Increasing Full-Time Professors at Neumont College of Computer Science: A Proposal for Improving the Educational and Work Experience

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During my time at Neumont College of Computer Science the quality of the education has become a growing concern among my peers and I. The focus of this paper is on Neumont College of Computer Science, a college facing a shortage of teachers and the ways this impacts the school. Throughout the paper, the college will be referred to as Neumont for the sake of conciseness. One of the most important factors in student achievement is the student-to-teacher ratio, or class size. Research has consistently shown that smaller class sizes lead to improved educational outcomes, including better grades, greater persistence in college, and improved critical thinking skills. As the number of accepted students soars the demand for more teachers is increasing at an unsustainable rate. Alongside a suspected decline in education quality this has led to larger class sizes, overworked faculty, and a scheduling nightmare for the registrar. This proposal paper will examine the problem of the shortage of teachers at Neumont, and the impact that class size has on student achievement. By hiring more quality teachers and reducing class size, Neumont can improve the quality of education that students receive and increase the chances of student success.

The shortage of full-time professors at Neumont is a major problem that needs to be addressed. According to College Factual (<https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/neumont-university/>), only 46% of Neumont teachers are full time professors. The other 54% of the teaching staff are adjuncts who are retired or teaching in their off time after work. While many of these adjuncts may be quality educators, that cannot be said for all of them. Many students have experienced adjuncts that throw out the established Neumont curriculum to try and teach what they believe needs to be taught purely based on the title of the course. It is true that in these cases Neumont generally does not rehire the offending parties, but if we had less reliance on adjuncts these situations would happen far less. The quality of our education is always in question from class to class due to the inconsistent quality of our professors and adjuncts. This not only affects the quality of education that students receive, but also has negative consequences for the college's reputation and ability to attract and retain students.

Regardless of quality, relying on adjuncts so heavily still poses problems for the college. Adjuncts often have day jobs and other responsibilities they must tend to which makes scheduling a more difficult task. Many students and teachers alike have very scattered schedules with awkward sized breaks between classes. This means that on average students and teachers must spend more time on campus than they really need to, which can be draining for students and especially teachers. Furthermore, the heavy reliance on adjuncts leads to overworked full-time teachers who are forced to take on larger workloads. This can lead to burnout and negatively impact the overall quality of education that students receive. The Software and Game Development degree program here at Neumont only has a single full-time professor, Raymond Maple. Professor Maple instructs every single game development class at Neumont with no aid from adjuncts whatsoever. The heavy workload and lack of support from adjuncts has a tangible impact on the well-being and productivity of full-time teachers, such as Professor Maple. As the academic quarter progresses, it becomes increasingly visible that Professor Maple is becoming burnt out and tired, only recovering during the break in between academic quarters.

The impact of the full-time teacher shortage at Neumont affects the overall quality of education provided to our students. Studies have long established that small class sizes and low student-to-teacher ratios are vital in ensuring student success. This Turkish study by Koc N. and Celik B. (2014, p. 68-69) found that most of the cities with the highest ranking schools have a student teacher ratio of less than 15, and that the 15 worst performing mostly had student to teacher ratios larger than 20. According to the official Neumont website (<https://www.neumont.edu/our-students>) we have a student to teacher ratio of 29:1. It is important to note that this statistic is calculated by adding up the total enrolled students and dividing by the total hired educators, this does not account for the varied amount of time and effort put in between educators. Class size and student to teacher ratio are two distinct statistics, some classes, such as MAT250 which has 22 students, have a smaller class size than the overall student to teacher ratio while others such as GAT420 (39 students) and ENG110 (47 students) have far larger class sizes. (WRITER NOTE, DON’T COUNT AS PART OF PAPER: I’m about to talk about how hard I assume your job is, if I’m wrong OOPS, if I’m right it isn’t because I’m writing this paper for your class, you just happen to be a good example) Large class sizes like this make it exceedingly difficult for students and teachers alike. In a 2010 study Chapman L. & Ludlow L. found the following:

This study found a significant positive relationship between

professor availability and perceived student learning and a significant negative

relationship between class size and perceived student learning. Taken together,

these suggest that smaller class sizes in general education courses may facilitate

“personalized educational” opportunities for students that, in turn, lead to

further “action and practice” such as becoming involved in faculty research

outside of class.

In ENG110 at Neumont for example, there are 47 students, it is nearly impossible for every student to get personal one on one feedback from Professor Carter simply because she cannot be everywhere at once. On the Professor’s side having a class this large, especially an English class, is very difficult. English work is some of the hardest schoolwork to grade, doing so for at least 75 students without any assistant graders is a herculean task.

As stated throughout previous sections, the shortage of full-time teachers at Neumont has significant impact on the quality of education provided to students, and the workload and well-being of both teachers and faculty. To address this teacher shortage Neumont must increase their recruitment efforts without lowering the standards for acceptable professors. This could be done a few ways: by reaching out to retired and semi-retired professionals, offering more competitive compensation and benefits to attract more talent and incentivize good adjuncts to join as full-time staff. The major concern with these solutions is likely to be of the financial variety, but due to our step tuition price and the fact that it just went up significantly I believe that to be a flimsy excuse.

In conclusion, the shortage of full-time teachers at Neumont has a significant negative impact on students, teachers, and staff. If this problem goes unattended for too much longer this may have a significant impact on the school’s reputation, in turn making it harder to hire new teachers as they prospective hires see how overworked the current staff is. The proposed solution to increase the hiring budget and recruitment efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits has the potential to interest our current adjuncts and other potential hires, thus addressing this issue. It is essential that the college administration takes immediate action to implement this solution to ensure that students receive the best education possible. The education of our students should be a top priority, and it is the responsibility of the college to provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed.

# References

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