

# **Colorado Community College System**

## **Adjunct Instructor Task Force**

**November 2014**

## **History of the Task Force**

The Colorado Community College System (CCCS or System) highly values its workforce and recognizes the important role that adjunct instructors play in the success of students and in the ability of the CCCS colleges to meet the changing needs of students and the business community. The community college model of instructional delivery, across the U.S., is predicated on flexibility and responsiveness. Community colleges pride themselves on being able to engage in rapid program development, to allow students open access and late enrollment decisions, and to meet changing enrollment patterns. This flexibility and responsiveness require a differentiated staffing model.

In order to gauge the satisfaction of and better respond to the needs of the System's many constituents--students, employees, graduates, business and community partners--CCCS conducts surveys. Over the years, adjunct instructors have been surveyed periodically. The 2014 survey of adjunct instructors, planned for the 2013/2014 academic year, was delayed for several months due to relevant activity in the 2014 Colorado General Assembly. However, the survey was then conducted in late spring, 2014. The results of the survey were shared in public session with the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education at their regular meeting on August 13, 2014. Dr. Nancy J. McCallin, System President, then sent the results, via email, to all adjunct instructors on August 18, 2014.

As further background, the Adjunct Instructor Survey was sent via email to all adjunct instructors employed during Spring 2014 by CCCS Colleges and by CCCOnline, the System's online consortium. The approximately 4,400 instructors were invited to respond. Data collection was open from April 28 to May 9, 2014. The online survey was completed by 1,164 instructors, for a response rate of approximately 26%.

In addition to administration of the survey and compilation of the results, Dr. Nancy McCallin, System President, took steps to understand the issues important to CCCS adjunct instructors and to seek advice on continuous improvement to support the System's ability to establish and achieve its goals. These steps included visits to all CCCS colleges,

to engage in formal and informal conversations with college constituencies. Based upon the survey data and the qualitative analysis, Dr. McCallin, in consultation with System and System College executives, determined that significant differences existed across the state in some of the key issue areas. She then commissioned the CCCS Adjunct Instructor Task Force, representing the five metropolitan Denver area community colleges (Arapahoe Community College (ACC), Community College of Aurora (CCA), Community College of Denver (CCD), Front Range Community College (FRCC), Red Rocks Community College (RRCC)), Pikes Peak Community College (PPCC), and Colorado Community Colleges Online (CCCO), and directed individual focus group data-gathering from the other seven System colleges.

## Adjunct Instructor Task Force Membership

Nominations for membership on the Adjunct Instructor Task Force were solicited of faculty by the System President, Dr. Nancy J. McCallin. Members were selected to ensure that one adjunct instructor (instructor) would serve to represent each of the six urban community colleges, as well as an additional adjunct instructor to represent Colorado Community Colleges Online. Additionally, only one representative was selected from each of the following employee groups: college vice president of instruction (VPI), college vice president of administration/chief business officer (VPAS), instructional dean (dean), instructional department chair (chair), and two full-time faculty members (faculty). The resulting committee had two representatives from each college. In addition, one college president (president) was asked to serve on the committee.

The committee membership was composed as follows:

JoAnnBeine	ACC	Full-time Faculty
Linda Comeaux	RRCC	VPI
Daniel Donalson	RRCC	Instructor
Andy Dorsey	FRCC	President
Lisa Gallegos	PPCC	Instructor
Stephanie Harrison	CCD	Dean
Jan Hoegh*	FRCC	Instructor
Martha Jackson-Carter	CCA	Chair
Lynda Kemp	CCD	Instructor
Brenda Lauer	PPCC	VPAS
David Lee	ACC	Instructor
Joseph Schicke*	FRCC	Instructor
Chelsea Spotts	CCA	Instructor
Matthew Stilwell	FRCC	Faculty
Lisa Wulf	CCCO	Instructor

- Jan Hoegh joined the Task Force to replace Joseph Schicke (who resigned due to a move out-of-state)

The Task Force was chaired by Dr. Linda S. Bowman, CCCS Vice President for Executive Leadership Training and Development and President Emerita of the Community College of Aurora.

