer Look at Faculty Service: What Affects Participation on Committees?

Despite the role that institutional service plays in the tenure and promotion process, quantitative research in this area has focused on the percentage of time spent on service and administration (e.g., Bellas & Toutkoushian, 1999; Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995; Fairweather, 1996; Finklestein, Seal, & Shuster, 1998; Singell & Lillydahl, 1996), with little research on specific aspects of faculty service. Committee work, one of the most important parts of faculty service, has been particularly neglected. Understanding who serves on committees is important, not only because committees are a central part of faculty service but also because faculty of color often report excess service on committees compared to the amount reported by White faculty (Adams, 2002; Baez, 2000; Laden & Hagedorn, 2000; Turner, 2002). This disparity is partly due to an institutional desire for diversity on some committees and to a feeling of obligation on the part of faculty of color to serve the needs of their racial and ethnic groups on campus (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996).

Yet because committee service is largely viewed as a minimal requirement to be met during the promotion process (as opposed to publications or grants), excess committee participation may harm the career prospects of minority faculty. Faculty of color and females are tenured at lower rates than Whites and males (Ginther & Hayes, 2003; Perna, 2001; Tack & Patitu, 1992), and excess committee service may be one of several reasons why female faculty and faculty of color are not proportionately represented in the higher ranks of the professoriate.

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While there has been substantial research on committee service, most of the research in this area has been qualitative in nature and has focused on only a handful of institutions. This literature still leaves open the question as to how prevalent excess committee service is in American higher education. While quantitative studies using national samples of faculty have tried to answer this question, they usually rely on survey items with low validity, such as questions asking respondents to estimate the percentage of time spent on service activities. Thus, we still do not know if committee participation varies among females, faculty of color, and White male faculty, and if it does, to what extent it varies.

This article uses the 1999 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF) survey and regression models for count data to investigate committee participation by different faculty demographic groups. Because the NSOPF is a nationally representative sample of faculty, analyses based on these data allow us to draw conclusions about the prevalence of excess committee service in the American professoriate. More importantly, the NSOPF survey asks faculty about their participation in curriculum, personnel, and governance committees, allowing for a more detailed understanding of faculty committee service. The paper examines different types of committee service across Carnegie types and seeks to answer four questions:

1. Do rates of committee participation differ by type of committee and institution?
2. Controlling for other factors, are females and faculty of color participating at higher rates on lower-profile curriculum committees?
3. Controlling for other factors, are females and faculty of color participating at lower rates on higher-profile personnel and governance committees?
4. Controlling for other factors, do females and faculty of color spend more time on committee work than White male faculty spend?

### *Literature Review*

Scholars have proposed two reasons why females and faculty of color might perform more institutional service than their male and White counterparts. First, these faculty become more involved because of institutional pressures. Institutions seek out females and faculty of color to ensure diversity in the faculty governance process; given their minority status in many institutions and academic fields, these faculty end up serving on more committees than usual. Padilla (1994) refers to this process as “cultural taxation.” Second, excess service might simply be a

matter of taste; these faculty might personally prefer to perform more service than male and White faculty do. Rather than a response to institutional demands, faculty of color might deliberately seek out committee service as a way to advocate for their causes on campus (Cuadraz, 1997).

There are two bodies of research that suggest that females and faculty of color might be shouldering a disproportionate share of the service burden in their departments. The first group consists of either personal reflections or qualitative interviews using small, nonprobability samples of faculty. The second uses quantitative analysis of large-scale faculty surveys based on probability samples.

The qualitative literature is consistent in its findings that females and faculty of color perform more service than other faculty do. Several scholars have found that institutions can pressure faculty of color to participate in excess service commitments (Baez, 1999, 2000; Banks, 1984; Tierney & Bensimon, 1996; Turner, 2002; Turner & Myers, 2000). As one of Turner's subjects reported, "When you are one of three or four Latinos and being a woman, almost every committee wants you to be on it. It gives you opportunities, at the same time, I think, you are expected to do a lot of things not expected of other faculty" (Turner, 2002, p. 82). Other scholars have reported that faculty of color often feel obligated to participate in service activities that might benefit their racial or ethnic community (Baez, 2000); they are also more likely than White faculty to report that providing services to the community is important, and they are more likely to report choosing their profession in order to influence social change (Antonio, 2002; Antonio, Astin, & Cress, 2000).

