Making Adjunct Faculty Part of the Academic Community

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Hundreds of adjunct faculty in four-year colleges and universities teach over 45% of the courses, especially in the general education programs, but few institutions have chosen to construct adjunct faculty development programs that integrate these faculty into the instructional community. Metropolitan State College of Denver, recipient of a Title III grant to build an adjunct development program received a TIA-CREF Hesburgh Award of Excellence in 2001 for its innovative adjunct support activities. This chapter articulates the features of this successful program and its effect on the adjunct faculty cohort at the college.

Adjuncts teach over 48% of the coursework in the first two years of college and university education nationally (Leatherman, 2001), and their numbers have increased 15% since 1998 (American Federation of Teachers, 2002). With only 38% of the instructional staff in four-year colleges and universities in the United States as full-time, tenure track/tenured faculty (National Education Association Research Center, 2001; Shapiro, 2002), the remaining faculty are full-time temporary (nontenure track) or part-time faculty (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2001). Although community colleges confronted this adjunct faculty issue more than ten years ago (Gappa, 2002), only recently have four-year colleges and universities faced the same instructional dilemma—limited funds for hiring tenure-track faculty and burgeoning enrollments of high school students and nontraditional adults returning for alternative education and new careers. To handle these enrollment increases, four-year colleges and universities initially depended on graduate assistants (Syverson & Tice, 1993), but this did not sufficiently
meet their needs, especially in institutions with limited numbers of graduate programs and graduate assistants (Fogg, 2001). Instead, four-year colleges and universities hire larger numbers of contracted adjunct faculty to fill their instructional quotas (Cox, 2000; Leatherman, 2000). As Lieberman and Guskin (2002) report, "If this trend continues, the non-tenure track faculty will far surpass the tenure-track faculty across higher education" (p. 269).

Not only are these numbers alarming, but despite their need for adjunct instructors, many four-year colleges and universities have not integrated these faculty into their institutions. In 2002, Gappa reported that adjunct faculty (both full-time temporary faculty and part-time adjuncts) are still marginalized by regular faculty, provided limited compensation, and ignored by administrations. Adjuncts are often criticized as incompetent by faculty groups such as the American Association of University Professors (Benjamin, 2002). While some universities have invested in elaborate programs of instructional training for their graduate assistants (Lambert & Tice, 1993; Marincovich, Prostko, & Stout, 1998), there is no national trend or policy regarding adjunct faculty (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). A preconference summary at the 2002 American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Forum on Faculty Roles and Rewards in Phoenix, Arizona, in which 50 universities and four-year colleges attended, revealed that,

Part-time faculty are a well-qualified and valuable resource, if properly used. The most serious threats to academic quality come from casual, inconsistent employment practices and a lack of institutional support, rather than from the quality of the part-time faculty themselves. It is therefore crucial for institutions of higher learning to develop systems of institutional support for part-time faculty and to engage in fair, consistent and mutually beneficial employment practices and policies regarding adjunct faculty. (Lucke, 2002, p. 1)

Despite the interest generated in finding solutions to the adjunct issue at four-year colleges and universities, no specific institution or organization has provided national leadership in addressing this concern (with the exception of administrators and faculty developers at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis who initiated the preconference in Phoenix, 2002). Assisting adjunct faculty to create curriculum, advise students, facilitate students' learning, and build a community of scholar-teacher-practitioners that will guarantee quality learning experiences for students enrolled in their course programs remains problematic nationally for higher education.
Like many other colleges and universities confronted with growing evidence of its transformation into ever larger numbers of adjunct (both full-time temporary and part-time faculty) instructional staffing, Metropolitan State College of Denver (Metro) designed a program of faculty development for its 555 part-time faculty, 78 lecturers, and 78 full-time temporary faculty. This college (an urban, four-year, undergraduate-only institution in downtown Denver, Colorado) enrolls 20,000 students. To assist its efforts in managing its large adjunct teaching staff, the college received a U.S. Department of Education Title III grant in 1998; one activity of which is devoted to the professional development and management of adjunct faculty.

