Adjunct and Part-Time Faculty: Working Toward Organizational Structures that Support Instructors and Student Success
Welcome

Ann Coburn-Collins
Director, Adjunct Faculty and Academic Support Programs
Before beginning...

Please take a moment to reflect upon what you already know about adjunct faculty.
In doing so, consider:

- The proportion of tenure track faculty to adjunct faculty
- How adjunct faculty are hired
- Policies and procedures for adjunct faculty employment
- Best practices for support
- Any problem you might have already identified
Definitions

• In the literature, adjunct faculty are often referred to as non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) or contingent faculty

• Adjunct faculty are a heterogeneous group which may consist of:
  - Teachers
  - Researchers
  - Administrators
  - Other academic professionals
  - Diverse members of the community who are professionals in their fields of expertise.

• Adjunct faculty may also be employed/work full-time or part-time
# Adjunct Faculty in Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Part-Time Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>4-Year Colleges &amp; Universities by Type</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>29.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>41.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>4-Year Colleges and Universities by Highest Degree Granted</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>27.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>43.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baccalaureate</td>
<td>35.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Profit 2-Year Colleges</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For-Profit Colleges and Universities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>93.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: American Association of University Professors, 2006, 18, table 2
There has been a significant shift in the reliance on non-tenure track faculty, particularly adjunct faculty.
Adjunct Faculty in Numbers

• A department survey administered by the ASA found
  – 60% of responding departments did not experience declines or increases in faculty since the previous year.*
  – But the average number of adjunct faculty increased in reporting departments at baccalaureate and master’s institutions, but not at research and doctoral institutions (Vanvooren & Spalter-Roth, 2013).

* (doctoral, master’s, and baccalaureate-only institutions)
In Program Assessment you might ask:

• What is the proportion of full-time faculty to adjunct faculty in your department?
• Has this proportion been consistent over time?
## Adjunct Faculty in Numbers

Part-time respondents, by education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than a Bachelors</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certification or Licensure</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>3,487</td>
<td>40.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MFA or MLS</td>
<td>872</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JD, MD, or MBA</td>
<td>572</td>
<td>6.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>606</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>2638</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valid Responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>8674</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Respondents</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,331</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012, 23, table 9
Adjunct Faculty in Numbers

• Average pay for a three credit course was $2700 in Fall 2010
  – Lowest pay was $2235
  – Highest pay was $3400

The irony is that, “it appears that those increasingly responsible for educating the undergraduates who reap this earnings premium are themselves excluded from the economic benefits of advanced educational attainment” (Coalition on the Academic Workforce, 2012).
Adjunct Faculty in Numbers

- Of those institutions employing adjunct faculty the majority:
  - Teach developmental courses (CCCSE, 2014)
  - 100 level /gatekeeper courses (CCCSE, 2014)
  - A study by the ASA Taskforce on Community College Faculty in Sociology found that 91.2 of part-time faculty respondents in community colleges teach Introduction to Sociology (Curtis, et al, 2016).
In Program Assessment you might ask:

• What is the average educational level of the department’s adjunct faculty?

• What is the pay rate for the department’s adjunct faculty? Does the department advocate on behalf of their adjunct faculty for higher pay rates?

• What is the proportion of full-time to part-time faculty who are teaching the department’s gateway courses.
Adjunct Faculty and the Literature

- The literature on adjunct faculty and their effect on student success suggests that:
  - Students who have increased exposure to part-time faculty in their first semester were
    - More likely to have lower GPAs\(^1\)
    - Lower credit hour completion in their second semester\(^1\)
    - Less likely to persist to their second year\(^2\)
  - Community college students who had mostly adjunct faculty were less likely to transfer to four year institutions\(^3\)
  - And graduation rates decline when students are taught by non-tenure track faculty\(^4\)

\(^1\) Harrington and Schibik, 2001; \(^2\) Bettinger and Long; \(^3\) Eagan and Jaeger, 2008; \(^4\) Ehrenberg and Zhang, 2004
Adjunct Faculty and the Literature

– Students who have adjunct faculty in one course are less inclined to take another course in a discipline or major.footnote{5}

– Adjunct faculty spend less time preparing for their courses and offer less written and oral feedback to their students than full-time faculty.footnote{6}

