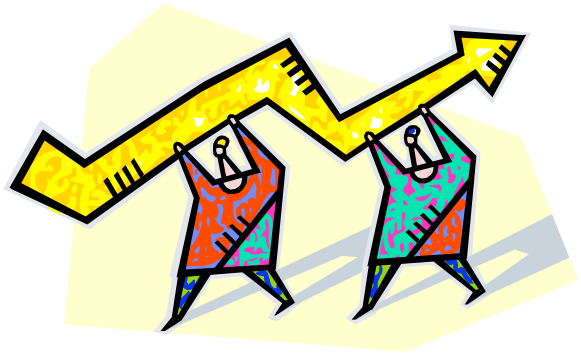
THE GROWING TREND OF PART-TIME FACULTY AT COMMUNITY COLLEGES

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES? WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS? WHAT SHOULD BE DONE?

A Literature Review



The percentage of part-time faculty in higher education has grown considerably over the last forty years. This trend has been especially steep at community colleges across the country. In 1962, 38 percent of community college faculty were part-time (Palmer, 1999). Today that figure has jumped to over 67 percent (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2006).

A handful of scholars have focused on this issue and have used a variety of methods to research the following types of questions: What has caused the growing use of part-time faculty at community colleges? Should it be a concern? What are its effects? How should it be addressed?

I begin this literature review by examining the scholarship on the causes of the growing trend of part-time faculty at community colleges. I will then focus my critique on the literature that has studied its effects. Lastly, I will review what scholars recommend should be done to address the trend. Throughout my review, I will note areas where gaps in the literature exist and future scholarship is needed to move the research on this topic forward.

In brief, most scholars tend to agree that the rise of part-time faculty is linked to the expansion of the multiple missions of community colleges as well as the tightening of budget dollars that higher education institutions have been facing. However, there has been much disagreement and controversy over the *effects* of the growing number of part-time faculty and what the responses should be. Some scholars believe the growing trend has serious adverse effects and should be reversed while others believe the rise of part-time faculty can be beneficial as long as part-timers receive the proper support.

In terms of addressing the gaps in the current literature, future scholarship should examine in more depth the experiences and perspectives of students who are taught by part-time faculty at community colleges. Forthcoming studies should also probe deeper to analyze the particular effects of part-time faculty at the department or division level at colleges. Finally, considering the percentage of part-time faculty is predicted to continue its upward trend, scholars should focus more on how

community colleges can feasibly and effectively support their part-time faculty going forward for the maximum benefit of colleges *and* their faculty and students.

A Note on Terminology

Before launching into this review, it is important to first comment on how the terms "part-time faculty" and "community college" will be defined.

With regard to "part-time faculty," there is no one, clear, universal definition. Some community colleges use the term interchangeably with "contingent," "temporary," and "adjunct," while other colleges institute clear distinctions among these terms and may employ different types of part-time faculty under different circumstances. For purposes of this review, I use the term "part-time faculty" generally and inclusively when discussing the body of literature on the topic, but I will use the other terms on occasion if a particular study I am commenting on explicitly references a particular term over the others.

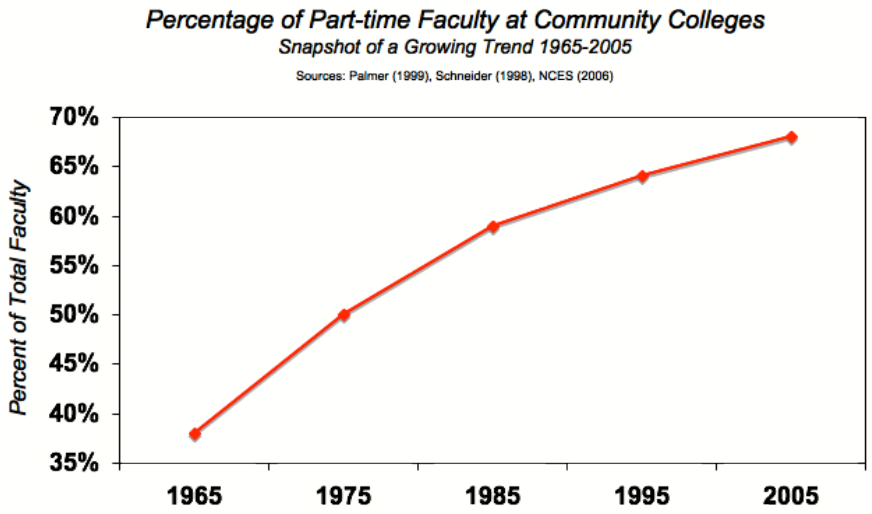
It is commonly understood that the term "community college" is synonymous with two-year college, and I use the terms interchangeably in this paper. Historically, community colleges have also been known as junior colleges, although you will rarely see the term "junior college" in journal articles today, so you will not see it used in this paper.

