

Strengthening the Role of Part-Time Faculty in Community Colleges

CAMPUS DISCUSSION GUIDE



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Listening to Learn

Engagement matters. It is critical for student success and it is critical for community college faculty and staff who are responsible for helping students learn and achieve their goals. It is particularly critical for community colleges to find ways to engage part-time faculty who are responsible for such a significant part of most students' college experiences.

Through its surveys and focus groups, the Center for Community College Student Engagement listens systematically to students, faculty, and staff. The Center encourages colleges to do the same on their campuses—and to use what they hear to create conditions that lead to improved student learning, persistence, and completion.

In the discussion guide that follows, the Center provides information to support campus discussions, which are an important complement to data from the Center's student engagement surveys—CCSSE, CCFSSE, SENSE, and CCIS. Another helpful resource is the Delphi Project publication *Non-Tenure-Track Faculty on Our Campus: A Guide for Campus Task Forces to Better Understand Faculty Working Conditions and the Necessity of Change* (http://www.uscrossier.org/pullias/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/DELPHI-PROJECT_NTTF-ON-OUR-CAMPUS_Web.pdf).

Conducting Conversations

Colleges can begin with the most fundamental step: creating venues for conversations and giving faculty, staff, and administrators time and support to discuss difficult issues—and to find solutions, together. Nothing replaces having individuals from across the college sit together and talk about their experiences, perspectives, and challenges. The discussions must be open and without threat, honest and without blaming, and inclusive of all voices and dismissive of none. Most important, talk must lead eventually to meaningful change, and that commitment should be evident from the outset.

Data that accurately depict faculty experiences at the college should be the starting point for campus conversations. Faculty engagement survey data, data from focus groups, and data from other sources must routinely be disaggregated to reveal significant disparities in the experiences of part-time versus full-time faculty. Data will often lead to more questions than answers, so a process of inquiry will require a commitment of effort over time. Building knowledge and understanding will help colleges create new systems that better support part-time faculty. These actions will, in turn, produce conditions more consistently conducive to student success.

A Discussion Framework

Part I: Making Connections With Institutional Data

- › What do you already know (or need to know) about how much of the college’s teaching is done by part-time faculty currently employed at the college?
- › Where within the college curriculum and course schedule are students most likely to encounter part-time faculty?
- › What initial questions do these data raise?
- › What else do you need to know to understand the quantitative picture of part-time faculty contributions at the college?
 - › Overall numbers of part-time versus full-time faculty?
 - › Percentage of course sections taught by part-time versus full-time faculty?
 - › Percentage of course sections in developmental education taught by part-time versus full-time faculty?
 - › Percentage of course sections in career/technical programs versus arts and sciences/“transfer” programs taught by part-time versus full-time faculty?
 - › Percentage of evening/weekend course sections taught by part-time versus full-time faculty?
- › What do you already know (or need to know) about the demographics and other characteristics of part-time faculty currently employed at the college? *Note: These data are available from college personnel data reported to IPEDS.*
 - › Gender of part-time faculty versus full-time faculty?
 - › Race/ethnicity of part-time faculty versus full-time faculty?
 - › Educational attainment level (highest degrees earned) of part-time faculty versus full-time faculty?
 - › Years of teaching experience of part-time faculty versus full-time faculty?
- › What do you already know (or need to know) about the experience of part-time faculty at your college?
 - › Recruitment practices
 - › Evaluation process and practices
 - › New faculty orientation practices
 - › Faculty mentoring
 - › Access to instructional materials
 - › Participation in campus faculty governance
 - › Participation in department/program faculty meetings
 - › Hiring practices
 - › Processes for promotion
 - › Professional development
 - › Availability of office space
 - › Access to support staff
 - › Academic freedom
 - › Job satisfaction



Conducting Focus Groups

Note: Materials for use in conducting focus groups with faculty members are available on the Center's website: www.ccsse.org/center/initiatives/ptf/tools.

