

## **Striking A Balance: Using Signaling Theory To Analyze Teaching, Research, And Service Expectations Between Candidates And Hiring Committees At The Initial Touch Point**

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Finding a balance between teaching, research, and service has always been a challenge for professors seeking tenure or promotion (Beltramini, Schlacter, and Kelley, 1985). This is evidenced by the continued drop in tenure from 1994-2016 for both public and private institutions, by 9.6% and 6.7%, respectively (NCES, 2016). Teaching was at one point in time the primary duty for faculty, though today's faculty have experienced substantial increases in all three classical academic obligations: teaching, research, and service (Zey-Ferrell & Baker, 1984; Teer & Wisdom, 1989). Actual and expected workstyle variations among employers and professional employees (i.e., college professors) are important because professionals are often driven by personal views of what should be expected as much as by what is expected by employers (Boya & Robicheaux, 1992). As a result, researchers have explored the issues faced by existing faculty working toward getting tenure, as well as the challenges experienced by faculty denied tenure (Seggie & Griffith, 2009; Beltramini, Schlacter, and Kelley, 1985).

Despite these advances to the literature, such measures lack clarity concerning the signals that are sent out to candidates upon exposure to the initial touch point (i.e., the job posting). The initial touch point is critical because it signals to the applicant the obligations and expectations tied to the job opening. During the hiring process, hiring committees are seeking to recruit the best candidate for the available position, while candidates are seeking to find a position that aligns with their interests, expertise, and desires. Both candidates and hiring committees have the same interest in mind, which is to fill the vacant faculty position. Candidates and hiring committees each attempt to communicate their needs and expectations and can sometimes fail to clearly communicate their goals to one another. This lack of clarity can lead to mismatched expectations from both parties, ultimately resulting in denial of tenure for professors and a loss of investment for the institution.

Through the use of Signaling Theory, we add to the conversation by investigating the communication of expectations at the initial point of contact, which will result in a clear understanding of goals that will lead to a higher probability of receiving tenure and increased retention rates for institutions. Signaling Theory looks to improve the way information is conveyed among parties, when there is information asymmetry between those parties (Spence, 1973). This study has critical implications for candidates and university hiring committees wanting to ensure that there is alignment between perceived expectations and actual expectations. Modifying signaling attempts at the onset may serve beneficial in aiding hiring committees to select good fit candidates, as well as aiding candidates in finding a job they will be less likely to leave.

### References

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