Background of the Trend

To help put this literature review in context, this section provides a brief background on the growing trend of part-time faculty at community colleges. Historical data reveal that the use of part-timers at community colleges has grown steadily over the last four decades. In 1962, only 38 percent of faculty were part-time. Nine years later, in 1971, it rose just two percentage points to 40 percent. But by 1974, 50 percent of faculty at community colleges were part-time, a 10 percent jump in just four years. In 1995, the part-timer percentage at community colleges had grown to a resounding 64 percent. In comparison, at public four-year colleges in 1995, only 24 percent of faculty members were part-time. Overall, from 1970 to

1995, the number of faculty members at two-year institutions grew by 210 percent, compared with a 69 percent growth at four-year institutions (Palmer, 1999; Schneider, 1998).

Since 1995, the percent increase of part-time faculty has not jumped quite as it did in the 1970s; however, the upward trend has continued. Today, over two-thirds of community-college professors work part time (NCES, 2006), and at some institutions (for example, at Rio Salado College in Arizona) nearly *100 percent* of faculty are part-timers (Wilson, *The Chronicle*, 2006).



CAUSES

Scholars have identified a variety of causes for the growing trend of part-time faculty at community colleges. Fundamentally, two main causes have emerged: (1) the expansion of the multiple missions of community colleges and (2) economic pressures and motivations confronting community college administrators.

Mission Expansion

The first community colleges in the United States sprouted at the turn of the nineteenth century. Their central mission was to serve as an educational stepping stone for students who planned to eventually pursue a bachelor's degree (Cohen and

Brawer, 1996; Townsend, 2001). Since then, the mission of community colleges has evolved—and multiplied. Instead of simply serving as transfer stations to four-year colleges, community colleges have been offering more and more types of classes to more and more types of people (Dougherty, 1994; Grubb 1996). Today's community colleges have taken on providing developmental education for remedial students, basic adult education, English as a second language classes, customized training for specific companies, preparation of students for industry certification exams, and depending on the institution, sometimes much more (Bailey and Morest, 2004).

As community colleges' missions have evolved, so has their faculty hiring needs. More than ever, community colleges are looking to hire people who are "experts" in their field (especially in the growing fields of computer systems, nursing, and business, for example) to teach the increasing numbers of students seeking occupational training and certifications (Brint and Karabel, 1989; Bailey and Morest, 2006). Many of these "experts" typically hold full-time jobs in their field and, as a result, are only employable at community colleges on a part-time basis. Therefore, one explanation for the growing trend of part-time faculty at community colleges is that the increased demand for industry-specific education over the past thirty years has led to the increased hiring of these types of experts as part-time faculty (e.g., Dougherty, 1994; Gappa and Leslie, 1993; Grubb, 1996; Levin, Kater, and Wagoner, 2006).

Economic Pressures and Motivations

It would be naïve to think that mission expansion is the only reason for the growing numbers of part-time faculty at community colleges, however. Economic pressures and motivations have also led to the increase. In recent years, real dollar funding for higher education in the U.S. has plateaued. This has hit community colleges particularly hard, since they do not have the kind of endowments or research grants that traditional four-year colleges often can dip into when budgets are tight. Furthermore, given that a central purpose of community colleges is to provide local, low-cost education to their communities, they cannot flippantly hike

tuition costs when faced with fiscal challenges. As a result, as many studies have shown, community colleges simply have lacked the money to hire full-time faculty to meet their growing course needs (Dougherty, 1994; Grubb, 1996; Leslie, 1998). Part-time faculty, unlike full-time faculty, are generally paid on a per course basis and do not receive health benefits, which make them substantially less expensive employees than full-time faculty (Levin, Kater, and Wagoner, 2006)

Coupled with these economic pressures, community colleges are also economically *motivated* to hire part-time faculty. For one, they represent a very flexible workforce in that they can be hired quickly and without hesitation. If enrollments in a particular course jump and new classes need to be scheduled at the last minute, community colleges can dip into the pool of available part-time faculty to cover the teaching loads.[1] And in the reverse case, if enrollments drop in a particular course and classes need to be cancelled, part-time faculty can be let go just as quickly and easily. Full-time faculty, on the other hand, are innately neither as flexible nor expendable, particularly if they are tenured faculty (Levin, Kater, and Wagoner, 2006; Jacobs, 1998).

In summary, with regard to the *causes* of the rise of part-time faculty at community colleges, scholars tend to be in agreement: Together, the mission expansion of community colleges and the economic pressures and motivations that community colleges face have caused the rise. When it comes to identifying the *effects* of the trend, however, there is much less scholarly agreement. In fact, there has been much scholarly debate (and rather polarizing debate, at that) on whether the effects are beneficial or actually very detrimental.

[1] A cause of the growing trend of part-timers in higher education more broadly (and one that is related to the economic causes mentioned above) is that the supply of people with doctorates who want to pursue careers in academia has also increased over the past thirty years. Scholars have argued that there are many people who are willing to take part-time faculty positions with hopes that a full-time offer will come down the road (Leslie, 1998). However, since a doctorate degree is not typically a qualification requirement to teach at a community college, the proliferation of doctoral degrees is not as definitive a cause affecting community colleges as those causes identified in this review above.