– Adjunct faculty tend to have lower academic expectations than their tenured and tenure-track peers.footnote{7}

Adjunct Faculty and the Literature

– Adjunct faculty rarely employ high impact teaching practices in their course delivery
– Adjunct faculty often feel that they do not have academic freedom because their positions are temporary
  • Making them feel as though expressions or discussions of sensitive material might put their positions in jeopardy

8 Clausen and Swider, 2013
In Program Assessment you might ask:

• Has the department assessed the success rate of students who were registered in their introductory courses?
• Are students who take an introductory course, taking other courses in the department?
• Are the adjunct faculty using high impact practices?
Limited Departmental Support

• Departments often fail to supply their adjunct faculty with important information that can affect student outcomes (Kezar & Maxey, 2014).
  – Adjunct faculty are often not told why they are teaching the course they are teaching
  – They are not told how their course fits with the department’s curriculum
  – They are unaware of what the departmental learning outcomes are for the course they teach and/or for the major itself

All of this leads to misaligned course goals
Limited Departmental Support

• Adjunct faculty have little to no involvement or input into departmental curriculum development
• Adjunct faculty are excluded from faculty meetings
• They have little or no access to office space limiting interactions with colleagues and students
  – Lacking private space can create FERPA violations
Limited Departmental Support

• Adjunct faculty have limited or no
  – Access to computers, photocopiers, telephones, or fax machines
  – Access to clerical support
  – Access to teaching supplies

All of these limitations hinder the ability of adjunct faculty to function at the same level as the full-time faculty and to have the time or place to interact with their students (see for example, Gappa, 2000, or Meixner et al, 2010)
Explanation

“What creates the “problem” of part-time/adjunct faculty is not any inadequacy on the part of these faculty members themselves but, rather, their exploited status, which requires them to rise above adverse and unreasonable circumstances in order to deliver quality education” (AFT, 2002).
Importance of Support-Jaeger & Eagan (2010)

- Studied six public, four-year institutions in Ohio
- Summary findings
  - Overall, the more exposure to non-tenure-track faculty in a students’ first year of college negatively affected a student’s retention to second year
  - However, in two of the institutions, under study, exposure to part-time faculty led to positive retention results
    - The difference in results, had to do with adjunct faculty support
- The authors’ findings suggest that intentional integration of adjunct faculty into the life and operation of departments and universities may contribute to improving student success
In Program Assessment you might ask:

• What practices does your department use in supporting your adjunct faculty?

• How are the department’s adjunct faculty integrated into the department’s life and that of the university/college?

• Do your adjunct faculty have an office space, complete with a computer and printer, as well as access to support and supplies?
Best Practices for Supporting Adjunct Faculty

• A thorough orientation to the institution, its culture and practices
• Adequate training in fundamental teaching and classroom management skills
• Both initial and ongoing professional development
• Creating a sense of belonging to the institution
• Recognition for quality work that is perceived as appropriate and adequate (Lyons and Burnstad, 2007)
Departmental Challenges

- Adjunct faculty need to be oriented to both the department and the university
  - They need to learn about
    - Departmental policies and procedures
    - University policies and procedures
    - Which support programs are available to them and their students
  - Departments should create a webpage which contains all of this information or a departmental handbook which outlines all of the policies and procedures
Departmental Challenges

• Departments should educate the adjunct faculty regarding:
  – General education requirements
  – Departmental curriculum requirements,
  – Student/major outcome goals
  – Why they are teaching the course they are teaching...how it fits into the department’s curriculum
Departmental Challenges

• When creating department budgets and year end plans, consider:
  – Providing opportunities for adjunct faculty to receive professional development and compensate them for their time
  – Providing funds that will help defray any of their costs to support classroom work
  – Providing mentoring as a means to discuss appropriate pedagogy, classroom management, etc.
  – Designating a faculty member to coordinate all matters related to the adjunct faculty
  – Becoming advocates for higher pay and benefits
Departmental Challenges

• Departments should create practices that are inclusive:
  – Working to create authentic lasting links for all departmental faculty and staff to meet departmental goals
  – Creating connections between the part-time faculty and departmental processes to generate an excellent educational experience for the students
Departmental Challenges

• Other means to create inclusion are to:
  – Allow the adjunct faculty to be a part of curriculum development/textbook selection
  – Include them in department meetings and social functions as a part of the team
  – Provide office space near the department for collegial and student interactions and to prepare for class
Departmental Challenges

