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Defining and Rewarding Academic Citizenship: The implications for university promotions policy

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The concept of 'academic citizenship' reflects different interpretations of the civic purposes of the university. However, activities associated with this concept are largely under-conceptualised and poorly rewarded in academic life. Based on research with an international group of academics, this paper defines the meanings of 'service' and 'academic citizenship', and outlines the implications for academics serving five overlapping communities: students, colleagues, institutions, disciplines or professions, and the wider public. It goes on to consider how academic citizenship may be recognised through university promotions criteria in the context of an increasingly 'performative' academic culture.

What is 'Academic Citizenship'?

The phrase 'academic citizenship' has been subject to a variety of interpretations. In some American universities, the phrase is an expression used to refer to a code of behaviour and values expected from university students. Such expectations normally incorporate reference to academic honesty, obligations to attend class, and submitting to standards of discipline and general behaviour set out by the university and/or faculty. It is about what is expected of students in order to become *bona fide* members of the academic and university community. A more widespread interpretation of academic citizenship refers to the duties, responsibilities or virtues of academic faculty rather than students (Shils, 1997; Ward, 2003; Macfarlane, 2006). Those addressing the meaning of this phrase argue that although the dialogue of academic life often focuses on the rights of faculty to academic freedom, it is important not to lose sight of their obligations in relation to the communities they serve (e.g. Kennedy, 1997). It is this latter meaning of academic citizenship that will inform discussion within this paper.

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In *The Calling of Education: The Academic Ethic and Other Essays on Higher Education*, Edward Shils identifies academic citizenship as a duty complementary to teaching and research. In Shils' analysis of the criteria governing academic appointments, a university must not only choose the intellectually best candidate but one who will 'do his duty to the university and the academic world as a loyal and responsible academic citizen' (1997, p. 76). For Shils, the need for academic citizenship as an added criterion for appointments was heightened by the politicisation of the American campus during the radical years of the 1960s and '70s. This had, in Shils' view, resulted in some lecturers using academic freedom as a justification for political rather than intellectual ends. Other writers, although not explicitly referring to academic citizenship, have concerned themselves with matters associated with academic ethics in relation to the service role. Kennedy (1997) argues that 'service is an important academic duty in all colleges and universities' (p. 117). 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.

Interpretations of the Civic Mission

In understanding the potential meanings of the phrase 'academic citizenship' for the modern academic it is important to reflect briefly on the roots of the civic missions of universities. Together with teaching and research, 'service' is one of the three historic purposes of universities around the world (Cummings, 1998). This mission, though, has been subject to a series of different interpretations. In the history of the English civic universities, founded during the late Victorian period, institutions such as Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham were established by philanthropists, local politicians and businessmen to serve the needs of their local communities. They also made higher education accessible to members of the middle and working classes, women and non-conformists. In the US, this civic tradition can be traced back to the land-grant universities that were established, like their counterparts in the UK, in the latter half of the 19th century (Boyer, 1990). Universities like Wisconsin and Nebraska had a commitment to serve their local communities through applied research to practical problems. After the Second World War, the creation of colleges of advanced technology and, later, polytechnics in the 1970s, represented attempts to re-establish the civic tradition through relevance to contemporary economic and vocational needs.

Prior to the expansion of universities in the wake of the industrial revolution, the university was an institution that stood aloof from ordinary society and existed mainly for the purpose of training men to enter the Church (Dunbabin, 1999). Oxford and Cambridge universities represented this version of service. Here, there was a particular emphasis on the relationship between the tutor and student, and

collegiality, both in terms of academic self-governance and the development of an intellectual community (Halsey & Trow, 1971; Tapper & Palfreyman, 2002). In the Middle Ages the teacher was very much a moral tutor and a father figure concerned with the virtuous development of their charges (Earwater, 1992; Arthur, 2005). The quasi-monastic, residential nature of university life reinforced the importance attached to the teacher's moral role. Although the distance between the students and the teacher is much greater in the European tradition, English higher education is inextricably linked to the model of the moral tutor. This philosophy was made real through the pattern of teaching that was prevalent at Oxford in the first half of the 19th century. Here, a single tutor, rather than specialist professors, would teach a small, select group of students. The personality of the tutor was, thus, as central to the curriculum as his command of Latin texts or Greek philosophy. This exclusive relationship with the tutor was considered more important in producing cultivated gentlemen rather than learned scholars (Ashby, 1967; Arthur, 2005).

