

EDITOR'S NOTES

Part-time faculty have been a prominent presence in community colleges for several decades. As a result, scholars and educators have spent much time debating the advantages and disadvantages of a part-time academic workforce, comparing part-timers to their full-time counterparts, and studying the part-time faculty experience. Since the 1990s, however, more part-time than full-time faculty have been employed in community colleges. In 2003, part-timers made up 66.7 percent of the public two-year academic workforce (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). Besides for-profit colleges, the community college is the only type of postsecondary institution in the United States where part-time faculty outnumber full-time faculty on many campuses. This fact has significant implications for community college administrators who are responsible for recruiting, hiring, and supporting part-time faculty; for college, district, and state leaders who help set policies regarding the use of part-timers; and for all part-time faculty who seek to receive equitable treatment as they strive to enhance the quality of education for community college students.

Although part-time faculty make up the majority of the community college academic labor force, *New Directions for Community Colleges* has not dedicated a complete issue to the topic since 1980 (Parsons, 1980). Since then, few of the notions introduced in that volume have been questioned. Most important, the financial benefits of a part-time workforce—mentioned as one reason for the use of part-timers in 1980—has become the predominant justification that administrators use today (Wagoner, Metcalfe, and Olaore, 2005). While constant budget pressures force community colleges to employ large numbers of part-time faculty, potentially negative effects of such practices—including diminished instructional quality, the challenges of managing a predominantly temporary labor force, and the difficulties in supporting oneself on a part-time instructor's salary—must also be considered. It is therefore necessary to reexamine the conceptions, practices, and perspectives related to the employment of part-time faculty in community colleges in the twenty-first century.

Drawing on nationally representative quantitative data from the 1988, 1993, 1999, and the newly released 2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF), qualitative fieldwork, and the experiences of administrators and faculty members, this volume provides a variety of perspectives on part-time community college faculty. In Chapter One, Kevin Eagan presents an aggregated national portrait of part-time faculty based on his analysis of the NSOPF data. He suggests that a stasis of sorts has been reached nationally

in the use of part-timers. As Eagan notes, his findings complement earlier studies, which is perhaps the ideal starting point for this volume, as it seeks to present an accurate picture of the part-time labor force while simultaneously questioning some of the accepted conceptions of them.

Chapters Two and Three begin the questioning process. John S. Levin suggests in Chapter Two how part-time faculty can be understood as extensions of institutional identity of twenty-first-century colleges and offers a cogent challenge at the end of the chapter, indicating that to change the current practices regarding part-time faculty, individuals must be willing to challenge the missions and goals of modern community colleges. Moving from this institutional perspective, my findings in Chapter Three present a conceptualization of part-time faculty as a new economy labor force. Central to this conceptualization is the need to disaggregate part-time faculty in order to better understand and interpret their use. These two chapters, then, question dominant conceptions of part-time faculty and present different ways of thinking about part-timers that are better aligned with their current roles in community colleges based on colleges' purposes today.

Grounding the discourse in practical concerns, Donald W. Green presents one senior administrator's view and experience in Chapter Four. He addresses the issues of finding, hiring, orienting, evaluating, and developing adjuncts, with an emphasis on ensuring quality and maintaining institutional standards. Often part-time faculty are not allowed a voice in scholarly discussions about their positions in community colleges; this volume includes two chapters dedicated to this perspective as a partial remedy to this lack of inclusion. Written by Robert B. Yoshioka, Chapter Five presents in strong terms the dissatisfaction and frustration that some part-time faculty members can feel. This chapter also describes how the Internet and e-mail have facilitated the organization of part-time faculty groups like the California Part-Time Faculty Association (CPFPA). As indicated in the chapter, these groups allow part-timers to act collectively to seek improvements in their positions. CPFPA chose to support and endorse legislation that will change policy affecting part-time faculty in California. To this point, the CPFPA's efforts have produced mixed results, but they indicate one method that part-timers can use to work beyond their campuses to seek change. The Washington Part-Time Faculty Association, Eddy A. Ruiz's focus in Chapter Seven, has chosen a different method to implement change: litigation. Ruiz summarizes the lawsuits brought against the state of Washington and its community colleges and the implications these cases might have nationally.

Chapters Seven and Eight revisit the themes discussed in Chapter Four. Vernon C. Smith, in Chapter Seven, presents the systems approach employed by Rio Salado College in Arizona, demonstrating best practices that help increase effectiveness and suggesting that a college's orientation to the globalized new economy does not necessarily guarantee instability and exploitation of part-time faculty. Chapter Eight increases the breadth and depth of effective policies and practices with Desna L. Wallin's exploration of pro-

grams dedicated to the professional development of part-time faculty at three community colleges that have proven effective in increasing part-time faculty integration. Returning to one of the themes of the opening chapter, I explore part-time faculty satisfaction in Chapter Nine. The chapter's analysis of the 1999 NSOPF data set indicates that disaggregating faculty groups offered a more nuanced perspective of faculty satisfaction than that of an aggregate view. While on the whole, part-time faculty might be described as satisfied, faculty associated with the different purposes of colleges and with different disciplines have significantly different levels of satisfaction.

The multiple perspectives presented in this volume offer a complex and conflicted picture of community college part-time faculty, as there are no easy answers to the questions that arise from colleges' heavy reliance on their service. As editor, I sought to solicit chapters that would encourage discussion and debate on the topic to update and advance the scholarship on part-time faculty while also highlighting best practices and useful examples that can help the two-year college continue to play a vital role in American higher education.

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References

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