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# Adjunct Faculty on the Fringes: The Quest for Recognition and Support in Community Colleges

## Abstract

Although there are a growing number of adjunct faculty teaching the majority of students at many community colleges, some institutions have not initiated practices to cultivate and support adjunct faculty. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to use the voices of the adjuncts to gain insight into their lived experiences and expectations of support and recognition by the institutions they serve. Ten participants from four Central New York Community Colleges participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were utilized as the primary source of data collection. Eight themes emerged, representing the participants' experience that included: (a) inclusion, (b) inspiring students, (c) upward trajectory, (d) communication, (e) socialization, (f) challenges, (g) professional development, and (h) recognition. In the current study, adjunct faculty reported that they desire to belong to a collegial college community, work collaboratively with full-time faculty, and feel valued by their peers and the institution. The recommendations for changes to institutional practices discussed in this study could improve institutional recognition of adjuncts' contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success.

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Adjunct Faculty on the Fringes: The Quest for Recognition and Support in Community  
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By

Amy Mech

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
Ed.D. in Executive Leadership

Supervised by

Cathleen McColgin, Ph.D.

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Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. School of Education

St. John Fisher College

August 2017

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Amy Mech

2017

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my Nanny Pat, who always believed that I could accomplish anything. To my dad, Dave Dix Sr., who supported me every step of this journey. His encouragement and a quiet place to write has provided the motivation to complete this journey. To my husband, Michael, and children, Daniel and Macy, thank you for your all of your sacrifices and your belief that I would someday finish and make-up for all the missed ball-games. To my mom, Vicky Cuvelier who inspired in me a love for reading at an early age.

I also dedicate this work to the St. John Fisher faculty, who all touched my heart in different ways. To Dr. Robinson, who convinced me I would succeed if I embarked on this doctoral journey and to Dr. Pulos who has teaching skills that are authentic .... To Dr. Linda Evans who understood me in a way few people do, and to Dr. VanDerLinden who provided a foundation of trust and mutual respect in every class she taught. To my committee chair, Dr. Cathleen McColgin, for her enthusiasm in my topic and in my eventual success, and to Dr. Dowthwaite, for her time and editing skills.

Finally, I would like to thank my cohort group for their support and encouragement throughout this journey. To my group members, Tricia and Josh who hold a very special place in my heart and whom I am happy to say are now forever friends.

### **Biographical Sketch**

Amy Mech is currently the Director of College for Living programs at Onondaga Community College. Mrs. Mech attended Broome Community College from 1992 to 1994 and graduated with an Associates of Arts degree in 1992. She attended SUNY Oneonta from 1992 to 1994 and graduated with a Bachelor of Sciences degree in 1994. Mrs. Mech attended Binghamton University from 1996 to 1998 and graduated with a Master of Public Administration degree in 1998. She came to St. John Fisher College in the summer of 2015 and began doctoral studies in the Ed.D. Program in Executive Leadership. Mrs. Mech pursued her research in Adjunct faculty under the direction of Dr. Cathleen McColgin and Dr. Jodi Dowthwaite and received the Ed.D. degree in 2017.

## **Abstract**

Although there are a growing number of adjunct faculty teaching the majority of students at many community colleges, some institutions have not initiated practices to cultivate and support adjunct faculty. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to use the voices of the adjuncts to gain insight into their lived experiences and expectations of support and recognition by the institutions they serve. Ten participants from four Central New York Community Colleges participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were utilized as the primary source of data collection. Eight themes emerged, representing the participants' experience that included: (a) inclusion, (b) inspiring students, (c) upward trajectory, (d) communication, (e) socialization, (f) challenges, (g) professional development, and (h) recognition. In the current study, adjunct faculty reported that they desire to belong to a collegial college community, work collaboratively with full-time faculty, and feel valued by their peers and the institution. The recommendations for changes to institutional practices discussed in this study could improve institutional recognition of adjuncts' contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

Higher education is going through many changes at a fast pace (Hoffman, 2014). The growth of community college enrollment has exceeded that of 4-year institutions, in part, due to their mission of open access and maintaining lower tuition costs (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). This growth underscores the urgency of fully understanding all of the factors that affect the fundamental academic mission of educating students in a community college. Community colleges have an important role in society because they are a gateway to postsecondary education for many underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation postsecondary students (AACC, 2012). Approximately 46% of all undergraduate students attend a community college (Hoffman, 2014). The array of challenges facing community colleges today is unprecedented. Colleges must struggle with financial pressures, growth in technology, industry demands, changing demographics, and public scrutiny (Kezar & Lester, 2011).

Adjuncts have long been a part of the community college faculty base. In the 1960s and 1970s, adjuncts were typically hired because they possessed technical skills and practical knowledge that was beneficial to students; their expertise and workplace experiences helped keep curricula up to industry standards. Community colleges were the first institutions to rely intensively on adjunct faculty due to surges in enrollments in the 1960s and 1970s, and the sector still employs the largest percentage of adjunct faculty (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). According to the most recent data available from the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES, 2013) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data

Survey (IPEDS) for fall 2011, adjunct faculty now comprise approximately 70.3% of instructors at these institutions. Moreover, adjunct faculty handle teaching between half and two-thirds of all course sections (CCSSE, 2015). Baldwin and Chronister (2001) attribute the increase in hiring adjunct faculty to institutions' internal factors. Due to rising operating expenses and decreasing government funding for education, institutions employ adjunct faculty, as employing adjuncts is more economical than employing full-time faculty. By hiring adjunct faculty, the institutions can gain added budgetary flexibility, allowing them to adapt to changing revenues and fluctuating student enrollments (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). However, this shift away from a cadre of full-time to adjunct faculty requires strategies to maintain important academic traditions, such as shared governance and a collegial community of scholars for all faculty members (Gappa & Leslie, 2010).

Gappa and Leslie (1993) note that defining adjunct faculty is difficult, because no single definition exists for such a heterogeneous group. In fact, they suggest four types of adjuncts: (a) individuals in retirement; (b) specialists, experts, and professionals who typically have a full-time professional job and teach minimally on the side; (c) individuals who want full-time employment; and (d) persons who have another position, often less than full-time (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Depending on the institution, adjunct faculty are referred to as adjuncts, postdocs, clinical faculty, part-timers, lecturers, or instructors (AAUP, 2015). However, for the purpose of this study, adjunct faculty refers to anyone who teaches less than the full-time teaching load at a community college.

## **Problem Statement**

Due to the myriad of challenges facing higher education, such as ongoing budget constraints and decreased resources, many community colleges have increasingly relied on adjuncts (Kezar & Sam, 2011). Adjunct faculty experienced a rapid rate of growth over the last 30 to 40 years. Numbers of adjunct faculty increased by 422.1% between 1970 and 2003 (Jolley, Cross, and Bryant, 2014; Kezar, 2014) compared to an increase of only 70.7% among full-time faculty in higher education (Schuster & Finkelstein, 2006).

Although there are a growing number of adjunct faculty teaching the majority of students at many community colleges, some institutions have not initiated practices to cultivate and support adjunct faculty (Hoyt, 2012). Despite this, adjuncts are relied on to support the core mission of the institution – educating students. Most studies continue to view these issues primarily through the lens of traditional 4-year institutions (Jacobs, 1998; Jaeger & Hinz, 2008; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Few studies exist that examine adjuncts at community colleges from a qualitative perspective. Such studies would provide a greater understanding of perceptions of value, respect, and support of adjunct faculty.

An important reason for understanding the perceptions of adjunct faculty is that they teach the majority of students in higher education; thus, they are significant influences in creating the teaching and learning environment. Adjunct faculty are now typically the individuals responsible for meeting the primary mission of postsecondary institutions (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

Gappa and Leslie (2010) theorized that in failing to give voice to the experiences and stories of adjuncts as a valid means of understanding and addressing concerns with

value, respect, and support, there is a significant gap in the higher education literature. The goal of fully integrating adjunct faculty into the academic life of an institution is particularly crucial for community colleges, as adjunct faculty in large numbers provide a powerful force for representing the college to students and stakeholders (Gappa & Leslie, 2010).

Recent literature portrays adjunct faculty as either a threat to the quality of the academic environment or as oppressed in their working conditions and status in an institution (Kezar & Sam, 2010; Kezar and Sam, 2009). In the current literature, working conditions vary by employment status, discipline, and type of institution. Institutions have done little over the last 20 years to change practices to acknowledge the new reality of adjunct faculty (Eagan, Jaeger, & Grantham, 2015; Kezar & Sam, 2010).

Hiring more adjunct faculty provides economic relief from rising full-time faculty costs and allows for a more responsive faculty with respect to an ever-changing global society; however, this increasing reliance on adjuncts has come under scrutiny in higher education literature (Bettinger & Long, 2006; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008a; Eagan & Jaeger, 2008b; Jacoby, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Moreover, because 2-year institutions employ proportionately more adjuncts than 4-year institutions, the issue of adjunct faculty is amplified for community colleges (Levin et. al, 2006). There are few studies that address issues associated with adjunct faculty within the specific and unique context of community colleges and relate to the concerns under scrutiny. According to some reports, reliance on adjunct faculty may negatively impact student social and intellectual integration into the academic community, which may lower student retention and graduation rates. Jacoby (2006) reports a highly significant negative correlation between

the ratio of adjunct faculty to full-time faculty at community colleges and graduation rates. Jacoby found that schools with low adjunct faculty to full-time faculty ratios have higher graduation rates than schools with high adjunct faculty to full-time faculty ratios (Jacoby, 2006). In a separate study, a negative correlation was observed between the students' exposure to adjunct faculty and graduation rates, and a negative correlation was observed between exposure to adjunct faculty in a 2-year college and the student's likelihood of transferring to a 4-year institution (Eagan & Jaeger, 2009). Eagan and Jaeger suggest that office space for adjunct faculty and compensation for extra hours spent with students outside of class may positively impact the student's exposure to faculty and advising time, which may improve the likelihood of the students transferring to a 4-year institution or completing their programs of study.