- Departments should develop effective hiring procedures based on clear criteria which include:
  - Hiring early
  - Using processes similar to hiring full-time faculty
  - Uses seniority for course assignments, if possible
  - Using processes which meet the institution’s mission
Departmental Challenges

• Adjunct faculty should be assessed:
  – Each semester with student course evaluations
  – Annually with classroom visits by a full-time faculty member
• Adjunct faculty should be recognized for good classroom practices
• Adjunct faculty could be recognized for their years of service
Results

• Faculty members who are:
  – Connected
  – Committed
  – Will support departmental efforts
  – Will have a positive effect on student success
In Program Assessment you might ask:

- Check with the departments regarding the following:
  - Are the adjunct faculty receiving an orientation to the department and to the university?
  - Are the adjunct faculty eligible for professional development? How? Are they compensated for their time? Are there some funds available to supplement their travel to conferences?
  - Are there policies and procedures the department’s adjunct faculty must follow?
  - What hiring practices are used to hire adjunct faculty?
  - How are the adjunct faculty members’ teaching assessed?
  - Does the department include their adjunct faculty in departmental business? How?
  - What are the working conditions of the department’s adjunct faculty? Do they have a desk, computer, printer, etc.?
  - If these are not being done, you might ask, “Why not?”
Resources for Adjunct Faculty Support

• What I hear most often is that the department can’t afford to provide support for their adjunct faculty

• Kezar and Maxey (2014)
  – Myth- “...Constrained resources are the primary reason” for not supplying appropriate supports or opportunities to adjunct faculty
Resources for Adjunct Faculty Support

• Kezar and Maxey (2014)
  – They developed a resource document which outlines specific improvements based on expense:
    • Marginal to no cost- *access to instructional materials and support*
    • Some additional expense- *access to on-campus P.D. with pay*
    • Moderate increase- *increasing compensation*
    • More substantial expense- *multi-year contracts*
Resources for Adjunct Faculty Support

• Kezar and Maxey basically point out that universities and perhaps departments need to think strategically about their budgets.

• They need to realize that adjunct faculty “are now an enormous part of our enterprise and we need to think about policies and practices to support these faculty” (Adrienne Kezar in C. Flaherty, 2014).
Resources for Adjunct Faculty Support

• Kezar and Maxey also assert that if an institution is serious about investing in student success, they must also invest in training and maintaining quality adjunct faculty....this involves a new, fresh look at the old way of creating budgets.

• They note that while the college costs are rising the cost of instruction has remained flat.
In sum

• Adjunct faculty are now a major component in the structure and function of higher education

• As a result, they need to be supported because their role in a student’s success, retention, and persistence is enormous
A Questionnaire

1. How far in advance of the start of the academic term are new faculty hired to allow them to plan and prepare?  
   Tenure-track faculty_______  Adjunct faculty ______

2. Do your adjunct faculty have opportunities to provide input or ideas regarding departmental curriculum, including control over the content and materials for the courses they teach?

3. Do your adjunct faculty know why they are teaching the course they are assigned, the goals for the course, and how the course fits into the major and departmental curricula?

4. How is the job performance of your adjunct faculty evaluated? Are multiple measures considered or just the student evaluations?

5. Do your adjunct faculty have access to the following?  
   – A space that includes a desk, computer, printer?  
   – To office materials...stapler, tape, paper, white board markers/chalk?  
   – To a copy machine?

6. Are your adjunct faculty sufficiently oriented to your department? Made aware of the policies and procedures governing their employment? Provided with a handbook?

7. Are your adjunct faculty encouraged to make use of high impact teaching practices or other non-lecture forms of pedagogy?

8. Are your adjunct faculty encouraged to use innovative classroom technologies? Are they supported with trainings and resources?

9. Is there a formal mentoring process in place for your adjunct faculty?
Ann Coburn-Collins
Director,
Adjunct Faculty and Academic Support Programs
Saginaw Valley State University
acoburn@svsu.edu
989-964-2130
References


Center for Community College Student Engagement (2014). *Contingent Commitments: Bringing part-time faculty into focus (A special report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement).* Austin, TX: the University of Texas at Austin.


References


References


