Checklist for performing service in Stat-ML

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Some personal suggestions (via accumulated wisdom) for assistant professors. Our field is volunteer-run: by the researchers that make it up. The primary types of service include reviewing (journals, grants), committee work (within the university or for the field) and organizing (workshops, conference sessions, etc.). Do enough service that you do not feel guilty, and not so much that you are consistently late or doing sub-par work. First, reviewing.

- A good proxy for how many papers you should review (per year): for each paper, divide by the number of authors, and multiply by two or three, and sum this across all papers you wrote last year. For eg: if your paper had 3 authors and got 3 reviews, each author should review once to keep the system balanced.

- Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you. If you get frustrated with bad reviewers who did not seem to spend enough time understanding the paper, don't do the same yourself. Be kind, be sincere.

- Being a good meta-reviewer for ML conferernces has its own unique challenges, in choosing good reviewers (altering default matchings), chasing down reviewers if they are late, fostering discussion post-rebuttal phases, and potentially adding your own review for borderline papers.

- Being a good journal AE has different challenges. One has to find good reviewers, requiring you to call on people you may know very well or not at all. Some of these people may be more senior than you, others may be your friends or mentees. You have to seek reviews gently and kindly, being respectful of other people's schedules and prior commitments. People may decline to review because of having too many reviews (taken on good faith) or because they are not experts on the paper, or are simply disinterested in the paper (hopefully rare, if you did a good job in judging that the paper is suitable for review and finding a relevant reviewer). When sending out a review request, take the time to explain why you chose them, it may make them more likely to accept if they agree with your logic. Don't ask the same person twice in the same year.

- Reviewing on grant committees can be a great way to learn about what makes a good grant, both by reading many critically, and be hearing the discussions and what makes the good ones stand out.

Next, committees.

- Types: there are thesis committees for others' students, intra-department ones (eg: I have served on hiring and seminar committees), and those for societies in your field (eg: I served on the IMS outreach committee and the COPSS emerging leader award committee). Some may be invitation-only, but you can still express interest. I would try to have one or two of each type, and do a good job on the ones you pick.

- Committees are good ways to shape your collaborations, department and field. Stand up for what you believe, express yourself honestly and clearly, and respect disagreeing viewpoints (in fact, reflect on them).

Finally, organizing sessions at conferences, or (single- or multi-day) workshops.

- Organizing sessions or workshops is an opportunity on two fronts. First, the speakers benefit from meeting each other and sharing the nuances of their latest research with each other. Second, the audience benefits by getting to learn about a new area that they may not have heard of before.

- Most large statistics meetings (like JSM or IMS World Congress) have open calls for organizing sessions. Most large machine learning conferences like NeurIPS or ICML have calls for single-day workshops. Many institutes, like BIRS, Oberwolfach, EURANDOM, AIM, etc. have open calls for week-long workshops.

- Obviously, organizing a session is the least effort: it only needs the commitment of 3-4 speakers along a broad or narrow theme, and these are not extremely competitive. The single-day or multi-day workshops are very competitive, and require much more effort. Usually, there are several organizers and a very clear theme. Multi-day workshops often need pre-commitment of a large number of speakers (say 20-40). Having done all of these multiple times, the week-long workshops are the most fun to organize, and the most fulfilling in terms of their intended outcome of spurring research, collaboration and camraderie (and require the most effort).