Evidence from studies regarding student learning outcomes suggests specific problems related to adjunct faculty for 1st-year persistence and retention, transfer from 2-year to 4-year colleges, and lower graduation rates seen among first-generation and remedial students. Additionally, the nature of part-time employment suggests that there are fewer opportunities for adjuncts to interact with students outside the classroom. This inaccessibility may make adjunct faculty seem less supportive and/or approachable. Adjunct faculty also have limited opportunities to interact with other faculty about best practices in teaching and learning (CCSE, 2014).

The lack of institutional support for adjunct faculty has negatively impacted the lives of adjunct faculty by creating poor institutional climates and working conditions (CAW, 2012). Adjunct faculty typically have low pay, little training, and few resources (Kezar & Sam, 2014). Adjuncts work within an environment that reimburses them for

only their physical time spent in the classroom, hires them at the last moment, provides them with little orientation to campus learning goals and minimal professional development and performance feedback (Hutchings, 2010). Furthermore, adjuncts may not be provided with basic tools of teaching, such as office space to meet with students, access to computers and printers, textbooks, or institutional e-mail (Jolley et al., 2014; Kezar & Maxey, 2014). Adjuncts are not offered tenure or promotion opportunities or long-term employment contracts and do not have job security (ASHE Higher Education Report, 2010; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Green, 2007; Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012). According to the 2010(a) Report of the American Society of Higher Education, adjunct faculty earn an average of 60% less than full-time faculty for their teaching load. The American Association of University Professors reports that adjuncts average \$2,700 per class and receive no benefits (Wilson, 2013b).

Adjunct faculty often do not participate in the creation of course syllabi, textbook selection, projects to integrate curricular or pedagogical reforms, or other curricular decisions, even for the courses they teach (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). This lack of participation prevents the provision of any valuable insights from the adjunct faculty to the full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty are teaching a large share of courses on campus and are often experts in their fields. The absence of adjuncts from discussions about curriculum design and student assessment may limit not only adjuncts' understanding of the course goals and objectives but their absence also limits improvements to broaden learning outcomes for programs and departments, institutional student learning outcomes goals, and the implementation of plans to improve student learning (Baldwin &



Chronister, 2001). Adjunct faculty have also been shown to be excluded from shared governance at institutions (Kezar & Sam, 2014).

Gappa (2000) reports that one issue that has a large impact on job satisfaction is the amount of respect and recognition that adjunct faculty receive. While some adjuncts feel that they are valued, established members of the collegiate community, others feel that they are marginalized and not valued (Gappa, 2000). Some adjuncts report feeling unwelcome, ignored, unappreciated, and not acknowledged for their efforts. Adjunct faculty report that they desire to belong to the college community and work with other faculty (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). Adjuncts report a sense of inferior status, marginalization, competition between colleagues, and a lack of emotional connection (Block, 2009; Meixner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010; Remmik, Karm, Haamer, & Lepp, 2011; Rice, Sorcinelli, & Austin, 2000). Adjunct faculty report a perception of second-class status due to their institutions policies and experience from interactions with administrators and full-time faculty (Benjamin, 2003a; Gappa & Leslie, 1993; McLaughlin, 2005).

Limited research exists investigating the perceptions and experiences of adjunct faculty at community colleges. Further research findings may increase institutional awareness of the need for change (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). Adjunct faculty are here to stay, and recognition of adjunct faculty as positive contributors to their institution may result in adjunct faculty perceiving a more inclusive and respectful fit into the fabric of institutions (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). Institutions have a responsibility to acknowledge and recognize adjuncts as positive contributors to quality higher education for the benefit of students (Hoyt, 2012). The consequences of institutions not acknowledging and not

recognizing adjunct faculty may result in stakeholder perceptions of higher education and threatening the integrity of traditional academia.

### **Theoretical Rationale**

The key concepts of early critical theory were to connect theory to the social environment. The three criteria for research in critical theory were that the research must be explanatory, practical, and normative (Poutanen & Kovalainen, 2010). The aims of critical theory served to promote social transformation by decreasing oppression and increasing freedom in society. Critical theory was concerned with the identification of inequalities in society to provide achievable, practical goals for change (Barbour, 2016).

The political theory of recognition is a subset of critical theory and is continued today through Axel Honneth's work. Honneth's theory of recognition hypothesizes that suffering caused by various forms of oppression is not merely the exclusion from public discourse but an attack on the conditions of individual identity and well-being (Deranty, 2010). Honneth's new paradigm in critical theory seeks to interpret interaction, not as communication, but as recognition. Recognition is indicated by the forms of social interaction that enable a subject to develop dimensions of practical identity and autonomy. This positive self-reflection depends on the quality of interactions with socially-encountered others (Honneth, 1995). Honneth theorizes that positive forms of interaction assist in creating conditions for practical identity and subjective autonomy defined as self-determination and self-realization. As a theoretical framework, the political theory of recognition provides a lens through which one may study the topic of adjunct faculty at community colleges (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). The political theory of recognition may shed light on what adjunct faculty, as a collective group, need to begin

to overcome the obstacles associated with their experiences as an oppressed and marginalized group.

Honneth developed three criteria for social recognition: love, respect, and self-esteem. He describes love as a strong connection between small groups of people. Self-respect is gained when people see themselves as deserving equal rights. Self-esteem, according to Honneth, is the result of recognition by others as individuals with specific qualities and abilities that result in a positive contribution to societies' goals (Honneth, 1995). Further, Honneth proposed that self-realization was conditional upon three types of recognition from significant others, namely: (a) recognition in the form of love or caring appreciation, (b) recognition as a means of bestowing rights to the person and (c) recognition as a way of acknowledging achievement by a community of interest (Honneth, 1995).

Honneth (1995) theorized that love is the medium through which self-confidence develops. Furthermore, legal and moral recognition of a person's rights gives rise to self-respect, and to give rights is to validate personhood. For Honneth, the notion of rights must be interpreted widely to include cultural, legal, political, and material entitlements. Lastly, self-realization is dependent on the community's acknowledgment of a person's attributes and accomplishments. Self-realization builds self-esteem and contributes to a sense of social solidarity.

Honneth interprets all social struggles, including those over material inequalities, as struggles for recognition (Honneth, 1995). Honneth believes that the three forms of recognition are countered by the corresponding forms of "misrecognition": violence, deprivation of rights, and humiliation. Moreover, Honneth emphasizes the importance of

identity within the theory of recognition. Taylor (1994) sums up the idea of identity below:

Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion if people or society mirror back to them a confining or demeaning picture of themselves (p. 25).

Honneth's theory of recognition may shed light on how adjuncts perceive their role within an institution, the changes that are necessary, and may serve as the momentum needed for meaningful change. The adjuncts can then form a collective identity to demand that their denial of recognition be corrected and that they receive recognition for who they are and what they contribute to the quality of higher education.

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to use the voice of adjunct faculty to examine their lived experiences and their expectations of support and recognition by the institutions that they serve. Adjunct faculty members report that they desire to belong to a collegiate community and work collaboratively with colleagues (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). Furthermore, adjunct faculty want to feel valued by both their peers and their institutions. Listening to the voices of adjunct faculty could lead to new institutional practices that embrace adjuncts in the overall vision and mission of the institution (CCCSE, 2015). The following research questions guided the qualitative research in this study:

## **Research Questions**

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts for their contributions?

## **Potential Significance of the Study**

This study will have significance for community college policy, practice, and theory. The discussion surrounding adjunct faculty is of particular importance to community colleges with almost two-thirds of faculty teaching part-time, as community colleges enroll nearly half of all United States college students (CCSSE, 2015). Colleges depend on adjuncts to educate the majority of students, yet they do not fully recognize the value of adjunct faculty members (CCSSE, 2015). This study addresses the literature gap in the perceptions of adjuncts at community colleges and what the adjunct faculty need from an institution in order to feel included. Additionally, this exploration of the expectations and lived experiences of community college adjuncts will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the ways in which institutions can more effectively recognize adjuncts' contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success.

Gappa, Austin, and Trice (2007) developed a framework to restructure future faculty models, which includes: (a) promoting equity among academic appointments, (b) vigorously protecting academic freedom, (c) ensuring flexibility in appointments, (d) fostering professional growth, and (e) promoting collegiality for a greater sense of community. These researchers consider all five elements basic goals that should apply to all faculty, regardless of position or institutional type. Equity pertains to fair treatment in terms of compensation, participation in shared governance, a voice in department meetings, access to resources necessary to do their jobs, suitable office space and staff support. Academic freedom refers to the right for faculty to express themselves freely without institutional censorship. Gappa, Austin, and Trice define flexibility as “the ability of faculty members to construct work arrangements to maximize their contributions to their institutions as well as the meaningfulness of their work and personal lives” (2007, p. 141). Gappa, Austin, and Trice believe that professional growth is important for faculty to remain current in their academic fields. It also allows them to engage with other scholars and exposes them to new practices to improve their courses.

### **Definitions of Terms**

For the purpose of this study, definitions are provided to clarify meanings specific to the research under review, to include the following:

*Adjunct faculty* - for the study, adjunct faculty refers to anyone who teaches less than the full-time teaching load at a community college.

*Adjunct typology* - for the study, Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) adjunct typology was the framework used to identify types of adjuncts.

*Community college* - A postsecondary institution of higher education that offers certificates, associate degrees, transfer credits, and workforce education.

*Full-time faculty* - Refers to faculty members assigned to teach at least 12 hours a semester on a 9- or 12-month contract (Hinkel, 2007, p. 7).

*Institutional support* - Any support, services, programs, or activities provided by the college in an attempt to facilitate or improve faculty accomplishment of tasks (Hinkel, 2007, p. 7).

*Job satisfaction* - a feeling that one's needs and expectations are respected and addressed.

*Recognition* - the act of acknowledging or respecting another being, such as when we 'recognize' someone's status, achievements or rights.

