

# FOUR

## CHALLENGES SOLVED BY FACULTY ACTIVITY REPORTING



**∴DigitalMeasures**

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# INTRODUCTION

Campus administrators benefit greatly from fast access to accurate information regarding their faculty members' teaching, research and service activities. This information is vital to numerous campus initiatives including accreditation, marketing the university, conducting yearly performance evaluations and attracting new faculty members and graduate students. However, generating accurate and complete reports isn't always easy.

Administrators have traditionally relied on calling and emailing faculty members and department chairs to collect information about their faculty's activities each time it's required. This ad hoc, inefficient approach frustrates administrators and faculty alike. As a result, many colleges and universities have shed their reliance on inefficient activity reporting systems in favor of a single, centralized system of data collection, management and reporting.

Read on to understand the main challenges universities face in reporting on faculty activity and the ways a centralized data management system addresses those challenges to deliver a streamlined reporting process.



# INTRODUCTION

## WHO NEEDS FACULTY ACTIVITY INFORMATION?



**President/Chancellor's Office:** Strategically position the university to external stakeholders including board of regents/trustees, government officials, industry groups and donors



**Provost's Office:** Make informed funding allocation decisions, evaluate faculty performance, demonstrate quality to regional accreditors, and attract prospective faculty and graduate students



**Deans' Offices:** Strategically position their college/school to external stakeholders including industry groups, donors and accreditors, as well as attract prospective faculty and graduate students



**Institutional Research:** Bring to light opportunities to improve the university's strategic direction, and provide other campus leaders timely information about strategic direction



**Regional & Professional Accreditation Committees:** Demonstrate that faculty are qualified to teach their courses and position the university to achieve its goals



**Grants Office:** Connect the best faculty collaborators to secure more grant funding for the university



**Marketing Department:** Promote the university to media sources to proactively manage the reputation of the university and attract prospective students

# 1

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## PROMOTING FACULTY ACHIEVEMENTS

Faculty are constantly achieving noteworthy accomplishments as they advance in their careers, from publishing research to speaking at conferences to performing consulting. Unfortunately, it can be difficult for universities to stay aware of it at all. Without access to centralized faculty activity data, a university is at a strategic disadvantage, unable to leverage the key successes of its most important resource: its faculty.

Understanding faculty achievements enables universities to:

- Tout key successes to the public and external stakeholders such as donors, state legislators and industry organizations
- Recognize faculty within the university, improving their retention
- Attract prospective faculty hires with up-to-date profiles on the university's website, making them more likely to want to join

Without clear, complete faculty activity data, a university cannot promote itself properly. A faculty activity reporting solution allows a university to bolster its reputation with fresh insight into its faculty's accomplishments.



# 2

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## SPARING FACULTY FROM REPEATED DATA REQUESTS

The average university asks its faculty for information about their accomplishments and activities eight to 12 times per year. These requests include everything from annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure documents, updating faculty profiles on the university website, information for regional and professional accreditation, and more.

Because faculty concentrate on accomplishing teaching, research and service activities rather than responding to requests for information about them, responding often falls to the bottom of their priority list.

That means responses are delayed and requests go unanswered, placing additional stress on both administrators who are collecting information and the faculty members who are required to submit information.

Even once they are collected, without a centralized data management system, this information ends up in filing cabinets or on personal faculty computers making it tedious and impractical to easily leverage it again in the future. Contacting faculty every time university administrators need access to faculty activity is inefficient for everyone involved.



challenge

# 3

## STREAMLINING INEFFICIENT PROCESSES

Academic institutions have immediate access to up-to-date information about university financials, student enrollment, courses taught and many other areas of strategic interest. With faculty accomplishments being one of a university's most significant assets, it's critical that institutions have regular access to this information.

The challenge in making faculty activity information readily available is that it currently exists in different forms and scattered locations. Gathering information from multiple sources adds to staff workload and often results in inaccurate reporting. And these reports are important: they include reporting for promotion and tenure, regional and professional accreditation, reporting to external stakeholders such as the board of trustees, and inquiries from state legislators.

The strategy of relying on administrative staff to produce timely reports using inefficient systems sets the university up for failure. When information is unavailable, incomplete or spurious, decisions are made with less confidence, putting the institution's reputation at risk. Moreover, unanswered requests for information result in lost opportunities for the university.

Considering the vast array of needs for information about faculty activities, a centralized system for faculty activity data collection, analysis and reporting is essential to improve processes in today's university.



# challenge 4

## CREATING ACCURATE REPORTS

Producing reports on faculty activity is a challenging hurdle faced by every university, especially when no faculty activity reporting solution is currently in place. Even though individuals from multiple departments have likely harvested information for their own use, others cannot use it because it is not readily available.

Now imagine the manual process of not only reaching out to collect this information from each member of the faculty, but hand-counting it and fitting the information into customized reporting templates for each purpose. Streamlining these processes benefit not just faculty or staff, but the university as a whole.

This time-consuming and inefficient data collection method causes administrators to spend hours creating reports on faculty activity every time a report is required, often “reinventing the wheel” with each request. Think about all of the ways your university should leverage information about faculty achievements: promoting the university, applying for grants, internal review processes, reporting to external stakeholders and more.





# THE SOLUTION: A CENTRALIZED FACULTY ACTIVITY REPORTING SOLUTION

Implementing a centralized faculty activity reporting solution helps the university promote faculty achievements, improves the data collection process, decreases time-consuming, repetitive tasks for both faculty and staff, and provides accurate reports for university decision makers.

Today, hundreds of leading universities are leveraging a centralized data management system to report on faculty activities faster, more efficiently and substantially more accurately than ever before. These universities include Cornell, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Penn State, Purdue, University of California-Irvine, University of Chicago, Baylor University, New Mexico State University, University of Kansas, University of Minnesota, University of Wisconsin and more.

## THE BENEFITS OF ADOPTING FACULTY ACTIVITY REPORTING SOFTWARE



Streamline the review process for annual faculty activity reports, promotion and tenure, merit pay adjustments and more.



Reduce the burden of the accreditation process on your faculty and staff.



Connect qualified faculty with available research opportunities, which facilitates more interdisciplinary research.



Gain instant visibility to the most current work of your faculty, which is also likely their best.



Promote key successes to the public and external stakeholders such as donors, founders, state legislators and industry organizations.

# CONCLUSION



Implementing a centralized faculty activity reporting solution for tracking and reporting on faculty activities will increase a school's efficiency, decrease time-consuming, repetitive tasks from faculty and staff, improve data usability and provide accurate reports for university decision makers.

## ABOUT DIGITAL MEASURES

Digital Measures focuses exclusively on web-based data management and reporting for universities. Activity Insight™, its popular faculty activity reporting solution, is trusted by 60% of the largest 500 universities in the United States and universities in more than 15 countries. Over 250,000 faculty members around the world use Activity Insight. The Milwaukee, Wisconsin-based company was founded in 1999.

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