While the qualitative literature agrees about female faculty and faculty of color and their service commitments, the quantitative literature is more mixed. Using the NSOPF survey, Bellas and Toutkoushian (1999) found that males and females did not differ in terms of percentage of time spent on service, but Blacks and Hispanics spent more time on service than did Whites. Analyzing an earlier iteration of NSOPF, Singell and Lillydahl (1996) found mixed results depending on institution type, with females at research universities spending less time on service and females at other institution types spending similar amounts of time on service. They also found that faculty of color at research and comprehensive institutions spent less time on service than White faculty did; at research universities, faculty of color spent equal amounts of time, while at liberal arts colleges they spent more time. A survey of engineering faculty in 19 research universities found no differences between White male, White female, Black/Hispanic (treated as one group), and Asian faculty in terms of the number of hours per week spent on committee

work or the number of committee memberships (Jackson, 2004). Conversely, an analysis of academic governance in the California university system found that female faculty were more likely than male faculty to have positions on university-wide committees (Turk, 1981). A similar finding was reported in the 1989 Carnegie faculty survey (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1990).

### *Methodological Issues*

While the qualitative literature has quite extensively and eloquently documented the issue of cultural taxation in American higher education with respect to service, an unanswered question remains: To what extent is excess committee service by females and faculty of color *prevalent* in American higher education? Unfortunately, the narrative and small-sample approach adopted by qualitative researchers does not allow the findings to be generalized to a larger population, so while we know that excess committee service exists, we are not sure how common it is. A secondary question that this literature also does not address is the extent of excess service; in other words, do minority faculty on average serve on one extra committee compared to White male faculty? Two committees? Three committees? Such questions are more easily answered with a quantitative approach using a nationally representative sample of higher education faculty.

While a nationally representative survey such as the NSOPF allows us to make generalizations about faculty in American higher education, whether the survey questions actually measure what we think they measure is always an open question. This is especially true for the question on the NSOPF surveys that is commonly used by quantitative researchers to analyze how faculty spend their time. In the 1999 iteration, this question asked faculty to allocate their total work time in the fall 1998 semester across several categories such as research, teaching, service, and administration in terms of “% of work time spent.”

As Groves et al. (2004) point out, these types of questions are rife with measurement error because they require respondents not only to recall information over a long period of time but also to give the survey interviewer a rate-based estimate of behavior. Recall accuracy drops rapidly as time passes, and the NSOPF survey asks questions about the previous fall semester during the following spring semester. More importantly, even if recall were not an issue, it is not clear whether faculty can accurately report the percentage of time they spend on various activities. Studies that compare survey responses for the number of hours reported on various activities with data collected from time-use diaries and similar methods have consistently found

large substantive differences between the two methods (e.g., Lee & Waite, 2005; Robinson & Bostrum, 1994). Given that time-use diary data are considered more accurate because the data are reported as the respondent engages in the activity, it is clear that survey data that ask respondents about activities and time use must be interpreted with great caution.

Instead of the NSOPF percentage of time spent question, this article uses two other survey questions about faculty committee work to understand faculty service: the number of committees served on during the fall 1998 semester and the number of hours spent on committee work during the typical week.<sup>1</sup> Focusing on committee work has two advantages. First, faculty spend most of their institutional service time on committees (Ward, 2003), so committee participation should be a valid measure of faculty service. Second, given the methodological issues described above, the number of committees served on as reported by the faculty member should have less measurement error than traditional questions about percentage of time spent on service. While faculty may not be able to accurately report the percentage of time spent on various activities, the cognitive burden of recalling and reporting the number of committee memberships is relatively small. Similarly, given the specificity of the hours worked on committees question,<sup>2</sup> the responses to this question should have less measurement error than questions about much broader categories such as research or service.

## *Methodology*

### *Data*

The data for this study are taken from the 1999 administration of the NSOPF. Because the NSOPF is a nationally representative sample of faculty with a very high response rate of 83% (National Center for Education Statistics, 2002), it is one of the best available data sources for understanding faculty work. The study sample is limited to full-time tenured or tenure-track instructional faculty with the rank of assistant, associate, or full professor. Faculty in research, doctoral, comprehensive, and baccalaureate institutions are analyzed separately, because reward structures and institutional norms differ by institution type (Fairweather, 1993; Leslie, 2002). Given that much of the discussion of faculty committee service has taken place within the context of minority faculty at predominately White institutions, historically Black colleges and universities are not included in the analysis. The study sample N is 5,867 faculty (2,413 in research, 894 in doctoral, 1,926 in comprehensive, and 634 in baccalaureate institutions).