Support, research, and resources, as requested by Task Force members, were provided by various departments and individuals at the Community College System, including Mark Superka, CCCS Vice President for Finance and Administration, Cynthia Hier, CCCS Executive Director (ret.), Jamie Fouty, CCCS Director of Institutional Research; Deborah Heckart, CCCS IT Office Manager; Rhonda Bentz, CCCS Director of Media and Legislative Communications; Dr. Jerry Migler, CCCS Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs; Christina Cecil, CCCS Executive Director of Human Resources.

## **Work of the Task Force**

On Friday, June 13, 2014, Dr. Linda S. Bowman convened the CCCS Adjunct Instructor Task Force on the Lowry Campus.

Dr. Bowman emphasized the imperative to balance the needs of students and communities, to examine best practices locally, regionally, and nationally, to understand the demands placed on the colleges, to examine similarities and differences, and to represent both communities of interest and the state at-large. She explained that while the representation on the Task Force included members from six of the colleges and CCCOnline, that the other seven System colleges would be included through other qualitative processes. She further explained the importance of the data provided by the Adjunct Survey, as an important starting place for the Task Force's work.

At this day-long meeting, members started by getting to know one another, establishing their group norms, reviewing the calendar of meetings and deadlines, and reviewing data and information contained in the member binders.

Dr. Nancy J. McCallin joined the meeting for a portion of the morning session, in which she gave the charge to the Task Force. Thanking the members for taking time from their summers to share their expertise and vision and to tackle this work, Dr. McCallin emphasized the importance of their efforts, the need to think broadly and creatively, to consider best practices and trends, and to participate openly. The Task Force members then shared best practices from their own experiences.

Utilizing the results from the Adjunct Instructor Survey, Task Force members identified key areas for their work and created sub-committees as follows:

- Appreciation/Respect/Inclusion
- Pay
- Access to Materials and Support

The group determined that work on the Affordable Care Act implementation would be left to those already working on that complex issue. Each subcommittee was charged to consider the following steps in their deliberations towards recommendations to be brought to the full Task Force:

- Define the issue
- Define the goal (short- and long-term)
- Information/data needs
- Impacts on: people, finances, practices, policies
- Possible unintended consequences
- Timeline

Over the course of the summer, subcommittees conducted in-person and virtual meetings, requested information from experts and shared their own findings and ideas, then came together to present, vet, revise, and present their recommendations to the entire Task Force.

The Task Force also had presentations or shared information on a number of related topics, including work being done by another committee on the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and key data from Mark Superka, CCCS Vice President for Finance and Administration on national funding comparisons, CCCS funding history, legislative funding processes, and financial assumptions and modeling. The Task Force delved into a number of key issues and discussed some notable differences among the System colleges.

Focus groups were conducted by Dr. Linda S. Bowman from August 21, 2014, through September 4, 2014, onsite at the following colleges: Colorado Northwestern Community College, Northeastern Junior College, Morgan Community College, Otero Junior College, Trinidad State Junior College, Lamar Community College, and Pueblo Community College. Adjunct instructors were invited to view the survey results, which had been previously provided by Dr. McCallin, and to share their thoughts regarding the issues most critical to their success and the success of their students.

Following are some of the findings from the discussions of the Task Force, as well as from the focus groups held at the rural colleges:

- Need for greater demonstration of appreciation, respect, and inclusion
- Need for greater communication regarding some of the supports already available
- Need for greater access to supports and opportunities
- Need for greater oversight and feedback in some colleges or departments
- Need for more inclusion in curricular decision-making
- Acknowledgment of need of colleges for flexibility to meet student needs
- Recognition that adjunct instructors' backgrounds, needs, circumstances as diverse as the students'
- Recognition that work satisfaction of adjunct instructors essential to student success
- Recognition that declining enrollment is resulting in declining dependence on adjunct instructor workforce
- Recognition that adjunct instructors vary significantly regarding their other employment status and reasons that they are teaching part-time
- Concern that other support units, e.g. IT and Library, not available at all of the times that/in the places where classes held
- Need for more convenient professional development opportunities for adjunct instructors working elsewhere
- Attention to uneven practices regarding compensation for professional development and curricular work
- Concern that initial paycheck timing sometimes too slow, causing hardships
- Recognition that departments uneven in inclusionary practices
- Recognition that some recommendations require new resources



## **CCCS Task Force on Adjunct Instructors Recommendations**

### **Preamble and Guiding Principles**

We believe that adjunct instructors must be valued by demonstrating respect and by providing appreciation and recognition, appropriate compensation, consistent communication, on-going interaction, and access to teaching support and resources. Adjunct instructors have a vital role as part of the Colorado Community College System and each college's educational mission.