**OBJECTIVES**

This chapter describes an award-winning adjunct faculty development program (the 2001 Hesburgh Award of Excellence) that can be instituted at other four-year colleges and universities. Features of the program address

- Orientation program implementation
- Classroom management coaching
- Communications options
- Technology enhancement training
- Team-building experiences
- Reward/recognition systems
- Professional development opportunities: research
- Increased compensation
- Improved resource support efforts
- Assessment

**Orientation**

A major problem facing adjunct faculty, whether part-time or full-time temporary, is their enculturation in the academic community (Annable, 1996). As Arden (1994) stated,
What adjuncts sorely need are the same opportunities tenured faculty enjoy—to mix with one's colleagues, to learn from one another, to consider new course materials, to discuss academic issues, and to function in every sense of the term as professionals. (p. 5)

One of the difficulties in including adjuncts into the academic community of the college lies in the varied nature of the adjuncts themselves. Some adjuncts (44%), according to the National Education Association Higher Education Research Center (2001), have other full-time positions. One-third of the adjuncts consider their current position to be their primary employment. Thirty-one percent of the adjuncts receive earnings from other institutions. These represent the migrant adjuncts described by Gappa and Leslie (1993) and Gappa (2002). For all three sets of adjuncts, "Part-time employees do not normally participate in departmental decisions" (Burnstad, 1996, p. 1). Further, in a presentation at the AAHE Faculty Roles and Rewards Conference, Leslie (2002) said that adjunct faculty "are excluded from several important faculty functions, such as curricular development, student advising and professional growth opportunities." To address these needs, Metropolitan State College of Denver (Metro) created a "MENU" of opportunities from which department chairs may choose to use full-time temporary and part-time faculty to perform teaching duties such as advising or creating special course work in their area of expertise. Faculty are paid the same rate for these functions as their teaching assignments. To make it easier to perform these additional faculty options on the MENU, three forms of enculturation are used:

1) An orientation session is held at the beginning of each academic period. Hosted by the Office of Academic Affairs, this orientation (for example, one half-day on August 13, 2002) addresses academic issues such as student diversity, advising options, syllabi construction, library resources, and other professional development opportunities (including training workshops for faculty). Seventy-five faculty have attended this orientation in the past three years.

2) The college provides each adjunct with a Handbook on Adjunct Instruction. The adjunct faculty receive either the part-time or the full-time temporary versions of the handbook. In addition, the handbooks are encoded on the Academy for Teaching Excellence web site. The handbooks spell out the college's expectations for adjunct faculty instruction, provide a synopsis of college regulations and procedures as they affect the classroom, and offer suggestions for instructional best practices. Five
hundred fifty-five part-time faculty and 78 lecturers have received the 2002 handbooks.

3) The Academy for Teaching Excellence web site (www.mscd.edu/~academy) contains three other web-based sets of materials for adjunct faculty:

• One includes an interactive document on student advising. Departments encourage their adjuncts to examine this resource for suggestions and ideas for successfully advising students in a variety of advising formats. In addition, the program developers created a CD-ROM with an interactive element that provides scenarios of various advising problems and can be downloaded to their computers. Faculty pick appropriate strategies for responding to these advising problems which are recorded on paper and sent to the academy for validation. The academy director meets with each adjunct, providing opportunity for discussion and assessment of the faculty member's choice of response to each scenario. To date, 70 adjunct faculty have evaluated their advising practices.

• A second document contains information about mentoring and coaching. It provides discussions about teaching practices, classroom management techniques, and resources available to the adjunct instructor.

• The third web-based document provides procedural instructions on how to use media and other technical enhancements in the technologically smart classrooms in which the adjunct faculty will be teaching.

In all three web offerings, full-time and part-time faculty work to assimilate the information and construct the web-based data themselves for their own use.

Classroom Management Coaching
Increasing incidences of academic dishonesty (Ashworth, Bannister, & Thorne, 1997) and classroom incivility (e.g., talking that disturbs the classroom, the use of cell phones, students' inattention, students' failure to turn in assignments, etc.) pose problems for adjunct faculty who frequently need assistance in managing their classroom climates. Again, the varied nature of the adjuncts themselves contributes to the problem—many of them bring expertise from their employment experiences but have never taught students. They lack knowledge of instructional methods including classroom management strategies. To assist
its adjunct faculty with this issue, the college constructed a web-based classroom management interactive site on the Academy for Teaching Excellence web page. Department chairs encourage their adjuncts to access the site and review the information and note the contact staff (director of counseling, the judicial staff officer, the dean of students, etc.) whose messages provide information about what and how to manage difficult student or faculty incidences in the classroom. Individual questions from adjuncts about the student handbook, procedures, and policies that affect the climate in their classrooms are addressed in group training sessions (three per semester) and individually (coaching) by department chairs or coordinators of specific course programs such as the Freshman Communication Program coordinator or the Mathematics–Statistics 1250 Coordinator. Approximately 73 adjunct faculty have availed themselves of this information since its development in 2001.