### *Dependent Variables*

Research indicates that the type of committee must be taken into account, not just committee service in general. Minority faculty report difficulties in achieving appointments to important committees that deal with hiring, promotion, and tenure as well as to committees that deal with larger campus issues (Tack & Patitu, 1992). They may instead be steered toward committees that deal with minority affairs (Aguirre, 1995). Service on promotion and tenure committees is often held in high regard (Blackburn & Lawrence, 1995), which can matter during the promotion process. This suggests that committee participation rates between minority and White faculty may differ by committee type.

The NSOPF survey asked respondents about the number of committees served on during the fall 1998 term for four types of committees: "Curriculum Committees," "Personnel Committees (e.g., search or recruitment committees)," "Governance Committees (e.g., faculty senate, student retention, budget, or admissions)," and a catchall category of "Other." The responses for each type range from zero to eight committees. Because the factors that affect participation might differ by committee type, each type is analyzed separately. The total number of committees participated in is also examined, by summing the number of committee memberships in the four categories.

Besides the number of committee memberships, much of the qualitative literature has also found that minority faculty, especially females, might spend more time on committee work than White faculty do. In addition, the number of committee memberships does not provide a complete picture of faculty work, because some committees might require only a few hours of work per semester, while others might meet on a weekly basis.

The NSOPF survey also asked respondents to report the average number of hours they spent per week on committee work during the fall 1998 term. Responses ranged from 0 to 40 hours, with a mean response of 4.2 hours and a median response of 3 hours. Because this variable is skewed with many responses in the lower part of the range, the variable is logged in the regression equations described below.

### *Independent Variables*

Descriptive statistics for the independent variables are presented in Table 1. The first set of variables consists of demographic dummy variables indicating that a faculty member was female (35% of the total sample), Asian Pacific American (8%), Black (4%), or Latino (5%). Because of the small number in this group, Native American faculty are not included in the analysis.

TABLE 1  
Number of Committee Memberships and Hours Spent on Committee Work

|             | Research |      | Doctoral |      | Comprehensive |      | Liberal arts |      |
|-------------|----------|------|----------|------|---------------|------|--------------|------|
|             | Mean     | SD   | Mean     | SD   | Mean          | SD   | Mean         | SD   |
| Memberships |          |      |          |      |               |      |              |      |
| Curriculum  | 0.74     | 1.07 | 0.84     | 0.94 | 0.77          | 0.90 | 0.75         | 1.06 |
| Governance  | 0.94     | 1.31 | 0.94     | 1.18 | 0.89          | 1.16 | 1.13         | 1.65 |
| Personnel   | 0.88     | 1.16 | 0.86     | 1.00 | 0.87          | 0.99 | 0.93         | 1.42 |
| Other       | 1.17     | 1.75 | 1.24     | 1.51 | 1.14          | 1.29 | 0.99         | 1.32 |
| Total       | 3.72     | 2.90 | 3.88     | 2.58 | 3.67          | 2.34 | 3.80         | 3.07 |
| Hours spent | 4.13     | 4.32 | 4.78     | 5.76 | 4.21          | 4.62 | 3.87         | 4.63 |
| Sample N    | 2,413    |      | 894      |      | 1,926         |      | 634          |      |

The second set of variables consists of control variables. Two dummy variables indicating faculty rank of associate or full professor are used to take into account differences in rank; junior faculty are often given lighter committee loads (Adams, 2002), and Blackburn and Lawrence (1995) report assistant professors spending less time on internal service than professors at other ranks spend. Age in years and a squared term to measure a possible nonlinear effect are included, although the coefficient for this variable must be interpreted with caution because of the cross-sectional nature of the data. While faculty rank takes into account the fact that faculty are at different stages in their career, theory and research indicate that age might also play a role in faculty productivity (Lawrence & Blackburn, 1988; Singell & Lillydahl, 1996). Several dummy variables controlling for academic field of teaching (arts, humanities, social sciences, life sciences, engineering, business, education, health services, human services, and vocational, with natural sciences as the reference category) are also included. Controlling for field is important because the amount of faculty work and its reward differ by field (Fairweather, 1996, 2002) and because the racial/ethnic distribution of faculty also varies by field (U.S. Department of Education, 2000).