- › Have you listened systematically to faculty (part- and full-time) about their perceptions of the institution's policies and practices pertaining to part-time faculty?
- › What key themes have you heard from focus groups?
- › Was there new or surprising information gained through listening to part-time faculty voices? If so, what?
- › Was there significant variation across the college in part-time faculty members' perceptions of the conditions created by the college for their work? If so, how do you understand the differences?

Synthesis of Data

- › What are the themes that emerge from the review of data on part-time faculty described above and on the previous page?
- › What additional data (quantitative or qualitative) do you need to guide decision-making about policies and practices that support part-time faculty?



Part II: Making Connections With CCFSSSE Data

The Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE) elicits information from faculty about their perceptions regarding students' educational experiences, their teaching practices, and the ways they spend their professional time—both in and out of the classroom. Offered as a companion to CCSSE (the student survey), CCFSSSE is an online census survey that invites all faculty at participating colleges teaching credit classes to contribute their front-line perspectives on student engagement.

Caution on data analysis and interpretation: When comparing faculty time spent on various professional activities, it is important to remember that full-time faculty—because they are full time—will typically spend more time on most activities. Valid comparisons require statistical controls for the number of credit hours taught in a given time period.

Note: Specific questions addressing each area below are aligned with the Community College Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (CCFSSE). CCFSSSE variable names, which are available in the CCFSSSE codebook on the online reporting system, follow each survey item to promote ease of reference. For more information on CCFSSSE, visit: www.ccsse.org/ccfsse.

Assessing Effective Educational Practice

- › How do faculty members spend their time in class? Are there differences between the responses of part-time and full-time faculty?

- › Lecture (FLECTURE)
- › Teacher-led discussion (FTEACHDIS)
- › Teacher-student shared responsibility (FTEACHSTU)
- › Student computer use (FSTUCOM)
- › Small group activities (FSMGROUP)
- › Student presentations (FSTUPRES)
- › In-class writing (FCLASWRIT)
- › Testing and evaluation (FTESTEVAL)
- › Performances in applied and fine arts (FPERART)
- › Experiential (FEXPERI)
- › Hands-on practice (FHANDS)



- › How often do faculty members require their students to incorporate collaborative approaches to learning into their coursework? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?

- › Group work during class (GRPDRNG)
- › Group work outside of class (GRPPROJ)
- › Study together during class (GRPSTDYIN)
- › Study together outside of class (GRPSTDYOUT)
- › Service learning (REQSRVLRN)

Other Related Professional Activities (Uses of Professional Time)

- › About how many hours in a typical 7-day week do faculty members spend doing specific tasks related to teaching and student support? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?

- › Teaching students in class (FTEACH)
- › Grading papers (FGRADE)
- › Giving other forms of written and oral feedback to students (FFEEDBACK)
- › Preparing for class (FPREP)
- › Reflecting and working on ways to improve teaching (FREFLECT)
- › Research and scholarly activities (FRESEARCH)

- › Working with honors projects (*FWORKHON*)
- › Advising students (*FADVISE*)
- › Supervising internships or other field experiences (*FSUPERV*)
- › Working with students on activities other than course work (committees, organizations, student life activities, orientation, intramurals, etc.) (*FWORKSTA*)
- › Other interactions with students outside the classroom (*FOUTCLAS*)
- › Conducting service activities (*FCONDUCT*)
- › Coordination and/or administrative activities (*FCOORD*)
- › Participating on college committees or task forces (*FTASK*)
- › Mentoring other faculty (*FMENT*)

Student Support Services

- › **To what extent do faculty members connect their students to college services that support their learning, persistence, and completion? Are there differences in the responses between part-time and full-time faculty? Are part-time faculty aware of services available to students?**
 - › Academic advising/planning (*FUSEACAD*)
 - › Career counseling (*FUSECACOU*)
 - › Job placement assistance (*FUSEJOBPL*)
 - › Peer or other tutoring (*FUSETUTOR*)
 - › Skill labs (*FUSELAB*)
 - › Child care (*FUSECHLD*)
 - › Financial aid advising (*FUSEFAADV*)
 - › Computer lab (*FUSECOMLB*)
 - › Student organizations (*FUDESTORG*)
 - › Transfer credit assistance (*FUSETCRD*)
 - › Services to students with disabilities (*FUSEDISAB*)