Communication Options
One of the most frequently mentioned issues among surveys of adjuncts is their feelings of isolation from other parts of the institution, especially other faculty in the instructional program. Gappa and Leslie (1993) described this phenomenon in their earlier surveys of adjuncts. Leslie reiterated these findings in another survey of 18,000 adjuncts that he reported in 2002: "Institutions by and large have not recognized that part time faculty can be a major asset to their academic programs. Part-timers are painfully aware that administrators and full-time faculty see them as second class citizens" (p. 1). Unger (1995) writes, "There is a marginalizing of adjunct faculty, both economically and professionally" (p. 119). A contributor to this professional marginalizing is the lack of communication mechanisms with which to distribute information and share ideas, teaching strategies, and research concepts among adjuncts. The situation is compounded because adjunct faculty often appear on campus just to teach their specific courses. Many have professional employment elsewhere and bring their particular expertise to students within limited time frames. Others (the migrant part-time faculty) instruct at many institutions as an economic necessity. These adjuncts have no time or incentives to attend department meetings in one institution—their efforts focus on fulfilling their instructional commitments of teaching on a circuit at multiple institutions in the area.

Finding ways to communicate with all three types of adjuncts (full-time temporary, part-time but employed full-time elsewhere, and migrant part-time faculty) presents a significant challenge to the academy. Although labor
intensive (even with the use of work study students), the academy provides five types of communication strategies to reach the adjuncts at the college:

- First, all faculty are issued an accessibility (code) to the institution's technology system which they can access through the Internet at home or on campus.

- Second, all faculty are issued a post office box in their departments.

- Third, the academy maintains an elaborate web site for workshop advertisements. It also maintains a portion of the All Campus Training Calendar supported on the institution's home page.

- Fourth, the academy sends emails to all faculty and specifically targets faculty, like the adjuncts, with special information about relevant professional development opportunities, training, grant opportunities, etc.

- Fifth, the academy hand delivers to faculty mail boxes individual information on training opportunities (fliers), professional development grant requests, conference notices, and service options to all faculty.

More than 1,064 faculty receive these materials that identify what is available for faculty development, both on campus as well as regionally and nationally. In some cases (upon request) this data is sent to the adjunct faculty member's other full-time employment mailing address and upon occasion, this data is sent to the home addresses of the adjuncts.

**Technology Enhancement Training**

Few would argue that adjuncts give departments and programs a degree of flexibility and often bring a special level of expertise into the classroom (Shapiro, 2002). However, as the National Education Association Higher Education Research Center (2001) reports, adjuncts have fewer doctorates or terminal degrees in their disciplines (25% compared with 71% of the full-time faculty. Note that over half of these adjuncts are employed by community colleges that do not require a terminal degree to instruct their students). This group of faculty are also less likely to bring sound instructional methods to the classroom and participate in professional development opportunities, especially technology training that can be used to enhance student learning (Shapiro, 2002).

Responding to this need for instructional technology to enhance student learning, Metro has developed a series of both skill-based and software application training workshops for adjunct faculty. Initially, faculty were paid for
the time spent in 15 hours of such professional development. Approximately 165 faculty (of which 120 were adjuncts) attended these workshops on advising online: PowerPoint for classroom enhancement, use of the browsers for research, web page creation, course design for online delivery, Dreamweaver, and Photoshop. In successive years of the grant, the academy has offered Illustrator for the Classroom and Advanced Dreamweaver applications for adjunct training among other types of software applications to improve learning in the classroom.

Since 2001, over 300 adjunct faculty have taken advantage of this free instruction, even though it required their unpaid presence in the faculty instructional laboratory on campus.

Since lack of time to attend workshops on the campus represents a hardship for many adjuncts, the academy is developing web-based workshops that adjunct faculty can access from their home computers. These training sessions are interactive and require the adjunct to register (online) and download worksheets. When completed, the worksheets are emailed to the academy for verification. If the worksheet is completely correct, the adjunct faculty member is issued a certificate of completion. At a later date, the adjunct is contacted to see if the information provided in the workshop training session actually has been implemented into the instructor's class. Twenty-five faculty are registered for two of these workshops for spring semester 2003 in Web Style Design and Syllabi Construction. Four additional workshops have been designed. The entire set of online workshops is the basis of a Certificate for Online Instruction program supported by grant funds.

Team-Building Experiences
The vastly limited contracts and time commitments of adjunct faculty means that they often conduct their work separately from those structures through which the curriculum, department and institution are sustained and renewed (AAUP, 1993). Academic programs require high levels of faculty investment in the architecture of new curricula and the maintenance of older curricula. Adjunct faculty are often excluded from this involvement because they are marginalized from the process, or because the time commitments to engage in departmental and college governance is beyond that which adjuncts can sustain in their role as part-time faculty.

