

Adjunct/Part-time Faculty Working Conditions are Linked to Student Success

A lot of research and energy has gone into understanding what helps students to be successful. Colleges are investing in programs that improve support for students based on the findings. Those things that make students successful are the same things that make faculty successful. It has been shown that there is a direct link between the working conditions of faculty and student success. Yet many teachers are denied even the most basic kinds of support that would make us better able to help our students reach their goals.

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| <p><i>Student success depends upon having the necessary tools to do what is asked of them.</i></p> | <p>Faculty also need the necessary tools to do what is asked of us. These tools include office space, technology, supplies, and the means to communicate with students and employers.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends upon the opportunity to plan ahead. They need to be able to register early, to choose preferred instructors, to get their schedules settled to best meet their needs, and to fit all of the needed classes into a reasonable time period.</i></p> | <p>Faculty also need to be able to plan ahead. Early notice of class assignments means better- prepared teachers. The goal should be time for all faculty to be well-prepared right from the start of each term.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends on being prepared for the rigors of college. They receive orientation, advising, and on-going guidance.</i></p> | <p>Faculty also need to be prepared in order to face the rigors of teaching in the college setting, to meet our obligations, and to deliver effective instruction. Faculty need to receive quality orientation and on-going guidance.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends on us being fully dedicated to them reaching their goals. We need to have a variety of means to address their needs and see them through their program of study. This includes counseling, tutoring and pre-college remediation, as well as diversity programs</i></p> | <p>Faculty need our institutions to be dedicated to our success. We need a concerted effort to reform attitudes about the use of part-time/adjunct faculty so that we get the mentoring and professional development that we need.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success comes when students have stability that allows them to focus on school.</i></p> | <p>Faculty need stability in our work lives in order to focus on our students. Constant changes in jobs, class assignments and schedules inhibit our ability to give our best attention to teaching and supporting students.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends on being supported and nurtured. Students need to be respected and wanted. It has been shown that success increases when students “connect” with someone at the college.</i></p> | <p>Faculty need to be supported and nurtured. We need to feel respected and wanted. Rushing from college to college consumes time and energy that would be better spent on our work. Feeling unwanted and disrespected turns our attention to our own difficult plight when we would rather give our attention to students.</p> |

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| <p><i>Student success depends upon regular and constructive feedback.</i> <i>Students deserve to know how they are doing. They deserve to know what criteria we use to assess them.</i></p> | <p>Faculty need to receive regular and constructive feedback. We need to know how we are doing, and by what criteria we are being assessed. We need to feel that we are trusted to do our jobs in a competent and professional manner, and to see that as the starting point for any evaluation and assessment of our performance.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends upon a fair system of discipline</i> <i>in the college setting. They need to believe that there will be no capriciousness in the grading or in the disciplinary actions that might be taken against them. They depend upon due process.</i></p> | <p>Faculty need to know that we work in a fair system without capriciousness in hiring, retention, and disciplinary actions. We deserve due process.</p> |
| <p><i>Student success depends upon having the financial support</i> <i>needed to be in school, stay in school, and be able to concentrate on school. Students without sufficient finances end up working, sometimes 2 or 3 jobs. This makes it much more difficult to do quality work and to complete their course of study in a reasonable amount of time.</i></p> | <p>Faculty need to receive sufficient financial compensation from our employment to be able to give maximum time and energy to our teaching. Those of us who don't receive fair compensation have to work more, meaning that we spend more time commuting from one college to another and possibly more time in class than would be considered a reasonable workload. We have much less opportunity to give time to students outside of class so it's harder to support them in ways that would enhance their educational experiences.</p> |

We know these things to be true about student success. They are also true about part-time and adjunct faculty. But we see a long history of abuse and misuse of non-tenured faculty, usually in the name of flexibility and saving money. If we, the faculty, treated students the same way that the higher education system treats us, we would be fired. It boggles the mind that this system has been acceptable for so long. But now that so much attention is being placed on student success, we have to look at the working conditions of a huge number of our teachers and make the required changes that will lead to improved student performance.

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