## **Chapter Summary**

Adjunct faculty are less expensive than full-time faculty. Additionally, they serve a variety of missions and teach within a broad array of certificate and associate degree programs; community colleges uniquely employ a significant quantity of adjunct faculty (Jacoby, 2006; Outcalt, 2002). Higher education literature speaks to several deficiencies associated with the employment of a significant number of adjunct faculty; for example lack of skill, motivation, engagement, and teaching experience (Gappa, 1984; Jacoby, 2006; Jaeger & Eagan, 2008; Levin et. al., 2006; Umbach, 2007). However, an examination of where adjunct faculty see themselves as members of their institutions is absent from community college dialogues. Moreover, the existing research does not consider the degree to which institutional practices and adjunct faculty expectations impact adjuncts' perceptions. The status quo of practices within community colleges is

not serving students. New policies and practices need to be designed with attention to equity regarding the impact of working conditions on student learning and other fundamental aspects of the institutional mission (Kezar & Maxey, 2015).

The study will fill this literature gap by exploring the lived experiences and expectations of adjunct faculty in a community college. The research will ultimately lead to an understanding of the ways that institutions can recognize adjunct faculty contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success.

This chapter provided a broad introduction to the focus of the current study. The next chapter will provide a review of the literature with emphasis on the characteristics and perceived values of adjunct faculty regarding support and recognition. The third chapter details the methodology used to conduct the research. Chapter 4 describes the study findings regarding the adjunct faculty's lived experiences within a community college, in terms of their perceptions of belonging and support. Study conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.



## **Chapter 2: Review of the Literature**

### **Introduction and Purpose**

More than 100 years after the establishment of the first community college in Joliet, Illinois, there are over 7.3 million students attending 1,108 of these public institutions in the United States (AACC, 2016). To educate their students, community colleges employ about 101,000 full-time faculty (29%) and more than twice as many adjunct faculty (245,000, 71%) (AACC, 2016).

Although there are a growing number of adjunct faculty teaching the majority of students at many community colleges, some institutions have not initiated practices to cultivate and support adjunct faculty (Hoyt, 2012). Despite this, adjuncts are relied on to support the core mission of the institution – educating students. Most studies continue to view this issue primarily through the lens of traditional 4-year institutions (Jacobs, 1998; Jaeger & Hinz, 2008; Ronco & Cahill, 2006; Umbach, 2007). Few studies exist that investigate adjuncts at community colleges from a qualitative perspective. Such studies would provide a greater understanding of perceptions of value, respect and support of adjunct faculty.

The purpose of this review is to provide the reader with an overview of the literature related to the dissertation topic: adjunct faculty at a community college. This chapter will provide the background for the research problem regarding the growing reliance on adjunct faculty and the issues associated with a lack of institutional support. The current literature review will discuss studies related to the following topic areas:

characteristics of adjunct faculty, working conditions, experiences, job satisfaction, effect on students, institutional support, and institutional change. The review concludes with highlights explaining why it is imperative to conduct further studies on this topic.

### **Adjunct Faculty Characteristics**

A Special Report from the Center for Community College Student Engagement (CCSE, 2014b) described adjunct faculty members as a diverse group and further divided them into eight categories of motivations:

1. Hoping to attain a full-time position,
2. Working at multiple institutions to piece together a full workload,
3. Choosing part-time work to balance other life requirements,
4. Career professionals choosing to teach about their work,
5. On-line faculty,
6. Graduate students,
7. Retirees,
8. Administrators or staff.

The adjunct faculty members in the CCCSE's diverse groups bring a variety of skills to community colleges. The American Federation of Teachers (2010) reported that adjunct faculty members at community colleges are generally women (54%) and that adjuncts at higher education institutions are mostly White. Adjunct faculty members are similarly well-educated relative to full-time faculty members at community colleges. The percentage holding master's degrees are about the same (67%), but full-time faculty are more likely to hold doctorates (18%) than adjunct faculty members (11%) are (CCCSE, 2014b).

A study conducted by Caruth and Caruth (2013) examined the role of adjunct faculty within the overall higher education landscape to determine the characteristics of this group (Caruth & Caruth, 2013). The research study was an archival, quantitative, data mining study using data from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS). The researchers identified full-time and adjunct faculty according to gender and race from a total of 4,426 degree-granting universities in the United States (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

Caruth and Caruth's (2013) results revealed that adjuncts represented 50% of the total faculty in degree-granting institutions in the United States for the year 2011. For every full-time instructor there was one adjunct faculty member. Females comprised 52% of the total part-time instructors and 44% of the total full-time instructors. Individuals identifying as White represented 74% of both part-time and full-time faculty. Individuals identifying as Native American or Alaska Native, Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and race/ethnicity unknown were combined and counted for the remaining 27% of the faculty in higher education (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

The implications from Caruth and Caruth's (2013) study have a bearing on institutional hiring practices and diversity. The practice of hiring adjuncts that are more representative of their student populations may be informed by Caruth's findings. Furthermore, Caruth's study has uncovered implications for professional development of adjunct faculty with greater knowledge of what adjunct faculty need to be successful (Caruth & Caruth, 2013).

## **Working Conditions**

The Coalition on the Academic Workforce (CAW) is a group of 26 higher education associations, disciplinary associations, and faculty organizations. These organizations collaborate on the issues associated with faculty working conditions and their effect on the success of college students in the United States (CAW, 2012). To address the lack of data on adjunct faculty and their working conditions, the CAW conducted an extensive survey in the fall term of 2010, seeking information about the courses that adjuncts were teaching, where they were teaching, and for what pay and benefits (CAW, 2012). The survey was open to any faculty member or instructor who wished to complete a questionnaire (CAW, 2012). The survey received 30,000 responses, with over 20,000 coming from individuals who identified themselves as working in a part-time position at an institution of higher education in fall 2010.

The researchers found that the median per-course compensation for adjunct faculty was far lower than the pay that full-time faculty received based on the standard compensation for instruction in a 3-credit course. The length of time working in an institution did not result in higher levels of pay for adjunct faculty or pay rates comparable to other faculty members (CAW, 2012).

The CAW (2012) report showed that teaching part-time was not always the preference of adjuncts teaching part-time. Over 80% of respondents reported teaching part-time for more than 3 years. When asked if they were seeking a full-time position, nearly 30% said they were, another 20% stated that they intended to seek such a position, and 26% said that they had sought such a position in the past (CAW, 2012). In another study, Leslie and Gappa (2002) report that the majority of adjunct faculty members prefer

to teach part-time (51%). Subsequent research reported a much higher percentage of adjunct faculty (67%) that want full-time positions but cannot find jobs (Hoyt et al., 2008; Kramer, Gloeckner, & Jacoby, 2014).

The respondents from the CAW study reported negative responses regarding their respective campuses. The study demonstrated how little support adjunct faculty members received from their institutions. The findings also suggested a general lack of resources to embrace adjunct faculty members in the fabric of community colleges (CAW, 2012). Adjunct faculty members perceive that they demonstrate a commitment to teaching and to the institutions that employ them, but those institutions do not reciprocate with them by providing appropriate compensation or other types of professional support (CAW, 2012).

CAW (2012) offers valuable insight into the working lives of adjunct faculty members. The responses sorted into specific themes in response to two open-ended questions on the survey: (a) Respondents expressed an interest in other benefits, particularly health insurance, (b) Respondents also stressed the value of non-monetary recognition; and (c) Respondents may feel appreciated by their peers but not by the institution (CAW, 2012).

## **Experiences**

Dolan, Hall, Karlsson, and Martinak (2013) conducted a quantitative study that explored the characteristics of who Maryland adjuncts are as a group, the kinds of professional development they have and what they want, and how they are treated at their institutions. Dolan et al. (2013) performed this study of adjunct faculty in Maryland colleges and universities with a convenience sample, asking respondents to report on

their experiences during the calendar year 2009. The anonymous 72 question survey went to adjuncts in Maryland colleges and universities. Respondents were asked to identify employment above and beyond their part-time teaching. Demographic information about the respondents was included such as age, gender, state of residence, ethnicity, employment status, academic credentials, other professional qualifications, and other professional work, recognitions, or participation in institutional governance in higher education in Maryland (Dolan et al., 2013). The survey yielded a large sample of self-reported Maryland adjunct faculty members at both 2-year and 4-year colleges. The demographic information on the respondents ( $n=1,645$ ) was similar to those for a previous study conducted by Martinak, Karlsson, Faircloth, and Witcher (2006). Martinak et al. (2006) studied Maryland adjunct faculty members in the 2004-2005 academic years. Dolan et al. (2013) reported that the typical profile of an adjunct college professor is a White woman in her fifties who may work full-time in a nonteaching job, holds a master's degree, teaches four-credit courses per academic year in face-to-face format in one institution at the undergraduate level, and has been teaching from 1 to 5 years. Dolan et al. (2013) stated that the profile of the 2010 survey respondent corroborates the 2005 part-time survey.

Dolan et al. (2013) discovered that adjunct faculty members work full-time at nonteaching jobs in addition to their adjunct faculty positions (22% of women, 18% of men). Six percent of women and 3% of men reported themselves as self-employed in an active business. Sixteen percent of women and 6% of men reported that they work part-time in addition to their adjunct teaching assignments. Twelve percent of the respondents

categorized themselves as being in retirement status with no other employment. Only 4% indicated they were seeking full-time work in a higher education teaching.

Dolan et al. (2013) respondents reported the number of higher education institutions at which they taught as adjunct faculty during the calendar year 2009. Of the 1,457 respondents teaching credit courses, 16% reported teaching at two or more institutions and 2% reported teaching at three institutions. The respondents reported whether they had ever attended a professional development workshop in any of the institutions where they teach. In total, 69% of adjuncts reported participating in professional development programs.

Lastly, Dolan et al. (2013) asked respondents to record in their own words what factors were most important to them in teaching at the institution where they taught most often. Of the comments received, the top five reasons were the location of the college (14%), supervision and colleagues (13%), subject matter (13%), the teaching itself (12%), and flexibility of the school in meeting their teaching needs (10%). When asked to list the single most important factor in their choice of an institution at which to teach, the top five criteria were location (21%), supervision and colleagues (19%), subject matter (10%), job availability/offer (9%), and the reputation and quality of the college (8%) (Dolan et al., 2013).

