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# Service Requirements for Promotion and Tenure: What Is the Technical Services Librarian to Do?

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This article seeks to determine the definition of service in academic institutions, the service criteria at various academic institutions, the percentage that service is valued, what weight specific service activities are given, and how service criteria has been viewed over the years. The focus is on the service criteria for promotion and tenure (including continuing appointment). Additionally, this article discusses some challenges technical services librarians face in fulfilling their service requirements and provides some suggestions on how technical services librarians can present their service activities in their promotion and tenure dossiers.

**Keywords:** service, technical service, promotion, tenure

## INTRODUCTION

Service is often a requirement in an academic librarian's annual evaluation, promotion, continuing appointment, and tenure criteria. But what exactly is service? The Oxford English Dictionary defines service as, "The action of helping or doing work for someone" or "an act of assistance" (oxforddictionaries.com, 2015). So what service activities should academic librarians perform? Are the requirements different for technical services librarians? Are there specific challenges for technical services librarians in fulfilling these requirements?

In academic institutions, the definition of service can be vague, or vary among institutions or even among library professionals. What is defined as service at one institution may not be considered service at another. The various options of service criteria can also differ across institutions. Plus, whether librarians need to perform service outside of their normal hours is not consistent among various institutions.

This article seeks to determine the definition of service in academic institutions, the service criteria at various academic institutions, the percentage that service is valued, the weight that specific service activities are given, and how service criteria has been viewed over the years. The focus is on the service criteria for promotion and tenure (including

continuing appointment). Additionally, this article discusses some challenges technical services librarians face in fulfilling their service requirements and provides some suggestions on how technical services librarians can present their service activities in their promotion and tenure dossiers.

## WHAT IS A TECHNICAL SERVICE LIBRARIAN?

According to the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) Website on the About us page, "ALCTS is the national association for information providers who work in collections and technical services, such as acquisitions, cataloging, metadata, collection management, preservation, electronic and continuing resources" (para. 1). Thus, the term "technical service librarians" covers a wide range of positions. These include acquisition librarians, catalogers, metadata librarians, collection librarians, electronic resource librarians, resource managers, serials librarians, conservation and preservation specialists, and now discovery librarians. Some librarians have positions that cross multiple duties, and have titles such as "collections and acquisition librarian," "cataloging and metadata librarian," and "technical services librarian."

As can be seen from these titles, the role of the technical services librarian has changed. Catalogers are often now called metadata librarians since they are often doing more than creating MACHine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) catalog records. These days, serials librarians spend much of their time managing electronic resources. And discovery

librarians did not exist a few years ago. But the focus of technical services is still on making library resources visible and enhancing the searching of these resources. Frost's (1994) definition of technical services still holds true: "Broadly defined, technical services is the provision of services and products that provide intellectual access to information" (p. 229). Thus, technical services positions are more operational than directly service-oriented, and include responsibilities, such as organizing/managing resources, and overseeing/managing library business functions.

### WHAT IS SERVICE?

As noted in the Introduction section, the definition of service varies and is often vague. Many institutions lack a definition of service even though service is listed as a requirement for promotion and/or tenure. While discussing service, Benefiel, Miller, Mosley, and Arant-Kaspar (2001) commented on how "the definition, scope and weight of service activities vary widely from institution to institution" (p. 362). They mention how little had been written on the topic and the concept of service was "not well defined" (p. 362) and "referral to the local promotion and tenure document may be equally uninformative, as these issues may not be explicitly addressed in a document" (p. 363).

An examination of several national library organizations found no clear-cut definition or little guidance with respect to service or service criteria for academic librarians. The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) SPEC Kit 182 (1992) contains a list of documents from 18 ARL libraries about faculty status for librarians. These documents include service criteria. However, the kit offers no overall definition or summary of service or service criteria.

Additionally, a search of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Website found little on service criteria for academic librarians. The ACRL "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians" (ACRL, 2012) document states, "Librarians serve and contribute to university governance through their service on campus-wide committees. They also enhance the reputation of the institution by engaging in meaningful service and outreach to their profession and local communities" (para. 5). Unfortunately, there are no examples of service included in this document. The ACRL Web document "A Guideline for the Appointment, Promotion and Tenure of Academic Librarians" (ACRL, 2010) also does not provide specific criteria for service activities for fulfilling promotion and tenure requirements. While describing promotion criteria, the guidelines provide a list of activities to consider, but do not specify if the activities are considered librarianship, scholarship, or service.

