

## Service Statement

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Being an involved campus citizen has always been central to my identity as a professor, first at Presbyterian College and now at Oxford College of Emory University. My late parents imparted to me a sense of duty to be engaged in the community in which we lived, and my father especially showed me the sheer joy that comes from a life and career at a small liberal arts college. The sense of duty and responsibility to contribute in some way, however small, and to making a place better than I found it is at the core of my being, thanks to my parents and to my other teachers along the way.

### Pre-Tenure Service Recap

In the service statement for my tenure review, I discussed the ways in which I had been engaged in and committed to efforts that would have a direct effect on the academic program and student learning. Those efforts included being a part of three strategic planning initiatives for Oxford. The work of the Curriculum Group, which I chaired in fall 2016, led to the creation and adoption of our signature Discover-Explore-Reflect program), and since then, I have continued to work with colleagues on implementing aspects of that plan, including launching the Discovery Seminar program. In addition, I served on committees such as our Academic Policies and Planning Committee (elected position) and the Writing Support Committee (appointed), provided students with a range of co-curricular opportunities (including organizing the Southern Circuit film series and bringing nationally acclaimed speakers such as former U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey to campus), and was involved in numerous faculty searches. In 2016, I was awarded the Fleming Service Award which recognizes outstanding service to the institution and which had never before gone to someone so early in their career at the college.

### Shift in Service Since Tenure

Since tenure, I have remained engaged in some of the work described above—for example, serving on an additional search committee, chairing a successful search for a tenure-track hire in English and Creative Writing, and organizing Oxford Studies events for students. I continue to be significantly involved in my professional organizations and have served in leadership roles within each since tenure, including organizing the Southeastern American Studies Association Conference as President in 2019. And I have continued to be engaged in my local community, currently serving as the volunteer Board Chair of the Covington YMCA.

However, my focus and work within the realm of service have shifted in the past four and a half years in part due to the formal administrative role I assumed in 2018 as Associate Dean for Faculty Development (ADFD) and Director of the Oxford Center for Teaching and Scholarship (OCTS) and due to my increased interest in more formally shaping and realizing the diversity, equity, and inclusion goals of Oxford College. I have combined service and administrative work in this statement, as I understand what I do in my role as ADFD as being largely in service to faculty colleagues, division chairs, deans, and students, even as that work falls generally within the parameters of a designated administrative position.<sup>1</sup>

With that said, I have also engaged in service beyond my prescribed administrative role—most recently, as an appointed Co-Chair of the Oxford College Dean Search, which is about to begin, and as a member of Emory President Greg Fennes’s appointed Task Force on Untold Stories and Disenfranchised Populations and now as the Co-Chair of the Twin Memorials Working Group (also appointed by President Fennes), the most meaningful and enlightening service commitment of my career. This year we will move forward with a design

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<sup>1</sup> While I play a central role in idea formation for a given semester’s programming or for retreats or various initiatives to support faculty, I would not be able to do any of this work without the constant support of Allyson Studer, senior program coordinator for OCTS. As many at Oxford know, Allyson makes everything actually happen—from organizing the logistics of events to managing our budget to making sure expense reports get submitted on time to creating beautiful advertising for our initiatives to getting the word out to a variety of constituents.

firm from Richmond, Virginia, in engaging community members in continued dialogue about how best to memorialize enslaved laborers who built our campus, the original campus of Emory University. As I hope it becomes clear, much of my service connects to my teaching and scholarly interests—particularly the goal of centering, making visible, and amplifying the experiences, voices, and labor of marginalized persons (marginalization that has largely resulted from racist practices and policies within U.S. society).

My ADFD duties have expanded over the past two years in part because of pandemic-inspired needs. As listed on my CV, the responsibilities are numerous, including but not limited to: providing formal and informal support and mentoring to junior faculty throughout the tenure and promotion process and working with the deans and division chairs to meet the needs of junior faculty; coordinating Oxford's efforts in academic affairs toward diversity, equity, and inclusion and serving as primary liaison to the university offices and committees involved with these efforts; creating programming for faculty related to pedagogical innovation and scholarly support; collaborating with the deans and division chairs on creating and launching faculty support initiatives; and participating in regular meetings and fostering collaborations with university partners (e.g., Office of Research Administration, Halle Institute, Office of the Provost, the Center for Faculty Development & Excellence, and more).

Out of my faculty development work at Oxford, three themes have emerged:

#### **Putting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging at the Center of Oxford College**

Inclusive and anti-racist pedagogy are not only central to my teaching but to the programming that OCTS provides to faculty. Every workshop that I bring to my colleagues—whether focused on supporting international students, offering labor-based and contract-grading approaches (“ungrading”), or understanding student mental health struggles—is informed by this pedagogy. In fact, when the pandemic posed the challenge in late spring 2020 of getting faculty colleagues prepared to teach entirely virtually, my colleague in academic technology and I created a 5-week training program (Oxford College Online Teaching, or OCOT) that was not shaped by Canvas, Zoom, or other technologies but by inclusive pedagogical principles and approaches, including Universal Design for Learning.

