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This chapter focuses on similarities and differences between part- and full-time faculty demographics, work profiles, attitudes and motives, and opinions about teaching and learning.

Part-Time Faculty: Competent and Committed

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Community college faculty, by head count, are predominantly part-time. Only 35 percent of faculty at public two-year colleges were full-time in 1995, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics [http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2000/Digest99/]. Although this trend has been evident for at least two decades (Gappa and Leslie, 1993; Cohen and Brawer, 1996), few detailed descriptions of part-time faculty in two-year colleges are available to establish who they are, what they do, and how they differ from their full-time colleagues.

The popular image of part-time faculty, as presented in frequent stories and opinion pieces in the media, perpetuates the commonly held assumption that part-timers are a temporary and dissatisfied lot who patch together part-time jobs by teaching at several institutions simultaneously and queue up for academic career opportunities that seem more and more scarce all the time. This picture is partly accurate for some part-time faculty, but it is substantially inaccurate for a very large portion of them. Instead, part-time faculty are usually employed elsewhere in full-time professional positions, have taught for at least several years at their employing

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The analyses underlying this chapter were compiled before release of NSOPF-99. However, review of the NSOPF-99 data suggests little change exists in the overall character and composition of the part-time teaching workforce in community colleges. Changes do appear in the motivations of individuals and the incentives they respond to when entering part-time teaching jobs. But the 1993 and 1999 data lack sufficient comparability on key items that would allow a valid comparison. External conditions for part-timers may have changed, but the people and how institutions employ them seem to have remained largely the same.

institutions, do not seek full-time academic work, and are more motivated by the intrinsic satisfactions they find in teaching than by economic or career interests (Gappa and Leslie, 1997).

For all the published work advocating better treatment of part-timers, and for all the debates over whether institutions damage themselves and the integrity of academic work by relying on them, there remains a serious gap in our understanding of part-timers' teaching in community colleges. This chapter summarizes findings from analyses of two databases, a survey of community college faculty conducted by the Center for the Study of Community Colleges (CSCC), and the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty conducted in 1992–93 by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Methods

Data for this chapter came from a national survey of 2,000 community college faculty members at 114 institutions conducted by the CSCC. (See "Editor's Notes" for more details on the CSCC study.) We also relied on corroborating data from the restricted-use file of responses to the National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty conducted in 1992–1993 by the National Center for Education Statistics (NSOPF-93). Responses were received from 25,780 full- and part-time faculty members in a random sample of 31,354 to whom survey instruments were sent. Technical information about the sample, response rate, measurement and sampling error, and weighting of the data is reported in Kirshstein, Matheson, Jing, and Zimbler (1997). We used cross-tabulations, chi-square statistics, and t-tests for independent samples to derive descriptions of part-time faculty in community colleges.

Results

The CSCC survey provides new data for comparison with the data collected in NSOPF surveys. The picture of part-time faculty in community colleges portrayed by both surveys is consistent with and enhances the overall picture of community college faculty drawn from prior studies. We present and compare the data from both surveys in four parts: demographics, work profile, attitudes and motives, and opinions about teaching and learning.

Demographics. Who are the part-time faculty in community colleges? Both surveys show that like their full-time colleagues, part-timers are equally likely to be men or women. Part-timers are slightly more likely to be *both* older and younger than full-time faculty, although the mean age of part-timers is 45.8 years while the mean age for full-timers is 48 years. Variance of age is greater among part-timers, with over twice as many (proportionately) in the over 65 bracket and nearly twice as many in the 25–34 bracket as full-time faculty.

Part-time faculty typically *average* five to six years of teaching experience, compared with eleven to twelve years for full-time faculty. Both databases are consistent on these estimates. But perhaps more important, over half of all part-time faculty members in community colleges have five or more years of experience at their current institutions, according to the CSCC data. Very nearly one-third (30 percent) report over ten years of teaching at their current institutions. This is consistent with data from NSOPF-93, which also shows a higher level of employment stability at single institutions than is commonly assumed for part-time faculty, although at lower rates than those reported by the CSCC survey. These data indicate that part-timers are a stable component of the faculty workforce in community colleges, with considerable teaching experience on average.