EFFECTS

Scholarship on the effects of the growing use of part-time faculty at community colleges first took root roughly fifteen years ago. The most seminal work at that time was *Invisible Faculty: Improving the Status of Part-Timers in Higher Education* written by Judith M. Gappa and David W. Leslie in 1993. Since then, essentially two perspectives have emerged, each stemming from one of the two major causes of the trend as discussed earlier. One group of scholars claims that the growing use of part-time faculty has serious detrimental effects and, therefore, urgent steps should be taken to reverse the trend. The roots of their argument stem from the belief that the predominant cause of the trend has been economic in nature. Another group of scholars, Gappa and Leslie included, has taken the view that the effects of the growing use of part-time faculty can actually be beneficial as long as part-time faculty receive the proper support and respect from their institutions.

Beneficial Effects: Part-time faculty are qualified, committed experts

Both professors of education as well as university administrators, Gappa and Leslie were among the first to examine the issue of part-time faculty in higher education (1993). In attempt to paint a fuller picture of who part-time faculty are and to determine how part-timers contribute to institutional goals, Gappa and Leslie conducted over 450 interviews with chief academic officers, deans, department heads, and full-time and part-time faculty members at 18 institutions, five of which were community colleges (1993).

Their analysis revealed that there are many prevailing "myths" associated with part-time faculty members. For example, they found that college administrators and full-time faculty generally held the belief that part-time faculty have a negative impact on the quality of instruction, although no one could point to hard evidence that corroborated such a theory. In fact, to the contrary, Gappa and Leslie's research found that part-time faculty are generally very qualified and highly committed to their jobs. They write that part-timers "represent a source of

energy, commitment, and creativity that colleges and universities can use to help make academic programs stronger" (p. 284).

Considering the topic of part-time faculty in higher education was still relatively new in the early nineties, Gappa and Leslie deserve accolades for being the first scholars to research and publish a book on the topic. In addition, instead of relying entirely on quantitative analyses of the rather limited datasets on part-time faculty that existed at the time, they deserve credit for attempting to shed light on the numbers by conducting qualitative research and gathering data through interviews with administrators and faculty.

However, it is also important to recognize the significant limitations of their method. For one, they conducted interviews at only 18 institutions and, furthermore, they were all very different institutions. Their sample included a variety of four-year and two-year, public and private, urban and small town institutions located in the United States and in Canada. It seems very difficult (and some would say impossible) to achieve significant, conclusive findings on any topic across such a wide spectrum and small sample size of colleges. So, while *Invisible Faculty* helped to further scholarly discussion on the issue of part-time faculty, it is very questionable whether its findings are representative across the very diverse landscape of higher education. Plus, related to part-time faculty at community colleges specifically, its findings are essentially inconclusive.

Recognizing the need to build upon *Invisible Faculty* and continue the scholarship on part-time faculty in higher education, particularly at community colleges, a handful of scholars conducted studies focused on part-time faculty at two-year institutions. Some of these subsequent studies supported Gappa and Leslie's positive findings with regard to part-timers' qualifications and commitment, while others actually seriously disputed such claims.

An example of a study that aligned with Gappa and Leslie's (1993) findings is a quantitative study published in 2000 that analyzed surveys issued by the American Association of Community Colleges as well as data from the U.S. Department of Education (Phillippe and Patton, 2000). The study found that

adjuncts are generally hired because they possess technical skills and knowledge that are beneficial to students. Furthermore, the authors claim that the expertise and workplace experiences of part-time faculty help to keep community college curricula "fresh" (p. 78).

Another study that portrayed part-timers at community colleges in a positive light is a 2001 study that analyzed part-timers' job satisfaction and commitment. Authors James R. Valadez and James Soto Antony drew from the 1992–1993 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty (NSOPF)[2] data and filtered it to derive their study sample of nearly 7,000 part-time community college faculty members. They found that part-time faculty are satisfied with their roles (although they are concerned with issues regarding salary, benefits, and long-term job security) and that they place a high value on teaching (Valadez and Antony, 2001).

Both Phillippe and Patton (2000) and Valadez and Antony (2001) should be commended for addressing a gap in the literature and focusing their research on part-time faculty at community colleges specifically. In addition, their quantitative analyses serve to support Gappa and Leslie's (1993) mainly qualitative findings; although, relative to community colleges, their studies would have been strengthened if they included qualitative analyses themselves.

Subsequent to their original work, *Invisible Faculty* (1993), Gappa and Leslie continued to build upon their research on part-time faculty. In a 1996 study, they found that the part-time faculty work force is "largely voluntary, reasonably well-off in economic terms, and professionally qualified for the work they do" (Gappa and Leslie, 1996, p. 12). Furthermore, in a quantitative study they conducted using data from the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) and the NSOPF, they found that part-time faculty are both "competent and committed" to their faculty

[2] Since NSOPF data is used extensively throughout this literature, I thought it might be helpful to include a brief note about what it entails. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) collects and tabulates data on colleges and universities for its Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). These data are primarily drawn from the NCES's surveys. IPEDS includes data on graduation rates and faculty employment, including the numbers of full-time and part-time faculty. IPEDS also includes data on student demographic variables, financial aid, enrollment, and degrees. Essentially, as scholars have claimed, NSOPF is the only national data set sufficient for institution-level national analysis of public community college graduation rates (Benjamin, 2006).

roles. The media portrayal of part-time faculty as a disgruntled workforce consisting of "wannabe" academics who juggle multiple teaching positions in order to make ends meet, they say, is grossly exaggerated. Their study found that only a small percent of part-time faculty hold multiple teaching jobs, are eagerly seeking full-time positions, or are aspiring to become career academics (Leslie and Gappa, 2002).

