

An Examination of the Factors that Shape the Engagement of Faculty Members and Academic Staff

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Abstract In this article we discuss some of the factors that influence how faculty members and academic staff at Michigan State University connect their scholarly activities to external audiences. Logistic regression was used to analyze data collected using an institutional-wide survey. Findings reveal that appointment type, discipline, and demographic attributes influence the type of engaged activities—teaching, research, and service—in which faculty members and academic staff are involved. We discuss the implications for practice and research.

Key words Faculty · Engagement · Scholarship · Productivity

Higher education institutions are increasingly being called on to contribute to social progress, technological advancements, and the well-being of communities (Boyer 1990; Bruckardt et al. 2004; Johnsrud 2008). This work often requires that faculty members connect their professional work to groups and organizations external to higher education. Surprisingly, little is empirically known about how faculty members and other personnel contribute to these efforts in ways aligned with scholarship and the mission of higher education institutions (Wade and Demb 2009). Much of the current literature focuses on how institutional reward systems undervalue faculty involvement with external audiences (Braxton et al. 2002; Calleson et al. 2005; O’Meara 2002). Since faculty members involved

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