Garner, Davidson, and Schwartzkopf (2009) also commented on how it can be difficult for librarians to identify what activities are considered service. They noted, "Confusing the issue is that there are no clear-cut guidelines among

institutions regarding what constitutes scholarship or service. For example, editorial responsibility is considered scholarship at some institutions and service at others" (p. 206). Additionally while introducing the concept of service, Mach (2005) defines service as:

Outreach or committee activities that are "above and beyond" your normal duties. Second, every library, and probably every librarian, defines service differently. Some expect service in all categories (library, university, professional, and community), while others do not. Some limit service to committee work, whereas others employ a broader definition. (Mach, 2005, p. 43)

Service definitions in the literature suggest a wide range of activities. While defining the concept of service, several articles provide lists of service activities as their definition of service. For their survey, Park and Riggs (1991) described service as activities at the "university, local, regional, and national levels." They summarized service as: "For librarians, public service most often means working outside the academic community with users such as high school students, business people, and other researchers. Professional service applies to active participation in university and professional associations and learned societies" (p. 277).

Other articles reviewed mentioned definitions of service using faculty definitions. One particularly interesting concept is the description of service as the "scholarship of application." According to Boyer (1990) service is:

To be considered scholarship, service activities must be tied directly to one's special field of knowledge and relate to, and flow directly out of, this professional activity. Such service is serious, demanding work, requiring the rigor—and the accountability—traditionally associated with research activities. (Boyer, 1990, p. 22)

These various definitions provide some common themes. Service indicates some activities outside of the library. Many of these definitions mention service to the library, university, and professional associations. Plus, several include service to the outside public community. The terms "outreach," "contribute," "serve," and "participate" are often used.

As can be seen from these definitions of service, the concept of "service" is broad and subject to interpretation. In some cases, the definitions consist of a list of examples. Thus, a clearer definition of service is needed for academic librarians. This article suggests a working definition of service and set of criteria to fill in this gap all in one place.

### LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review of "service" and academic librarians in relation to promotion and tenure revealed a small number of articles written with many published a few years ago. Service is often included as part of an article on a larger topic such

as criteria for promotion and tenure. No articles were found specifically on technical services librarians and service.

Many of these previous discussions on service focused on a particular segment of the academic population. Park and Riggs (1991) wrote on the promotion and tenure practices in academic libraries by institutional type across the country. In their survey, service was the second highest rated activity (87.4%), with job performance (94.9%) as the highest, and research and publication third (74.4%). Their research also showed that service was more of a deciding factor in institutions where librarians have faculty status. Of the institutions with faculty status, 96.8% used service in promotion and tenure criteria, while only 78.1% of institutions with professional status considered service.

Focusing on promotion and tenure experiences among academic librarians of color, Damasco and Hodges (2012), like Park and Riggs (1991), found service to be the second highest criterion at 86.7%, with job performance highest at 91.7%, and research and publication third at 83.3%. In Damasco and Hodges' more recent survey, the percentages for job performance and service have dropped while the percentage for research and publication has increased.

Some of the literature revealed this shift of the decreasing importance of service and the increasing importance of scholarship. In their survey of tenured librarians in large universities, Smith, Frost, Lyons, and Reichel (1984) found that: "research and publication had become the second most important criterion after job performance by 1979" (p. 97). In a more recent article, Smith (2006b) determined via his survey that the librarians' attitude toward service activities differed from the administration's attitude. At Georgia Southern University, administrators placed more value on scholarship than service activities while librarians valued service (7.1%) slightly over scholarship (6.69%). Thus, there may need to be discussion between academic librarians and library administration on the value of service activities. Also, academic librarians may need to examine their promotion and tenure documents to clarify the importance of their service requirements.

As seen by these differing percentages, these surveys and studies indicate a range in the value of service in promotion and tenure criteria. These differences could be based on the type of university or whether librarians have faculty status. Smith (2006b) determined that research universities valued scholarship more than regional universities, state universities, and 2-year colleges. He also concluded that service is rated lower at research universities than the other types of institutions, based on the role of research at these institutions. Park and Riggs (1991) also discovered that research and publication is a factor in almost 85% of institutions with faculty status while only 65% of institutions with professional status, indicating that research and publication was more of a deciding factor in institutions where librarians have faculty status.

Other studies discussing service requirements focused on particular regions of the country. Henry and Neville (2004) examined the research, publication, and service activities of Florida academic librarians. These activities were divided into the following categories: research/publishing, editorship, posters/presentations, and service (miscellaneous other professional activities). Unfortunately, their study focused more on publishing than the other types of service activities, and they ranked all of the activities together. But Henry and Neville did provide a helpful table that listed all of the service activities by "perceived importance." In his survey of state academic librarians in Georgia regarding promotion and tenure activities, Smith (2006b) included a list of the six highest and lowest rated service activities, but did not include a copy of his survey containing the complete list of activities. Therefore, a further study of service activities of academic librarians is needed since these studies only briefly discussed the necessary criteria.

Additionally, only a few authors have examined the criteria for promotion and tenure for technical services librarians. While discussing strategies for success in tenure, Lee (2007) mentioned strategies and advice for technical services librarians in pursuing tenure. The advice she gave geared to technical services librarians was in the "profession of practice" area with no specific advice for technical services librarians in regards to service. Providing guidance from various serials librarians, Johnson et al. (2005) described the tenure process at their various institutions and how a serial librarian can put together a successful dossier. A few of the authors (Miller and Wilkinson/Lewis, in particular) offered some ideas on service activities. Their suggestions include volunteering to serve on library, campus, and library organizations committees/taskforces. The only suggestion specifically geared to technical services librarians was joining the North American Serials Interest Group (NASIG) organization.