- › **To what extent do faculty members incorporate the use of college services into their courses? Are there differences in the responses between part-time and full-time faculty?**
 - › Academic advising/planning (*FSATACAD*)
 - › Career counseling (*FSATCACOU*)
 - › Job placement assistance (*FSATJOBPL*)
 - › Peer or other tutoring (*FSATUTOR*)
 - › Skill labs (*FSATLAB*)
 - › Child care (*FSATCHLD*)
 - › Financial aid advising (*FSATFAADV*)
 - › Computer lab (*FSATCOMLB*)
 - › Student organizations (*FSATSTORG*)
 - › Transfer credit assistance (*FSATTRCRD*)
 - › Services to students with disabilities (*FSATDISAB*)



High-Impact Educational Practices

- › Research and practice show that certain structured experiences for students lead to better outcomes. In which practices designed for students have faculty been involved (planning/designing or teaching/facilitating)? Is there a difference in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?
 - › Orientation — planning/designing (*ORPLAN*)
 - › Orientation — teaching/facilitating (*ORTEACH*)
 - › Student success course — planning/designing (*SSCPPLAN*)
 - › Student success course — teaching/facilitating (*SSCTEACH*)
 - › First-year experience — planning/designing (*FYEPLAN*)
 - › First-year experience — teaching/facilitating (*FYETEACH*)
 - › Learning community — planning/designing (*LCPLAN*)
 - › Learning community — teaching/facilitating (*LCTEACH*)
 - › Accelerated developmental education — planning/designing (*ACCPLAN*)
 - › Accelerated developmental education — teaching/facilitating (*ACCTEACH*)

- › Do faculty members make supplemental instruction available to students (*AVLSUPINST*)? If so, is it required (*REQSUPINST*)? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?

- › Do faculty members have an attendance policy (*ATTENDPOL*)? Is it consistent across the college? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty? When there is an attendance policy, what is the impact on students' grades for missing class or assignment deadlines? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?
 - › Attendance is tied to a participation score or grade (*ATDGRADE*)
 - › A given number of points are deducted from the final grade for each missed class (*ATDDEDUCT*)
 - › A given number of points are deducted after a preset number of classes have been missed (*ATDCLASS*)
 - › Something else (*ATDOTHER*)

- › In what ways do faculty members communicate the attendance policy to their students? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?
 - › Orally (*EXPATTEND*)
 - › The policy is included on the course syllabus (*SYLATTEND*)
 - › The policy is posted on a course website (*WEBATTEND*)
 - › Students sign an attendance policy contract (*SIGNATTEND*)
 - › The policy is sent in an e-mail (*EMALATTEND*)
 - › The policy is sent via text message (*TXATTEND*)

- › How often (*FFACFEED*), and in what ways, do faculty communicate with students about their academic performance? Are there differences in responses between part-time and full-time faculty?
 - › Directly during class (*WRNINCLS*)
 - › Directly outside class (*WRNOUTCLS*)
 - › Systematic early warning system (*WRNSYST*)
 - › Informal intervention process (*WRNINFML*)
 - › Referred to college tutoring services (*WRNTUTR*)
 - › Required student to participate in college tutoring services (*WRNREQT*)



Part III: Institutional Policy and Support

Discussions about effectively engaging part-time faculty must include a review of current college policies and practices that either provide support part-time faculty need or make it difficult for part-time faculty to engage with students, their colleagues, and the institution in the desired ways. College leaders need to ask questions about the following:

- › Hiring Practices and Expectations
- › Orientation
- › Subsequent Employment
- › Professional Development and Mentoring
- › Part-Time Faculty Involvement in Student Success Initiatives
- › Part-Time Faculty Integration in the College Community and Faculty Work
- › Evaluation
- › Compensation and Recognition
- › Space and Support

Hiring Practices and Expectations

How are part-time faculty positions filled? What are the policies that exist, if any, to determine how jobs must be posted, minimum and desired qualifications stated, and expectations for the role made clear? Are hiring practices consistent across the college?