The responses to the survey provided a picture of adjunct faculty members in Maryland, who they are, what they are doing, the kinds of professional development they have, and what they ultimately want (Dolan et al., 2013). Through this study, Dolan et al. (2013) showed that adjunct faculty wanted to be seen as educators. The responses to the recent survey confirm that adjunct faculty are committed professionals who want

recognition of their status as educators as well as professional development opportunities to increase their effectiveness in the classroom (Dolan et al., 2013). However, there was not a clear picture of how they are treated at their institutions. With this survey, the researchers missed an opportunity to obtain and analyze this information. If the information was gathered, it was not reported in either of the studies of Maryland adjunct faculty.

### **Adjunct Faculty Job Satisfaction**

Kramer, Gloeckner, and Jacoby (2014) conducted a quantitative study exploring whether adjunct faculty were satisfied with their role in higher education. Non-probability convenience sampling included adjunct faculty at 13 community colleges in the Colorado Community College system (CCCS) ( $N=405$ ). The population included all adjunct faculty who taught in the 2008 calendar year (Kramer et al., 2014). The research questions pertained to factors associated with job satisfaction among adjunct faculty and desire for a full-time teaching appointment. The researchers sought to evaluate 15 dimensions of job satisfaction. The average number of years teaching experience as an adjunct was 6.3 years, with a total for all teaching experience at any level of 13.6 years. Adjunct faculty members were asked to respond to the question: “If you had it to do over again, would you still choose an academic career?” Fully 89% of respondents indicated they would choose academia if they had it to do over again (Kramer et al., 2014).

Factor analysis yielded practical, positive connections. Adjunct faculty members who stated they would have preferred full-time teaching and intend to seek a full-time teaching position also preferred annual teaching contracts as opposed to at-will, semester-to-semester contracts (Kramer et al., 2014). Adjunct faculty members who preferred a



full-time teaching appointment were dissatisfied with various dimensions of job satisfaction, including their workloads, salary, and overall job satisfaction. The researchers reported that adjunct faculty members are perceived to be treated unfairly ( $r = +.314, p = .001$ ). Additionally, adjuncts felt that teaching excellence was not rewarded and adjuncts did not feel valued in their respected departments as adjunct faculty members (Kramer et al., 2014). The recurring themes in this study relate to the need for institutions to implement changes to longstanding practices by (a) increasing salaries, (b) offering health insurance, (c) providing other benefits (e.g. tuition discounts), (d) recognizing faculty commitment, and (e) offering annual teaching contracts (Kramer et al., 2014).

Feldman (2001) conducted a study that examined the various aspects of their jobs which adjunct faculty found most and least satisfying. Feldman utilized both quantitative and qualitative data to research the role that career stage plays in determining how these individuals reacted to their jobs. Based on the feedback received from the adjunct faculty themselves, this study identified some strategies that institutions may wish to consider to more effectively manage this growing segment of the academic workforce.

Feldman's sample consisted of adjunct faculty and research associates at a large state university ( $n = 105$ ). Participation was voluntary and respondents were not required to provide their names. Seventy-two percent (72%) of the sample were adjunct faculty and instructors. Twenty-eight percent (28%) of the sample were research associates. The sample was 52% male and 48% female. The average age of the sample was 43 ( $SD = 12$  years). Fourteen percent (14%) of respondents were in their 20s; 53% were in their 30s or 40s, and 33% were in their 50s or older. Participants indicated their satisfaction with

eight specific aspects of their jobs (flexibility, autonomy, challenge, coworkers, supervision, pay, benefits, and advancement opportunities), as well as their overall job satisfaction. Two other attitudes were assessed as well: professional commitment (the extent of individuals' emotional investment in their chosen vocation) and relative deprivation (the extent to which individuals felt anger about their current situations and entitlement to better jobs). Three employee behaviors were measured in this study. First, the extent to which the employee was actively searching for another job was measured with four items from Feldman and Turnley (1995). At the end of the survey, respondents were asked several open-ended questions about their experiences as adjunct faculty members. Specifically, participants were asked the following questions: (a) What have been the best parts of doing this type of work? What have been the worst parts of doing this type of work? (b) What type of impact do you think working as a contingent employee is likely to have on your career? and (c) What could your current institution do to make this type of employment more productive and satisfying?

Content analysis was used to categorize these data. For many adjunct faculty, the opportunity to have scheduling flexibility was the major attraction of this type of work. Another major advantage of this type of work for these individuals was the opportunity for social contact with a diverse set of colleagues. Many adjunct faculty accepted adjunct positions because they enjoyed working with students and wanted contact with other faculty. Participants in the study were pleased with the amount of autonomy they had in their jobs and the amount of challenge in their work. The most prominent disadvantage of working as an adjunct was the lack of advancement opportunities and, particularly, the lack of job security. Adjunct faculty members were also concerned about the lack of

fringe benefits, pensions, and health insurance they receive. Finally, among many participants in this study, there was a genuine concern about being treated as second-class citizens (Feldman, 2001).

In Feldman's (2001) study, job satisfaction was significantly higher among late-career faculty than among early or mid-career faculty. The responses to the qualitative portion of the study highlighted the differences among adjunct faculty in different career stages. For professionals starting out their careers, adjunct faculty positions presented interesting opportunities for growth and development. Two disadvantages, in particular, are especially relevant to individuals in these positions. First, many young professionals who take an adjunct position right out of school fear that part-time employment looks bad on their resume. Also, some young professionals found themselves stuck in adjunct positions that were unchallenging and, as a result, they lost interest in their career. When coupled with the anxiety about finding full-time employment, these concerns led several to consider changing careers altogether. At mid-career, the advantages and disadvantages of adjunct positions were somewhat different. On the positive side, adjunct positions presented mid-career professionals opportunities for creativity and autonomy in their jobs. Also, for many mid-career professionals, working in an adjunct position allowed them to blend academic work with self-employment or another part-time job. On the other hand, one downside of working as an adjunct in mid-career is the extensive carryover of job responsibilities into the home. For late career adjuncts, the most frequently cited reason for their satisfaction was the opportunity to transition gradually out of full-time employment into retirement. Another added benefit for these partial retirees was the opportunity to avoid some of the most unpleasant parts of their

professions while still being able to engage in the most pleasurable aspects. For many, this meant the opportunity to forego campus politics and endless academic meetings (Feldman, 2001).

Feldman's (2001) results suggest that the most positive aspects of adjunct positions involve the work itself and relationships with professional colleagues. In contrast, the poor financial packages and lack of promotional opportunities are clearly the most dissatisfying aspects of these positions. Indeed, in many cases, it appears that adjuncts remain in their jobs because of their attachment to their profession rather than for the low economic rewards these positions offer.

Feldman (2001) cited some strategies that institutions may apply to improve conditions for their adjunct faculty. These strategies focused on three areas in particular: (a) recruitment, (b) working conditions, and (c) supervision. Two issues in particular were mentioned by participants in this study as areas for administration improvements. First, advance notice of assignments would help adjunct faculty get better organized and prepared to deliver high-quality teaching. Also, better orientation at the beginning of their employment would help the adjunct faculty get up to speed on their jobs more quickly. Finally, it is evident from the comments of respondents that the general quality of supervision they receive could be improved. Many participants in the study felt that they would benefit from more communication with their supervisors and more mentoring from senior colleagues.

Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, and August (2012) studied the factors that contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction among adjunct faculty. They performed a qualitative study of adjunct faculty at 12 research universities. The study

examined the reasons behind what the authors identify as growing job dissatisfaction among adjunct faculty at U.S. universities and colleges (Waltman et al. 2012). The sampling included 24 focus groups with both full- and part-time faculty ( $n=220$ ). Waltman et al. (2012) used convenience sampling by contacting universities with which they were familiar to identify the focus groups.

Waltman et al. (2012) conducted 90-minute focus groups, using an open-ended interview protocol that asked the same questions of each focus group but allowed the researchers to prompt for a deeper understanding of the responses. The researchers asked two questions of the groups. The first question asked about the aspects of their job that the faculty believed to be positive. The second question asked about the negative aspects of their jobs.

Waltman et al. (2012) performed thematic analyses using NVivo software. The researchers found four significant themes: (a) students and teaching, (b) personal life and flexibility, (c) terms of employment, and (d) respect and inclusion. Two of the themes, “teaching and students” and “personal life and flexibility,” were clear sources of job satisfaction. The other two themes, “terms of employment” and “respect and inclusion,” were factors associated with job dissatisfaction (Waltman et al., 2012).

Waltman et al. (2012) reported that institutional administrations have not implemented many changes in the last 20 years regarding policies and work environments that contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The authors explained that adjuncts wanted job security, as well as clearly defined opportunities within the institution relating to advancement and evaluation. Waltman et al. (2012) also identified the need for adjuncts to have a voice for inclusion into the fabric of their organization.

The researchers suggested that the administration of an institution could improve the level of job satisfaction and institutional commitment to adjuncts by (a) supporting and recognizing teaching, (b) creating practices to enhance job security and professional institutional opportunities, and (c) creating a respectful climate (Waltman et al., 2012).

Eagan, Jaeger, and Graniham (2015) studied how part-time job satisfaction correlates with the availability of support services and a respectful campus environment. Eager et al. (2015) also examined satisfaction levels for both adjunct faculty who desired full-time work and adjunct faculty who were satisfied with part-time work. The authors conducted a quantitative study utilizing data from the 2010-2011 Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) faculty survey. The sample consisted of 4,169 adjunct faculty from 279 4-year colleges and universities, excluding graduate student responses. IPEDS Institutional data supplemented faculty level data. Eagan et al. analyzed the triennial cross-sectional survey using Hierarchical Linear Modeling (HLM). Key independent variables consisted of respondents' answers to questions related to (a) support services, (b) perceptions of campus climate and respect, (c) advancement, and (d) professional development. The dependent variable constructs were generated through item response theory (IRT) analysis (Eagan et al., 2015).