The strength of these later studies by Leslie and Gappa is that their quantitative methods serve to corroborate their earlier, mainly qualitative findings that were published in *Invisible Faculty* in 1993. One thing interesting to note, however, and which I will discuss further in the next section, is that Gappa and Leslie fail to cite or address the scholarly critics of *Invisible Faculty* in these subsequent studies. The fact that they ignore their critics' claims ultimately, in my mind, casts doubt on theirs.

John E. Roueche, Susanne D. Roueche, and Mark D. Milliron wrote the book *Strangers In Their Own Land: Part-time Faculty in American Community Colleges* in 1995. They developed the "National Part-Time Faculty Utilization" survey and sent it to community colleges across the U.S. with the aim of collecting data on the trends of employment and integration of community college part-time faculty.

Their sampling method is important to note, particularly in light of the issues that Gappa and Leslie encountered in *Invisible Faculty* (1993). To ensure the benefits of randomness and mitigate over or under representation of categories of colleges in their study (based on size and district-affiliation), Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995) employed a stratified random sampling procedure. They assert this method enabled them to achieve a more complete and conclusive analysis.[3] In addition, they achieved an overall response rate of 62.4 percent, which compared to other studies that tackled this topic, is quite above average and adds significance to their results. Among their findings was a general consensus across community colleges that part-time faculty would be hired in even greater numbers in the

[3] The part-time percentages at the community colleges they examined ranged from 3.7 percent to as much as 89 percent.

future. Their analysis also revealed that colleges have a long way to go in terms of effectively utilizing and integrating their part-time faculty.

In summary, the camp of scholars reviewed above believe that part-time faculty are generally qualified teachers, satisfied with their jobs, and will inevitably play a major role in higher education going forward. Therefore, arguing against the presence and the growing trend of part-time faculty is, they say, a "futile activity" (Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron, 1995, p. 153).

As a whole, one of the strengths of this corpus of literature is that it consists of both qualitative heavy studies (e.g., Gappa and Leslie, 1993) and quantitative heavy studies (e.g., Phillippe and Patton, 2000) that, collectively, substantiate the same claim that part-time faculty at community colleges are generally very ably qualified and committed to their jobs. Because their quantitative and qualitative studies strongly corroborate each other, it lends credence to their claims.

However, this body of literature also has its weaknesses. For one, the sizes of their datasets were typically extreme, either very small or very large. For example, Gappa and Leslie (1993) collected qualitative data from only 18 institutions, a rather narrow dataset especially when compared to Phillippe and Patton (2000), who attempted to generalize the composition of part-time faculty across the country using a dense amount of national data without any ample weighting or stratifying of data.

Secondly, as the publication dates make apparent, this body of literature is rather dated. Apparently studies that focus their analyses on the demographics and motivations of faculty members at community colleges are no longer as popular or notable as they were ten years ago. This leads to a third weakness of the literature, namely, its narrow focus on faculty as isolated units of analysis. While some of these studies capture the perspectives of college administrators (e.g., Gappa and Leslie, 1993), none venture to capture the perspectives of students. For example, while an analysis of the job satisfaction rates of faculty is certainly important and insightful (Valadez and Antony, 2001), one is left to wonder what the *student* satisfaction rates are of their experiences being taught by part-time faculty.

Given the weaknesses and limitations of the literature reviewed above, it is not surprising that not everyone agrees that the growing trend of part-time faculty is so innocuous, let alone beneficial. Some scholars adamantly argue that the growing trend of part-time faculty in higher education has serious adverse effects and must be reversed for the sake of the academy and for the sake of students' learning.

Detrimental Effects: Abundance of Part-time faculty is bad for students and the academy

One of the utmost critics (and alarmists) of the growing trend of part-time faculty has been Ernst Benjamin, a trained political scientist who has also served on the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Benjamin's research claims that the growing trend of part-time faculty has adverse effects—notably on the faculty profession—and must be stopped and reversed.

In the late nineties, when the part-time faculty issue was starting to get more mainstream attention, Benjamin used his quantitative skills to test the claims laid forth by Gappa and Leslie (1993) and their supporters. In short, he found their claims "conceptually troubling" (1998, p. 52). Why, he wondered, would part-time faculty voluntarily accept terms and conditions of employment that are substantially less attractive than their apparently similarly qualified full-time colleagues? Phillippe and Patton (2000) found that part-timers typically have other income sources, so they can accept the lower pay offered by community colleges compared to their full-time colleagues, but Benjamin was skeptical and decided to analyze the data himself.