Since Metro relies so heavily on adjunct faculty, it has begun to incorporate adjunct faculty into its curricula renewal process at the departmental level. This is accomplished by creating curricular teams—matching a full-time faculty member with an adjunct to renew, revise, or reconstruct old curricular
courses/programs or develop new courses. This teaming of adjuncts and full-time faculty has occurred in seven programs (mathematics, technical communication, psychology, English, history, communication, and biology) and has resulted in the creation of eight new or revised courses. Thirty-six faculty (adjuncts and full-time) will have participated in these teams at the end of the five-year grant period.

Rewards and Recognition
Even community college systems, with 65% of the teaching faculty as part-time adjuncts, demonstrate a minimal reward and recognition program for adjunct faculty. Andrews (2001) reported in 1994 that only 13.2% of community colleges had any merit reward programs for their adjuncts. In 2001 this figure had grown in community colleges to 34%. On the other hand, four-year colleges and universities rarely provide any recognition or compensation for outstanding adjunct instruction (Gappa, 2002).

Realizing the value of the adjunct instructional base, Metro designed several opportunities for public recognition and rewarding of adjunct instructional excellence. First, the college president funds the recognition of two outstanding adjunct faculty selected by the Golden Key Honor Society. The results of this selection are announced at fall convocation. Each recipient is given a cash award equivalent to that given to each outstanding full-time faculty instructor.

Every fall, the academy hosts a Fall Faculty Conference. All adjunct faculty are invited to attend. In 2002, the Fall Conference Committee (composed of full-time and adjunct faculty) designed a competition for the best ideas and best instructional practices and provided awards for the instructional strategies. The best instructional practices from two adjuncts were selected and awarded prizes at the conclusion of this very successful faculty designed and managed conference supported with institutional funds.

Professional Development Opportunities: Research
In addition to building curriculum, adjunct faculty are often precluded from research development opportunities. Despite this exclusion, data from the National Education Association Higher Education Research Center (2001) indicates that one-third of the adjunct faculty (in four-year college and university environments) completed a research publication in the past two years. Their production has been only slightly less than the production of their full-time counterparts. This means that given the opportunity, adjunct faculty will engage in research efforts to increase their professional development.
To assist this process of professional development, Metro instituted the Faculty Research Team concept. The academy provides full-time faculty and adjuncts the opportunity to identify areas of research in which they want to concentrate their efforts as a team of researchers. The academy supplies funding for a professional reference librarian to conduct the literature survey for each research team (adjunct and full-time faculty member) that applies for support. So far, eight teams have engaged in this support in a variety of disciplines including art, management, accounting, teacher education, biology, and physical education. The result of this research is the submission of an article or presentation of the research at a regional or national conference by each team.

Increased Compensation
Low compensation for adjunct instruction remains one of the most glaring inequities in higher education (American Federation of Teachers [AFT], 2002; Marklein, 2001). The AFT report indicates that more than 80% of part-time faculty do not have health coverage funded by their institution or a subsidized plan for retirement (Marklein, 2001). Receipt of benefits is dependent upon whether or not the faculty member is allowed to teach at least half time at the institution. Many adjuncts are prohibited from half-time employment at their primary institution. As Murrell (1998) states, “But when calculating budgets and course contracts for part-time faculty, to save money, administrators adopt policies that limit course offerings for part-time faculty members who are eligible for benefits and hire additional part-timers who do not qualify for benefits” (p. 25). The AAUP (1993) reports some institutions prorate benefits for adjunct faculty members who have half-time appointments (20 hours). Approximately 42% of part-time faculty who work more than 20 hours per week indicate that benefits were available to them. Only 11% of those part-timers who teach less than 20 hours per week had accessibility to those benefits enjoyed by other members (AAUP, 1993).

To assist its large adjunct population, particularly its part-time faculty, Metro instituted a new category of faculty. They are the lecturers, who teach a full teaching load, have the stability of year-long contracts, have the benefits of full-time faculty members, but who are paid as part-time instructors. The pay per course is on a sliding scale so that part-time faculty enjoy the same raise percentages that full-time faculty receive each year. Part-time faculty/adjunct funding is now one line-item budget feature of the college, instead of money secured from various unspent funds for projects or programs abandoned or not completed. This provides more security for part-time instructors (year-
long contracts) and guarantees annual increases in compensation commensurate with those of the full-time faculty.

