Counting Invisible Workload: A Resource for Faculty from Underserved Communities

ASA is often asked to assist faculty members in making evident to their departments and universities the huge amount of important professional work they do that is sometimes overlooked in conventional review metrics. Extensive scholarship has been done on the "invisible workload" for faculty which can be useful in your individual advocacy efforts; see, for example: Faculty Workload and Rewards Project (and additional resources at the end of this document).

This document provides some ideas that we hope will be helpful to sociologists in beginning to think about the problem and tangible ways to mitigate it. Every department and campus is different, so there is no one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring that the invisible workload is counted. We encourage you to think through all of these ideas with a local lens. Campuses and departments within them vary in how they weigh teaching, research, and service for faculty evaluation. Encourage your departmental leadership to make criteria explicit in any bylaws or governance documents. Encourage the chair and members of the evaluation committee to clarify annually at a faculty meeting how faculty evaluation is counted. Ideally, all of the members of the department will have a chance to weigh in and discuss how the department wants to recognize and value the different parts of faculty workload.

Be diligent in keeping track of all of your activities that are related to your work as a sociologist. As you take notes on activities that seem to fall outside of the stated categories that "count," make a case for why they connect to the counted criteria. For example, if you perform spoken word on weekends in order to stay connected to the community for the purpose of engaging in community network analysis, then explain that your spoken word performances are tied to your scholarship and not extra-curricular.

Following are some activities to consider as you document your efforts in the three areas most often used for evaluation:

Teaching

- The number of student reference letters that were written and customized for graduate schools, internships, scholarships, employment, and other programs.
- How much of your time is dedicated to the advising (both formal and informal) of undergraduate and graduate students, or even high school students interested in your discipline.
- How many students you mentor in and outside of your department.
- The time you spend or the number of students you assist with special needs, who need extra time for exams, who require additional one on one meetings, or who are underprepared and need supplemental assistance outside of class (those who are on academic probation may fall under this category).
- All campus service work, no matter how small it may appear to others. Have you had to walk students to or call different departments in order to help students access services? Research something on behalf of students? Participate in small campus activities because they needed representation?
- Student clubs that invite you to present your research or speak with students.

Research

- Outside creative works that speak to your research or areas of expertise.
- All invited lectures you give in other classes in or outside of your institution (including all virtual lectures/guest panels).
- White papers, blog contributions, trade publications, op-eds, newspaper articles that you write or that quote you based on your work and expertise.
- Community engaged scholarship, linking your research to communities in your area, or to communities more broadly.

Service

- The number of committees you serve on at the department, college, and university level, and how much time is dedicated to these committees. This is especially important for those who are pulled into more committee work due to the need for diverse committees.

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion work that is not formalized through committee work.

- Leadership roles you have held at early career stages that go beyond most colleagues.

- Unpaid consulting work external to the college/university that is related to your scholarship.
- Trainings that you have attended to help with your work on campus.
- Workshops or other professional development activities that you have organized or taught to create a more inclusive campus environment.
- Program review committees that you serve on (what is your role, how much time is spent on these committees).

If your activities don't align with evaluation criteria at your school and you think there are ways in which those criteria could be amended to make the invisible workload more visible, advocate for them using the connections you will have made as you documented your activities. For example, you could articulate why your volunteer work in a community-based organization "count" since it directly impacts your teaching and scholarship.

While this is not an exhaustive list of what could be counted in the workload of marginalized faculty, we hope it can be useful as a starting point for discussion in departments.

For more context on "invisible workload" for faculty, please see the following:

[The Burden of Invisible Work in Academia](#)

[What Is Faculty Diversity Worth to a University?](#)

[Recognizing Emotional Labor in Academe](#)

[Equity Beyond Covid-19](#)

[Keeping Covid-19 From Sidelining Equity](#)

[Cultural and Identity Taxation: The Experiences of Minority Faculty in Academia](#)

[Ivory Ceiling Service Work](#)