Eagan et al. (2015) identified approximately 73% of adjunct faculty as desiring full-time appointments. Adjunct faculty were not satisfied with their relationships with administration and colleagues, so working conditions became more important. Job satisfaction was lower among adjunct faculty who felt that their full-time faculty and administration did not value their scholarly contributions (Eagan et al., 2015).

Furthermore, for those adjunct faculty that wanted full-time employment, lower levels of

workplace satisfaction may have been intensified by their perception of disrespect and lack of inclusion.

Maynard and Joseph (2006) conducted a study on job satisfaction and commitment among groups of adjunct faculty ( $n=167$ ). This quantitative study investigated the job attitude of adjunct faculty as compared to the job attitude of full-time faculty. Maynard and Joseph studied how satisfied and how committed adjunct faculty and full-time faculty were with the various aspects of their job. The researchers questioned whether satisfaction and commitment of adjunct faculty depended on whether they would prefer a full-time teaching position. The study used an employment survey that attempted to measure the level of job satisfaction and commitment an adjunct brings to various aspects of their job (Maynard and Joseph, 2006).

Of the 167 respondents, 57% were female. The job status of the respondents included 51% full-time, 48% part-time, 55% temporarily employed, and 45% permanently employed (Maynard & Joseph, 2006). They asked faculty whether they were employed part-time or full-time. Participants responding that they were employed full-time were identified as full-time faculty ( $n=85$ ). Participants who answered part-time were then asked to indicate whether they would prefer their position to be full-time. Those that answered yes to the second question were identified as involuntary part-time ( $n=45$ ), whereas those that answered no were identified as voluntary part-time ( $n=30$ ) (Maynard & Joseph, 2006).

Maynard & Joseph (2006) measured job satisfaction with the Minnesota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ; Weiss, Dawis, England & Lofquist, 1967). Cronbach's alpha for the 18 scales ranged from 0.85 to 0.96 with most above 0.90. They

measured affective commitment with the 12-item Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) ( Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

Maynard and Joseph (2006) discovered that involuntary part-time faculty were more dissatisfied with advancement, pay, and security, but were just as satisfied with other aspects of their job. A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with faculty status (full-time, voluntary part-time, or involuntary part-time) as the independent variable, with the four job satisfaction facets as the dependent variables. Univariate analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were computed for each of the four job satisfaction variables. Involuntary part-time faculty reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction (M=1.70) with advancement than full-time (M=2.58) or voluntary part-time faculty (M=2.52). Involuntary part-time faculty also reported significantly lower levels of satisfaction with compensation (M=1.50) than full-time faculty (M=2.09). Part-time voluntary faculty did not differ significantly from either group (M=1.87). Differences also existed in job security satisfaction, such that full-time faculty reported greater job security satisfaction (M=3.34) than voluntary part-time faculty (M=2.71), who, in turn, reported greater job security satisfaction than involuntary part-time faculty (M=1.90). An unexpected finding was that both voluntary (M=3.30) and involuntary (M=3.08) part-time faculty reported feeling a more emotional commitment to the organization than full-time faculty (M=2.75) (Maynard & Joseph, 2006).

Maynard & Joseph's findings may indicate that this particular institution has practices in place that recognize adjuncts. The study does indicate that the match between a faculty member's actual and desired employment situation is a better predictor of job attitude than status alone (Maynard & Joseph, 2006).



Rich (2015) conducted a qualitative research design with an inductive approach to data analysis to explore job motivations and satisfaction of adjunct faculty. Semi-structured interviews were the primary data collection method. Rich identified a criterion-based sampling protocol identifying participants with the following criteria: (a) participants must have taught as an adjunct for at least 1-year, and (b) participants must be willing to participate in in-person interviews.

The resultant sample ( $n=27$ ) was comprised of 56% women and 44% men with an average of 7- years of adjunct teaching experience. Two interviews were conducted with each participant. The initial interview was established to gain insight into and report the work experience of each adjunct, while the second interview was conducted as a follow-up meeting for validation. Each interview was audio recorded and, after the interviews, the author reviewed the data and data was transcribed verbatim. Second interviews followed the same protocol and were conducted 4-weeks after the initial meeting. The researcher also used probing questions that encouraged the adjunct faculty member to elaborate on his or her responses from the initial interview (Rich, 2015).

After conducting each interview, the data were uploaded into a qualitative software program for in vivo and axial coding. There were three job motivation factors that emerged from the inductive analysis: (a) impacting students, (b) academic freedom, and (c) receiving acknowledgment of appreciation of their adjunct instructors' work in the college. Each factor was reported by 100% of the interviewees. Interestingly, acknowledgment was discussed as coming from the students and other adjuncts, not the administration. The researcher found that all 27 adjuncts were satisfied at their institutions (Rich, 2015).

Levin and Hernandez (2014) reiterated the importance of grounded theories that develop out of adjunct faculty's experience. They conducted a qualitative study using an interpretative approach to understanding the ways in which adjunct faculty members construct meaning for their professional activities. The data collection involved semi-structured interviews with adjunct faculty members in capturing adjunct faculty's understandings of their employment context ( $n=14$ ) (Levin & Hernandez, 2014). Levin and Hernandez examined narratives drawn from a larger set of 60 interview transcripts from both full-time and adjunct faculty. The transcripts of interviews with faculty identified emergent topics and linkages in the data. In their instructional assignments in classrooms, adjunct faculty members viewed their position as experts. Outside the classroom, when adjunct faculty members reflected on their position within the larger institutional and social context, they viewed themselves as undervalued based on their working conditions. The working conditions included: (a) low salaries, (b) extended periods of work, (c) excessive workloads, (d) no physical space allocated to them on campus, and (e) limited or nonexistent participation in institutional matters (Levin & Hernandez, 2014).

Jolley, Cross, and Bryant (2014) conducted research on adjunct faculty experiences regarding assessment practices and the challenges that adjuncts face. This qualitative study explored the experiences of adjunct community college faculty concerning the assessment processes of their institutions. Through interviews, the researchers gathered data identifying what adjunct faculty reported regarding teaching conditions and institutional assessment procedures ( $n=20$ ). The sample was a non-random convenience sample generated through social media and word of mouth. The

respondents in the survey taught in community colleges across the country. Nearly all participants taught as an adjunct faculty member as a primary source of employment. Most of the respondents taught for more than 10 years; one individual was in his 50th year of service (Jolley et al., 2014).

Jolley et al. (2014) completed interviews, recording responses on a 16-item research protocol through phone interviews lasting from 20 minutes to 1 hour. Researchers transcribed the recorded interview sessions and submitted digital copies for member checking. After participants approved the transcripts as valid, the research team analyzed each transcript individually using open and axial coding to identify significant categories and themes. Researchers also used cross-case analysis to identify other similar themes (Jolley et al., 2014).

Jolley et al. (2014) discovered two principal experiential themes. One was the overwhelming perception of lack of engagement and lack of assessment. Student evaluations were the only professional assessment that the adjunct received. Furthermore, the questions on the student evaluations were perceived by the adjunct faculty as being more geared towards full-time faculty. The adjunct faculty responded with powerful narratives of their perceptions of being invisible, unimportant, and lacking a recognized voice in any decision-making on campus. Increasingly, responsibilities of teaching and demands for increased student learning affected both full-time and adjunct faculty (Jolley et al., 2014). There were many differences between the two groups in their perceived support regarding physical space, raises, and pay scale. Within this study, unrecognized professional identity was a recurrent theme and disengagement of the adjunct faculty appeared to be the result (Jolley et al., 2014).

## **Effect on Students**

Jaeger and Eagan (2011) conducted a study to identify possible causes of student drop-out rates and the relationship of hiring adjunct faculty at community colleges. The quantitative study used Hierarchical Generalized Linear Modeling (HGLM) to examine how exposure to adjunct faculty relates to a student's likelihood of transferring to a 4-year college, completing coursework, or dropping out of college or university. Drawing from two cohorts of first-time, credit-seeking students in 2000 and 2001, Jaeger and Eagan tracked the college attendance behavior of the system's students over 5- years. There was an overall sample of nearly 1.5 million students in 107 community colleges in California (Jaeger & Eagan, 2011). To supplement the student-level data, they merged institutional data from IPEDS into the institutional dataset. The dependent variable transfer represented whether a student transferred within 5- years of initially enrolling in the system of community colleges. Demographic characteristics included gender, race/ethnicity, age, and citizenship (Jaeger & Eagan, 2011).

Some students in the sample had a range of no credits with adjunct faculty, while others had all of their credits taught by adjunct faculty. Students had an average 1st-year GPA of 3.10, and their cumulative GPA averaged 3.14 (Jaeger & Eagan, 2011). The average age of students in the analytic sample was 24 years. Among the institutional variables, adjunct faculty constituted 64% of all faculty across all the institutions in the system in 2003. The average proportion of instruction offered by adjunct faculty was 49% percent (Jaeger & Eagan, 2011).

The study suggested that exposure to adjunct faculty members had a modest but negative effect on students' chances of completion. They concluded that high exposure

to adjunct instructors in the community colleges resulted in at least a 5% decrease in the likelihood that students would graduate with an associate's degree. Eagan and Jaeger suggested that institutions have the ability to remedy these effects by improving conditions for adjunct faculty (Eagan & Jaeger, 2011).

Jacoby (2006) conducted a quantitative study that examined whether student graduation rates at community colleges were lower when adjunct faculty employment was higher. This study used institutional data, including graduation rates, provided by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) within its Integrated Postsecondary Data System (IPEDS). The data were assembled from all 1,209 public 2-year colleges in the 50 states for the year 2001. Multiple regression analysis was used to test whether graduation rates at public community colleges varied as schools increased their dependence on adjunct faculty. In the absence of a single agreed upon measure for the community college graduation rate, identical analyses were performed using three dependent variables of community college performance: IPEDS graduation rate, the net graduation rate, and the overall degree ratio.