A third civic purpose stems from the Humboldtian idea of the university. Von Humboldt, the founder of the University of Berlin in the early 19th century, argued that if the State could provide autonomy for the university and academic freedom for academics, the State would benefit from the generation of objective knowledge. Such a bargain would result in the university as an independent think-tank (Delanty, 2001). In many respects, it was the growing involvement of the State in higher education that helped to establish the autonomous tradition. During the 20th century the rapid growth of State funding for higher education, in both the US and UK, began to re-shape the service role of the university in the direction of research in the national interest. American universities, such as John Hopkins, Stanford, Chicago and Michigan at Ann Arbor, were quicker than their British counterparts to embrace the Humboldtian tradition (Smith, 1999). In contemporary academic life possession of a doctorate is now *de rigueur*. It is notable, though, that Yale University became the first American institution to award a Doctor of Philosophy degree in 1861, whereas in England it was not until the 1920s that Oxford University conferred a DPhil in science (Bourner *et al.*, 2001).

Hence, the history of the university indicates that there is not a simple or singular interpretation of the meaning of 'service'. In the civic tradition there is an emphasis on service through equitable access to higher education and relevance to social, economic and vocational needs. Service to society in the Oxbridge tradition needs to be understood by reference to the ideal of producing 'Christian men' with the gentlemanly virtues of self-discipline and public service, as espoused by John Henry Newman and Thomas Arnold. Service in the Humboldtian tradition is discharged through advanced research and scholarship that serves society best by remaining independent and objective. All these interpretations are at play when modern universities express a commitment to service at the 'macro' level as part of their institutional mission. However, it is pertinent to ask what, if anything, do terms like 'service' and 'academic citizenship' mean to the modern academic? This paper will draw on research with academic staff from a variety of national contexts and consider

the implications of recognising academic citizenship for university promotions' criteria.

Lecturer Definitions of 'Academic Citizenship'?

In seeking to gain an understanding of how academics define and interpret the concept of 'service' and 'academic citizenship', face-to-face interviews and a short questionnaire were used to illicit responses from over 30 university staff drawn from institutions in the UK, North America, Australia, Canada and southern Europe. These respondents represented a range of disciplines, institutional contexts and levels of seniority. Steps recommended by Hycner (1985) were followed to produce a phenomenological analysis of the interview data. These included a clustering of responses and determining common themes on this basis. The short questionnaire used to communicate with non-UK participants was constructed on the basis of the common themes that emerged from the analysis of interview data.

In accordance with Shils (1997) and Kennedy (1997), respondents connected 'academic citizenship' with membership of a community (see Table 1). Membership of a community also implies duties deriving from kinship in reciprocation of the benefits that membership brings. This was identified by respondents as applying to different groups or communities, such as students and colleagues. Others expressed the view that academic citizenship implied broader requirements in connecting their work with the concerns of society (see Table 2). The phrase was also interpreted as working beyond the strict confines of contractual obligation.

The definitions and implications of academic citizenship identified by respondents help to frame an understanding of five overlapping communities that they serve. Academics provide service to students, colleagues, their institution, their discipline or profession, and the public. Although all these communities are important, it is clear that there are fundamental differences in the status of different service activities. Status is associated with a number of, interrelated factors valued in academic life: the extent to which the activity is regarded as 'scholarly', whether the activity is internal or external to the university and the degree to which the activity is 'visible' to colleagues and rewarded in performance-related terms. These factors help produce a 'service pyramid' (Figure 1).