We acknowledge that our students, our colleges, and our workforce are diverse. Our students come to our colleges from diverse educational, cultural, and demographic backgrounds to achieve varying and diverse goals. As institutions committed to access in diverse parts of the state, our colleges have different programs, different resources, and different expectations from their communities. Our adjunct instructors are diverse in their backgrounds, needs, and desires. We are committed to ensuring that our recommendations be inclusive and support the needs of all adjunct instructors, as well as those of our students, our colleges, and our other workforce groups.

We encourage the Colorado Community College System to adopt an instructional belief and best practice statement, along with guiding principles, as the overarching and holistic view of inclusiveness and support of adjunct instructors.

This statement should include our beliefs:

- that we all share collective responsibility for student success;
- that we collaborate as partners in the learning process to ensure quality, rigor, and opportunity for all students to achieve their goals;

- and that we work together to design and deliver curriculum, teaching methods, and student support, creating an inclusive learning environment.

The recommendations that follow include short- and long-term strategies to achieve the goals of improving the experience of adjunct instructors and effecting a change to a culture of greater inclusion and support across all CCCS colleges.

### **Recommendation #1**

Provide opportunities for adjunct instructors to participate in curriculum development, department meetings, all-college meetings, and other areas of instruction as needed, such as advising. Develop compensation criteria for participation that is appropriate for each type of activity.

### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Determine participatory opportunities and establish standards for participation. Balance mandatory and optional participation requirements throughout the academic year.
- Consider communication methods that invite participation and ensure adjunct instructors feel included.
- Provide training as necessary, such as, curriculum development.
- Delineate mandatory participation requirements up front with consideration of adjunct instructors' schedule availability.
- Establish clear criteria for selection of adjunct instructor participation in areas that require content expertise and/or additional training. Department chairs and others involved in hiring and supervising adjunct instructors have a significant role in developing the criteria.

### **Recommendation #2**

Increase access to, participation in, and compensation for professional development, including campus or System-based workshops and training, and off-campus seminars, workshops, or conferences.

- Research available resources for professional development, both internal and external to the college. Determine types of professional development needed and/or wanted by adjunct instructors.
- Offer professional development that is desired and effective both for the college and adjunct instructors. Account for continuing education related to professional licenses or certifications and CTE credentialing.
- Create reasonable compensation mechanisms to support attendance, with acknowledgement of differences across the colleges, such as paying expenses for certain off-campus activities and time-based compensation for on-campus activities.
- Develop ways to communicate professional development opportunities at other CCCS institutions that are appropriate for shared/open attendance.
- Establish criteria and communication methods for professional development in terms of required versus optional participation and allocation of professional development funds.

### **Recommendation #3**

Develop mentor programs to assist adjunct instructors in navigating the colleges' systems and procedures, share knowledge of best practices for teaching and learning, and support adjunct instructors in undertaking new goals or challenges.

### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Determine which adjunct instructors would benefit from this program, adjunct instructors and faculty who can serve as mentors, and training needs.
- Compensate mentors and mentees at a rate appropriate within the college's funding structure.

- Define qualifications, responsibilities, training requirements, and tracking methods.
- Encourage faculty and adjunct instructors to serve in order to build a pool of talented and trained mentors.
- Decide whether the mentor program is required or optional by considering the impact on workload.

#### **Recommendation #4**

Establish recognition and appreciation activities that reward excellence in teaching and service. Extend employee discounts, free programs, services, and other perquisites to adjunct instructors.

#### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Inventory the activities, programs, and services already in place at each college. Survey adjunct instructors on meaningful and rewarding activities.
- Outline transparent selection criteria and process for honoring adjunct instructors via awards and recognition.
- Create mechanisms to communicate awards, appreciation, and recognition to the rest of the college and the community.
- Communicate discounted or free programs and services to adjunct instructors.
- Implement during the next academic year.