#### *Statistical Approach*

The number of committees on which a faculty member participates can be viewed as a type of count data. Count data are measures of the number of times something occurs, and among other things, they are characterized by a skewed distribution where low counts are common and high counts are uncommon (Cameron & Trivedi, 1998). This

in essence describes committee participation. For example, the distribution of governance committee participation at research universities ranges from zero to eight committees in the NSOPF data. But no participation is common: 49% of faculty were not members of a governance committee, while 29% served on one governance committee and only 2% served on five, six, seven, or eight governance committees.

The use of ordinary least squares on count data such as these yields inefficient, inconsistent, and biased estimates. Instead, regression analysis for counts models must be used, where counts are modeled with a maximum likelihood approach. Because of the overdispersion in the dependent variables (the variances are larger than the means), a negative binomial regression is preferred to a Poisson regression approach (Long, 1997). The estimates in this study are derived from negative binomial regressions using the NSOPF survey weights, with the standard errors adjusted for the stratification and clustering of the survey sample (Thomas & Heck, 2001). One exception is the curriculum committee model for doctoral universities; tests indicate no overdispersion, and a Poisson regression is used instead.

The hours worked variable is analyzed using multiple regression, with the NSOPF survey weights and the standard errors adjusted for stratification and clustering. Because the dependent variable is logged, the coefficients are not directly interpretable. Instead, they are now expressed in terms of percentage change in the dependent variable given a unit change in the independent variable.

#### *Limitations*

As with any study, this study has several limitations. First, the analytical traction gained by focusing on committee work means that other aspects of service are not included in this analysis. Faculty do spend time on other areas of service, such as student advising or service to the community.

Second, while the NSOPF offers the advantage of drawing conclusions about higher education in general, this breadth comes at the expense of depth. Because of administration costs, the number of survey questions in general and the number of questions specifically about service and committee work are limited. In particular, the four committee type subcategories may still be too broad. For example, the category "personnel committees" undoubtedly includes responses from faculty reporting participation on search committees as well as from faculty reporting participation on promotion committees. Because of issues of representation, faculty of color may participate at

higher rates on search committees and lower rates on promotion committees, but this difference would not be observed given the nature of the survey questions on the NSOPF.

Third, the study uses the 1999 iteration of the NSOPF, so the data described here are 7 years old at the time of writing. Institutions and faculty work issues might have changed since the survey was administered, although change in academia does tend to occur at a slow pace. The 2004 NSOPF will soon be available, but the committee membership questions have been dropped from this iteration of the survey, so the 1999 data are the most recent nationally representative data set that contains these questions.

Finally, the emphasis here is on understanding the prevalence of committee service and time spent on committee work among faculty demographic groups. While much of the literature in this area focuses on issues of membership and time spent, the literature also emphasizes what these experiences mean to individual faculty members. For example, it is clear from many of the qualitative studies that besides issues of time, minority faculty members often question why they have been requested to serve on particular committees, such as committees that address gender, racial, or ethnic issues. This article does not address these important issues.

## *Results*

The overall rates of committee participation by type of committee and institution are quite similar (see Table 2). The number of committee memberships across institution types is .74 to .84 for curriculum committees, .89 to 1.13 for governance committees, .86 to .93 for personnel committees, and .99 to 1.24 for other committees. The typical faculty member reports participating in 3.7 to 3.9 total committees, with the highest participation rates in doctoral institutions and the lowest in comprehensive institutions. Across committee types, participation in other committees is highest, which is not surprising given its catchall category. Faculty at all institutions report slightly more memberships in governance committees than in curriculum or personnel committees.