NSOPF-93 data show that half of all part-timers (52 percent) hold master's degrees and 62 percent of full-time faculty in community colleges hold the same degree. Roughly 9 percent of both groups report working on a doctorate. Full-time faculty members are more likely to hold doctorates (18 percent vs. 11 percent of part-timers according to the CSCC survey, and just slightly fewer in both cases according to NSOPF). Eighty percent of both full- and part-time community college faculty report that they are not presently working on advanced degrees. These data suggest little incentive (or support) for community college faculty to pursue terminal academic degrees, which usually are not required in any event. On the whole, part-time faculty in community colleges have achieved a slightly lower level of education than full-time faculty, but probably not so much lower that it would raise clear concerns about differences in "quality." Part-time faculty are more likely to teach occupational or professional subjects for which the doctorate is either uncommon or not relevant (Leslie, 1998). No recent studies of part-time faculty have found any differences in the quality of instruction provided by full- and part-time faculty (Cohen and Brawer, 1996; Grubb, 1999; Gappa and Leslie, 1993; Wyles, 1998).

The CSCC survey asks about numbers of different kinds of journals read by the respondents. These data show no statistically significant differences ($p>.01$) between part- and full-time faculty with respect to disciplinary journals, general media (such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education)* dealing with higher education, and journals focusing specifically on community colleges. Full-time faculty are slightly more disposed to read discipline-based journals, while part-timers are slightly more disposed to read general media. If these patterns are reflective of some underlying pattern of intellectual curiosity or commitment to professional or disciplinary currency, the data suggest that "no difference" is the safest conclusion. In the NSOPF survey, part-time faculty do not report spending a substantially different amount of time on "professional development" (5.8 percent vs. 4.6 percent for full-timers), and they also report being more satisfied with their

ability to keep up with developments in their fields (67.9 percent vs. 48.3 percent for full-time faculty)(Leslie, 1998).

Work Profile. According to the CSCC survey, half (51 percent) of all part-time faculty respondents are employed elsewhere in nonteaching jobs (vs. about 70 percent reported by Cohen and Brawer, 1996), and nearly two-thirds of them (61 percent) work more than thirty hours a week at those jobs. In the NSOPF-93 survey, nearly 80 percent (78.2 percent) of community college part-timers report holding other jobs. Two-thirds of these part-timers say the other jobs are full-time, and just short of 38 percent report that the other jobs involve teaching. Thus data from the two surveys confirm other reports (Gappa and Leslie, 1993; Gappa and Leslie, 1997) that part-timers are at least as likely to be employed elsewhere in business or professional occupations as in teaching part- or full-time, and that part-timers who have more than one postsecondary teaching job at a time appear to number between 15 and 17 percent of all part-time community college faculty. This is a far smaller figure than popular impressions might suggest, and is congruent with the taxonomy we propose in *The Invisible Faculty* (1993). We suggest there that most part-timers are "specialists, experts and professionals" with their primary occupations outside the academy, "free lancers" who prefer to work simultaneously at several different part-time occupations, or "career enders" in transition from well-established careers outside of higher education. We found relatively few part-timers who are "aspiring academics" fully qualified for and actively seeking full-time faculty careers (pp. 43–65).

Community college faculty, whether full- or part-time, spend their workdays in very similar activities. The CSCC survey shows that on a given workday, both put in between six and seven hours teaching, planning classes, and interacting with students. Full-time faculty spend significantly ($p<.01$) more time on administration, teaching, and interacting with students. (See Chapter Four for a detailed exploration of differences in instructional practice by employment status; see also Chapter Five for an analysis of differences in faculty attitudes toward students on the basis of employment status.)

There is little in these data to suggest that the popular image of part-time faculty as underqualified, nomadic, or inadequately attentive to their responsibilities has any validity. To the contrary, the portrait that emerges shows part-time faculty in community colleges to be stable professionals with substantial experience and commitment to their work. This is in keeping with the findings of Grubb in *Honored but Invisible* (1999), although he and his associates come to many of these conclusions via a different route.