The main result from this study was that an increase in the ratio of the adjunct faculty to full-time faculty at community colleges has a highly significant and negative impact on graduation rates. The overall results from six regressions testing two models on each graduation measure were all highly significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Jacoby, 2006). While a more detailed study is needed, Jacoby (2006) believes that the dangers in expanding the use of adjunct faculty appear to outweigh benefits. It is likely that negative effects on student graduation rates are the consequence of multiple impediments inherent in hiring adjunct faculty (Jacoby, 2006).

## **Institutional Support**

Diegel (2013) researched the levels of support that adjunct faculty receive from their institution. Using a qualitative phenomenological study to understand the perceptions of similarities and differences among three division chairpersons and 15 adjunct faculty members at one community college, the three separate departments answered questions regarding teaching support, mentoring, and professional development opportunities. The community college had approximately 10,500 students and 284 adjunct faculty members during the time of the study. Adjunct faculty comprised approximately 30% of the entire teaching population.

The sample consisted of chairpersons from three academic divisions, along with five current adjunct faculty from each of their respective divisions. Diegel (2013) held interviews with the chairpersons, and focus groups were conducted with the adjunct faculty. The divisions included humanities, English, and science (Diegel, 2013).

The data from the interviews and the focus groups were transcribed verbatim via phenomenological data analysis. The first part of phenomenological data analysis coded the descriptive narratives, and the second part of the analysis required reviewing the data and performing open coding (Diegel, 2013).

Professional development was not offered through any of the divisions, because the college had a Faculty Center for Teaching Excellence (FCTE). Because this community college had such a large adjunct faculty population, the FCTE's main purpose was to orient and assist adjunct faculty. Upon hire, adjuncts received an orientation to the FCTE as a centralized place where they could prepare for their classes, use the computer, attend professional development workshops on improving pedagogy and

classroom management skills, and exchange teaching ideas with other adjunct faculty (Diegel, 2013).

Within the divisions, adjunct faculty gained support from their chairperson, because they perceived him/her to value and respect their teaching. The adjuncts enjoyed their part-time role, because the chair people were available and communicative, encouraging them to implement new activities in their classes. Also, there was a formal mentoring program in place in the department (Diegel, 2013).

Thirolf (2013) conducted a qualitative study to analyze the voices of adjunct faculty to determine how they make sense of their professional identity in a community college. The researcher built on a previous study (Thirolf, 2012) where she had interviewed three new adjunct faculty recently hired at a community college. All three of the adjuncts had expressed interest in a full-time position if it were offered to them. The author incorporated second-round interviews with the same adjuncts 1.5- years after the initial interviews. She studied how the faculty identities evolved over time using discourse analysis methods. The second round of semi-structured interviews revealed two main themes on the ways in which faculty identities of the adjunct faculty evolved. First, it was apparent that at the core of the adjunct faculty's identities was their love for teaching and students. However, these feelings subsided over time. Second, the adjunct faculty views of their identity indicated that the lack of positive connections with other faculty members led to a diminished sense of professional identity (Thirolf, 2013). The results suggest that perhaps faculty development opportunities would lessen the feelings of frustration and isolation that were apparent in the second interviews.

Jacoby (2005) conducted a quantitative single institution case study to determine whether part-time adjuncts desire full-time teaching appointments. The quantitative study used a survey of adjunct faculty from a medium-size community college in Washington (n=116). The survey consisted of 41 questions covering current and recent employment conditions, preferences for hours of work, experience, current income and sources, perceptions of teaching environment and conditions, and personal data. The data analysis used logistic regression to demonstrate which variables significantly predict that an adjunct faculty member desires full-time work. The independent variables theorized to influence the variables included characteristics such as age, gender, family structure, teaching experience, income drawn from nonteaching sources, and faculty perceptions of satisfactory employment alternatives (Jacoby, 2005).

Jacoby's results showed that 55% of the participants preferred full-time appointments, but only 46% said they would seek out that full-time appointment. Only 33% of respondents expected to become full-time faculty in the future. Jacoby (2005) interpreted this as symptomatic of discouragement on the part of the part-time faculty. Further, 67% of respondents disagreed with the survey question stating they have adequate job security.

Lightner and Sipple (2013) conducted a quantitative study to determine the benefits of professional development for adjunct faculty at a community college. The researchers reviewed the professional development opportunities in on-going faculty learning communities. Lightner and Sipple (2013) used an online survey where 44% of all faculty responded. All responses were from faculty who had participated in a faculty learning community (FLC).



Lightner and Sipple (2013) studied the impact of FLCs on the faculty's professional lives with a survey that asked faculty about their satisfaction and the effect that FLCs had on their workload. The online survey had a Likert five-point scale. The benefits of FLCs to faculty included promoting scholarly teaching, intellectual stimulation, institutional problem-solving, professional credentials through scholarship, and decreased isolation. Overall, the survey revealed that faculty experiences with FLC were positive ( $m=4.27$ ,  $sd$  1.24). Faculty also reported that they would recommend the FLC to a colleague ( $sd=4.40$ ). They indicated that FLC experiences enhanced their teaching and other professional responsibilities. Faculty also showed benefits in relationships in the form of networking input from colleagues (Lightener & Sipple, 2013). The authors did not distinguish how many of the respondents were part-time. The authors also did not report if the adjuncts were financially compensated for professional development time.

### **Institutional Change**

Kezar and Sam (2014) conducted a qualitative study on the role of governance to create institutional change. They interviewed faculty leaders at 30 institutions that have made progress in meaningful and sustainable change for their adjunct faculty ( $N=45$ ). They utilized a two-part methodology of interview and document analysis. Kezar and Sam spoke with 29 adjunct faculty, 11 full-time faculty and six tenure-track faculty. Their interviews focused on the following information: (a) role of governance and institutional change towards inclusion of adjunct faculty; (b) exemplary governance practices and policies; (c) experience with governance, particularly challenges and opportunities for improving contingent faculty participation in governance; and (d) model

contract or handbook language they would recommend (Kezar & Sam, 2014). The institutions were a mix of different campus types but were weighted more to community colleges and unionized campuses.

Kezar and Sam (2014) conducted a study specifically interested in the role of governance and the potential for changes made for adjunct faculty. Kezar and Sam (2014) used Boyatzis' (1998) thematic analysis for inductive and deductive coding around key themes. One of the significant themes resulting from the study is that adjunct faculty believe that participation in governance activities is an unattainable goal, even though they believe participation in governance is a significant step in creating change. To the adjuncts, it was secondary to the challenges they face with working conditions, feelings of legitimacy for the group, and interaction opportunities to break down barriers between full-time and adjunct faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2014).

In recent research, Kezar & Maxey (2010) indicated that one of the reasons that it has been difficult to move forward with changes in working conditions of adjunct faculty has been the fact that the key stakeholder groups lack a shared vision for their future. In the absence of conversations regarding options or ideas around which changes might begin, practices have remained stagnant. Adjunct faculty have been shown to be consistently excluded from shared governance at institutions, and they are often not invited to attend departmental or institutional meetings open to other faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2014). Even on many campuses where adjunct faculty participate in governance, they have no voting rights or are only afforded a limited right to vote (Kezar & Sam, 2014).

Kezar and Sam (2010) conducted a meta-analysis to provide direction for practice by exploring emergent themes in the literature. They looked at various issues concerning professionalism and effectiveness. Kezar and Sam found that recent studies look at quantitative outcomes but are often unable to explain what the outcomes mean. Furthermore, most studies do not break down the differences between full-time and adjunct faculty. Kezar and Sam (2010) explored emergent themes in the literature relating to adjunct faculty. They looked at various issues concerning professionalism and effectiveness in recent studies by reviewing quantitative and qualitative studies. Studies show varying opinions regarding the current status of adjunct faculty. Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) maintained that the current mistreatment of adjunct faculty is just one result of the corporatization of higher education in the labor market.

Kezar and Sam (2011) suggested the need for studies to match theory to the phenomenon, to explore underlying assumptions, and to search for alternative explanations. Kezar & Sam (2011) meaningfully connected the need for different research and new theories, as existing theories have not proven adequate for explaining behavior and, worse, are perhaps creating problematic stereotypes that shape new negative realities. Because of pre-conceived notions, Kezar and Sam (2011) believed scholars of recent studies chose theories that are inaccurate. Further, the majority of the research was conducted using quantitative methods. They urged scholars to consider qualitative methods along with sociological theories such as professionalization to assist in understanding the behavior and experiences of adjunct faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2011).

Over a period of several decades, adjunct faculty have become the majority of instructional faculty among higher education institutions. Maxey and Kezar (2015)

reviewed the growing volume of research that pointed to poor working conditions and lack of support experienced by adjuncts as potential causal factors in adverse effects on student learning outcomes. Maxey and Kezar conducted a study that utilized a modified Policy Delphi approach to examine the perspectives of individuals representing a broad range of higher education stakeholder groups (e.g., boards, accreditation agencies, unions). They studied the causes and implications of rising contingency in the academic workforce (n=40) and identified conditions that are obstacles to change. This study led to a better understanding of factors influencing change in higher education. It also suggested how a set of consistent values and interests may be communicated by stakeholders to increase awareness and support for revising existing adjunct faculty practices (Maxey & Kezar, 2015).

Kezar and Sam (2010) focused on theories applied to study adjunct faculty and philosophical tensions represented in the literature. The analysis was broken up into a series of articles, "Theories Used to Study and Understand Non-Tenure-Track Faculty," "Tensions," and "Conclusion and Suggestions for Further Research." The first article reviewed theories applied to the study of adjunct faculty. All of the articles examined beliefs and assumptions critical for shaping policy and conceptualizing research. The authors reviewed the research on productivity, cost-effectiveness, student outcomes, and the effects of the rising number of adjunct faculty. Their findings indicated that policy-making regarding adjunct faculty will likely be more effective after productive discussion with and understanding of this group. Additionally, they provided conclusions related to earlier articles that provided ideas for future research.