In attempt to answer this question, he turned to the most recent NSOPF dataset like many scholars have done. Most notably, though, instead of grouping all part-time faculty from across disciplines together, he segmented the data into a vocationally oriented cluster and a liberal arts oriented cluster. The vocationally oriented cluster included fields such as nursing, law, business, and engineering. The liberal arts cluster included fields such as history, English, sociology, and political

science. His results were eye-opening and certainly contributed a great deal to move the scholarship on the issue of part-time faculty forward.

He found that vocationally oriented part-time faculty conform in many respects to the "competent and committed" part-time faculty image as portrayed by scholars like Leslie and Gappa (2002) and others, but his results on part-time faculty in the liberal arts oriented cluster painted a very different picture. He found that part-time faculty in the liberal arts cluster were not only substantially more discontented and relied more on their part-time faculty wages for their overall personal income, but they also faced negative performance incentives and lacked the time and job security essential for excellent instruction (Benjamin, 1998).

This was one of the first studies to dig deeper into the issue and examine part-time faculty by field of discipline. Benjamin's findings certainly cast a degree of doubt on the studies that herald the "idealized image" (to use Benjamin's phrasing) of part-time faculty at community colleges. Could it be that previous scholars' findings had an over-representation of faculty from the vocationally oriented fields, and that's why their results on job satisfaction and commitment were so positive? I believe that future scholarship on part-time faculty should continue down this route and dig even deeper into the data at the department and division levels. If such detailed data does not yet exist at the state or national level, I argue that new and improved datasets should be deployed so that scholars can analyze this issue at a finer level of detail.

Another scholar who has challenged Leslie and Gappa's findings is Daniel Jacoby, a professor at the University of Washington (Bothell), where his specializations include labor, economic history, and education. As a labor economist, Jacoby is particularly skeptical of Leslie and Gappa's claim that relatively few part-timers are aspiring academics actively seeking full-time faculty careers (2002). So, in 2005, he conducted his own test of that finding.

Using data derived from a survey administered at a community college in the state of Washington, Jacoby (2005) found that the majority of part-time faculty actually *prefer* full-time work. Using a logit regression analysis that controlled for

personal attributes (such as age, gender, and presence of other breadwinners in household) as well as faculty divisions (such as business, humanities, and social sciences, which draws on Benjamin's 1998 findings), his study showed that typical part-timers begin their part-time posts with the intent of eventually becoming full-time faculty. However, over time when prospects for a full-time job diminish, they often become discouraged (Jacoby, 2005).

Jacoby's study sheds critical light on Leslie and Gappa's claim (2002) that most part-time faculty do not actively seek full-time positions. Jacoby argues that the validity of that claim hinges on the stage of a person's faculty career and, thereby, the stage of his or her discouragement with his or her likely part-time fate. In short, he suggests that the diminished full-time job search on behalf of part-time faculty is likely the result of discouragement after years of frustration, *not* because of contentment with their contingent statuses (Jacoby, 2005). He also admits, however, that since his study analyzed survey responses at one suburban community college in Washington state, it fails to adequately represent national patterns. He suggests, and I agree, that it is important to replicate this type of analysis on larger datasets in order to progress the research on this topic.

In 2003, Benjamin again conducted analyses on NSOPF data with the aim of "reappraising" the part-time faculty issue. In so doing, he essentially deflated Gappa and Leslie's and others' argument that "part-time faculty are, for the most part, superbly qualified for their teaching assignments" (Gappa and Leslie, 1996, p. 6; as quoted by Benjamin, 2003). Among his analyses, he calculated that full-time faculty spend 50 to 100 percent more time on instruction per credit hour that do part-time faculty. Furthermore, he found that the selection and evaluation processes of part-time faculty are informal and haphazard at best and insufficient or non-existent at worst. In summary, Benjamin states:

> I believe that there is ample evidence to show that, although contingent faculty provide instruction at less direct cost and are often able individuals, they are less well qualified, less carefully selected and evaluated, less well supported, less involved in student learning, and less well integrated into the learning community (p. 108).

One of his findings that alarmed him most was that part-time faculty indicate they are relatively well-satisfied with the time they have to keep current in their fields. Considering they receive little support and engage little in scholarship (if at all), Benjamin believes this finding suggests "an erosion in professionalism or sense of professional responsibility," which he claims is certainly not consistent with the academic values that American higher education should want to see prevail (2003, p. 99). Clearly, Benjamin casts the growing trend of part-time faculty in a negative light.

Considering that Benjamin is a longstanding affiliate and once high-level leader of the AAUP, it should come to no surprise that he has motives to preserve the distinction, honor, and prestige of the faculty profession. This is important to consider in light of his 2003 study's findings. However, Benjamin's AAUP bias does not seem to creep into or taint his research on the differences between the vocationally oriented and liberal arts oriented clusters (Benjamin, 1998), which is arguably one of the most influential and progressive contributions to the literature on part-time faculty to date.