Motives, Attitudes, and Morale. NSOPF data show that half (51 percent) of all part-timers in community colleges prefer to teach part-time. There is no difference in the preferences between men and women, but more women (52 percent) than men (42 percent) respond that they teach

part-time because full-time opportunities are not available, indicating perhaps that women have less flexibility in moving to find those opportunities. Men (70 percent) are far more likely than women (52 percent) to be teaching part-time to supplement their incomes. About two-thirds of both groups report teaching part-time to "be in an academic environment." Almost none (8 percent) teach part-time while pursuing graduate degrees—with only negligible differences between men and women. Yet this group of part-time doctoral seekers, while a very small part of the sample, differs substantially and systematically from other respondents in the CSCC survey.

Part-time faculty members appear generally satisfied with their jobs. The CSCC data show no difference between part- and full-time faculty members' rating of the "working environment in general." They both rate it 1.9 on a scale where 1.0 means "excellent" and 2.0 means "good." The only aspects of their jobs that part-time faculty rate less than "good" are salary (2.7) and job security (2.6), where 3.0 means "fair". These patterns parallel responses to NSOPF's similar items. On the NSOPF survey, over 85 percent of part-timers respond that they are satisfied or very satisfied with their jobs on the whole compared with 84 percent of full-timers (Leslie 1998).

Statistically, part-time faculty rate their own autonomy, relations with administrators, and students' enthusiasm for learning more favorably than do full-time faculty. In the CCSC survey, part-timers are slightly, but significantly ($p<.001$), more likely than full-time faculty to agree that their institutions' administration is "creative and effective," although both groups provide a mildly positive assessment. They also report being less stressed than full-time faculty ($p<.001$). Full-time faculty rate their own freedom to choose instructional materials more favorably than do part-time faculty.

In other respects, full- and part-time faculty in community colleges do not differ in rating various aspects of their jobs—and generally report those ratings to be in the "good" to "excellent" range. Both part- and full-time faculty would choose academic work again, given the choice. The data from both surveys corroborate these points by showing that part-time faculty are not as massively or universally dissatisfied with their jobs as is popularly assumed. To the contrary, they are generally very satisfied.

Faculty professionalism, and whether or not it is supported by the institution, is a recurrent theme in academic labor relations (Rhoades, 1998). The CSCC survey asks several questions bearing on unionization. Full-time faculty "somewhat agree" that collective bargaining "has a definite place in a community college." Part-timers differ, responding in the direction of "no opinion." The NSOPF data show that just over 50 percent of full-time community college faculty belong to unions, compared with only 17 percent of part-timers. This difference is to be expected when most part-timers have primary jobs elsewhere and fewer guarantees of job security as faculty members, and when only 39 percent of the collective bargaining contracts that

address part-time faculty issues in some respect speak to their rights or perquisites (Rhoades, p. 157).

Full-time faculty are significantly ($p<.001$) less receptive to merit pay than are part-time faculty, but both are mildly supportive. But the pay issue on which part- and full-time faculty most emphatically part ways asks whether part-timers "should be paid the same, per class taught, as full-timers." Part-timers are statistically ($p<.001$) more likely to agree than full-timers, who are ambivalent about pay. On a politically potent pocketbook issue, this difference in attitude could lead to conflict between the two groups, particularly when budgets are tight. Full-timers who support collective bargaining also support equal pay. Younger full-time faculty—who are more supportive of collective bargaining and less supportive of merit pay—are more likely to support equal pay for equal work by part-timers.

Both full- (mean of 3.1) and part-time (mean of 3.0 where 3.0 means "no opinion") community college faculty show uncertainty about whether "claims of discriminatory practices against women and minority faculty and administrators have been greatly exaggerated." NSOPF data show a more positive assessment, as both part- and full-time community college faculty agree that women and minority faculty are treated fairly.

Opinions About Teaching and Learning. Part- and full-time faculty members are in substantial agreement about the overall functions of community colleges according to the CSCC survey results. They rate providing students with job-entry skills and prebaccalaureate transfer functions as essentially coequal priorities. Career-skill upgrading is ranked third, with lifelong learning, remedial education, and community development ranked in sequence as lower priorities.

Similarly there are almost no differences between part- and full-time faculty in the predominant instructional methods used. Lectures, student discussions, and exams account for close to two-thirds of all class time regardless of whether the instructor is part- or full-time. Lab work accounts for another substantial portion among full-time faculty (about 7 percent), but less for part-time faculty (4 percent), the one significant difference between the two groups.

