

# IMPACT 2030

## The 2030 Faculty

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# IMPACT 2030 – The Future Role of Faculty

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An impending identity crisis for universities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, is forcing a re-evaluation of roles in the academy that have traditionally characterized institutions of higher education. With predictions of the loss of as many as 50% of universities, the landscape of higher education is due for significant change. A review of literature yields a wide range of predictions for the future of academia and more specifically for the role of faculty in 2030. ORU faculty are well-positioned for the future required competencies (teaching, industry skills, scholarship, multicultural skills and technological expertise) that will produce the “Teacher Leaders” of 2030.

## INTRODUCTION

Enumerating the role of faculty in light of anticipated change was the task assigned to this work group. A review of literature, clearly outlines positional extremes as thought leaders grapple with the question of what will faculty look like in 2030? Such extremes will be highlighted in the following discourse divided in the following sections motivated by literature and the UPC’s guiding questions:

- The Role of Faculty
- The Influence and Nature of Research
- Faculty Credentialing
- The Impact of Cultural Changes
- Conclusions for ORU Faculty

A useful framework for thoughtful examination of the role of faculty was stimulated by the following questions (Bull, 2015): 1) What are the essentials of faculty’s current role? 2) What is important in faculty’s current role? and 3) What is merely present in faculty’s current role? The ORU Faculty Work Group concluded that those aspects of faculty’s current role that are merely present, will no longer exist in 2030. Those aspects of faculty’s current role that are important have potential to be molded and shaped for continued value in faculty’s role in 2030. This discussion, however, focuses on those aspects of faculty’s current role that are deemed essential for faculty’s role in 2030.

## THE ROLE OF FACULTY

Based on input from expert thought leaders in recent literature, the future role of faculty might best be explored on a spectrum bounded by the extremes of “no change” in current faculty to “non-existence” of current faculty. The latter perspective reflects a belief that robotics will replace student jobs and thus, eliminate the need for faculty jobs. Additional points on the continuum include faculty as professional trainers and faculty as facilitators of knowledge acquisition in a saturated, data-intensive environment. While uncertainty in the environment prevents accurate prediction of which role will best characterize faculty in 2030, the ORU

Faculty Work Group, in agreement with Nelson and Strohl (2013), believes that faculty will exist but there will be a need to adapt to rapid changes in technology and the growing demand for more personalized instruction without restrictions to residential campus. Faculty will be required to respond to the student demand for “Value Add” in knowledge initiatives which will not be available in books and on e-portals (Gopal, 2017). More specifically, the ORU Faculty Work Group, supported by literature, has identified the following as essentials for faculty in 2030:

- Teacher
- Scholar
- Mentor and Guide

**Teacher:** When comparing the professoriate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century with that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been argued that in the previous century effective teaching was “hampered by the relative importance of scholarship in hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions” (Wertheimer & Woody, 2017, p. 285). Though the 21<sup>st</sup> century role of a faculty member will continue to include teaching, scholarship and service, there will be a greater emphasis on effective teaching (Wertheimer & Woody, 2017).

Effective teaching in 2030 must include the ability to engage learners using various technological tools and means (Dina, Onete, & Albastroui, 2018). Faculty will further be required to design and continually update courses to integrate technological advances. Good teaching practice will require faculty to have subject matter knowledge, teaching skills and culturally relevant teaching practice (Commission on the Future, 2017). In support of growing external accountability, it is argued that “good teaching raises student learning and satisfaction and, importantly, raises persistence in challenging majors, as well as degree completion” (Commission on the Future, 2017, p.67).

*Classroom Skills.* The characteristics of “Good teaching” in the classroom is under debate. Extreme positions include “Technology has found a place in universities, but nothing significant has changed” and thus, “the pedagogic pendulum will swing back towards the lecture as the importance of an analytical mind becomes appreciated once more” (Times Higher Education, 2015). This position is in stark contrast to the belief that the adoption of technological innovations will result in fewer academicians and the classroom lecture will diminish in value amid growing acceptance of alternative teaching and learning methods. In support of the former view, some hold that universities will ban laptops and smartphones from classes to regain the lecture room as a place where multitasking is suspended in favor of sustained attention to a single topic (Times Higher Education, 2015). Correspondingly, some have expressed that uniform instruction, i.e., lecture, must give place to more personalized learning (Bull, 2015).

Though there is a disparity of views, the ORU Faculty Work Group concludes that it will be essential for the 2030 faculty member to maintain a state of continuous learning for developing teaching and technological skills. Faculty must be innovative in the value they bring to the classroom to remain relevant.

