Adjunct Work Environment and Development at SLU
Department Chairperson Perspectives

The following points come from a survey of Department Chairs, conducted in March of 2015, on part-time/adjunct faculty work environment and professional development. Possible solutions/improved practices for discussion are given in italics.

• The survey was completed by 36% (37/102) of our Department Chairs and Program Directors. Most of our Department Chairs describe part-time/adjunct faculty as content experts who bring an expertise to their department that is lacking among their full-time faculty, and who teach across the curriculum.

• Department Chairs who responded to the survey report that their faculty regularly hold office hours, in some cases write recommendation letters for students, and in some cases support extra/co-curricular programming. It was not uncommon for Chairs to indicate they did not know if their part-time/adjunct faculty performed outside-of-the-classroom activities. Importantly, almost all Chairs indicated their part-time/adjunct faculty were not compensated for outside-of-the-classroom activities.
  
  We can improve by having our Chairs be more aware of the outside-of-the-classroom activities performed by their part-time/adjunct faculty. We could discuss this being part of a larger discussion on an annual evaluation process for part-time/adjunct faculty that is tied to raises.

• Depending on their disciplines, there was a split among Chairs who responded to the survey about whether it would be better to have full-time or part-time/adjunct faculty performing the duties currently being done solely by part-time/adjunct faculty. Some Chairs cited the content expertise as the primary reason for part-time/adjunct faculty being preferable. Some Chairs cited the need for student mentoring, university service, etc., as the primary reason for full-time faculty being preferable.
  
  For the Chairs who cited the preference for part-time/adjunct faculty they noted the lack of specialized training in teaching for their part-time/adjunct faculty that could be offered. The University should discuss efforts to help Chairs with part-time/adjunct faculty training.
  
  For Chairs who would prefer full-time faculty, perhaps we need to discuss a possible role for part-time/adjunct faculty in activities like student mentoring, how we would train part-time/adjunct faculty for such roles, and how they would be compensated.
  
  For the Chairs who responded they would prefer full-time faculty to part-time/adjunct faculty, to meet needs such as student mentoring and University service, there should be a discussion on how the University can best address the needs of these Departments.
• About half of the Chairs who responded to the survey indicated their part-
time/adjunct faculty: (i) have sufficient space; (ii) receive regular correspondences from the Dean; (iii) are invited to faculty meetings; (iv) have input into curriculum development.
  – On a positive note, it is great that half of our Chairs/Departments can answer yes to these questions.
  – This still leaves room for improvement, and we should discuss how to make this the experience for all of our part-time/adjunct faculty.

• The Chairs who responded to the survey reported that even when invited, most part-time/adjunct faculty do not attend Departmental faculty meetings. In addition even where they have input into curriculum development, most part-time/adjunct faculty do not vote on changes to the curriculum. Related, most part-time/adjunct faculty do not vote on any issue in faculty meetings.
  – There is room for discussions on how we could improve on these issues.

• About half of the Chairs who responded to the survey indicated their part-
time/adjunct faculty were required to attend an orientation in their Department or College. Most Chairs who responded to the survey said they would like to see a University orientation offered for part-time/adjunct faculty, and over half said they would require their part-time/adjunct faculty to attend a University orientation. For those Chairs who indicated their part-time/adjunct faculty were required to attend an orientation in their Department or College, most said they were not paid to attend the event, nor were they provided free parking for the day.
  – It is positive to see so many Chairs investing in the part-time/adjunct faculty in terms of orientation, and it is good to see the desire for a University orientation.
  – We should consider a University orientation.
  – We should also have a discussion about compensating the part-
time/adjunct faculty for time spent in orientations, and have a discussion about providing for their parking at such events.

• Most of the Chairs who responded to the survey indicated their part-time/adjunct faculty members are interested in professional development, though only about half the Chairs said their part-time/adjunct faculty attend development events on campus or off campus. About a third of Chairs who responded to the survey did not know if their part-time/adjunct faculty attended professional development conferences on or off campus, and most said their part-time/adjunct faculty did not receive Department, College, or University funds to support professional development.
  – We should do a better job making sure part-time/adjunct faculty are aware of the professional development opportunities available to them on campus.
  – We should do more to encourage part-time/adjunct faculty to attend professional development opportunities on campus (i.e., making sure Chairs/Deans advertise to part-time/adjunct faculty; discuss providing for parking at such events).
- *We should have a discussion about investing funds in the professional development of long-time part-time/adjunct faculty.*

  • About half of the Chairs who responded to the survey indicated that all of their part-time/adjunct faculty were provided with the same compensation. However, almost no Chairs said their Department had policies for raises or for promotion of part-time/adjunct faculty.

- *We should discuss developing a policy for the annual review of part-time/adjunct faculty performance, and discuss having this tied to a policy for part-time/adjunct faculty raises (and possibly promotion).*

  • Almost no Chairs indicated their College allowed for multi-year contracts for their part-time/adjunct faculty, and even though about half of the Chairs who responded to the survey said their College had a policy for cancelling classes taught by part-time/adjunct faculty, almost none of these policies included compensation for time spent preparing to teach the course.

- *We should discuss the possibility of a policy for compensating part-time/adjunct faculty for time spent preparing to teach courses that are cancelled close to the start date.*