Is there a standard position description for part-time faculty? If so, does the position description delineate expectations for part-time faculty members to a) demonstrate teaching effectiveness; b) interact with students outside of class; c) advise students or knowledgeably refer students to academic and student support services; d) provide prompt oral and written feedback on students' academic performance; and/or e) participate in part-time faculty orientation, professional development, student success initiatives, etc.? Are these expectations discussed during the interviewing and selection process?

How far in advance of the start of the academic term are part-time faculty typically hired? Does the timing allow them adequate opportunity to plan and prepare materials? Is a minimum time period between hiring and first class day established in policy?

On average, how long are the employment terms for part-time faculty? By term? By academic year? Other?

Does the college have a staffing plan that defines what should be the composition of the faculty, as well as standardized policies and practices for faculty hiring? For part-time faculty? For full-time faculty?

Does the college have an explicit strategy or policy for diversifying the ranks of part-time and full-time faculty to match the demographics of the student population?

What improvements could be made to existing policies and practices for hiring part-time faculty on your campus?

Orientation

When new part-time faculty are hired, do they participate in a formal campus-wide orientation? Face-to-face orientation? Online orientation? Is participation in orientation mandatory or optional?

Is face-to-face orientation offered at various times to accommodate part-time faculty schedules?

Are new part-time faculty paid to attend orientation?



What is covered during this orientation? Does orientation address student characteristics? The college's student success initiatives? General institutional information and human resources material? College services and supports for students? Part-time faculty roles and expectations? Other?

In addition to a campus-wide orientation, are there policies encouraging or requiring a formal department-level orientation for new part-time faculty?

In what ways might orientation be improved for part-time faculty at the college?

Subsequent Employment

Does the college have a policy in place to determine how and when part-time faculty are notified about whether or not they will be teaching the following term? If yes, what is the policy?

Are there opportunities for promotion for part-time faculty? If so, what are the criteria for part-time faculty to be eligible for promotion? What conditions or incentives typically accompany promotion for part-time faculty? Increase in pay? Longer contract term? New title? Other?

Does the college have an explicit policy for providing current part-time faculty with a path to potential full-time employment at the college? Preparation opportunities? Preference in hiring?

Are current re-appointment policies serving students well? How do you know? If not, how might they be improved? Are current re-appointment policies serving part-time faculty well? For example, are they providing faculty with adequate time to prepare for teaching each term?

Professional Development and Mentoring

What professional development opportunities are available to part-time faculty at the college? Campus-wide? In each department?

Does the college have an explicit policy defining professional development provisions and expectations for part-time faculty?

Is formal mentoring available to part-time faculty to facilitate opportunities to interact with full-time faculty, share knowledge, discuss teaching strategies, and provide guidance in their teaching?

Is participation in professional development or mentoring required or optional for part-time faculty? If required, discuss the nature of the required experiences and their connections to student success.

Do part-time faculty receive pay or other incentives for any professional development activities?

How are part-time faculty notified about professional development opportunities?

Are professional development opportunities made available outside of normal business hours?

Are professional development opportunities made available online?

In what ways could professional development for part-time faculty be improved at the college?



Part-Time Faculty Involvement in Student Success Initiatives

In general, does the college include part-time faculty in discussions, planning and design, and implementation of initiatives to improve student learning, academic progress, and college completion? If so, in what ways?

How, if at all, are part-time faculty encouraged to use high-impact educational practices and other effective teaching strategies?

How, if at all, are part-time faculty encouraged and provided opportunities to work collaboratively with other faculty in planning for teaching?

