**MHEC FAC**

**Division of Issues for the Faculty Advisory Council 2014-2015**

**Standards for Use of Adjunct Faculty Work Group Report**

**April, 2015**

**Our Charge**: (The Commission, in consultation with colleges and universities, will provide information and conduct studies, within its existing reports or stand-alone reports, to examine whether the use of adjunct faculty has any effects on student progression and to encourage explicit standard for the strategic use of adjunct faculty.)

**Our Resources** used in studying the issues related to adjunct faculty use:

1. MHEC Data Book (2014) – Creating a State of Achievement

2. Adjunct vs Full-Time Faculty: Comparison of Student Outcomes in the Online Classroom – Mueller, B., Mandernach, B.Jean and Sanderson, K. Journal of Online Learning and Teaching: Vol. 9., No. 3, September, 2013

3. A Critical Challenge: The Engagement and Assessment of Contingent, Part-Time Adjunct Faculty Professors in United States Community Colleges – Jolley, M.R., Cross, E., and Bryant, M. Community College Journal of Research and Practice, 38: 218-230, 2014.

4. Inside Higher Education: Adjunct Union Contracts Ensure Real Gains Including Better Pay. Colleen Flaherty, July 26, 2013.

5. Inside Higher Education: Union Sets ‘Aspirational Goal’ For Adjunct Pay. Colleen Flaherty, February 9, 2015.

6. The Washington Post: Adjunct Professors Get Poverty-Level Wages. Should Their Pay Quintuple? Lydia DePillis, February 6, 2015.

7. Examining Par-Time Faculty Utilization and Its Impact on Student Retention at a Public Research University – Johnson, I. (Indiana State University), a scholarly paper for presentation (<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED493826.pdf>)

8. A Comparison of the Achievement of the Students Taught By Full-Time Vs Adjunct Faculty in Business Courses – Kirk, F.R. and Spector, C.A. Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, Vol. 13, No.2, 2009.

9. Individual experiences at several Maryland Colleges and Universities – workgroup members.

**Overall Generalizations from the Resources Listed Above:**

The research studied does not yield a consistent and clear picture of whether the use of adjunct faculty results in either better or worse performance or retention of students taught by them. Possible limitations and problems in the at research papers we analyzed include numerous methodology questions, generalizations from small samples sizes, and the number of full time vs. part-time faculty studied e.g. often studies included large numbers of adjunct faculty and very small numbers of full time faculty. Studies were also limited in time (e.g. one semester), and in breadth of the types of students included in the study (e.g. limited to business students, or to online students). Additionally, analyses of the data presented often excluded alternative explanations for the results claimed. Some assumptions made in the research examined were not supported by previous studies and surveys familiar to the workgroup members, including two large surveys performed in Maryland (5 years apart) by the Maryland Consortium for Adjunct Faculty Professional Development (MCAPD); both were published by the Journal for Continuing Higher Education.

It is also apparent from these studies and articles that there are a number of issues related to unionization of adjunct faculty, equity in pay for adjuncts, and especially job security as a part-time faculty member, that should be addressed.

**Observations of the Work Group:**

1. The use of adjunct faculty varies significantly across college/universities in Maryland and elsewhere. Variation depends on the status of the school; e.g. USM, Private/Independent, 4 year schools vs. 2 year schools and For-Profits. The percentage of adjuncts teaching in System ranges from 30% to 92%; in community colleges the range is from 55% to 77% (data from 2014 Data Book, MHEC).
2. Pay levels for adjunct faculty similarly show great variability, and the variation is dependent on the same criteria mentioned in #1 (above) with lower salaries most often found in community colleges and independent schools.
3. While adjunct faculty members in Maryland have been approached by several unions, to our knowledge, only Montgomery College now has collective bargaining/union representation in Maryland. Washington D.C. has several of its universities in that category.
4. Community College Presidents actively lobbied against a bill last year that would allow unions to sign up adjuncts in Maryland.
5. Maryland System schools do not allow collective bargaining at this point in time.
6. Shared governance, in the truest sense of the term, generally does not include adjunct faculty in Maryland. A recent CUSF review committee report specifically points out that UMUC (with 90+% adjunct faculty members) has no legitimate shared governance. Adjunct faculty contracts in Maryland are particularly short, usually one course or one semester at a time.
7. Most adjunct faculty members are hired on an as needed basis; often just before a course begins. This situation often does not allow sufficient time for course preparation.
8. The points made in these observations include many of the concerns that adjunct faculty expressed in surveys and publications in Maryland and across the U.S.

**Recommendations for Strategic Use of Adjunct Faculty**

In light of the research we reviewed and the current state of adjunct faculty in Maryland, we recommend ten steps that Maryland/MHEC might consider to retain valuable adjunct faculty who have a history of excellent teaching and loyalty to our colleges and universities and to facilitate the hiring of such individuals in the future.

1. Some standards for financial compensation would create more equity for adjunct faculty across Maryland. These could be based on the type and level of institution where the adjunct faculty member teaches. Criteria for hiring vary dependent on a variety of factors, including highest degree earned, teaching experience and also the industry in which the faculty member works full time.

Consider a percent of FT equivalent salary; or percent of the salary of an Assistant Professor or Instructor.

Consider the Maryland State minimum wage when setting salaries for adjuncts.

1. Benefits such as pension and healthcare should be evaluated as possible benefits for adjunct faculty (perhaps based on the number of years of service).
2. All adjunct faculty members should be required to have an orientation to the school and to the department.
3. Adjunct faculty should be evaluated by Dept. Chairs or designated full-time faculty as well as by students. It should be standard operation for the Department Chair or course coordinators to discuss the evaluations in person. Mentoring of adjuncts by full time faculty should be a standard process within department.
4. Job security should be standard operation: faculty contracts should be offered for longer periods of time, rather than for a single course or semester. Faculty members should have a right to notice and due process and at least partial reimbursement for cancelled classes. It has been observed that some schools will not offer a course until the last possible moment to avoid having to pay for a cancelled course. For a thoughtful approach to this topic, it would be useful to review the new standard of job security that has been established by the University of Denver for non-tenure track faculty (positions which were previously adjunct positions).
5. Logistically, adjunct faculty need to have a private place where they can meet with students. One option, which is currently being used by some Maryland colleges, is office sharing with other adjunct faculty or with full-time faculty who are not on campus when adjuncts are teaching. Colleges cannot expect adjunct faculty to hold office hours or meet with students outside of class, if they don’t have a “place of their own”- even if it’s shared with others. It is important to note that the lack of private spaces to hold office hours often results in conversations in the public spaces (tables in the hallway, the library, the cafeteria) which in turn often leads to blatant FERPA violations.
6. Adjunct faculty should have incentives to excel in their teaching and professional development.
7. Like full time faculty, part-time faculty should have access to office supplies, parking (free), campus activities and recreational facilities, a college email address and telephone.
8. Technology/online training should be offered to all adjunct faculty so that they might use those resources at least as supplements when teaching in person.
9. All expectations of adjuncts should be defined in a transparent manner prior to acceptance of a contract to teach.

**Adjunct Faculty Work Group**:

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