Looking at academic law librarians, Blackburn, Hu, and Patrum (2004) investigated faculty status and tenure for academic law librarians. In their survey, the authors examined if the requirements for technical services librarians in academic law libraries differed from their public services counterparts. The authors expected technical services librarians to have different requirements than public services librarians since public services librarians often require a Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree. However, they found that only 10.8% of libraries surveyed indicated different requirements.

Most importantly, Hill (2007) discussed the plight and struggle of technical services librarians in obtaining tenure. During the course of the article, she made little mention of the service aspect (including service as part of their normal duties), focusing instead on the practice of librarianship. However, she commented how technical services librarians have less time in their work schedules to pursue scholarly

and research activities than their public services counterparts since technical services work is more production-oriented and less “seasonal.”

Thus, for technical services librarians, selecting which service activities to perform is especially important. While describing promotion and tenure for academic librarians in Carnegie institutions, Garner et al. (2009) recommended that academic librarians look for service opportunities and choose activities that interest them (even though Garner was Coordinator of Cataloging Services and Davidson is a Serials Cataloger, the authors did not investigate whether technical services positions differed from public service positions). Griffin (2013) also suggests choosing the right type of service opportunities and cautions about taking on too many service commitments in pursuit of tenure. In fact, Griffin notes that her mentors advised selecting service activities with potentially high impact(s). She states, “They advised me to seek out and engage in service options which had influence on policy within the library and on campus within a professional organization” (p. 87–88). Likewise, Lee (2007) suggested starting to plan early to obtain tenure, by setting goals and a timeline for them. She recommends selecting service activities that will help attain tenure and finding out which activities your institution rates higher. These statements further indicate that the service activities an academic librarian selects and performs must provide justification to grant promotion and tenure.

But how is a librarian to decide which service activities to perform? Mentorship is frequently mentioned in the literature with respect to service activities. Hill (2007) included service in her discussion of mentorship, stating that senior faculty should help junior faculty find service opportunities. Plus, she detailed the importance of mentorship for technical services librarians since they are fewer in number and may need more support. Unfortunately, not all institutions have formal mentoring programs. Johnson et al. (2005) discussed the value of finding a mentor at her own library and another mentor through a professional organization (NASIG) to guide her, since her institution did not have a mentoring program. This suggests that technical services librarians may need to find a mentor outside their own library or have a mentor that is not a technical services librarian.

This literature review indicates that a more specific set of criteria is needed for assistance in fulfilling promotion and tenure requirements. Service, both its definition and criteria, has been given peripheral treatment in the literature. As Miller (1987) noted, “the relative weights of various activities in this category (professional service) are difficult to determine because little attention has been given to the matter in higher education literature” (p. 65). Additionally, since little has been written on different types of librarians and promotion/tenure requirements, technical services librarians, in particular, may need some up-to-date guidance and information. In seeking to develop a clearer definition and specific set of service criteria, this article provides the

results and analysis of some recent promotion and tenure documents, and suggests a possible definition and selections of criteria for service that may be useful in fulfilling promotion and tenure requirements for academic librarians. The focus is on technical services librarians.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

As seen in the Literature Review section, much of the literature written on service criteria for promotion and tenure is somewhat dated. A review of more recent promotion and tenure documents was conducted for the 18 libraries who submitted documents for the ARL SPEC Kit 182 (1992) by examining their human resources, academic, and library Websites for updated documents. These universities are: University of Alabama, University of Alberta, University of Arizona, Brigham Young University, University of Cincinnati, University of Colorado, Colorado State University, University of Florida, University of Illinois at Chicago, Indiana University, Louisiana State University, University of Nebraska Lincoln, New York University, Pennsylvania State University, State University of New York at Buffalo, University of Tennessee Chattanooga, Texas A&M University, and Washington State University. Appendix A provides the list of documents examined.

Specifically, the documents were examined for service definitions, necessary service requirements for promotion and tenure, amount service is weighted, various service criteria activities, and if there are any specific criteria differences for technical services librarians. This study follows up the research conducted by Benefiel et al. (2001) who compiled a list of service activities and discussed their associated value.

## RESULTS

The review of the promotion and tenure documents revealed that none of the 18 institutions listed different service requirements for technical services librarians (though several included differences in positions regarding job performance). However, four of the institutions offered some flexibility. Their promotion and tenure documents stated that the criteria could vary depending upon department or position. But they provided no specific information on these variations. Instead, the documents included statements such as:

Application of the criteria in each of the three categories will vary depending on individual assignment(s), Washington State University, 2014, p. 15).