Table 1. Definitions of academic citizenship

'Citizenship is about belonging to a group. A learning community is what it means most and being a member of that community.'
'Belonging to a community with a set of values, rules and objectives with an idea of how it contributes to society at large.'
'Being a part of the wider academic community, contributing, via scholarly activity and/or research, to the development of one's area of knowledge and being supportive of others in the same.'
'The term "academic citizenship" is used in the Faculty. It's a bit of a "catch-all" [phrase]. [It] means a willingness to work with others, take part in projects and so on.'

Table 2. The implications of academic citizenship

'Staying up-to-date, supporting students, supporting the organisation and sharing expertise in the wider sense within and outside the university.'

'Academic citizenship implies being part of a community which is supportive of students, colleagues and stakeholders.'

'It means doing your bit as an academic. There is limited money in the academic world and a lot of things would fall flat otherwise.'

'Academic citizenship implies that academics have responsibilities that extend well beyond those to their immediate colleagues, students, discipline and university…they have obligations to society at large.'

'I would see service in the sense implied as going beyond one's contractual obligations.'

Student service lies at the base of the service pyramid. This comprises a range of responsibilities, both academic and pastoral. Although it is normal to divide academic support for students from pastoral care, in reality these responsibilities overlap. These activities involve 'caring' for students and tend to be largely 'invisible' in the sense that they take place without reward or recognition from peers or the institution. Examples include giving formative feedback on student work, acting as a student counsellor, coaching students for job interviews, writing references for students or representing a student's interests at an examination board. The positioning of student service at the base of the pyramid reflects the disesteemed and largely unrewarded nature of many of these activities.

Moving up the pyramid, *collegial service* consists of activities such as mentoring colleagues, observing their teaching to aid development, contributing to university or departmental 'open days', acting as a second marker or sharing self-authored teaching materials with colleagues (such as lecture notes or case studies). Collegial service enjoys a higher status than student service and, for UK academics, has latterly become associated with the increasing importance attached to staff and educational development, reflected by the establishment of the Higher Education Academy in the wake of the *Dearing Report* (NCIHE, 1997).

Institutional service implies activities such as membership of university Senate, committee/working party membership, representing the university at an external
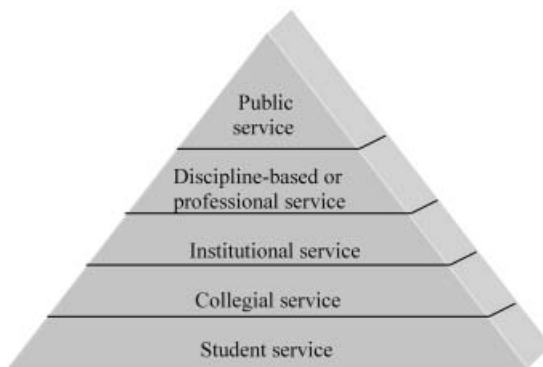

Figure 1. The service pyramid

event, acting as the director of a degree programme or as an admissions tutor. Although some of these activities form part of formal job descriptions, some are unconnected with any explicit employment requirements. Some examples of institutional service, such as that of Head of Department, are formally recognised and rewarded, although the perceived status of such academic leadership roles varies, especially between research-intensive and teaching-focused universities. Other forms of service are more externally focused and are taken as additional evidence of the scholarly expertise and status of an individual.

Discipline or professional service takes place largely, although not exclusively, through activities external to the institution. This commonly involves research-related work and collaboration, such as organising an academic or professional conference, acting as a peer reviewer for journals and research-funding organisations, publishing in unrefereed journals, writing book reviews and giving feedback to colleagues on draft papers for publication. These activities are directed mainly at supporting the development of colleagues within the discipline.

Finally, *public service* was identified as use of the scholarly expertise of staff in interacting with the media, business, government, and professional and voluntary organisations. Examples of activities include giving public lectures, working with broadcasters or the print media, and advising government, charitable and other public organisations or in developing educational links with community organisations.