**Scholar (The Influence and Nature of Research):** Research will be an integral part of the academic landscape in 2030. Universities will need to more fully articulate and defend the societal role of research and departmental silos must be broken down in support of

interdisciplinary efforts for creating innovative solutions to major societal problems (Times Higher Education, 2015; Bull, 2015). The following dimensions of both traditional and societal research, supported by literature, were identified by the ORU Faculty Work Group as essential considerations for faculty as scholars in 2030:

- Acceleration
- Altmetrics
- Student Engagement
- New Technology

*Acceleration.* The pace of the global research environment will continue to accelerate as funders and regulators push for more open collaboration and industry seeks increased involvement and efficiency (Vostal, 2015). To some extent, advanced technologies and improved access will aid improved efficiency, but some aspects of research will always require “time autonomy” for researchers who must have adequate time to think, collect data and conduct effective analysis (Eckman, 2013). The most effective response to the push for institutional and research efficiency will be a growth in open access publishing where research is immediately made available by the publisher (Suarez & McGlinn, 2017; National Academies of Sciences, 2018). Despite challenges inherent in analysis of open scientific publishing growth trends, the recent EU mandate for all scientific papers to be freely available supports proponents’ prediction that by 2040, all published scientific articles will be available through open access (Jason, 2018; Enserink, 2016).

*Altmetrics.* Traditional citation-based metrics, such as impact factor for journals (measure of citation frequency of a journal’s articles in a given year) and h-index for scholars (gauge of quantity and citation rate of an author’s total scholarly output), will be supplanted in importance by altmetrics - a measure of the online activity surrounding the scholarly content. Altmetrics help measure the global reach of the researcher, and in turn the institution, within the larger academic community (Papakostidis et al., 2018). These measures will also be part of faculty evaluations (Thelwall, 2018). This means that the faculty of 2030 will all have Google Scholar and ResearchGate (or their 2030 equivalents) profiles and upload all their scholarship to an institutional repository in an open and near to real-time manner.

*Student Engagement.* The educational experience, leadership capacity, and future preparedness of students both academically and civically can be enhanced through student-engaged research and service-learning activities (Stanford et al., 2017; Huda et al., 2018). These trending best practices will result in a proliferation of interdisciplinary undergraduate research groups and service learning opportunities for students. Faculty must be willing to forgo the “turf battles” to embrace interdisciplinary research in support of student engagement.

*New Technology.* As worldwide scholarship output continues to grow exponentially, diverse forms of technology, including artificial intelligence, will play an ever increasing role in scholarship activities (Bornmann & Mutz, 2015). First, as a filter: “It’s not information overload. It’s filter failure.” - Clay Shirky. And second, as a tool to aid scholarship itself (Cuff, 2014). Thus, in the future, every faculty member will be required to be both informationally literate and technologically savvy.

**Mentor and Guide:** Faculty members in 2030 must serve as mentors to encourage students in developing confidence, communication and logic skills while serving as a guide through increasing options in the educational and skills attainment landscape. To assist in successfully guiding the student in workforce preparation, there will be an increasing need for faculty and administration collaboration with industry representatives in on-going review of university curricula and student progress. In this way, universities in response to growing demand for external accountability, will ensure that students are graduating with the required professional skills. Formats for industry collaborative partnering range from internships and mentorships to multilevel academic and industry partnerships for faculty (Commission on the Future, 2017). To help “bridge the gap between industry and institute,” Gopal (2017, p.91) recommends faculty visit industry and corporations periodically while also considering working as an intern for two to three months every few years. Relationships with students and partnerships with industry will be foundational for the mentoring role in 2030.

## **FACULTY CREDENTIALING**

As workplace demands shape expectations for new hires, due to its centrality in workforce knowledge and skill development, higher education must adapt and respond to workplace expectations. With the growth of online education and the proliferation of new credentials and credentialing organizations like boot camps, software certifications, and Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs), the higher education landscape has been substantively altered (Selingo, 2015). As the types of credentials available to students continue to expand, credentialing alternatives for faculty must adapt. While credentialing for faculty in 2030 ranges from professional trainers affiliated with corporations to Ph.D.s affiliated with institutions of higher learning, and the question of tenure is an on-going debate, the ORU Faculty Work Group identified the following credentials as essential for faculty in 2030:

- Terminal Degree
- Field Experience
- Continuing Education (Lifelong Learner)
- Global Cultural Competency

**Terminal Degree and Field Experience.** Recognizing a need for content experts in relevant disciplines, terminal degrees will continue to offer evidence of expertise in a field for faculty credentialing. A terminal degree, however, may not be the only evidence of expertise. With future employer expectations for practical, “real world” skills in students, where postsecondary credentials for students serve as the currency exchanged between job seeking employees and prospective employers (Harris, 2017), faculty credentialing should emphasize industry skills that vitalize curriculum and learning outcome decisions. As earning “a degree” loses importance in favor of certificates from workplaces and industry, recognition of faculty’s life-experiences and high-level, industry skills must contribute to the faculty credentialing conversation. Responding to this market demand, new systems of accreditation should also develop as these alternative certification programs gain in respectability.

**Continuing Education and Global Cultural Competency.** With growing debates about education vs. job training (Bull, 2015), faculty must continually update knowledge and skills through certifications and post-doctoral, discipline specific training seminars and tutorials. As

global expansion continues, with increasing diversity in student populations, faculty must grow in global cultural awareness with a deepened cultural sensitivity. Faculty must retool themselves with technological expertise and pedagogical skills that embrace professional competencies and cultural diversity. In light of new forms of credentialing, on-going evaluation of faculty performance should include industry evaluators and could include the use of artificial intelligence. For example, taking advantage of technological advances in another venue in higher education, avatars could be used in the evaluation of faculty's ability to teach on all levels.