#### **Recommendation #5**

Balance enrollment management and student needs by developing strategic scheduling, class assignments, and class cancellation processes that consider the impacts on adjunct instructors in terms of course preparation and work schedules. To encourage reasonable class cancellation deadlines and scheduling practices, we recommend a policy that adjunct instructors assigned to classes that are canceled within 14 calendar days of start date be paid 10% of the total course compensation.

**Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Mitigate the extent and number of late cancellations affecting adjunct instructors, by developing a method of forecasting, to lessen the effect on students and adjunct instructors.
- Collaborate between Instruction/Academic Affairs and Student Services/Student Affairs to minimize impact on students and adjunct instructors by considering enrollment guidelines, payment dates, drop dates for non-payment, and student communication/education about the importance of early registration.

**Recommendation #6**

Improve support and access to resources for adjunct instructors.

**Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Review the types of support and resources that currently exist. Survey employees to ascertain how they understand their roles in supporting adjunct instructors. Survey adjunct instructors, at the college-level, to determine support and resource needs. Use the review and survey data to identify gaps and make improvements and additions.
- Increase employee awareness of the sometimes unique adjunct instructor needs in order to enhance support and resource services.
- Reassess staffing patterns in areas such as IT to increase support for classes scheduled in early morning and evening timeframes.
- Ensure adjunct instructors' access to and communicate availability of all necessary class-related resources, including course materials, well-stocked classrooms, office space with options to meet privately with students, copiers, printers, computers, and telephones.

### **Recommendation #7**

Design adjunct instructor advancement programs with teaching, student learning, and performance evaluation components.

#### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Research what other colleges are doing in this area with the purpose of constructing an effective program or updating an existing one.
- Develop advancement program criteria that are reasonable and attainable; focused on teaching, learning, and student success; and incorporate the needs of the college and adjunct instructors.
- Create transparent and consistent performance evaluation components and processes, including training for evaluators.
- Establish guidelines for maintaining an achieved tier level and commensurate compensation.
- Implement or update during the next two academic years.

### **Recommendation #8**

Ensure the ability of CCCS colleges and CCCOnline to attract and retain the best adjunct instructors and deliver the best education to students. Raise the adjunct instructor pay level at each college by 28% by the academic year 2016-2017, in order to create a competitive scale for adjunct instructor compensation that considers the compensation levels of other Colorado institutions of higher education that offer parallel educational opportunities.

#### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Pursue the identification of sufficient funds to raise adjunct instructor pay rates to be more competitive with other colleges in the state.
- Acknowledge that external resources are required to achieve and maintain the pay level increase by seeking assistance from the Colorado General Assembly.
- Acknowledge role of declining enrollments on college budgets.
- Identify appropriate colleges in the state for pay rate comparative data.

### **Recommendation #9**

Each CCCS college should annually increase its average instructor compensation by at least the same percentage as it increases the average salary for all other employee groups.

#### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Establish a pool annually for increases to adjunct instructor pay scales that is equal to at least as much, on a percentage basis, as the average pay increases for all other employee groups.
- Annually survey adjunct salary increases at key competitor institutions in the Denver and Colorado Springs, as well as in rural areas.
- Adjust adjunct instructor pay increases to ensure that CCCS colleges remain competitive.

### **Recommendation #10**

Provide the first paycheck to an adjunct instructor by the first possible pay date after the adjunct instructor's class has started.

#### **Implementation Strategies and Practices:**

- Improve planning and processes in order to typically provide first paycheck within four weeks of class start date.
- Investigate factors--college, System, State--that impact payroll processing deadlines and responsiveness.
- Review processes at each college and at the System in order to ensure that paycheck is provided by the first possible date.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The members of the Colorado Community College System Adjunct Instructor Task Force look forward to submitting these recommendations to the State Board for Community Colleges and Occupational Education and the System President, Dr. Nancy J. McCallin.

## **ADDENDA**

- Summary of the Colorado Community College System 2014 Adjunct Instructor Survey
- CCCS Adjunct Instructor Survey 2014 Results