## **Chapter Summary**

The current literature review addressed studies related to the following four themes: characteristics of adjunct faculty, adjunct faculty job satisfaction, institutional support, and institutional change. The studies that were reviewed depicted an upward trend in researchers attempting to understand the need for positive changes for adjuncts in higher education. This review has shown that institutions have a responsibility to make changes to acknowledge and recognize adjuncts as positive contributors to quality higher education for the benefit of students (Hoyt, 2012). Chapter 3 details the interview design methodologies, research context, participants, data collection, and data analysis for the current study.

## **Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the current study was to explore the lived experiences of adjunct faculty who teach in community colleges. The growth of community college enrollment has exceeded that of 4-year institutions, in part due to open access and lower tuition costs (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). There are a myriad of challenges facing higher education, such as ongoing budget constraints and decreased resources. These combined factors may have caused many community colleges to rely increasingly on adjuncts (Kezar & Sam, 2011). The need for fully incorporating adjunct faculty into academic life is particularly crucial for community colleges. Adjunct faculty, in large numbers, are an important resource for representing the college to students and stakeholders (Gappa & Leslie, 2010). Limited research exists that focuses on understanding the lived experience of adjunct faculty at community colleges. These issues underscore the urgency of fully understanding all of the factors that affect the fundamental academic mission of educating students in a community college and the implications that these experiences may have on student success. Therefore, new research findings may increase institutions' awareness of the need for institutional change as it relates to adjunct faculty and student success (Kezar & Maxey, 2014).

The current study used qualitative methods in the form of a phenomenological study. A phenomenological approach focuses on the intrinsic nature of an experience (Creswell, 2013). The term "lived experience" is used in phenomenological studies to

highlight the importance of experiences of study participants as perceiving human beings (Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, the phenomenology technique signifies an approach that pays close attention to how the people being studied experience the world.

In this study's phenomenological approach, semi-structured interviews were utilized to describe and understand aspects of the adjunct faculty's experiences teaching in a community college. Adjunct faculty who have taught for at least two semesters in a State University of New York (SUNY) community college were interviewed, as they were believed to be familiar with the culture and practices of the institutions in which they teach. The current study specifically focused on adjuncts who desired full-time teaching appointments and may be looking for support and recognition in a stable career opportunity.

Research questions are developed to guide the direction of the study (Creswell, 2013). The research questions must align with the problem, purpose, and literature review. The research questions for this phenomenological study were:

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts?

The advantage of a qualitative design is that it is an approach to inquiry that generates rich, detailed data that can provide multiple frameworks to understand the phenomenon being studied (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Additionally, a qualitative design enables one to obtain an understanding of the lived experience that cannot be developed using numerical data. The current study's qualitative phenomenological design yielded results that may be helpful in furthering new ways of understanding the perspectives of adjunct faculty. Also, the design provides a complex view of relevant phenomena while interacting with each participant's own perspectives (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research allows for a deeper understanding of the experiences of individuals and the factors that may be influencing the phenomena (Creswell, 2013).

### **Research Context**

The nation's largest comprehensive public university system, The State University of New York (SUNY), was established in 1948. Since its founding, the SUNY system has evolved to meet the changing needs of New York's students, communities, and workforce. Today, the system includes research universities, liberal arts colleges, specialized and technical colleges, health science centers, and community colleges (SUNY.edu, 2016). Community colleges have an important role in society, because they are a gateway to postsecondary education for many underrepresented, low-income, and first-generation postsecondary students (AACC, 2012). There were over 440,000 students enrolled in a SUNY institution in the fall semester of 2016, and just over 220,000 were students enrolled in a SUNY community college (SUNY. edu, 2016).



## **Research Participants**

A population consists of individuals who have certain characteristics and are of interest to a researcher (Flick, 2014). The population of interest in the current study was adjunct faculty who had taught at least two academic semesters at a SUNY community college within Central New York. Adjunct faculty with at least two semesters teaching experience were interviewed, as they were believed to be familiar with the culture and practices of the institutions in which they teach. An additional inclusion criterion was that the participants desired full-time faculty positions.

Research participants were recruited using the researcher's current academic and professional circles, through the researcher's personal contacts, and as a source for the initial nomination of participants. From there, snowball sampling was used to identify additional research participants. In snowball sampling, one begins by identifying an individual who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study. Once this identification is accomplished, that individual is asked to recommend others they know who may also meet the criteria (Patton, 2002).

Creswell (2009) suggested that for phenomenological research, the sample should be small, five to 25, in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of participant experiences. The goal was to have between 10 and 15 adjunct faculty participate in the study. The plan was to continue interviews until saturation (the point at which no new data emerges) is reached (Creswell, 2013). Snowball sampling is a useful way to pursue the goals of purposive sampling in many situations where there are no lists or other obvious sources for locating members of the population of interest. However, this sampling method does require that the participants are likely to know others who share

the characteristics that make them eligible for inclusion in the study (Given, 2008). To achieve rich data and for snowball sampling to work, the number of participants in the study depends on the point at which data saturation is reached (Flick, 2014).

In practice, snowball sampling poses a distinct risk of capturing a biased subset of the total population of potential participants, because any eligible participants who are not linked to the original set of informants will not be accessible for inclusion in the study. According to Given (2008), the best defense against this possible bias is to begin with a set of initial adjuncts that is as diverse as possible. This variation on maximum diversity sampling increases the likelihood that the subsequent links in the snowballing process will reach different segments of the entire set of eligible participants.

Participants were contacted by the researcher in the order in which they responded to an e-mail inviting them to participate; their invitation was based on their nomination by a fellow adjunct. Interviews were scheduled based on locations and times that were convenient for the research participants to complete the interview.

Informed consent is a process that begins with the recruitment and screening of a participant and continues throughout the participant's involvement in the research. It includes: 1) providing specific information about the study to participants in a way that is understandable to them, 2) answering participants' questions to ensure that they understand the research and their role in it, 3) giving participants sufficient time to consider their decisions, and 4) obtaining the voluntary agreement of participants to take part in the study (Creswell, 2013). The initial consent is only to enter the study, as participants may withdraw at any time or decline to answer specific questions at any time during the research.

The participants were assured that confidentiality would be maintained by the removal of any identifying information such as names, schools, locations, and dates. Interviews were not conducted at the researcher's workplace, as this might raise questions as to whether the data collected would be accurate and objective (Creswell, 2013). Informed consent was provided by the participants. The participants were not paid for their participation. Ethical considerations were incorporated.

According to The Belmont Report (1979), there are four ethical principles that guide researchers to protect participants in research. These are:

- Autonomy – respecting persons,
- Maleficence – do no harm,
- Beneficence – doing good while maximizing benefits and minimizing risk, and
- Justice – being equitable.

The research was carried out in compliance with the ethical guidelines of the Belmont Report. To promote justice, no participant was excluded based on race, ethnicity, or religion. To ensure autonomy, the purpose of the study was explained and participation was voluntary. Participants were informed of study protocols and were informed that they may discontinue the interview at any time. The study participants then provided written informed consent for study participation. To foster beneficence and avoid maleficence, the study was designed to ensure that no major risks were anticipated for the participants. However, minor risks may apply, including psychological discomfort, embarrassment, or distress, if the participant were to recount difficult situations that they have experienced.

## **Instruments to be Used in Data Collection**

The role of the researcher is to serve as the main instrument for data collection and analysis in this qualitative phenomenological approach (Creswell, 2013). Creswell (2013) advised developing interview questions that are open-ended, general, and focused on understanding the central phenomenon in the study. The interview protocol used was similar to the protocol described by Creswell (2013). The guide sheet included: (a) a heading including the date, place, interviewer, and interviewee; (b) instructions for the interviewer to follow to ensure standard procedures; (c) questions, including any ice-breaker questions; (d) probes for the questions to follow up and ask participants to explain their ideas in more detail; (e) space between questions to record responses; and (f) a final thank-you statement to acknowledge the participants' generosity with their time.

After the participants had consented to participation in the study, qualitative data were generated through individual, semi-structured interviews. The interviews utilized a phenomenological approach to collect, interpret, and synthesize rich, descriptive responses to assist in the understanding of the phenomenon of interest (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). The flexible and interactive approach to the interview structure is intended to generate unbiased interviewees' accounts of their perspectives, perceptions, experiences, understandings, interpretations, and interactions (Flick, 2014). Reliance on the use of open-ended questions provided the researcher with "quotations which reveal the respondents' levels of emotion, the way in which they have organized the world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions" (Patton,

2002). The interviews were all conducted in quiet locations. Both the design and methods of interviewing are linked to the purpose and research questions of the study.

The interview should be a positive experience for the interviewee. “A well-conducted research interview may be a rare and enriching experience for the subject, who may obtain new insights into his or her life situation” (Brinkman, & Kvale, 2015, p.34). Giving back to participants for their time and efforts in studies is important to the ethical concept of beneficence. The publication of the findings of this study will offer guidance to college administrators to facilitate change within community colleges, thereby benefitting society at large.

Open-ended questions are primarily used in qualitative research to allow participants to answer in their own words and allow the researcher the flexibility to probe more deeply and encourage expansion of responses. The questions and requests for information for the study are below:

#### Interviewee background questions

- How long have you taught as adjunct faculty?
- How many institutions have you served as an adjunct?
- What is your highest degree?
- Do you have a full-time, non-teaching job?
- Are you married?
- What is your age range, 20-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50- 60, 60+?
- Do you have children under the age of 18?

#### Interview Questions

- Tell me about your expectations as adjunct faculty.

- Tell me about your experiences as adjunct faculty.
- What are some of the most challenging aspects of your experience serving as adjunct faculty?
- What specific supports or practices would you like from the institution in which you teach?