Promotion considerations must take into account, however, differences in mission among campuses, and among library units within some campuses, as well as the individual librarian’s contribution to the library/campus mission. The relative weight attached to the criteria above should and must vary accordingly (Indiana University, 2015, p. 16).



The weight to be accorded each will be consistent with the department's mission and with the faculty member's job duties and work assignments (Louisiana State University, 2009, p. 5).

It is recognized that weights assigned to teaching, research, and service in university-wide policies and standards for tenure, promotion, and retention may vary in fields where normal activities require more or less involvement in teaching or service (University of Alabama, [n.d], Appendix Q, para. 2).

Whether or not these statements apply to technical services librarians appears to be left up to the individuals reviewing the librarians' activities, although they do seem to imply that different job functions should be evaluated differently based on the individual's job responsibilities. These results follow the study conducted by Blackburn et al. (2004) that found only a small percentage of academic law institutions had different requirements for technical service librarians. Consequently, the majority of technical services librarians must follow the same promotion and tenure requirements as other librarians at their institutions.

### Definition of Service

This examination of promotion and tenure documents also found that very few of them included an actual definition of "service." Rather most of the documents provided a list of sample service activities. One of the most specific definitions of service comes from Louisiana State University (2009): "The term service is used to mean other contributions to the department, the University, the academic profession, or the broader community that support the primary missions of scholarship and teaching" (p. 9). Likewise Texas A&M (2009) stated, "Service includes those activities which parallel the performance of Librarianship, research, and publications in focus, direction, and effect" (p. 6). Splitting up the concept of service, the glossary of University of Cincinnati's document provides clear definitions for both community and university service, and professional service.

Community and university service: Assistance provided through offices held, committee work, or special projects for the University or community which is beneficial to the Library or the University. (University of Cincinnati, 2005, p. 25)

Professional service: Contributions of a professional nature provided through offices held, committee work, or special projects to further the interests of the library or library-related profession. (University of Cincinnati, 2005, p. 26)

These definitions suggest that service activities must have some meaning and purpose. They are an extension of a librarian's job performance activities. Plus, they should

bring prestige and recognition to the librarian and the librarian's institution. Therefore, the service activities an academic librarian performs should be carefully considered and should help advance the librarian's career. Unfortunately, there seems to be no guidance for librarians such technical services librarians whose work is more operational than teaching/research focused.

### Promotion and Tenure Criteria

And what are the specific criteria for promotion and tenure included in these 18 documents? Two-thirds of the institutions (12 of the 18) had three criteria they evaluated for promotion and tenure: job performance, scholarship and research, and service. These three criteria are the same criteria discussed in previous studies such as Smith et al. (1984), Park and Riggs (1991), Smith (2006b), and Damasco and Hodges (2012).

None of the 18 institutions listed only one criterion, while only one institution had two criteria—job performance, and either scholarship and research or service. The remaining institutions were split with two having four criteria, two having five criteria, and one with six criteria. The added options were teaching, professional development, academic credentials, professional experience, and job development. Both institutions with five categories break their service criteria into multiple categories. Table 1 summarizes the various criteria for promotion and tenure at the 18 institutions, and the number of institutions that have each criteria option. For the institutions with four or five criteria, the number of institutions having the listed criteria is included following the criterion name.

The institutions' promotion and tenure documents used some different terminology to describe job performance, scholarship and research, and service. Job performance was indicated in many ways such as: professional responsibilities, job competence, librarianship, professional performance, scholarship of librarianship, and position effectiveness. Research and scholarship was also called: professional development, creative activities, research and publications, scholarly accomplishments, research and creative work, and scholarship of research and creative accomplishments. Service had only a few other terminology options: outreach, citizenship, participation, and leadership. This different terminology among the 18 institutions does cause some confusion. For example, professional development means "research and scholarship" in some institutions while in others professional development indicates "training and development."

Of these criteria, job performance is stated as the most important in 13 out of the 18 institutions. Four institutions did state not which criterion was the most important, while one institution appeared to indicate that scholarship and research was the most important. This observation also follows previous studies discussed in the literature review that ranked job

TABLE 1  
Number and Various Criteria Options for Promotion and Tenure

Number of Criteria	Number of Institutions	Criteria
1	0	All have at least two criteria
2	1	Job performance Supplemental professional activities: scholarship/research or service
3	12	Job performance Scholarship/research Service
4	2	Job performance (2) Teaching (when assessed; 1) Professional development (1) Scholarship/research (2) Service (2)
5	2	Academic credentials and experience (1) Job performance (2) Service to the library (1) Service to the university (2) Service to the profession (2) Service to the community (1) Scholarship/research (1)
6	1	Job performance Professional experience Job development Professional development Professional services activities Scholarly or service activities *Criteria applied depend on librarian rank. Service is not applied until Associate Librarian rank.

performance as the most important criterion for promotion and tenure.