How, if at all, are part-time faculty encouraged to use innovative learning technologies and supported with training and resources to optimize their use?

How, if at all, are part-time faculty prepared and supported to provide online or hybrid instruction?

Part-Time Faculty Integration in the College Community and Faculty Work

Are part-time faculty included in department meetings? Are they paid for their participation?

Are part-time faculty involved in curriculum committees? Do they participate in course design? Are they paid for their participation?

Are part-time faculty involved in accreditation work, Achieving the Dream (or other state/national student success initiatives), strategic planning, and other college-wide initiatives? Are they paid for their participation?

Would students and the college benefit from having greater participation of part-time faculty in these areas?

If yes to the question above, what steps might the college take to increase part-time faculty participation in each of these areas?

Evaluation

How is the job performance of part-time faculty evaluated? Are multiple measures used, or are student evaluations the only factor that is considered? Are evaluation criteria explicit and directly tied to college statements of job responsibilities and expectations for part-time faculty?

Is evaluation of part-time faculty standardized across the college? If not, how and by whom are decisions made about evaluation?



How, if at all, are part-time faculty provided information regarding the measures considered in their evaluation in advance of any formal evaluation process taking place? Is this information provided when part-time faculty are hired?

Who conducts the evaluation of part-time faculty? Is the process consistent across the college or determined by each department?

Following evaluation of part-time faculty, is individual feedback provided?

Following evaluation of part-time faculty, are individuals provided with resources and support to help them improve their teaching and related interactions with students and the college? Is an explicit professional development plan created?

What improvements, if any, in evaluation of part-time faculty could strengthen teaching and learning at this college?

Compensation and Recognition

Does the college provide monetary or other incentives for part-time faculty participation in orientation, professional development, work with students outside of class, work with colleagues on designing students' educational experiences, group review of student learning outcome assessments, exploration of student engagement and success data, and the like? Are these activities included in the part-time faculty job description (see "Hiring" section on page 7)?

Are part-time faculty eligible for incremental pay increases based on completion of an intensive professional development program or other explicit criteria, such as years of service?

Does the college publicly recognize part-time faculty for teaching innovation and excellence?

Does the college publicly recognize part-time faculty for their participation on committees or in other college service activities outside the classroom?

Do part-time faculty have an opportunity to purchase insurance through the college's group insurance plan?

Space and Support

Are part-time faculty provided office space? If so, what is the nature of that space? Shared office? Common space for part-time faculty to work and interact? Private space for meeting with students individually or in groups? Other?

If space is shared, what is the typical experience of part-time faculty in using the space? Is available space adequate?

Which of the following are typically made conveniently available to part-time faculty?

- › copier
- › computers
- › printers
- › phone to place/receive calls
- › voicemail
- › college e-mail address
- › office supplies
- › copy of course textbook/other course materials
- › course syllabus or sample
- › mailbox
- › administrative support (staff or student)
- › after-hours access

Do part-time faculty have access to all services that is equivalent to the access of full-time faculty?

Specifically, how might students be affected when the resources and support listed above are not conveniently and consistently available to part-time faculty?

What steps can be taken to provide more or all of the resources and supports listed above for part-time faculty?

Are opportunities provided for part-time faculty to interact and share ideas with full-time faculty? If so, in what ways?

In what ways does the college communicate about services and supports available to part-time faculty?

Is there a mechanism provided for part-time faculty to provide systematic feedback on programs and services available to them? If so, what have you learned from that feedback?

From feedback provided by part-time faculty, what are areas that need improvement—and steps that can be taken to better support part-time faculty?



Part IV: Discussion Synthesis and Next Steps

Considering what you have learned through the guided discussion, what are the ways that current college policies and practices related to part-time faculty might be creating obstacles for achieving the best teaching and learning environment to support student success?

What changes can be made in the short term for no cost or minimal cost?

What changes can be considered that will require a reallocation of resources or identification of new resources?

Who else on campus needs to be involved in the discussion?

What are immediate next steps?

NOTES