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Faculty Consulting: Responsibility or Promiscuity?

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Source: *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 55, No. 5 (Sep. - Oct., 1984), pp. 637-659

Published by: [Ohio State University Press](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1981827>

Accessed: 11-11-2015 03:53 UTC

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inconsistent. One study shows, for example, that the proportion of faculty at four-year colleges and universities who received consulting fees increased from 13 percent in 1962 to 48 percent in 1975 [6]. Another set of studies shows that the percentage of faculty members who consult for pay was considerably smaller and did not change between 1969 and 1975; that is, 37 percent of college and university faculty members consult for pay during an average week, 19 percent consult on average more than one half-day per week, and only 6 percent consult on average more than one day per week [20, 22, 23]. A third study purports that over 54 percent of faculty members at major universities devote some portion of a normal week to paid consulting and that 16 percent of them spend on average more than 10 percent of a normal week consulting [16].

In view of current economic and demographic conditions as well as forecasts for higher education, the debate about faculty consulting is likely to intensify. This article sheds some light on this important faculty issue. It does so by examining the potential benefits—to the individual, the institution, and society—and the potential costs of faculty consulting; by presenting a review and synthesis of the research literature and data on faculty consulting; and by introducing new and previously unreported data from the National Research Council. Consideration also is given to pertinent theoretical, social-philosophical, and policy implementation issues.

### *Consulting as a Traditional Faculty Role and Responsibility*

**Faculty consulting**, as here defined, is not necessarily limited to income-generating considerations. Rather, it is viewed more broadly as a natural extension and application of one's **professional or scholarly expertise outside the academic institution and as an important form of public service that long has been recognized as a legitimate expression of faculty role and responsibility**. Viewed in this way, faculty consulting relates directly not only to the intellectual, social, psychological, and economic well-being of the individual faculty member but also to the tripartite mission of most academic institutions (i.e., teaching, research, and service).

### *Some Common Misperceptions and Complaints*

In discussions about faculty consulting, several misperceptions and complaints frequently surface. Among them are: "Faculty consulting is increasing and getting out of hand"; "Less outside consulting will