Adjunct Oversight Committee 2019-2020 Final Report

Members (Fall 2019): Glenda Byars (Adjunct Representative and Welfare), Deanna Caveny (Academic Affairs), Tom Parry (Compensation), Jessica Streit (Art & Architectural History), Chris Warnick (Chair, English)

Members (Spring 2020): Glenda Byars (Adjunct Representative and Welfare), Deanna Caveny (Academic Affairs), Jacob Craig (English), Tom Parry (Compensation), Jessica Streit (Chair, Art & Architectural History)

The committee met on the following days: September 10, 2019; October 8, 2019; November 13, 2019; January 28, 2020; March 10, 2020; April 7, 2020

Guiding Principles, Initiatives, and Progress

From its first meeting, the 2019-2020 Adjunct Oversight Committee (AOC) wished to make a concrete, positive impact in the service of adjunct faculty at the College of Charleston. At the same time, the committee acknowledged the limits of its own power to change issues such as adjunct compensation (although AOC remains a committed advocate for this and other issues).

Therefore, this year’s AOC selected what it felt was two actionable items from lists of best practices generated by previous committees, and it worked to put them into practice.

The first initiative is the creation of an online information portal that aggregates links to critical resources and information for CofC adjunct faculty. Currently, policies and procedures regarding adjunct appointments, benefits, pay scales, service and professional development opportunities are spread across multiple pages and subdomains in the College’s web architecture. Finding information important to their employment, development, and welfare can be difficult and time-consuming for adjunct faculty in particular.

This proposed webpage, to be housed under the Academic Affairs subdomain <http://academicaffairs.cofc.edu>, will include information about onboarding, parking discounts, annual evaluations, and pay. Including this information will help promote more favorable, transparent, and collegial working conditions for adjunct faculty. Information about professionalization opportunities—teaching awards, professional development funding, participation in governance—will be included to promote a culture of professionalism among adjunct faculty and to recognize adjuncts' professionalism among full-time, roster faculty.

After receiving input from adjunct faculty colleagues and others, the AOC has generated said links to critical resources. It has initiated the request to create the website Academic Affairs with the support of Associate Provost Caveny. Currently, the committee has begun drafting the webpage; once completed, it will forward to Academic Affairs.

The second initiative is the creation of a dashboard that contains essential data about CofC’s adjunct usage. Ideally, the site would report five years’ worth of data about two things: (1.) adjunct usage by percentage of SCH for each school for each fall and spring semester and each academic year, and (2.) adjunct faculty headcount, not as a percentage, but simply the raw number. The AOC envisions that the information captured in this portal will be accessible to the College’s faculty, staff, and administrators.
After several information-seeking meetings with Institutional Research, the AOC reached out in early April to request the creation of this dashboard. As of the writing of this report, it has not yet received an answer.

At their core, both of these items reflect a commitment to supporting adjunct faculty through information sharing. All faculty should have easy access to the policies and procedures that govern their employment at the College of Charleston, not to mention information about more quotidian concerns like where to park or how to use OAKS. Likewise, we believe that all faculty and staff should have access to current and reliable data about adjunct usage across campus, information that can inform decisions that affect adjunct faculty.

Finally, the committee drafted a letter of support for a proposal by the School of Humanities and Social Sciences to compensate their adjunct faculty for moving to distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although disappointed that the proposal did not succeed, the AOC remains a committed advocate for additional adjunct compensation. However, a $500 compensation to all adjunct faculty who participate in the full DE readiness course in Summer 2020 is now guaranteed. This compensation only applies to adjunct faculty: permanent and visiting faculty are no longer eligible.

**Recommendations for Future Committees**

While the 2019-2020 Adjunct Oversight Committee believes that it has made good progress on both of its initiatives, several tasks will remain for the 2020-2021 AOC to complete. Both initiatives will require follow-up with Academic Affairs and Institutional Research to create the information portal and data dashboard. During this process, the AOC must attend to user experience of both website and portal, and, once created, it should ensure that they remain up to date. Recognizing that both resources run the risk of becoming another forgotten corner of the cofc.edu domain, the AOC must work to circulate these two resources among their intended.

Additionally, any future Committees should work to be advocates for raises in adjunct pay and recognition of adjunct seniority whenever these two issues are considered for discussion within the structures of faculty governance.