Unfortunately, only three of the 18 institutions gave specific percentages for their criteria. At Washington State University, job performance is evaluated at 70%, scholarship and research at 20%, and service at 10%. The University of Nebraska, Lincoln expects librarians to spend 70–75% of their time on job duties with the remaining on scholarship/research and service (they unfortunately did not give a breakdown of the division between scholarship/research and service). While Colorado State University has different percentages for job performance, scholarship, and research, and service before and after tenure (Colorado State University 2014). Before tenure, job performance is typically considered at 75%, with scholarship and research at 15%, and service at 10%. After tenure, job performance is typically considered at 80%, with scholarship and research at 10%, and service at 10%. Additionally, at Colorado State University these amounts can be negotiated and can vary from year to year.

As can be seen from these percentages, only two of these institutions (plus the one other institution that implied research and scholarship was the most important) indicated that scholarship and research was rated higher than service in promotion and tenure criteria. Thus, more than 80% of

institutions appear to value service as much as research and scholarship. This further indicates the selection of service activities is crucial for promotion and tenure at academic institutions.

### Service Activities

Included in the 18 promotion and tenure documents are a wide range of activities listed as service, though in general, service was divided into the falling broad categories:

- Library
- University
- Professional associations
- Community

Library service includes library committees, projects, work groups, task forces, creating/maintaining library Web pages, and training and mentoring of other employees. These library service activities were considered above and beyond normal job responsibilities. University service consists of university committees and task forces, institutional governance and administration, teaching a credit course, actively participating in campus events, and the support of student organizations and students in general.

Service involving professional associations can be at the local, national, or international level. Some institutions place more value on national and international organizations. The activities can include committee work, holding office, being a panelist at a conference, and serving on an editorial board. Librarians are expected to do more than be a member of the professional organization—that is, they must perform some type of significant work for the organization. Leadership (being an officer or chair) on these committees/activities is sometimes regarded higher.

Community service includes providing expert consultation services, arranging for conferences and workshops, volunteering at a public library or historical society, participation on government bodies, and making presentations to external groups. This type of service should be related to librarians' job responsibilities.

Service to professional organizations and university service were listed in all 18 of the promotion and tenure documents, followed by community service (17) and then library service (16). Church and state activities were each included in one promotion and tenure document. It was a bit surprising that library service was included less than others. However, some institutions probably consider library service as part of job performance with librarians expected to fulfill these activities as part of their normal job responsibilities.

When describing service activities, some of the promotion and tenure documents give very specific examples of service activities, while others only state that service to the library, university, profession, and community was needed without giving any specific examples. Many institutions provide a list



of sample activities, but indicate that the list is not exhaustive. Because of these differences, [Appendix B](#) provides a list of the most commonly mentioned service activities in promotion and tenure criteria documents. The most often listed service activities in the promotion and tenure documents are:

- University committees, working groups, and task forces
- Professional consulting/expert advice
- Library committees, working groups, and task forces
- University governance
- Significant work/active member of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization
- Officer of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization

It is worth noting that committee work is the most often mentioned activity for library, university, and professional associations. Being a chair of a committee was included in several of the documents as its own activity, with listings the most under professional association committees then university committees. Chairmanship was also pointed out for professional meetings/conferences and faculty governance in a couple of the documents. Interestingly, being a chair of a library committee was not cited in any of the 18 documents. However, some of the documents used the term “leadership” and did not specify what it meant. Thus, being an officer or chair probably should have received more listings.

Additionally, some of these activities were included in different criteria (scholarship/research or service) of the promotion and tenure documents. Writing and editing appeared under service in most of the documents. In general, writing for peer-reviewed journals fell under scholarship and research, while activities such as editing an academic or professional journal, refereeing articles for a professional journal, writing book reviews, and writing for a newsletter were listed under service activities. In some libraries, professional activities such as being a conference panelist fell under both scholarship and research activities while others considered these types of professional activities as service.

Two-thirds of the institutions (12 out of 18) have different criteria based on rank. Many of the documents state that service activities should be at an “appropriate level.” These institutions expect the service activities to show continual progression—that is increased impact as librarians move up in rank. At higher job ranks and for tenure, words such as “outstanding,” “significant,” “commendable,” “superior,” “successful,” “meaningful,” “important,” “recognition,” and “leadership” are used to describe the service activities. Once again, these terms are open to interpretation.

### Evaluation of Service

Unfortunately, only 2 of the 18 institutions provide specific criteria for the evaluation of service. That is, what activities are considered more important or rated higher. At these two institutions, national organizations were rated “higher”

than regional/state organization. Plus, leadership roles (officer, committee chair, and program chair) were valued more than service to a committee. At Indiana University, to be considered “beyond satisfactory” (p. 31), the librarian must “serve as a vital member.” To achieve the highest rating, there must be evidence of significant impact of service activities to the profession or university. While at Texas A&M, serving as an officer, chair, administrative leadership, or program chair are considered excellent (opposed to effective). Major committees and task forces are given more weight. Additionally, Washington State University provides some helpful guidance: “Committees that meet often, call for major time commitments, and are important to the mission, governance, and/or structure of the Library and University are more heavily weighted” (p. 22).