## **THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL CHANGES**

As society is saturated with technology, personal skills have begun to atrophy (Gratton, 2018). Employers are reporting a deficit in communication and soft skills for which the need is being ranked higher than that of technical skills (Staley & Trinkle, 2011; Stivers & Onifade, 2013; Wardrobe, 1994). As higher education experiences a surge in cultural and ethnic diversity on college campuses, the need for cultivating students' soft skills has received further focus (Whitaker, 2018). Employers expect college graduates to enter the workplace with "scientific and civic understanding, critical thinking and soft skills" (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 3). "To make a difference, professional competence must be expressed interpersonally" (Koehn & Rosenau, 2016, p. 2). As a result, students are calling for teachers and learning environments that impart the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills which also include critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and innovation in order to be competitive contributors to a global knowledge economy. (The 2030 Faculty Member, n.d.).

Recognized as an "essential" by the ORU Faculty Work Group, and supported by literature, soft skills will be instrumental in setting students apart as employers seek strong communication and interpersonal skills (Pope, 2015). The university must be a force for socialization as well as a place of learning. In order to remain competitive, professors must possess the strong interpersonal skills to emotionally and intellectually connect with students. To build soft skills in the faculty of 2030, it is crucial that all professional training incorporate interpersonal skills that facilitate interactions with diverse populations (Koehn & Rosenau, 2016).

## **CONCLUSIONS FOR ORU FACULTY**

From the prior discourse, conclusions may be drawn for the ORU faculty community of 2030. With a Spirit-empowered, whole-person form of higher education that values a broader range of characteristics than just those linked to knowledge and employability skills, ORU faculty have further responsibility for nurturing Christian values and a Christ-centered focus in future, global leaders—a distinctive that transcends time. Christian attributes, in addition to Christian ethical understanding, cultural global literacy and leadership have an even more central role for ORU faculty and are more vital in preparing students for true global interaction with personal and corporate impact. From the ORU Faculty Work Group, the essentials for ORU faculty in 2030 are detailed below. Drawing from the prior discussion, to fulfill the ORU faculty role, these essentials include competency in:

- Teaching
- Industry Skills

- Scholarship
- Multicultural Skills
- Technology

**Teaching:** To remain relevant in the higher education landscape, ORU should “value and reward” quality teaching encouraging and motivating subject matter experts trained in both industry and academia. Spirit-empowered faculty must exercise “teacherpreneurism” in all aspects of student interaction. For curricular and extra-curricular outcomes, innovative pedagogy must characterize student-centered learning in a global context to prepare future leaders for future jobs—including jobs that do not currently exist. Only through the entrepreneurial creativity of the Spirit, can future needs be identified and satisfied.

**Industry Skills:** To fulfill responsibilities as subject matter experts, mentors and guides, faculty members must actively collaborate with industry experts and leaders. Through industry partnering, faculty will be able to identify and grow the practical skills requisite for student success (Schaffhauser, 2014) and stay relevant in a changing workforce.

**Scholarship:** Through the power of the Spirit, ORU faculty of 2030 must be interdisciplinary problem solvers who research and create innovative solutions for societal problems both locally and internationally. In compliance with the digital and open access demands of 2030, ORU faculty will have Google Scholar and Research Gate (or their 2030 equivalents) profiles with the ability to upload scholarship to ORU’s institutional repository in an open and near to real-time manner. To serve ORU’s global constituency, ORU will join other forward-thinking universities, such as Harvard University, who have led the way in instituting policies which support and reward open access scholarship (Eckman, 2013; Odell, Coates, & Palmer, 2016). ORU Faculty of 2030 will meet the great challenges with expertise from all disciplines removing cultural barriers to provide problem-focused, real-time research.

**Multicultural Skills:** The continued expansion of ORU into the global educational market through increased enrollment of international students and study abroad initiatives will require the 2030 faculty member to expertly and innovatively engage students from a variety of cultures. Creating a global awareness and empowering students to act globally is an essential quality in developing ORU’s global leaders in 2030.

**Technologically Competency:** The ORU professoriate of 2030 must have a high level of technological skill to successfully integrate digital tools in pedagogy and practice. Continual training will be required for ORU faculty to improve teaching, integrate digital tools and learn new technology (Commission on the Future, 2017). ORU faculty must have a willingness to innovate and a willingness to commit to the new learning technologies. With responsibility for lesson plan design using novel technological innovations while teaching students the importance of navigating an informationally saturated world, ORU faculty must become “Teacher Leaders” managing many complexities with seamless connections in and out of cyberspace.

**A Continued Primary Responsibility:** As a community of Spirit-empowered Christian educators, the primary activities of Oral Roberts University faculty in 2030 will center on demonstrating competency in Christ-centered teaching, industry engagement, open access

research, global cultural sensitivity and technological expertise. Every faculty member, regardless of position or rank, will intentionally pursue, and be held accountable for, excellence in teaching and continued professional vitality.

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