



California Part-time Faculty Association

Advocate, Educate, Legislate

www.cdfa.org

Response to Student Success Task Force Report

November 7, 2011

The California Part-time Faculty Association (CPFA) supports the responses of the various other faculty organizations in regards to the provisions of the Student Success Task Force. As part-time faculty teach almost 50% of all courses and comprise over 45,000 faculty in the Community College system it is important that our unique perspective be added to the other responses to the Student Success Task Force Report. Below represent our concerns regarding the information, recommendations and omissions from this report.

1. Professionalization of Part-time Faculty is key to better student success. The Student Success Task Force report does not adequately address the issue of part-time faculty and their enormous role and reliance in the California Community College System.
2. Temporary Defined Faculty. Due to the fact that part-time faculty are defined by the Ed Code as being temporary and are required to be more transitory, they actually receive very little or no professional help, training or mentoring. Part-time faculty are not “temporary,” and most part-time faculty regularly teach courses from basic skills to G.E. transfer courses and vocational courses. Most are hired on a regular and recurring basis and are essential to the success of most programs, departments and colleges.
3. Professional Development. Although the report discusses the need for professional development, these opportunities are often minimized in most institutions or are not required of part-time faculty, nor are these opportunities made readily available. Also “professional development” presupposes that part-time faculty are included, paid and expected to be “professionals”. In many districts and colleges part-time faculty are ostracized from shared governance, professional activities and programs, interaction and mentoring meant to promote student success. The system as a whole needs to be reviewed to see that all faculty, equally, are required to meet student needs and interact appropriately within a shared governance structure.
4. Part-time Faculty Categorical Funds. The idea to combine the part-time categorical funds of equity, office hour, and health with equal employment opportunity is misguided at best. The idea that equal employment opportunity should be combined with anything associated with part-time faculty equity and professionalism is illogical. Most part-time faculty members are not treated with any sense of equality when it comes to employment, re-employment, or full-time employment. The part-time categorical funds exist as such to require districts and unions to address these inequities.
5. Office hours are probably the most closely related topic to student success. Students pay for and expect equal access to their instructors to get the needed help they need to succeed. The fact that this important fact was omitted from the report is significant. Office hours range in this state from none to the same as full-time faculty. This inequity disenfranchises those students who do not receive the same opportunity for access. The office hour fund should not only be increased, but legislation should require all part-time faculty to perform and be paid to do the same office obligation as all full-time faculty.

6. Pay and Work Equity. If the system is to attract and retain the best instructors possible, it needs to adequately address pay and work equity. Again this is at the heart of student success. If the faculty members who teach them are not treated with the appropriate respect due their profession, then students will not respect the education they are receiving. Pay and work equity includes equity pay, job security and academic freedom to teach with rigor, discipline and integrity.
7. Full-service, professional educators. Research study after research study has shown that students succeed better when taught by faculty who are accessible on a full-time basis, who are more readily available to them, who are actively engaged in shared governance and programs, who are respected members of their academic community, and who have academic freedom to teach with discipline and rigor.

California is the only state and educational institution (both K-12 and higher education) with an employment cap (67%) for non-tenured or non-tenure-track academic employees. This fact shows a lack of commitment to the faculty members who teach and the students who learn. Removing the 67% cap on Part Time Faculty Teaching would be one of the most cost-effective ways to improve student success rates in the shortest amount of time.

Allowing part time faculty to teach up to 100% of load would go a long way toward “regularizing” teaching in the community college system and would have the advantage of getting students and teachers together on a more sustained basis, rather than having part time faculty running about, leaving one campus and driving to another campus in order to cobble together a living.

In this instance it is worth taking a page out of the CSU play book. The CSU system recognizes the need for experienced, non-tenure-track lecturers and allows them the ability to work a 100% load, be on campus and serve the needs of their students.

8. A students learning environment is a faculty members working environment. If we don't take both seriously and address both, then students and faculty will fail. The Student Success Task Force needs to address more holistically the problem of student success by addressing how the system has failed to support the more than 45,000 part-time faculty by not legislatively addressing full-time equivalent office hours (student equal access), equitable working conditions (no employment cap) and pay equity (living wage based upon experience and expertise).

Regarding the funding of this initiative, CPFPA recommends that the Chancellor's office require that all districts free up and spend down their reserves to the statutory 3-5% limit rather than hoarding and hiding their funds that they wish to earmark for a “rainy day.” According to our sources there are hundreds of millions of dollars of sequestered funds that should be released. In order to do so, CPFPA suggests that the Chancellor's office undertake a statewide audit of each district's accounts and put all of these into a Student Success Account to be used to make changes we suggest above.

Questions and Ideas about NEW concepts, policies and procedures that the Student Success Task Force should consider

There are many things that we could propose as “outside the box” that the CCC’s could do to energize students and embolden faculty, such as:

- Why not do something specifically to deal with returning veterans?
- What about creating intra-campus cross-disciplinary student/faculty “houses” that would take students and work them as a cooperative body?
- What about involving parents/friends/relatives in an active and on-going student support collective?
- What about taking the “business” out of the education equation and coming up with another more humane and meaningful model for student/faculty interaction?
- What about re-setting AB 1725 to put 75% of CCC resources into instruction and 25% of our resources into all other activities?
- What about setting the ratio of salaries paid to administrators to no more than 50 times (including bonuses, one-time take downs and “in appreciation for”...monies) what the lowest paid person on campus gets? Or, another way of calibrating salaries: No administrators will be paid salaries (and perks) amounting to more than 50% of what the Governor is paid annually (or certainly no in excess of the state Chancellor’s salary).
- What about mandating a standard student application form that would be used on every campus?
- What about mandating a standard uniform course numbering system across the whole system so that nobody would have to worry about credentialing and evaluation for transfer?
- What about auditing the 73 districts and getting them to spend down their reserves to get them back into line with statute (between 3%-5% of their operating budgets) and use the surplus found to hire more full-time faculty, pay for required and standardized office time and address part time equity?
- What about beginning the process of consolidating similar districts and thereby reducing redundancy and administrative waste? [If the CSU’s can make do with 23 schools, why can’t the CCC’s make do with urban, suburban, beach, mountain and desert districts?]
- What about the possibility of creating 6-7 regional Boards of Trustees instead of 73?
- What about mandating hiring full time faculty from within the system, rather than undertaking costly (and largely pointless) “global” searches under the guise of hiring for diversity, some of which can be “internal promotions”?
- What about mandating equitable and paid part time faculty membership in local and statewide Academic Senates, as well as in Edu-Unions and departmental/divisions?