Maybe the best description of evaluating service criteria comes from Indiana University:

Assessment of the quality of service is based on evidence of its impact on furthering the goals of the library, the specific campus, the University, the community and the advancement of the profession, and its effect on the development of the individual, among other factors. (Indiana University, 2015, p. 15)

Note how this statement parallels the definitions of service found in the What is Service? section of the current article. A few of the other promotion and tenure documents provide some limited guidance. These statements include “Each activity is evaluated on a qualitative and quantitative basis, professional significance, and relevance to the Libraries” (University of Nebraska–Lincoln, 2013, p. 4), “The candidate’s assigned administrative and/or service-related activities must be judged by superiors as meritorious and to have brought credit to the University” (University of Alabama, [http://ua.edu/\[n.d.\]](http://ua.edu/[n.d.]), Chapter 2), “Research/scholarly/creative and professional contributions will be evaluated for quality, quantity, and professional significance” (Washington State University, 2014, p. 19). But these statements are somewhat vague and also open to interpretation since they do not specify how to evaluate the quality or quantity, or what is considered professionally significant.

Many of these 18 documents state that documentation and evidence of these activities is needed but do not state what specific documentation and evidence is needed. For example, “Review letters should address the quality, quantity, and significance of the service” (Brigham Young University, 2008, p. 9) and “Evidence of such service is documented primarily in the librarian’s curriculum vitae and by letters from officers or members of appropriate groups” (University at Buffalo Libraries, 2009, p. 5). A few of the documents specify that awards and honors should be included in a librarian’s dossier. However, only Indiana University provides specific examples of what should be included in the documentation. Offering some guidance, the University of Tennessee, Chattanooga describes what

documentation (such as program announcements, membership listings, products of committee work, etc.) is needed, and Pennsylvania State University specifies that awards and honors, and letters and documents that prove the “effectiveness” of the librarian’s service contributions are needed (The Pennsylvania State University 2005).

Thus, sadly, the statement by Benefiel et al. (2001), “referral to the local promotion and tenure document may be equally uninformative, as these issues may not be explicitly addressed in a document” (p. 363), still rings true. In these current documents, definitions of service, criteria for promotion and tenure, specific service activities and their weights, and evaluation of these activities are often still vague and vary.

This examination results in a few questions. Are these 18 institutions a representative sample or a limited sample? Do institutions have guidelines that are general practice for evaluation, promotion, and tenure service activities, but not explicitly stated in their promotion and tenure documents? Or are these documents purposely vague to allow academic librarians to perform service activities that suit their position and abilities?

## DISCUSSION

The literature review and the results from this study show some parallels and differences regarding service criteria among the different studies and surveys on promotion and tenure. These differences could be based on the year the surveys were conducted and the types of institutions surveyed. The parallels indicate some common themes.

As a more recent study, Damasco and Hodges (2012) determined that the most common services activities were library committees (85%), university committees (70%), and professional association committees (68.3%). Additionally, their research discovered that community and religious activities were often not valued by other librarians (they did not provide a percentage for community service activities).

In an earlier study, Park and Riggs’ survey (1991) revealed the following as service activities and their percentages: university committees (63.5%), regional and national committees (56.9%), elected office (52.0%), consultation services (41.1%), and other activities (17.1%). Going back even further, Smith et al. (1984) found that percentage of librarians serving on library, association, and professional association committees increased after tenure. The increases were library committees from 90.3 to 96.1%, university committees from 42.6 to 60.5%, and professional committees from 53.9 to 62.1%. On the other hand, consultations decreased after tenure from 84.1 to 74.5%.

These results indicate that this study and Damasco and Hodges had higher percentages for university service and professional associations, possibly suggesting these activities may have become more of a factor in the past 25 years. In contrast, these two recent studies found lower

percentages for library committees than Smith et al. and others (Park and Riggs did not track library committees). This decrease could further suggest that library committees are expected as part of normal job performance. Table 2 summarizes the various studies.

The percentages for community service and consultation services varied the most across the different studies. Interestingly, these activities were considered more in the most recent and oldest studies. All of the studies agreed that community service and consultation services need to be job-related, such as volunteering a local public library or historical society, making presentations on behalf of the library or institution, etc. With community service activities now included as a criterion in many tenure and promotion documents, this change could signify increased opportunity for these activities or the desire to market the library and/or institution.

Like other surveys, Smith (2006b) noted that community service was rated the lowest at all of types of institutions, particularly research universities and regional universities. (In his study, professional service was valued at 7.1 while community service was valued at 5.62%). Smith was one of only a few of the studies that rated the importance of various activities. Table 3 shows the ranking of specific service activities by Smith and Henry and Neville, compared against the activities found in the most promotion and tenure documents examined in this study. Note that the publishing activities included in Henry and Neville’s results are not included in the table.