In 2002, Pam Scheutz published a study that corroborated Benjamin's claims that part-time faculty are not as "superbly qualified for their teaching assignments" as Gappa and Leslie (1993) and others claim. It also revealed a new way to think about and reframe the debate on the part-time faculty issue. Using data from the 2000 Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC) survey, which included data on more than 1,500 faculty respondents from over one hundred community colleges nationwide, Scheutz explored the differences between the instructional practices of full-time and part-time faculty.

She found that the average time spent by part- and full-time faculty in most classroom instructional practices is essentially equivalent. However, her analysis confirmed that part-timers tend to have less total teaching experience, use less innovative or collaborative teaching methods, and interact less with their students, peers, and institutions compared to their full-time colleagues. Furthermore, she found that part-timers tend to be less familiar with campus services (such as

tutoring and counseling) and less likely to sustain the kind of extracurricular student-faculty interaction that has been linked to enhanced student learning [4] (Scheutz, 2002, p. 44).

Her study is important because it bridges research on the part-time faculty issue with research on the importance of student services and student-faculty interactions. Most literature written on part-time faculty previous to her 2002 study focused on part-timers' teaching qualifications, commitment, and job satisfaction. But her study reveals a new and important way of thinking about the issue. A part-time faculty member can be the most qualified, committed, and satisfied teacher in the world, but if he or she does not have time to spend with students outside the classroom or does not know how to advise students on the services available to them so that they can get the most out of their educational experience, can he or she truly be effective? Strong pedagogical skills and expertise in their fields of study are obviously important for faculty to have and to hone, but those attributes are not the only things that enable a faculty member—whether full-time or part-time—to be positively influential on his or her students' learning.

As mentioned earlier, a critique in the body of literature reviewed so far is its lack of considerable analysis of students at community colleges. How has the growing trend of part-time faculty affected them? Within the last eight years, studies have begun to examine the effect of part-time faculty from the student perspective more. And their results tend to align with Benjamin's (1998, 2003) contention that the growing trend of part-timers at community colleges has negative effects.

For example, Larry A. Burgess and Carl Samuels (1999) studied the impact of instructor status (full-time or part-time) on student academic performance and retention in sequential courses (e.g., English 101 and English 102). They analyzed data supplied by a large urban multi-campus community college district and limited

[4] The studies Scheutz (2002) cites that have linked student-faculty interaction to enhanced student learning include Kerekes and Huber (1998), Stanback-Stroud et al. (1996), and Stoecker, Pascarella, and Wolfle (1988).

their dataset to sequential courses in developmental mathematics, regular mathematics, and regular freshman English.

They found that students who take the first course in a sequence from a full-time instructor and then take the second course from either a full-timer or a part-timer perform about as expected. But, those students who take the first course from a part-time instructor and then take the second course from a full-timer performed significantly poorer than expected. They conclude that these differences "seem to support the contention that part-time instructors are more lenient, less demanding, and grade higher than full-time instructors" (p. 496).

Although this study was limited to one large urban community college district and did not factor in control variables in its analyses, its findings illuminate the need to study student outcomes related to the growing use of part-time faculty further to get a better handle on just what the effects of employing more part-timers are on the students themselves.

Linda Hagedorn, Athena Perrakis, and William Maxwell from the University of Southern California are researchers that place great value on the student perspective. They write, "If we want to serve students in the best, most effective way possible we have to listen to their comments, heed their suggestions and respond to their needs" (2002, p. 21). In a three-year longitudinal study, Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell collected qualitative data on issues relating to student success through a series of focus groups, including focus groups with students, at the Los Angeles Community College District (2002).

They found that, much to the chagrin of the students, tenured full-time faculty tended to teach the upper-level courses while part-time faculty picked up the introductory courses. Their study found that the students believed the more experienced teachers should be the ones who interact with and support new students, especially since the full-time faculty have office space and are required to hold office hours, unlike part-time faculty. Regardless whether the part-time faculty are able instructors or willing mentors, Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell (2002) found that part-time faculty lack the time to "interact with students or develop

long-term connections or mentoring roles" (p. 17). In short, community colleges that want to encourage student success should not rely heavily on part-time faculty.

Although their dataset was limited to a subset of the Los Angeles Community College District, Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell's results (2002) filled a gap in the literature and, like Burgess and Samuels (1999), revealed that much can be gleaned by researching the student perspective.

However, in today's world, where a push for accountability has taken American education institutions by storm, capturing and analyzing qualitative data on student perspectives (à la Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell, 2002) simply does not carry as much weight as capturing and analyzing quantifiable (and therefore measurable) student outcomes. In recent studies, researchers have analyzed college student graduation rates, a traditional and commonly accepted key effectiveness indicator of higher education institutions, to shed light on the effects of part-time faculty.

For example, Ronald G. Ehrenberg and Liang Zhang (2005) ran analyses on data from a large sample of institutions and found that an increase in the percentage of part-time faculty is associated with a reduction in graduation rates. For example, they found that a 10 percent increase in the percentage of faculty who are part-time at a public academic institution is associated with a 2.65 percent reduction in the institution's graduation rate. Their findings with regard to community colleges were inconclusive, however.

