Final Report and Recommendations from 2017-18 Adjunct Oversight Committee

Members: Mary Ann Blitt (Academic Planning); Julia Eichelberger (Budget; Committee Chair), Phyllis Jestice (Welfare), Todd McNerney (Academic Affairs), Sorinel Oprisan (Compensation), Cheryl Spinner (Adjunct Representative).

This committee met 11/9/17, 12/5/17, 1/26/18, 2/23/18, 4/6/18.

In F 2017 we sent out a list of suggested practices for chairs and program directors and shared this with Faculty Senate in January 2018.

We conducted two surveys, of adjunct faculty and of faculty who supervise and evaluate them.

- Questions were intended to address conditions other than salary that affect adjuncts. Our questions did not address adjunct pay, although we are concerned by how low that pay is, because we do not foresee significant changes to salary in the next year or more.

- We invited adjunct faculty to complete a survey asking questions about their experiences teaching at C of C. 118 faculty responded. We reported our findings to the Faculty Senate in February (page 15 of minutes).

- We created a survey with similar questions to get the perspectives of department chairs and program directors, and received 21 responses.

Based on the results of these surveys and other research and discussion, we offer the following suggestions.

Final Recommendations from 2017-18 Committee

1. Chairs need more info.

Survey responses suggest chairs may not have all the info they need on some topics:

- How to expedite hiring process for adjuncts
- What benefits adjuncts are eligible for & how they get them
- How to furnish adjuncts with appropriate equipment, office space, textbooks, etc.
- How to evaluate every adjunct, every year
- How to create a more welcoming and collegial workplace

Academic Affairs’s current web page has links with information on some of these topics, but more information would be helpful (see below). This page should be updated annually, at which time the link can be re-sent to all chairs and program directors.
2. **Adjuncts need office space and equipment.**
Survey responses suggest some adjunct faculty have good office space & equipment and others lack these things. Our recommendations, already being followed by some supervisors, are below. (One exception is adjunct faculty who supervise teaching practicums on-site.)

- Because of student privacy concerns, _almost all adjunct faculty need some kind of office space_ to discuss coursework with students. Such discussions shouldn’t happen in hallways & classrooms.
- For faculty sharing offices, consider arranging teaching schedules so that officemates will not all be there at the same time. Identify other locations faculty may use to meet with students if needed.
- Department chairs/program directors with no space to offer their adjuncts should inform their Dean, who should be prepared to help locate suitable space.
- Offices without telephones need a computer or another device enabling adjuncts to communicate with students via OAKS or other methods. (Equipment and furniture could be shared if adjuncts have different teaching schedules/office hours.)
- Some adjuncts have mentioned potentially unsafe office conditions--broken chairs, malfunctioning lights, sagging ceilings. Encourage your adjunct faculty to inform supervisors of repair and safety issues so the supervisor may put in a work order with Physical Plant.
- Keep office furnishings in good condition. Used furnishings are free at Central Stores. All offices need seating for one or more students, a working desk/chair that adjuncts don’t have to share during office hours, secure storage space for teaching materials & student work.
- All faculty must use MyCharleston and email, and most should be using OAKS. Therefore _all faculty need to be issued an up-to-date and reliable computer_. Contact Helpdesk to request a link to a request for computer purchase for faculty in your program. IT has loaner computers available while you are waiting for new equipment to arrive.

3. **Adjuncts need better information on benefits available to them.**
Many adjunct faculty, as well as their supervisors, are unclear on what’s available to them, how much premiums will cost, and when to sign up for them. This situation seems to us to be unacceptable; we urge Academic Affairs and HR to rectify it in time for the start of Fall 2018.

- The _health benefits information provided by HR_ should be revised so adjunct faculty can see quickly whether they will be eligible, how much they will pay for their premiums, when coverage will begin, and what will be covered. This site should be regularly updated; as of April 2018, it referred to health coverage that begins in 2014. Currently available online:
  - link to a “comparison chart” explaining benefits to full-time SC employees
  - separate link listing the cost of premiums
  - third link, on a different web page, discussing the health insurance marketplace where temporary employees may purchase coverage if ineligible for C of C coverage (C of C must attest to their ineligibility before they buy marketplace coverage).
None of these links explains what an adjunct faculty member will have to pay. If they’re eligible for state coverage, their premiums will be prorated differently because they have fewer pay periods. Members of our committee have been told that coverage for eligible adjuncts will extend over the summer, but it’s not clear to us how that works.