According to the comparisons listed in Table 3, serving on a university committee was in the top spot in this study and Henry and Neville’s study, while university committees did not make the top six in Smith’s survey. In all three of these studies, being a chair of a committee was not considered more than being an active/significant member of a committee (note that in many of the promotion and tenure documents examined for this study, librarians were expected to have more significant service accomplishments as they moved up the ranks, but specific details were not provided). However, this study and Smith’s found being an officer of a profession association to be near the top of each list, while Henry and Neville failed to include this service activity in their survey. Additionally, Smith and Henry and Neville both considered presenting at a national conference a high-rated activity, but this study found it listed in only a couple of the promotion and tenure documents in the “service” area. Interestingly, external review was rated high in Henry and Neville’s survey, but only listed in two of the 18 promotion and tenure documents examined for this study.

Unfortunately, these studies do not point to much consistency on what service activities are considered the most important. This could be the result of the various options presented in the surveys, different terminology, and the vagueness in the promotion and tenure documents. However, based on the examination of the 18 promotion and tenure documents, service is still an important part of the promotion

TABLE 2  
Comparison of Category of Service Activities by Study

Study	Library Committees	University Committees	Professional Association Committees	Community/ Consultation
Romano (2016)	88.9%	100%	100%	94.4%
Damasco and Hodges (2012)	85%	70%	68.3%	N/A
Park and Riggs (1991)	N/A	63.5%	56.9%	41.4%
Smith et al. (1984)	90.3% before tenure 96.1% after tenure	42.6% before tenure 60.5% after tenure	53.9% before tenure 62.1% after tenure	84.1 before tenure 74.5 after tenure

and tenure process. Its value, in general, appeared to be equal to research and publications. Librarians (including technical services librarians) cannot ignore service activities and must develop a plan to perform service activities that matter.

### What Is a Technical Service Librarian to Do?

For technical services librarians, service requirements for promotion and tenure present some challenges. Public services librarians deal with faculty and students on a regular basis. Thus, they are more likely to be invited to serve on university committees, assist with student groups, advise students, or be asked to speak. Instead, technical services librarians may need to make others aware of the unique skills they can provide and make more of an effort to find service opportunities. Technical service librarians can offer expertise in organization, project management, budgeting, computer skills, and data management to other departments at their institution, student groups, professional organizations, and community groups.

Considering service as an important part of tenure and promotion, Johnson et al. (2005) recommended that librarians volunteer to serve on library and campus committees. By serving on these committees, the librarians will have activities to include in their dossiers, plus they will make themselves known and boost their reputation. Regarding outside activities, listservs and social media often provide opportunities for volunteer service activities, such as writing

a book review, working on an organization's Website, being part of a task force, etc. Joining an organization, such as ALCTS or Online Audiovisual Catalogers, Inc. (OLAC), for audiovisual catalogers presents some service opportunities.

When considering service activities, technical service librarians should consider how these activities fit into their career plans. That is, what activities will show a progression and growth in service? When putting together a dossier for promotion or tenure, librarians need to tell their "story." Service is an important part of that story. Service activities should reflect favorably on librarians by showcasing their abilities and their strengths, or as the service definitions state—an extension of their job performance.

Additionally, technical services librarians may find themselves needing to explain their service activities. Other librarians may be unfamiliar with publications they are editing or refereeing, community groups they are assisting, and professional organizations they are serving. In the ALCTS "Advocacy" e-forum (Weber, 2012), participants suggested that technical services librarians promote their departments by tours, helping with orientation, newsletters, blogs, and Web pages. Lee (2007) also discusses how some librarians (such as those in cataloging and acquisitions) may have to spend extra time on their promotion and tenure materials to show the worth of their contributions since some of the reviewers may not be familiar with this type of work. A mentor may be able to review a dossier and see if the individual's description is clear. A non-technical services individual may be able to

TABLE 3  
Comparison of Top Service Activities by Study

Romano (2016)	F. Smith (2006a)	Henry and Neville (2004)
University committees, working groups, and task forces	Holding a major American Library Association (ALA) office	Member of university committee
Professional consulting/expert advice	Having a major grant funded	External review
Library committees, working groups, and task forces	Presenting at a national conference	Chair of university committee
University governance	Serving as an editor of a library journal	National presentations
Significant work/active member of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization	Serving as president of an ALA division	Member of national committee
Officer of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization	Earning a doctorate	Chair of national committee

provide some guidance to make sure that the dossier is well-rounded and understandable to all.

Clarifying service activities may be especially important for technical services librarians. Hill (2007) mentioned the additional issue that there are often fewer technical services librarians than public services librarians. Unfortunately, they can be underrepresented on evaluation, promotion, and tenure committees. Therefore, technical services librarians are often rated lower in evaluations since the qualifications are often geared toward the majority of librarians. When creating a dossier, Johnson et al. (2005) recommended that "it is better to think more broadly and link activities to the library's mission" (p. 47). Often technical services librarians may need to explain their service activities, and show the impact of their work on library and the institution they serve.