Given the types of committees and schools in the data, 20 binomial regression/Poisson regression models are estimated, for the four committee types plus total number of committees for faculty in research, doctoral, comprehensive, and liberal arts institutions. The model results are summarized in Table 3. Similar to logistic regression models, count model coefficients are not directly interpretable. Instead, Table 3 shows the expected change in the number of committee memberships given the

TABLE 2  
Descriptive Statistics for Independent Variables

| Variable               | Mean       | SD       |
|------------------------|------------|----------|
| Female                 | 0.3486     | 0.4766   |
| Asian                  | 0.0822     | 0.2746   |
| Black                  | 0.0440     | 0.2051   |
| Latino                 | 0.0516     | 0.2213   |
| Rank: associate        | 0.3249     | 0.4684   |
| Rank: full             | 0.4045     | 0.4908   |
| Age                    | 49.8786    | 9.5670   |
| Age squared            | 2,579.3900 | 961.9442 |
| Field: art             | 0.0637     | 0.2443   |
| Field: business        | 0.0740     | 0.2617   |
| Field: education       | 0.0907     | 0.2872   |
| Field: engineering     | 0.0931     | 0.2905   |
| Field: health services | 0.1012     | 0.3017   |
| Field: human services  | 0.0384     | 0.1921   |
| Field: humanities      | 0.1497     | 0.3568   |
| Field: life sciences   | 0.0915     | 0.2884   |
| Field: social sciences | 0.1773     | 0.3819   |
| Field: vocational      | 0.0118     | 0.1078   |

listed change in the independent variable. Because there may be a possible nonlinear effect for age, changes for four different age ranges are shown for the age variables.

After rank, age, and academic field are controlled, there are not many differences in the average number of committee memberships between females and faculty of color and White male faculty. Females at research universities serve on slightly more governance committees, while females at comprehensive universities serve on slightly fewer personnel committees. The largest differences between females and males occur at doctoral and liberal arts institutions. Female faculty at doctoral universities report serving on one quarter more other committees and about one half more total committees than males. Female faculty at liberal arts colleges also report serving on one quarter more other committees.

For faculty of color, there are no differences in the number of committee memberships between Black and White faculty across all institution types, and there are no differences between Latino and White faculty at research and liberal arts institutions. Latino faculty at doctoral institutions serve on fewer curriculum and governance committees and serve on one full additional other committee than White faculty do. Latinos report serving on about one fifth fewer curriculum committees than Whites do. Asian faculty report less participation across a range of