My work to support diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging at Oxford further involves collaborating with our Human Resources Director, student-facing Director of DEI, and administrative leadership to make DEI even more intentionally, overtly, and visibly at the center of all we do at Oxford. To that end, we recently drafted a DEI vision statement for the college with the expectation that each office and unit at Oxford will use it as a guide for setting specific goals as related to DEI. In addition, I have served as primary author for the college's annual DEI report—a public document, submitted to Vice Provost Henderson, that serves to showcase our strengths and point to areas for potential improvement. Finally, while faculty search committees regularly receive implicit bias training, recent feedback from faculty from formal surveys I conducted reveal a desire and need for more specific training as related to implementing the helpful ideas shared in such trainings and making the search process similar across all searches (e.g., sharing evaluative rubrics and feedback forms, making sure all candidates across all searches have similar campus visits, and more). I look forward to continuing this work and thinking with the administration about the college's DEI-related needs, including what I see as a need for a Chief Diversity Officer who reports to the Dean of Oxford College.

#### **Helping Faculty Find Time and Resources**

Senior leadership has worked tirelessly to advocate for increased compensation and merit raises for faculty. My role has been to collaborate with them, the division chairs, and the Office of the Provost to help faculty find time for their work. My engagement in this area began before the pandemic, inspired in part by a faculty retreat in which we discussed faculty workload and creative ways to find time in the absence of a reduced

course load. In collaboration with the deans and chairs, I drafted Oxford's banking system and associate professor course release programs and helped to make the Office of the Provost's generous offer for three years of teaching assistants and postdoctoral teaching fellowships into a reality for Oxford. (I continue to execute and manage those programs.) In addition, I allot funds within the OCTS budget to make possible visits to classes from outside speakers and summer group writing retreats. The latter has been particularly effective in providing time and space for faculty to focus on their scholarly writing, not to mention a much-needed source of camaraderie and support during a period of social isolation.

### Supporting Junior Faculty in Their Promotional Trajectory

Over the past four years, I have engaged in supporting primarily junior faculty in formal and informal ways. Formally, I regularly lead meetings with the tenure-track faculty in which I share information regarding review requirements, offer advice on statements or selecting external reviewers, and generally attempt to demystify the tenure and promotion process. My goal has been to make these meetings focused, constructive, and helpful, as in the past they unfortunately often took a negative turn. That cannot always be avoided as anxiety runs high, especially in a pandemic, but I have attempted to make them as formative as possible.

The formal support that I have provided to junior faculty has taken various forms: a new faculty mentoring program, for which I secured additional funding for OCTS to pay senior mentors for their additional work; collaborating the academic dean and the division chairs to establish a more formalized and uniform course observation protocol and reporting form for use by all divisions; or working with staff colleagues to streamline the annual review process through Facet, another move towards standardizing the pre-promotional review experience for junior colleagues across the divisions. My informal work with faculty colleagues has largely consisted of providing thorough formative feedback on review materials and spending a significant amount of time *listening*, offering counsel when requested. I do not shy away from offering direct and clear feedback, but increasingly, I try to meet my colleagues, just like I do with my students, where they are, resisting passing judgment and offering understanding, empathy, and grace.<sup>2</sup>

### Conclusion

Overall, the years since receiving tenure have been incredibly rewarding in terms of the range of service contributions I have been able to make to Oxford College, Emory University, my professional community, and my local community. I am grateful for the trust, responsibility, and freedom given to me to make OCTS into a thriving entity and a go-to place for faculty support, and I am honored to be a part of the significant undertaking of memorializing enslaved persons and of making known and visible Emory's history as connected to slavery. While I believe what I have outlined here and in my teaching and scholarship statements signals a "significant advance beyond the work done for tenure" (*Oxford Faculty Handbook*), I also know that there is more to do to continue to realize the vision for inclusion and belonging at Oxford and to continue to support faculty and students in the midst and, hopefully one day, in the wake of the pandemic. I look forward to continuing that work at Oxford College and Emory University in the decades to come.

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<sup>2</sup> An additional example of informal yet tangible support—or rather, encouragement—involved the effort of OCTS, with support from additional offices, in providing thank you gifts and facilitating thank you note writing to faculty and staff during the pandemic. We know that swag and a note do not go as far as a raise and/or a sabbatical, but we hope we were able to offer a spot of brightness during the dark days.