The service pyramid is an enabling or heuristic device for helping us to understand the communities that academics interact with in their service role. Here, it needs to be stressed that the place of these groups within the pyramid relates to *perceptions* among academic staff as to the relative importance attached by peers and institutions to their contributions in relation to these communities. The pyramid does not infer that the needs of students are unimportant; merely that institutional reward and recognition and the ingrained practice of academic life places a higher premium on service contributions to other communities. There was a strong feeling among those I interviewed that many of their service activities went unrecognised. Here, there is perhaps a 'line of visibility' that may be drawn mid-way up the service pyramid dividing esteemed from disesteemed forms of service. Public service, service to the discipline or profession and some forms of institutional service, such as Chairing a department or a leading university committee, are valued and honoured more highly than student service, collegial service or forms of institutional service disconnected from prestigious leadership roles.

There are also interesting connections between these forms of service and the different interpretations of the service role of the type of university considered earlier. There is a link between aspects of student service and the Oxbridge tradition of service, with its emphasis on developing a pastoral and moral relationship with students. In the Oxbridge tradition, living in college was seen as an essential feature of the learning process in contrast with many students attending the ancient Scottish or new Victorian English universities. Collegial service implies a commitment to the

intellectual development of colleagues whereas institutional service demands work in support of academic self-governance, both central features of the Oxbridge tradition (Tapper & Palfreyman, 2002). The Humboldtian tradition privileges research and scholarship as the primary concern of the academic community and sustaining this tradition requires commitment to discipline or professional service. Finally, public service is most closely associated with the civic tradition through seeking to extend understanding of disciplines to wider sections of the community and actively working to link learning with the emerging social and economic needs of the locale or region.

The Micro Politics of Service

The service pyramid, and the degree to which academics are committed to elements of service within its parameters, reflects the micro politics of life within modern universities. Although nearly all interviewees expressed the view that service activities were poorly rewarded and received limited recognition, power relations within the immediate department or academic unit determined who would be required to perform the most disesteemed forms of service. Senior academics largely perform service roles with power and status, such as peer reviewing for journals, and tend to have less responsibility for disesteemed service roles. By contrast, newer or more inexperienced lecturers are routinely required to execute administrative service roles, such as admissions work and undergraduate course management, as a 'rite of passage'. In the United States there is a substantive division between 'tenured' and 'untenured' staff while there is increasing casualisation of the academic profession across many national contexts (Benjamin, 2000; Court, 2006). As a professor from an American university stated, 'Realistically, internal service is something that "junior" (untenured) faculty are pressed into and find hard to refuse'. Although kudos is gained from collegial service roles in relation to wider scholarship, internal service tasks do not attract a similar degree of recognition or reward. This results in a sense of resentment among junior staff and led one respondent to state that he felt 'shafted' by more senior colleagues because of his administrative workload. The way that power relations within the academic community impact in shaping service roles in this way, to the detriment of certain categories of staff, has been referred to by Hargreaves (1994) as 'contrived' collegiality and Massy as 'hollowed' collegiality (Massy *et al.*, 1994).

The gendered nature of academic citizenship roles also needs to be recognised. Women are good 'campus citizens' inasmuch that they contribute, often disproportionately, to student advising and in service to the institution (Burton, 1997). They are more likely to be taken advantage of in respect to fulfilling disesteemed roles owing to their commitment to the 'ethics of care' (Gilligan, 1982), their 'institutional virtue' (Burton, 1997) and through occupying fewer senior positions in universities. Women are twice as likely as men to be employed on a part-time contract in a UK context (HESA, 2004). Part-time staff and other marginalised groups, such as graduate teaching assistants, also tend to have little

input into collegial decisionmaking processes despite the fact that both these groups are now central to the provision of higher education in many national contexts (Park & Ramos, 2002).