The duties of technical services positions present some added difficulties. In her article on technical services and tenure, Hill (2007) also discussed the problem of how technical services jobs are structured in regards to workload and time management. She detailed how the workflow of technical services librarians is often less "seasonal" than public services librarians who have fewer responsibilities during class breaks and summer break. Plus, some technical services librarians have "quotas" that they need to meet (such as a cataloging a specified number of books). She recommended that technical services librarians be given time to pursue scholarly and service activities, and their work expectations should be adjusted accordingly. Additionally, Johnson et al. (2005) stated:

The difficult part is that as a catalog librarian my work does not have the ebb and flow that my reference colleagues speak of. It can be hard to break away from work that may be piling up to do the other things associated with tenure. Scheduling scholarship and service time on a regular basis seems to be the best way to fit in everything (p. 42).

This statement may be particularly important for technical services librarians. They should be able request or negotiate some "release time" to handle their service requirements without fear or feeling like they are letting their responsibilities slide. Technical services librarians should be given some "off-desk" time as public services librarians are often given.

## CONCLUSIONS

There seems to be little consensus on what exactly "service" means, and service requirements for promotion and tenure vary across institutions. Some promotion and tenure documents contain detailed descriptions of service criteria and expectations, while others only give a few sample activities. Most institutions appear to expect some service activities outside of normal job performance, but do not state when librarians are expected to perform these activities.

However, the service criteria for promotion and tenure should be clearly stated and identified for academic

librarians. Since institutions often use different terminology, the requirements need to be unambiguous. Without specific criteria, the requirements can be subjective. Librarians could unknowingly fail to meet their service requirements or perform the wrong types of activities. The criteria should either be defined at the institutional level, or possibly by standardized criteria at a national level. For guidance, librarians should check the dossiers of other librarians who have been successful at their institution to see what they listed as service and ask for guidance. Mentorship can successfully guide a librarian through the process.

But what does service mean? As determined from this study, "service" involves making professional and significant contributions (including and beyond normal work responsibilities) to the library, university, profession, and/or community that enhance the reputation of the librarian, the library, and the librarian's institution. This definition applies to all librarians including technical services librarians.

With no recent discussions of service criteria for promotions and tenure, does service still matter? Fifteen of the 18 institutions (83.3%) examined appeared to have the same weight for research and publication as service. While writing about university service, Gamble (1989) noted that librarians should understand the importance of and participate in university service. Thus, they are part of the decision making process at their academic institutions. Gamble further commented:

Librarians can and should work toward gaining the flexibility in work schedules that permits them to become involved in university service participation. And it is through performance evaluations that librarians may be provided the incentives and rewards to encourage them in this direction. (p. 347)

The same could be said for technical services librarians. They should be involved in library and university committees so that decisions that affect them are not made without consultation. Technical services librarians should actively serve on these committees to have equal representation and make themselves known. Librarians need to find a balance between their service commitments, their regular workload, and their professional development. They should be able to seek out service activities that advance their career goals, help them develop new skills, and most importantly, suit them.

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## APPENDIX B: LIST OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES

This appendix lists the service activities that were included in at least two of the promotion and tenure documents reviewed. The activities are divided into library, university, professional, and other.

### Library activities

- Library committees, working groups, or task forces
- Library governance
- Library mentor

### University activities

- University committees, working groups, and task forces
- University governance
- Advisor to student groups
- Faculty advisor
- Presentations to university committees, faculty, or student groups
- Participating in university activities in a professional capacity
- University representative to professional groups, community groups, and government bodies
- Involvement with campus groups/assistance with student groups

- Administrative office/leadership of university
- Organizing workshops and lectures at university
- Teaching credit-based course
- Sponsoring student and school activities
- Chair of university committee
- Chair of faculty senate

### Professional service activities

- Significant work/participation as member of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization
- Officer of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization
- Committee member of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization
- Editor of an academic or professional publication
- Leadership in professional association
- Chair of international, national, regional, state, or local professional organization committee
- Referee for a professional or scholarly journal
- Organizer or a professional meeting and workshop
- Member of editorial board
- Conducting workshops for professional organizations
- Maintaining electronic discussion list or Web site
- Write book reviews, audio/video reviews, abstractions
- Presenting papers/moderator/panelist at symposia, conferences, or annual meetings
- Moderator or panelist for international, national, regional, state, or local conference
- Chair of professional meeting or conference
- Write newsletter articles and columns

### Other activities

- Professional consulting services/expert advice
- Service to community libraries, groups, and historical societies
- Participate on community/government body
- Teaching continuing education course
- Review and administer grants
- State-wide or university-system wide committees
- Promote mission of library/university
- Public lectures to groups
- Hiring/search committee
- Review committees
- Awards or prizes
- Certification/accreditation board
- Public appearance in the interest of the profession
- Fellowships/internships/exchange programs
- Leadership in business collaboration, economic development, technology transfer, or job creation