A Profile of Cabrillo College’s Adjunct Faculty
Prepared for the Governing Board by Sharon Took-Zozaya and Sadie Reynolds, CCFT

INTRODUCTION and BARGAINING UNIT OVERVIEW: This survey provides detailed insight into current conditions affecting part-time faculty at Cabrillo College. We undertook this survey to obtain information that can inform contract negotiations and to provide the entire faculty and administration with a window into adjuncts’ concerns and experiences.

Cabrillo currently has 588 faculty, of whom 66% (387) are adjuncts. Adjuncts’ length of service ranges from five years or less to over 25 years. 58% of respondents have taught at Cabrillo for more than ten years. (In June 2012, 34%, or 171, of a total of 497 adjuncts had more than 10 years of service.)

145 of the possible 387 adjuncts completed this survey. This 37% response rate is unusually high and we are delighted that so many busy people took the time to respond. Quantitative data in the form of graphs shown below indicate some clear trends. We also reported respondents’ qualitative comments, in summary form, with some representative comments appearing throughout this report in italics.

KEY FINDINGS

- 58% of respondents have taught at Cabrillo for over 10 years
- 51% of respondents said Cabrillo is their primary source of income.
- 41% of respondents have experienced unit cuts in the last few years
- 42% usually receive fewer units than they would like to teach
- 30% of Respondents are Retirees or FT Workers Elsewhere
- 28% either have no health insurance, or pay for it out-of-pocket
- More than 80% report a high degree of academic freedom

“The image many full timers have of us is that we are truly what our contracts say - temporary - when in fact for a huge number, Cabrillo is the primary focal point of our teaching careers - in many cases for decades.”

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS: Cabrillo adjuncts’ employment at other colleges and universities includes: CSUMB, DeAnza, DeVry, Gavilan, Hunting College, Mission College, MPC, SJSU, UCSC, West Valley College and others. “Other employment” includes a wide variety of employed and self-employed positions such as: Bookkeeper, Building Contractor, Choreographer, Consultant, Dentist, Fire Fighter, Human Resources Specialist, Landscape Architect, Musician, Nurse, Physical Therapist, Resort Chef, Teacher, University Professor, Videographer, Visual Artist, Web Designer, Writer, and others. Working hours range from two hours a week to full-time.
BENEFITS: 28% either have no health insurance, or pay for it out-of-pocket. The main responses to what would be required for them to have health insurance were: a lower threshold to establish eligibility, a lower unit load required to maintain eligibility, and affordability. There is a need for insurance stability. Suggestions to increase the percentage of adjunct faculty coverage were:
- Establish a low cost buy-in option for those who are ineligible due to lower unit loads
- Lower the unit load requirement for eligibility
- Lower the unit load requirement to maintain insurance

“Health benefits for spouse and children would be great. I have to buy insurance out of pocket for family, taking up 25% of my income.”

“I love teaching at Cabrillo. It is a great community. However, I would like contract work and benefits. I would be happy to participate more, contribute more, even though my time is split between teaching at 2 colleges and making art.”

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES IN DEPARTMENTS, DIVISIONS AND COLLEGE-WIDE: 74% of adjuncts participate in non-coursework related professional activities at Cabrillo. 69% of this work is not compensated. Ancillary activities include: College governance and hiring committees, student advising, organizing special events for students, department and division meetings, curriculum development, SLO work outside of normal coursework, etc.

“I would participate in more activities outside the classroom if the time was paid.”

“Would be more involved if I was not so busy with our other clients.”

“An arbitrary definition and focus on student success being equivalent to passing a class brings pressure on applying objective academic standards.”

“Part-time employment is difficult (anywhere). A lot of time spent prepping for class/grading/planning for labs is completely unpaid. Much of my time is spend traveling to and from multiple institutions. And the fact that I’m never sure of whether I’ll get an assignment or not is demoralizing. However, I do it (as I’m sure many of us part-timers do) because we love teaching!!”

“Cabrillo is a great place to work. I hope to be here a very long time & hopefully obtain a full time faculty position at some point.”
PROFESSIONAL RIGHTS AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM: 63% reported that they are free to develop and teach courses as they wish, while 22% said they are somewhat free to do so. 79% said they are free to assign grades without external interference and 8% answered ‘somewhat’. This indicates that most faculty experience academic freedom in these areas. However, a handful of faculty reported they had been directed to change low grades or not to assign them at all.

Most adjuncts feel ‘somewhat’ to ‘fully’ included in the professional life and decision-making of their departments. However, 30% don’t believe they have a say in decision-making and 5% are not sure. Only 36% of respondents reported voting in the last election for their program chair and some didn’t know that this was an option. Since adjuncts make up about 2/3 of our faculty, departments may want to consider finding ways to include more adjunct participation when making decisions.
COMMENTS ON THE ROLE OF ADJUNCTS: Cabrillo adjuncts are highly qualified, dedicated educational professionals and many have demonstrated expertise in a variety of additional professions.

“I love Cabrillo. I love what we do and what we stand for. The students we serve are bright stars we can send on into the universe. I just wish we could offer them more than part time support....”

“Part-time permanent employment!!! Job insecurity takes years off of my life. Collecting unemployment is embarrassing and degrading and would be unnecessary with permanent employment and parity. Most organizations pay ‘per diems’ or un-benefitted employees more per hour, not less!”

“I am very sorry to be leaving Cabrillo College. I would love to stay. Despite overwhelmingly positive student evaluations, peer evaluations and an enthusiasm to be working at Cabrillo, I am left with no choice but to leave the college. Maybe someday, I will be invited back as a full time faculty member.”

“I have taught all over the Bay Area, and Cabrillo has a reputation for treating its adjuncts poorly. In my department .... There is a deep divide between adjuncts and full-timers. Many adjuncts feel mistreated and ignored.”

“I feel the College is very inclusive of part time issues. I feel very respected at the college and in the department. Compared with other colleges, Cabrillo works hard to be responsive to and inclusive of adjunct faculty.”