TABLE 3  
Impact of Independent Variables on Number of Committees Served

| Variable                         | Change   | Research      |         |          | Doctoral     |         |         |        |        |         |         |
|----------------------------------|----------|---------------|---------|----------|--------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|---------|---------|
|                                  |          | Curr.         | Gov.    | Pers.    | Other        | Total   | Curr.   | Gov.   | Pers.  | Other   | Total   |
| Female                           | 0 to 1   | 0.09          | 0.12+   | 0.05     | 0.04         | 0.27    | 0.01    | 0.17   | 0.10   | 0.25 *  | 0.52 *  |
| Asian                            | 0 to 1   | -0.18 *       | -0.19+  | -0.03    | 0.02         | -0.40+  | -0.07   | -0.14  | -0.13  | -0.28+  | -0.66 * |
| Black                            | 0 to 1   | -0.05         | 0.00    | -0.11    | -0.15        | -0.35   | -0.04   | -0.19  | 0.02   | 0.26    | 0.02    |
| Latino                           | 0 to 1   | -0.07         | -0.05   | -0.03    | -0.26        | -0.46   | -0.29+  | -0.50* | 0.06   | 0.97 ** | 0.26    |
| Rank: associate                  | 0 to 1   | 0.09          | 0.24*   | 0.31 **  | 0.54 *       | 1.29**  | 0.43**  | 0.08   | 0.14   | 0.01    | 0.77+   |
| Rank: full                       | 0 to 1   | 0.07          | 0.31 ** | 0.38 **  | 0.41 *       | 1.28**  | 0.24+   | 0.28+  | 0.31 * | 0.30    | 1.33**  |
| Age and age squared <sup>a</sup> | 30 to 40 | 0.03 *        | 0.21 ** | 0.13 **  | -0.06 *      | 0.26    | -0.62** | 0.24+  | 0.18*  | 0.50**  | 0.51+   |
|                                  | 40 to 50 | 0.05          | 0.16    | 0.01     | -0.10        | 0.08    | -0.18   | 0.08   | 0.03   | 0.37    | 0.15    |
|                                  | 50 to 60 | 0.07          | 0.07    | -0.10    | -0.12        | -0.11   | 0.06    | -0.13  | -0.14  | -0.08   | -0.26   |
|                                  | 60 to 70 | 0.09          | -0.05   | -0.11    | -0.14        | -0.29   | 0.36    | -0.26  | -0.23  | -0.46   | -0.59   |
| Variable                         | Change   | Comprehensive |         |          | Liberal arts |         |         |        |        |         |         |
|                                  |          | Curr.         | Gov.    | Pers.    | Other        | Total   | Curr.   | Gov.   | Pers.  | Other   | Total   |
| Female                           | 0 to 1   | 0.06          | 0.05    | -0.18 ** | 0.11         | 0.04    | -0.06   | -0.15  | -0.06  | 0.27 *  | -0.03   |
| Asian                            | 0 to 1   | -0.15         | -0.20   | -0.12    | -0.25+       | -0.73** | -0.24   | 0.21   | -0.06  | 0.13    | 0.08    |
| Black                            | 0 to 1   | -0.09         | -0.11   | 0.24     | -0.05        | -0.02   | 0.35    | -0.25  | 0.34   | -0.03   | 0.30    |
| Latino                           | 0 to 1   | -0.18 *       | 0.00    | 0.08     | 0.16         | 0.04    | 0.32    | -0.10  | 0.04   | -0.11   | 0.18    |
| Rank: associate                  | 0 to 1   | -0.12         | 0.20*   | 0.09     | 0.25 *       | 0.40*   | 0.08    | 0.32+  | 0.31 * | -0.22+  | 0.50    |
| Rank: full                       | 0 to 1   | -0.04         | 0.17+   | 0.24 **  | 0.27 *       | 0.63**  | -0.12   | 0.05   | 0.50** | -0.06   | 0.30    |
| Age and age squared <sup>a</sup> | 30 to 40 | 0.11 *        | 0.18+   | 0.12+    | 0.05         | 0.50**  | -0.02   | 0.27   | 0.00   | 0.31 ** | 0.68 *  |
|                                  | 40 to 50 | 0.01          | 0.09    | 0.03     | 0.01         | 0.15    | 0.03    | 0.16   | 0.02   | 0.22    | 0.46    |
|                                  | 50 to 60 | -0.09         | -0.04   | -0.07    | -0.04        | -0.25   | 0.09    | -0.02  | 0.04   | -0.01   | 0.12    |
|                                  | 60 to 70 | -0.16         | -0.16   | -0.15    | -0.08        | -0.56   | 0.17    | -0.20  | 0.06   | -0.23   | -0.25   |

NOTE: Cell entries are change in number of committee memberships given listed change in independent variable, with other variables held at their means. Results for field of teaching dummy variables are not shown. + $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

<sup>a</sup>Age and age squared p-value derived from joint hypothesis test; only the first change is marked as statistically significant.

committees and institution types: about one half to three quarters fewer committees overall in research, doctoral, and comprehensive universities, and less participation on curriculum and governance committees at research universities and other types of committees at doctoral and comprehensive universities.

Rank is a fairly consistent predictor of committee membership, with senior faculty reporting more committee memberships than junior faculty across all institution types. Senior faculty in particular report more memberships on governance and personnel committees, approximately one quarter to one half more committees. In addition to rank, age also has an effect on the number of committee memberships, with committee participation increasing until around age 50 and then dropping off.

Curriculum committees appear to be the most egalitarian committee type, in that there is little difference in the number of committee memberships across demographic or rank groups. Liberal arts colleges appear to be the most egalitarian in terms of committee membership overall; there are few statistically significant relationships between the independent variables and number of committee memberships for all five committee models.

In terms of the number of hours spent on committee work during the typical week, the institutional means reported in Table 1 are similar to the means for number of committee memberships, in that there is little variation across institution types. While faculty report participating on 3.7 to 3.9 committees across the four institution types, they also report spending on average 3.9 to 4.8 hours per week on committee work. Interestingly, faculty at liberal arts colleges report spending the fewest number of hours on committee work.

Table 4 provides the results of the hours spent equations. The table shows two sets of models. The first set replicates the membership models described above. The second set includes an additional independent variable, the total number of committee memberships reported by the faculty member. It may be possible that minority faculty members shoulder more of the work on the committees on which they are members. Controlling for the total number of committee memberships for time spent on committee work allows us to investigate this possibility.