**Improved Resources**

Adjunct faculty at many institutions have no access to faculty resources such as office space, technology equipment, and instructional support (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). To provide for this resource support, the academy director approached each dean and each department chair seeking office space for adjunct faculty. Each time a department physically moves from one space on campus to another building, department chairs and deans promise to configure office space (even if it is a “bullpen”) for adjunct faculty use. So far, half of the departments, especially those with large numbers of adjuncts such as mathematics, psychology, English, communications, and history, have found office space for adjunct faculty.

Providing computer accessibility proved more problematic. However, since the entire college instituted a computer replacement program last year in which student laboratory computers are replaced annually from student technology fees and the old student lab computers are given to departments for faculty usage, adjunct faculty needs have been included in the computer replacement process. For those adjunct offices that lack computers, the academy (through the Title III grant) provided new computers for adjunct faculty use. In addition, the academy constructed two laboratories (one a Mac lab and the other a PC lab) for adjunct/full-time faculty training. The academy schedules free time for faculty to use these computer labs when they are not occupied for training. Adjuncts, as well as other faculty, are invited to schedule usage of the labs to meet their personal/professional computing needs.

Each semester, the academy offers between 37 and 60 workshops on a variety of topics on teaching effectiveness (active learning strategies) and technology. In those years when the institution is implementing a new course management system for online instruction, the Academy offers more training workshops in the new course management software. In general the workshops focus on managing large class sections, critical thinking projects, case studies for enhanced learning, advising skills (handling the advising process), professional development options (PowerPoint presentations, conducting research, managing student service learning, issues involving intellectual property rights, etc.), and technology enhancements to the classroom. All faculty are invited to enroll in these workshops. Over 700 faculty participated in these workshops during 2002, and half of these faculty were adjuncts. Fully one-third of these adjuncts attended more than one workshop in 2002.
Assessment
Faculty evaluation is one of the most powerful means of assisting colleges and universities in maintaining quality control over instructional programs, especially those taught by adjunct faculty. But implementing such a practice requires the commitment of the full-time staff and considerable resources. As Moser (2001) wrote,

For adjuncts to be professionally evaluated and mentored it would take an enormous commitment of resources from the full-time staff. Instead, they are only evaluated by students. It is reasonable to expect that such a system of evaluation would make adjuncts vulnerable to student pressure for better grades or reluctant to teach controversial subjects or engage in stressful disputes over plagiarism. (p. 3)

Because the expenditure of time and resources is large, most four-year colleges and universities do not assess the performance of their adjunct faculty as instructors. However, a study conducted by Andrews (2001) indicates that 77% of all community colleges have instituted evaluation processes of their significantly large numbers of adjunct faculty. These are not just student-based but also peer-based. From this data the college has summarized over a four-year period the performance assessment of its adjunct faculty instructors. In general, adjunct faculty have improved their student evaluations an average of over 30% during the past four years. Beginning with a baseline score in 1998 adjuncts’ instructional excellence as perceived by students was 4.10 on a Likert Scale of 1–6 on the criterion of instructional excellence. By the end of the grant period, the average score of all adjuncts on instructional excellence as perceived by their students was 5.389 on a Likert Scale of 1–6. Peer observations that were assessed on a Likert Scale of 1–5 began in the baseline year with a fairly high 4.02 for adjuncts and improved 10% to over 4.42 on a Likert Scale of 1–5. Much of this can be attributed to the increased efforts that the academy has spent developing and supporting this faculty cohort through the Title III grant activities in faculty development. In addition, 10% of the adjunct faculty have been promoted from part-time to full-time temporary faculty or lecturer status. One of the persistent recommendations of AAUP, as well as other professional disciplinary organizations, is the conversion of adjunct faculty positions into tenure-track positions (AAUP, 1993; Benjamin, 2002; Moser, 2001). The college has hired one-third of its new full-time tenure track faculty since 2000 from the ranks of the adjunct instructors (many of whom have participated in academy and Title III programs). Previously, Metro hired very few new tenure-track faculty from the adjunct faculty pool.
CONCLUSION

The emerging pattern of hiring adjunct faculty as contingency faculty in four-year colleges and universities represents a shift in the instructional staffing of all higher education institutions. It implies changes in the funding strategies, faculty roles and responsibilities, faculty governance of the institution, and a fragmentation of the professorial workforce. Recognizing its dependence on these adjunct faculty, Metropolitan State College of Denver with the help of Title III funds, addressed many of the problems associated with large numbers of nontenure-track faculty as the institution provides quality education for its large urban student population.

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