A 'performative' (Ball, 2003; Skelton, 2005) culture in academic life impacts upon the commitment by staff to academic citizenship. Although academic life has always been competitive, such pressures have been exacerbated in recent years as a result of the globalisation of the market for higher education and attempts by governments to audit research and teaching 'excellence' as part of a new culture of accountability and 'performativity' (Skelton, 2005). System-wide change affecting higher education has led to a fundamental shift toward a culture based more closely on 'performativity' and income generation (Skelton, 2005). The changing culture across education sectors represented by the term 'performativity' is one characterised by an unremitting diet of 'targets, indicators and evaluations' (Ball, 2003, p. 215). The impact of the Research Assessment Exercise in the UK, for example, has been blamed for creating a modern breed of 'selfish' professors focused on individual research agendas and less likely to contribute toward the development of new scholars or wider communities (Richards, 1997; Piercy 1999; Bassnett, 2004). Although it is now commonplace to 'measure' academic performance in respect to teaching and research through a variety of instruments, comparatively little effort has been expended on applying performance management measures in relation to academic citizenship.

Evidencing Academic Citizenship

Academic careers have long been shaped by reward and recognition for individual achievement (Shils, 1997). This historic bias means that service activities, which are often focused on enhancing the achievement of others, tend to be overshadowed by the performance of staff in respect to their teaching and research. Despite the fact that many universities do include service contributions within their promotions criteria, the overriding impression of interviewees is that lip service is paid to the importance of service in university life. Most were dubious that 'service' contributions are really rewarded in career terms (see Table 3).

These comments illustrate that there is a key difference in the way institutions pay *formal* and *informal* attention to service within their policies and procedures. Many

Table 3. The (lack of) reward for service

Service activities generally go unnoticed, unrewarded and unappreciated.
Service…is a very poor stepchild to scholarship and teaching, and is only notionally rewarded.
Research is seen as having the highest kudos and teaching lies underneath. Service is at the bottom.
To the best of my knowledge, neither my previous nor my current employer gives much recognition to service contributions.
I think they (i.e. service activities) are certainly rewarded but there is a sense that they are a secondary component compared to teaching and research…service might provide a little extra help on occasions (e.g. in promotion decisions).

universities and colleges do formally recognise service (occasionally expressed as 'academic citizenship' work), especially in North America where there is a more strongly established tradition of service and service learning within university life (Ward, 2003). However, although universities may state that service is an important or, indeed, integral part of their criteria in respect to promotion, this does not automatically mean that such work plays such a significant role in practice. A number of interviewees voiced concern that what really mattered in such promotion decisions were contributions to research through publication and obtaining grant funding and, perhaps to a much lesser extent, teaching and then, lastly, service achievements. Most institutions provide bullet-pointed lists of promotion criteria that appear to imply that teaching and service contributions rank on an equal basis to research achievements. However, the reality may be somewhat different if, to re-paraphrase George Orwell, some bullet points are more equal than others! In other words, criteria in respect to service or citizenship contributions are not perceived to have equal weight to those that relate to research and (narrowly defined) scholarship. Generally, institutions do not provide 'weightings' in respect to tenure and promotion criteria that indicates which are the most important. Very few universities provide an explicit 'weighting' for service or academic citizenship contributions. Edith Cowan University in Australia is a rare exception to this pattern (Edith Cowan University, 2005).

Some universities refer explicitly to 'academic citizenship' in their promotion and tenure procedures for academic staff. The University of Alabama, for example, has identified student service-related activities, such as advising roles, and institutional governance activities, such as committee membership or other relevant commit-ments, as categories for the evaluation of faculty members. It has also determined that performance of such obligations that go beyond those normally required for 'responsible academic citizenship' can result in the award of a salary increase (University of Alabama, 2005). The University of Alabama, however, is unusual in explicitly identifying 'academic citizenship' as opposed to more generalised notions of service. It is common practice for a distinction to be drawn by writers between service activities in relation to wider communities and to service activities within the institution, sometimes referred to as 'corporate' or 'academic' citizenship (e.g. Knight, 2002; Ward, 2003). Less commonly this distinction is reflected in university promotions criteria whereby service is subdivided into service to the university and service to communities beyond the university, as at Midwestern State University (USA) or the University of Zwazulu-Natal, South Africa (Midwestern State University, 2004; University of Zwazulu-Natal, 2004).