It is important to note that considerable controversy exists over the use of graduation rates to measure community colleges' effectiveness (see Bailey, Calcagno, Jenkins, Leinbach, and Kienzl, 2006). Community colleges serve so many different kinds of students (including full-time, part-time, and transfer students), who enroll and take classes for a wide range of reasons and who have various personal educational goals. In short, it is not every community college student's goal to graduate, so using graduation rates to measure the effectiveness of community colleges is flawed at worst and controversial at best.

However, given that student graduation rate is the typical, most commonly accepted way of evaluating higher education institutions, the newest challenge facing researchers of community colleges has been to somehow incorporate graduation rates in their research methods in fair and effective ways. Daniel Jacoby stepped up to that challenge and published a study in December 2006 that examined whether two specifically customized student graduation rates at community colleges decrease when part-time faculty employment increases. The adapted graduation rates he used included *overall degree ratio*, which includes part-time, transfer, and non-degree seeking students, and *net graduation rate*, which is the ratio of full-time students who graduate within 150% of normal time minus those who have transferred to other institutions. After running detailed analyses of the data, he found that even these customized community college graduation rates still decrease as the proportion of part-time faculty employed increases (Jacoby, 2006).

Although these recalculated graduation rates may still be controversial, *overall degree ratio* and *net graduation rate* are certainly more applicable and fairer measures of community colleges. All in all, Jacoby deserves a great deal of credit for being creative and using modified (yet still legitimate) versions of student graduation rates that are more appropriate and applicable for community colleges.

In this study, Jacoby also tests the assertion that colleges have been tending to substitute less expensive part-time faculty for full-time faculty in order to preserve or enhance their faculty student ratios, a measure often used in college ranking systems (2006). The statistical quadrant map he designs and utilizes to test this claim ultimately confirms that, indeed, colleges have been ostensibly over employing part-timers to buttress their faculty student ratios. In conclusion, Jacoby states that the "dangers in expanding the part-time faculty appear to outweigh any benefits." (p. 1101).

Overall, the body of this second set of literature has many apparent strengths. Like the first set, it effectively uses both quantitative and qualitative data to corroborate their claims. Also, one of the true strengths of this second set is

how fresh and current its research is today (which is notably not a strength of first set of literature reviewed). Thirdly, Benjamin's landmark study (1998) that delves deeper into the data and finds differences between the experiences of part-timers in vocationally oriented and liberal arts oriented fields uncovered an apparent weakness in Gappa and Leslie's (1993) original seminal work and truly has progressed the scholarship on this topic.

Perhaps in part because of how new this second set of scholarship is today, one obvious weakness in this literature is that its studies' results are not (yet) scalable to the point that they can be considered representative of broader, national patterns (e.g., Jacoby, 1995; Hagedorn, Perrakis, and Maxwell, 2002). This is arguably less a weakness and more of an opportunity, however, as I predict future studies will be launched to address this need.

RECOMMENDED RESPONSES

So, given the according causes and *dis*according effects of the growing trend of part-time faculty, what should be done? Not surprisingly, the two camps of scholars on either side of the effects debate have recently begun to posit differing claims on how community colleges should address the growing numbers of part-timers. While two contrasting views have emerged—*reduce* the percentage of part-timers versus *invest* in them—the scholarship on this topic is still very recent and open to further thought and analysis.

Reverse the Trend and Reduce the Percentage of Part-timers

As previously mentioned, Jacoby (2006) claims that the detrimental effects, or "dangers," that come with expanding the percentage of part-time faculty at community colleges appear to outweigh any benefits. He takes this argument one step further and states: "There now appear to be few real defenses that can justify maintaining a system of employment that evidence increasingly suggests has adverse results for students as well as for faculty" (p. 1101). In short, Jacoby

believes the best way to address the growing trend of part-timers is to stop and reverse it.

Not surprisingly, Ernst Benjamin agrees. In his 2003 study on part-time faculty in higher education, he states: "Above all... we need to recognize and convince policymakers that excessive dependence on contingent appointments is detrimental to undergraduate learning" (p. 111).

In an opinion piece he wrote in *The Seattle Times* in 2001, Jacoby argued on behalf of part-time faculty in the state of Washington that the state's legislature should convert more part-time positions into full-time lines. In other words, reducing the growing trend of part-time faculty does not mean cutting heads. "What we need to evaluate is not individual performance," Jacoby states, "but the part-time system overall" (Jacoby, *The Seattle Times*, 2001). That system, he implies, is broken and needs a serious overhaul to limit the growth of part-time faculty and, therefore, limit the "dangers" associated with having an abundance of them.

Actively Invest in Part-time Faculty

Instead of arguing for a reversal of the trend, other scholars have claimed that the increasing dependence on part-time faculty is a "permanent fix" (Gappa and Leslie, 1993). Part-time faculty are here to stay, they say, and the academy must come to grips with that as an irreversible reality. Arguing against the presence and the growing trend is, therefore, a waste of time and even a "futile activity" (Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron, 1995, p. 153). So, if the trend is irreversible, what should be done?