In general, the results mirror the findings for committee memberships, with few differences between demographic groups.<sup>3</sup> Females at doctoral institutions spend 15% more hours on committee work than males, and Blacks at comprehensive institutions spend 18% fewer hours than Whites. Asians at doctoral, comprehensive, and liberal arts colleges spend less time than Whites (17% to 34% less). Across all institution types, associate professors spend more time on committee work than

TABLE 4  
Regression Models for Log of Hours Spent per Week on Committee Work

| Variable         | Research   | Doctoral  | Comprehensive | Liberal arts |
|------------------|------------|-----------|---------------|--------------|
| Intercept        | -0.9163 +  | -0.0527   | 0.8595        | 0.5620       |
| Female           | -0.0123    | 0.1432 +  | -0.0646       | 0.0015       |
| Asian            | -0.0548    | -0.2446 * | -0.1774 *     | -0.4166 **   |
| Black            | -0.0905    | -0.2135   | -0.1961 +     | 0.1517       |
| Latino           | -0.1534    | -0.0331   | -0.0908       | 0.2040       |
| Rank: associate  | 0.1875 **  | 0.2230 +  | 0.1206 *      | 0.3149 **    |
| Rank: full       | 0.2912 **  | 0.4239 ** | 0.2941 **     | 0.3200 **    |
| Age              | 0.0887 **  | 0.0551    | 0.0195        | 0.0297       |
| Age squared      | -0.0009 ** | -0.0006   | -0.0003       | -0.0004      |
| Total committees | 0.1158 **  | 0.1495 ** | 0.1604 **     | 0.1059 **    |
| SEE              | 0.73       | 0.77      | 0.76          | 0.68         |
| Adj. R-square    | 0.05       | 0.05      | 0.03          | 0.05         |

NOTE: Results for field of teaching dummy variables are not shown. + $p < .10$ . \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

assistant professors (13% to 37% more), while full professors also spend more time than assistant professors (34% to 52%). Unlike the membership results, age had a statistically significant effect only for faculty at research universities, with time spent on committee work increasing in a curvilinear fashion.

The second set of equations including the total number of committee memberships as a control variable yields similar results. Not surprisingly, the number of committees on which a faculty member serves increases the amount of time spent on committee work, with each additional committee increasing hours spent by 11% to 17% across institution types. As shown by the coefficients for demographic groups, it is clear that females and faculty of color do not spend more time on committee work than White males spend, even taking into account any differences in committee memberships.

### *Discussion*

The preceding analysis of the 1999 NSOPF reveals few differences in committee participation between females and faculty of color and White male faculty; for the most part, the differences found are fairly small, less than one committee in difference and only small percentage differences in time spent. In general, this is good news; while females and faculty of color may share a disproportionate burden in terms of institutional service, it appears that this is not taking place in departmental and university committee memberships. In addition, it does not appear that minority faculty are being kept off the more powerful and prestigious personnel and governance committees.

There are, however, some differences in participation that should be noted. Female faculty at doctoral institutions appear to serve on one half more committees than male faculty, with much of this excess participation due to participation in "other" committees. They also report spending more time on committee work than males spend. Female faculty at liberal arts colleges also appear to participate in more other committees than male faculty do. Unfortunately, the NSOPF survey does not ask faculty to list committee names when faculty respond to the other committee survey item, so we have no way of knowing what kind of committees these are; they could be departmental, college-wide, or institutional. Clearly, this is an area that needs further research.

There is some evidence that Latino faculty are not participating as often as White faculty on some curriculum and governance committees. Asian faculty in particular appear to have lower participation rates: for the five committee types across the four institutional groups, Asians par-

ticipate less often than Whites on 7 out of 20 committee/institution types. For the total number of committees, this difference ranges from about four tenths to three quarters of a committee. They also report spending less time on committee work. My literature review did not reveal any research on Asian Pacific American faculty and institutional service; most of the literature has focused on the experiences of Black and Latino faculty. An in-depth qualitative study of Asian Pacific American faculty and their experiences with faculty service would surely yield some insights into why their participation rates are lower than those of White faculty across several institution types.