- HR should create and publish online a chart with all health care information in one place: the premium costs and amounts of coverage on the state plan, the range of premium costs available on the exchanges, and clear info on how to activate coverage and the dates it will begin and end. Each year when the site is updated, the link should be re-sent to all chairs/program directors and all adjunct faculty.
- We were troubled to learn that adjunct faculty are being required to opt in or out of the State Retirement plan within 30 days of the very first semester that they are employed by the College, and that they will never, in their lives, have an opportunity to opt in or out after that.
  --If we’ve misunderstood this situation, we apologize, but this shows that the information is not being presented clearly enough.
  --We don’t understand why this “opt in once and never change” is required by state law, even though adjunct faculty are hired anew EACH SEMESTER.
  --We are concerned that adjuncts are not being informed, via a simple chart listing retirement program costs and benefits to adjunct participants, of what they are opting into or out of. This information needs to be made available to adjunct faculty.

Our committee notes, with no disrespect intended to our colleagues at HR, that all C of C employees need more complete and succinctly presented information on our benefits. Links to the state’s description of its employee benefits are not sufficient to meet our needs. One committee member told us that her previous institution provided succinct and clear comparison charts enabling all faculty to understand their benefit eligibility and the costs and benefits for each option. C of C employees need such information provided up front. Therefore we thank HR in advance for being more proactive in bringing employees unambiguous and up-to-date information on all the benefits for which we are eligible.

4. Adjuncts report differing feelings of being included or excluded in their home departments. Some C of C programs are doing an excellent job.
- Some adjuncts report feeling included and valued because their department chair/program director stays in regular touch & other faculty have personally welcomed them in faculty meetings, social gatherings, hallways, and departmental projects.
- Chairs/directors should be particularly proactive with adjunct faculty, who have fewer opportunities to make connections with others in their program.
- The annual process of evaluating adjunct faculty can be formative as well as summative; the formative component can help your adjunct colleagues feel more welcomed and valued.
- Some departments invite adjunct faculty to pair with permanent faculty for formal mentoring programs or, in the case of experienced adjunct faculty, peer observations of teaching, syllabus or assignment design workshops, etc.
  --Such activities are logistically easier for larger departments with large numbers of adjunct faculty, but even small programs have created opportunities to support and
collaborate with adjunct faculty by joining with other programs for peer observations, orientation and welcome sessions, or technology training.

--Funding for adjuncts’ time when participating in professional development is available via the Office of Academic Affairs. For examples of past programs, go here.

5. **Adjuncts aren’t paid much. So can we at least address the cost of their parking?** How much would it cost to subsidize adjuncts’ hourly parking garage rates and the cost of their parking permits? Could such a subsidy be made available to adjuncts who have served more than 2 semesters (and perhaps to other employees who are paid very little?) We have shared this suggestion with the Budget Committee and the Provost.

6. **The College should identify its target level of adjunct reliance.** The committees on Welfare, Compensation, Academic Planning, and Budget should continue to explore the costs and benefits of decreasing our current levels of adjunct reliance and increasing adjunct pay.

7. **Statistics on adjunct pay and adjunct reliance should be automatically provided to this committee each year.**

Pay Rates for Adjunct Faculty, Per Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Courseload</th>
<th>Without PhD/terminal degree</th>
<th>With PhD/terminal degree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 course/3 credit hours</td>
<td>$2620</td>
<td>$2720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 courses/6 credit hours</td>
<td>$5240</td>
<td>$5440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 courses/9 credit hours</td>
<td>$9475</td>
<td>$9475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 courses/12 credit hours</td>
<td>$13,890</td>
<td>$13,890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Retiree rate for emeritus/emerita faculty is 7.5% of their last 9-month base salary.)

Number of Adjunct Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full-time Faculty</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>531</td>
<td>Not yet available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time Faculty</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>367</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>Not yet available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Credit Hours taught by Adjunct Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>SCH Taught by Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Total SCH</th>
<th>Percentage of SCH Taught by Adjunct Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>103,469</td>
<td>301,316</td>
<td>34.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>104,476</td>
<td>298,440</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>109,755</td>
<td>298,808</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sections Taught by Adjunct Faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Year</th>
<th>Taught by Adjunct Faculty</th>
<th>Total Sections</th>
<th>Percentage Taught by Adjunct Faculty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014-2015</td>
<td>1677.2</td>
<td>4636</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015-2016</td>
<td>1731.7</td>
<td>4708</td>
<td>36.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016-2017</td>
<td>1763.1</td>
<td>4688</td>
<td>37.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departments with Highest Levels of Adjunct Reliance: [As of 4.25.18 we had not received this info from the Office of Academic Affairs]