On this issue, Barbara Wyles (1998) makes her opinion clear: "The overarching problem is not the growing number or the overall proportion of adjunct faculty; rather, it is the institutional neglect of this critical mass" (p. 92). Leslie and Gappa (2002) agree and state that investing in the capabilities of part-time faculty "instead of treating them like replaceable parts" should yield long-term returns for colleges in the forms of increased teaching effectiveness, morale, and institutional loyalty (p. 66). In *Invisible Faculty* (1993), Gappa and Leslie specify 43 distinct

recommendations to help institutions support and get the most out of their part-timers. These include, for example, engaging them in course coordination and involving them in campus- and department-wide events.

Specific to community colleges, Valadez and Antony (2001) argue that community colleges must begin to develop strategies that will contribute to the improvement of the working conditions, job satisfaction, and commitment of part-time faculty members, especially since part-time faculty members will continue to play an important role in community colleges (p. 107). While Leslie and Gappa's (1993) list of recommendations is very comprehensive and Valadez and Antony's (2001) points are well taken, they are essentially mere suggestions, not (yet) tried and true solutions.

Scholars are just recently starting to make headway in filling this gap in the literature. For example, using case studies, local narratives, and analyses of employment practices and models, Eileen E. Schell and Patricia Lambert Stock (2001) address the question of how to transform the role of contingent faculty. They present and evaluate a range of "strategies for change" at both the local and broader levels. They argue persuasively why it is in the academy's best interest to reconsider the roles and rewards it has offered to contingent faculty.

Drawing on his experience as a dean at American University, Frederic Jacobs argued back in 1998 that part-time faculty should be better integrated in the institutional culture of their colleges. Building upon this, Wagoner, Metcalfe, and Olaore (2004) employed a case study method to examine how the use of part-time faculty "influences and embodies the organizational culture" of a community college. After conducting interviews with administrators (albeit, only administrators) they developed a framework that, they argue, will allow administrators to determine if their college's use of part-time faculty is consistent with their campus' overall mission and goals. In sum, they state that leaders can use such a framework to evaluate their own campuses and determine if, perhaps, "efficiency has eclipsed human achievement and worth" (p. 42).

I argue that more studies like Wagoner, Metcalfe, and Olaore (2004) should be conducted, and that they should span beyond the scope of just one campus if possible. As scholars have suggested, making part-time faculty feel like valuable members of the culture and community of a college can ostensibly lead to great benefits. Moreover, doing so doesn't have to strain colleges' already tight budgets. If successfully achieved, faculty, institutions, students, *and* local constituencies all have much to gain. More research is needed to corroborate this scholarly inkling as fact and to determine what feasible, effective strategies will work (and where) to integrate part-time faculty and achieve maximum benefit for all.

Also, in light of Burgess and Samuels' (1999) findings, I believe it is critical that scholarship on community colleges begin to focus on part-time faculty effects on and interactions with remedial students. Related to this, one of Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron's (1995) findings is that part-time faculty have a large role to play in meeting the challenges of the part-time, nontraditional student, a student population that has been growing considerably over the last couple decades. Benjamin (2003) also posited that excessive dependence on part-time faculty is especially detrimental to at-risk students who are unable to attend the few selective (and therefore expensive) institutions that have the resources to staff their core programs with "full-time, fully supported faculty" (p. 111).

Throughout Roueche, Roueche, and Milliron (1995), they break out the discussion between the perspectives of college administrators and the perspectives of faculty members, but as I noted earlier, they fail to incorporate the student perspective. In terms of addressing the need to examine part-time faculty effects on and interactions with remedial students, I believe incorporating the students' perspective will be critical.

CONCLUSION

There has been much written about the issue of the growing trend of part-time faculty in higher education, and a handful of scholars have focused their research of the trend at community colleges specifically. In brief, most scholars tend

to agree that the rise of part-time faculty is linked to the expansion of the comprehensive mission(s) of community colleges and the economic pressures and motivations faced by community colleges. However, with regard to the effects of the trend, there has been much debate on whether the growing trend has serious adverse effects and should be reversed or whether it can be beneficial if part-timers receive adequate respect and support.

This paper reveals a handful of gaps in the current body of literature related to the growing trend of part-time faculty at community colleges. In particular, future scholarship should capture and analyze the perspectives and experiences of community college students more. In addition, given the multifarious and comprehensive missions of community colleges, future research should move beyond the institution level and examine more intently the effects of the growing number of part time faculty at the department or division levels. As Jacoby (1995) duly notes, "National statistics can mask variations that should be investigated and documented in their own right" (p. 147). That said, I believe that progress should be made to enhance the national and statewide datasets on community colleges that exist today. For example, more detailed information is needed on faculty attitudes and work statuses, student experiences, and institutional and departmental characteristics. Lastly, I believe more research needs to be conducted on how to best address the growing numbers of part time faculty at community colleges—especially in light of the growing numbers of non-traditional and remedial students—because, if the latest predictions are right, both are trends that will likely continue.

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