On several other measures in the CSCC survey, however, part-time faculty members appear less committed, accomplished, and creative in their teaching than full-time faculty. For example, they are significantly ($p<.001$) less likely to have received an award for outstanding teaching (24 percent vs. 39 percent of full-timers), taught with someone from outside their department (15 percent vs. 24 percent), revised a course syllabus within the last three years (88 percent vs. 97 percent), prepared a multimedia presentation for class (42 percent vs. 53 percent), or attended a professional conference in the last three years (67 percent vs. 89 percent). However, to assume that these differences are indicative of overall quality of teaching performance would be erroneous without understanding why the differences occur. For example, part-timers may or may not be eligible for teaching

awards or to receive financial assistance with expenses associated with attending professional conferences. They may be teaching courses that have multiple sections and standard syllabi, allowing less opportunity for course development. To the extent that they are marginalized in their departments, they may have no voice in curricular development or textbook selection (Wyles, 1998). It is difficult to interpret these differences, and additional research is needed.

Over three-fourths of both full-time (83 percent) and part-time (76 percent) faculty at community colleges indicate that they are motivated to pursue professional development. However they vary according to what type of professional development they want. Significantly ($p<.001$) more full-time faculty seek in-service opportunities, whereas more part-time faculty are interested in options to complete advanced degrees. Both full- and part-time faculty "somewhat agree" that faculty should "take some type of academic course work or engage in a creative activity at least every three years."

Neither full- nor part-time faculty appear to feel strongly that their institutions should provide more faculty development opportunities to support teaching directly. They "agree somewhat" that instructors in their fields "are well-prepared to teach." And, they show virtually identical "no opinion" scores on an item asserting that their institutions do "too little to orient new faculty." These findings run counter to the actual academic preparation and experience part-timers have vis à vis their full-time faculty colleagues, and one would assume greater differences on this issue between full- and part-timers. Although they "somewhat agree" that students "are not as well prepared" as previously, both part-time and full-time faculty *dis*agree somewhat with the statement that students are not receiving as good an education as they did five years ago. The general picture from the CSCC survey appears to be that institutions are supportive of faculty who are dealing reasonably well with an incrementally less well-prepared student population.

Conclusion

The picture of part-time community college faculty that emerges from this analysis is—on the whole—consistent with those of previous studies. Part-timers in community colleges look more like full-time faculty than is sometimes assumed. Their interests, attitudes, and motives are relatively similar. They are experienced, stable professionals who find satisfaction in teaching. Contrary to popular images, only a small fraction of part-timers are eagerly seeking full-time positions and subsisting on starvation wages while holding multiple part-time jobs—the prevalent stereotype so often profiled in the popular media.

On the other hand, this analysis of the CSCC data does show that part-time community college faculty members appear to be more comfortable with conventional teaching practices and less likely to have won outstanding teaching awards. However, these data can also be interpreted to mean

that while they do, on average, have substantial teaching experience, they are less seasoned than full-time faculty, and perhaps less secure about breaking the mold. Certainly this conclusion makes sense when the lack of recognition, rewards, and job security available to part-timers are taken into account.

Part-timers do feel that their institutions have been appropriately supportive. But the relative strength of these feelings leaves room for improvement. Academic administrators at community colleges may want to read the data in the CSCC survey in two ways: that on one hand, the part-timers are evidently satisfied on the whole and are clearly able to do the job they are asked to do, and on the other, that institutions may see in these data a less than ringing affirmation of their preparation and the conditions under which they work. Part-timers are less likely than full-timers to have achieved graduate degrees. Just a little over half of the part-timers, for example, hold master's degrees, a minimal qualification to teach in an academic program at an accredited institution of higher education. The need for a graduate degree appears to be a high priority for part-timers among other options for professional development. Given that part-timers are also somewhat less experienced teachers and perhaps more wedded to conventional instructional methods, it would appear that their professional development needs cover both substantive disciplinary preparation and preparation to teach.

As we suggest elsewhere (Gappa and Leslie, 1993, 1997), part-time faculty should be considered an integral asset among all of those who teach. Investing in their capabilities—instead of treating them like replaceable parts—should yield long-term returns in teaching effectiveness, morale, and institutional loyalty.

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