Rather than gender or race/ethnicity, the biggest driver of faculty committee participation is the faculty life cycle. Not surprisingly, junior faculty participate on fewer committees than more senior faculty, and they are less likely to be members of the two most prestigious committee types, personnel and governance. In part, this difference reflects institutional desires to keep service burdens low for junior faculty as well as institutional realities for committee participation. At most institutions, junior faculty cannot serve on promotion and tenure committees, and service on governance committees is usually elected, meaning that better-known (and thus more senior) faculty are often elected to these positions. The result is that more experienced faculty are serving on governance and personnel committees, while curriculum committees are more likely to have faculty members from all ranks.

Among institution types, doctoral institutions have the most differences in committee participation for minority faculty, while liberal arts colleges have the least. Liberal arts colleges differ from universities in many ways, and three of the biggest differences are a greater focus on teaching, a smaller number of faculty, and a greater emphasis on diversity. Tierney and Bensimon (1996) report that internal service is more important at liberal arts colleges than at other institutions. It may be that, with the increased emphasis on service at these institutions, White male faculty at liberal arts colleges are more likely to seek committee participation than are their counterparts at universities, thus ensuring equal rates of participation across gender and racial groups. Alternatively, compared to larger, more impersonal institutions, the smaller size of the faculty at liberal arts colleges might encourage a more egalitarian spirit among the faculty. Finally, some evidence suggests that liberal arts colleges are more effective at promoting diversity, at least at the student level (Umbach & Kuh, 2006). Faculty at these institutions might simply have a greater commitment to diversity than faculty at other institutions, and they might be more aware of the perils that excess committee service poses for the promotion and tenure prospects of minority faculty.

The findings presented here contrast with much of the literature in this area. As argued above, the most likely explanation for this difference is twofold. First, the study here uses a nationally representative sample of faculty rather than smaller samples of faculty from a single or a handful of institutions. Note that this does not mean that minority faculty do not share a disproportionate burden of committee service. The results presented here should be viewed as national averages, and as with any average, there will be observations above and below the mean. So while cultural taxation in terms of committee service may not appear to be the norm across the country, as the qualitative research in this area indicates, it is still undoubtedly the norm at some individual institutions.

Second, this study uses a measure of institutional service that is much easier for faculty to recall and accurately report than the standard percentage of time spent on service survey question. Clearly, the measure makes the difference, and the results presented here suggest that we need new and better measures of how faculty spend their time. The use of time diaries, where respondents note how they spent their day, or the Experience Sampling Method (Lee & Waite, 2005), where respondents are randomly beeped throughout the day and then asked what they are doing at the time of contact, should yield new insights as to how faculty spend their work time.

While committee work does comprise a large portion of any faculty member's service, faculty spend time on other forms of service (such as student advising) and service outside their institution (such as community service in their local community). This is an important point, because some of the discussion in the qualitative literature involves equity issues surrounding these other forms of service. Thus, the findings presented here on committee participation might not be replicated when looking at other aspects of faculty service.

Even if institutions strive to ensure equitable service burdens for females and faculty of color, faculty perceptions about how committees are assigned and how they experience their service remain important topics for future research and discussion. In other words, minority faculty might participate in the same number of committees as White faculty, but at the same time they might question why they are selected for specific committees, such as committees that deal with racial or ethnic issues.

Although there has been a push to expand the notion of faculty scholarship to consider activities other than just research, recent studies have indicated that the role of institutional service in faculty evaluations has not changed much during the past decade, even for institutions that have initiated reforms in this area (O'Meara, 2005). This suggests that the

issue of excess committee service is still important, as faculty spending more time on areas not valued in the tenure and promotion process will undoubtedly fare poorly when they go up for promotion. The analyses presented here indicate that excess service might still be an issue for some faculty, especially female faculty at doctoral institutions.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The number of committees question was phrased as follows: “During the 1998 Fall Term, how many of the following types of administrative committees did you serve on at this institution? How many of these committees did you chair? Include committees at the department or division level, the school or college level, and institution- and system-wide committees.”

<sup>2</sup>This question was phrased, “On average, approximately how many hours per week did you spend on administrative committee work?”

<sup>3</sup>Specific changes reported in the text are calculated from the coefficients in Table 4 using the adjustment recommended by Kennedy (1981).

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