Interviewees recognised that it is also difficult to 'measure' service citizenship-type activities as opposed to research outputs such as papers, books and compositions or grant funding generated. Part of the problem in measuring academic citizenship is that although many institutions do acknowledge aspects of this role in their reward and recognition criteria, few do so in a comprehensive or sufficiently detailed way to do justice to the range of activities that academics undertake in this regard. Table 4

Table 4. Evidencing service

Activity	Examples
Engaging	Inter-professional and public audiences through the popular media; public lectures and contributions to debates; working on public and national committees; holding public office relevant to dissemination of expertise
Authoring	Teaching materials and coursewares; unrefereed papers and articles in the popular press; university papers and reports; new academic programmes
Leading	Educational programmes; organisational units; university-wide initiatives; committees; journals; research groups; societies; networks
Mentoring	Institutional colleagues and research students; external academic peers; colleagues in allied professions or commercial settings
Organising	Field trips; educational visits; work placements, service learning opportunities; conferences; symposiums; public debates
Representing	The School or Faculty on university committees; the university in recruitment work; national and international organisations, networks and societies
Reviewing	Academic papers; the quality of teaching and learning; books; applications for promotion, research grants and other awards
Sharing	Self-authored teaching materials; research findings; through consultancy
Tutoring	Student advising, including pastoral support and skills development; writing references; liaison with allied student services

indicates the range of activities that academic citizenship entails. For almost all these activities, evidence can be produced. One way of handling the collation of this sort of information is to present it in the form of a portfolio, a technique that is now used widely in relation to evidencing teaching activities and associated claims for promotion and recognition on this basis.

Although evidencing contributions to service are important, this does not suggest that promotion or recognition in academic life should be based wholly on such contributions. Such evidence needs to be provided in more detail and taken more seriously, however, alongside research and teaching achievements. There are, of course, differences in outlook and culture between national systems of higher education. In studying university promotion policies it is notable that references to 'service' and 'academic citizenship' are more likely to be found in the criteria issued by non-UK institutions. This may be explained by the dominant use of the term 'administration' in UK universities to describe work other than service rather than the broader and more inclusive use of 'service' as a term found in North American institutions (Macfarlane, 2005). In North America, for example, academic résumés or curriculum vitae commonly place emphasis on community and outreach activities as citizens, often in response to promotion and tenure guidelines (Ward, 2003). It is unusual to find such information contained in an equivalent submission for appointment or promotion by a UK-based scholar. This is partly because of the more established tradition of service learning and outreach found in North American universities, which helps to integrate academic learning with community service (Rhoads & Howard, 1998). In the UK, part of the difficulty of evidencing service activity is that the service learning tradition is only weakly established or understood. The UK university sector, in

particular, still has a long way to go before it adequately recognises and rewards academic citizenship.

Conclusion

Academic citizenship is central to the success of the university as a collective entity rather than as a collection of individuals set on achieving personal goals (Shils, 1997). Some may regard this vision as a romantic ideal rather than a practical possibility. However, academic citizenship is central to sustaining the infrastructure that supports academic life and the 'compact' (NCIHE, 1997) between the university and society. The drive to make higher education more 'efficient' through a more 'performative' reward structure and the casualisation of academic labour is also undermining academic citizenship. In this respect, national research audit exercises also contribute strongly to a culture thatincreasingly rewards an individual rather than collective ethic.

Sustaining academic citizenship in this climate demands more explicit reward and recognition. Although many universities have re-designed their promotion and tenure policies in recent years to reward individual performance in research and teaching, few have addressed the more complex question of evaluating contributions for the collective good via academic citizenship. Academic citizenship is no less valuable simply because it might be perceived as harder to 'measure' or evaluate. If universities fail to take up this challenge it will make it harder to maintain the quality of internal and external service activities and, ultimately, public support and understanding for the role of higher education in a free society.

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