The questions changed and became more refined during the research process to reflect an increased understanding of the problem. The open-ended questions were pilot-tested with subjects not involved in the study (Saldana, 2011). A pilot test of the interview questions was conducted by selecting two adjunct faculty members who have worked at a community college for many years. These individuals reviewed the questions to ensure that they were clear; they also provided the investigator with extensive feedback as to the relevance of the questions.

The interviews with participants in this study were conducted face-to-face with each participant, were scheduled in advance, and took place at a time and location of mutual convenience. 2- days before the scheduled interviews, a reminder e-mail was sent to the participants reminding them of the date, time, and location of the interview.

The interviews were audiotaped, transcribed, and stored on a password protected external hard drive. The interviews were taped on the researcher's personal Voice Memo iPhone application and downloaded to the external hard drive to transfer to the transcriptionist. The transcriptionist did not have access to the participant identities. The voice memos were deleted from the password protected iPhone after transfer to the external hard drive. After a minimum of 3- years following the conclusion of the study, the voice memos will be destroyed. To ensure that all materials are kept confidential, all

information was stored in a password protected file on the principal investigator's laptop secured in her home office. Participant numbers were used to identify audiotapes and notes. The key that links the participants' names with participant ID numbers was kept separate in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's residence. Names did not appear in the researcher's notes and names were not heard within or associated with the audiotapes. A research journal was used to keep track of interview appointments, the length of interviews, any observations made during the interviews, and any of the researcher's thoughts occurring before, during, or after the interviews. The research journal was secured in the locked file cabinet at the researcher's residence. Dates and times of transcriptions were listed on an Excel spreadsheet. The notes in the journal have ID numbers in place of participant names to ensure confidentiality.

Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) discussed validity as quality control that optimizes the quality of the research through checking, questioning and interpreting the findings. Member checks allow each of the research participants to review and sign off on the accuracy of their interview transcripts (Lindolf, 1995). Each of the research participants was emailed a copy of their interview transcripts and was requested to corroborate or disapprove the accuracy of the data. Four out of 10 participants responded with approval of the accuracy of the data collection. Member checking also provided the opportunity for participants to volunteer additional information (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015).

### **Data Analysis**

Merriam (2002) speaks to the notion of organizing or constructing reality in qualitative data analysis. She notes that qualitative research is based on the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. As such,

identifying and interpreting the reality of the research participants is the primary job of a researcher.

One process crucial to interpreting data collected through qualitative methods of inquiry is coding — the progressive procedure of sorting and defining data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Coding allows researchers to glean knowledge from data in a self-reflective manner unique to their understanding. Coding can also help answer questions such as: What are the major themes? How do participants make sense of the world in which they live? What are the key happenings or events? How is a particular phenomenon manifested for those interviewed?

For the purpose of this study, data obtained via participant interviews were open-coded in accordance with recommendations for developing a coding system. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) suggest three steps for the proper coding of data: 1) search through the data to uncover regularities and patterns, 2) write down words and phrases which represent these patterns, and 3) organize these patterns into categories for coding (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The researcher read the transcripts several times to obtain an overall feeling of the participants' experiences. To ensure a deep understanding of the experiences recounted, the researcher also listened to the audio transcripts several times. Reading and re-reading the reflective and analytic memos of the interviews assisted the researcher in identifying significant phrases in the transcripts that related directly to the experience. From there, the codes were clustered into themes for all participants' transcripts. The researcher developed assertions and compiled data for each assertion by finding the data that best captured the themes in the transcripts. The assertions were



tested with peer review from other qualitative researchers who looked at the compiled data and gave their expert opinion.

In phenomenological research, the identification of themes and any “coding” or categorization of data is merely preparatory, in that it organizes data conveniently for a more in-depth, structural analysis that follows. Creswell (2013) discusses the process of interpreting the codes and themes beyond the larger meaning of the data.

While computer programs are aids for structuring interviews for further analysis, the responsibility for the interpretation of the data remains with the researcher (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). In this study, a computer program was used after manually coding to assist in analyzing the data. The processes for the analysis were presented by Saldaña (2013). Specifically, NVivo 11 software and analytic memo writing were used. NVivo software was used to generate word clouds and word frequency tables to assist with data analysis. Analytic memo writing helped to generate categories (Saldaña, 2013). Rich, detailed descriptions were identified from the codes and themes and showed the perspectives represented in the data. Final themes were determined by both their frequency and uniqueness to this study. By making connections within and across the data, an exhaustive description of the phenomenon was developed.

Brinkmann & Kvale (2015) state that the advantage of coding is the ability to see an overview of the data that is most useful. They also say that the disadvantage of coding is that some researchers believe that coding reduces meanings to simplistic categories. Results of the data analysis in the study were reported using a table or narrative discussion that displays an overview of the themes interpreted by the principal investigator.

## **Summary**

The purpose of the current qualitative research study was to improve understanding of the lived experiences of adjunct faculty teaching in community colleges within the SUNY system. This chapter provided an overview of the methods and approaches to explore the adjunct faculty's experiences and perceptions. Through literature review, a qualitative, phenomenological process was determined to be the most appropriate method to conduct the current study; this methodology led to a deeper understanding of the adjunct faculty's lived experiences and provided information that may lead to changes to institutional practices concerning adjuncts. Chapter 4 describes the study findings regarding the adjunct faculty's lived experiences within a community college, in terms of their perceptions of belonging and support. Study conclusions are presented in Chapter 5.

## **Chapter 4: Results**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of adjunct faculty who teach in upstate New York Community Colleges. The growth of community college enrollment has exceeded that of 4-year institutions, in part, due to open access and lower tuition costs (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). There are a myriad of challenges facing higher education, such as ongoing budget constraints and decreased resources. These factors have caused many community colleges to rely increasingly on adjuncts (Kezar & Sam, 2011). The need for fully incorporating adjunct faculty into academic life is particularly crucial for community colleges. Improved understanding of the lived experiences of the adjunct faculty will assist institutions in implementing practices that integrate adjunct faculty into the fabric of each institution. The subsequent institutional improvements will further strengthen the learning environment for students.

The current study used a convenience sampling method, and 10 adjunct faculty from four Central New York SUNY community colleges participated in the study. Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews using open-ended questions. Each participant engaged in an individual 45-minute interview with the researcher.

### **Research Participants**

Table 4.1 illustrates a summary of the participants' demographics. The participants were recruited from four Central New York Community Colleges. with

respondents from different departments: Business (two males and two females), Computer Technology (one female), English (one male and two females), Criminal Justice (two males), and Science (one male). All of the study participants had taught at their institution for at least 5-years. There were no differences based on the demographics of the study participants' experiences or recommendations for institutional change. Differences in their expectations of recognition was perceived based on gender and will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Table 4.1

*Demographics of Interview Respondents: Background Characteristics (n = 10)*

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Participants n (%)</u>
<b>Gender</b>	
Female	6 (60%)
Male	4 (40%)
<b>Length of Employment</b>	
5-10 years	6 (60%)
10-15 years	3 (30%)
15-20 years	1 (10%)
<b>Age</b>	
30-40	3 (30%)
40-50	3 (30%)
50-60	3 (30%)
60+	1 (10%)
<b>Highest Degree</b>	
Associate's	1 (10%)
Bachelor's	1 (10%)
Master's	8 (80%)

## Study Findings

Chapter 4 reports the findings of the study, which are derived from the guiding research questions:

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts for their contributions?

This chapter is organized into three categories and eight themes that emerged from the research questions. The first category, *expectations*, incorporates three themes: (a) *inclusion* (b) *inspiring students*, and (c) *upward trajectory*. The second category, *experiences*, incorporates three themes: (a) *communication*, (b) *socialization*, and (c) *challenges*. The third and final category, *institutional support*, incorporates two themes: (a) *recognition*, (b) *professional development*.

**Research Question 1: expectations.** The first research question, *expectations*, emerged across the participant's responses, which were remarkably similar to their initial expectations as adjunct faculty in a community college. The participants described their desire to share knowledge with students, to be a part of academia, and to eventually be

hired full-time. The three themes identified under this category include: (a) inclusion (b) inspiring students, and (c) upward trajectory.

Most of the participants remembered not having any expectations for the institution. Participant 1 stated, “I didn’t have a lot of expectations, the first time I ever taught was the 1st-year experience and I was given training to teach that course, a copy of the syllabus, the template, and then I was able to sit in on someone else’s class, I didn’t know what to expect basically” (p. 1). Participant 2 agreed, “Honestly I didn’t have any expectation at all, I didn’t know what to expect because I was teaching for the first time” (p. 2).

“I didn’t know a lot about it and I had very little teaching training. My expectations, you know, I didn’t have a ton of expectations, I don’t know what this is going to be like” (Participant 5, p.1).

“I had just graduated my Master’s program and I didn’t really know what to expect but I thought it would, I certainly didn’t expect to be in it 7-years still as an adjunct” (Participant 7, p.1). Participant 8 said, “Career-wise, I didn’t have high expectations as an adjunct because my mentor in graduate school always said that it was a dead-end street and I don’t disagree because I’ve been doing it for 18 years” (p.1).

***Inclusion.*** Most participants noted the need for more emphasis on the integration of adjunct faculty into the fabric of the institution.

I had an interview and I liked the two people I interviewed with and they were excited and hired me and if I had not contacted them I could have just started teaching with no interaction really. I ended up requesting a syllabus and course outlines and things and asking for direction. So I would say my expectations was

I thought there would be a little more formality. I also thought there would honestly be more assessment of what I was doing (Participant 5, p. 1).

I wasn't sure, I didn't know, I was just kind of thrown in with no guidance, no knowledge of how to create lesson plans, no knowledge of how to do anything teaching, I mean I knew how to command a class, I knew how to pull students in, but I didn't know what else to do (Participant 7, p.1).

Additionally, Participant 6 stated, "Basically to have a basic outline of a course that I would be teaching and typically whether a book or any course would be discussed and class size, location, and my preferences of teaching" (p. 1). Participant 8 noted, "My expectations were that I would be incorporated into the department and included as much as possible, that I would not have much say in the classes I got because I was an adjunct and I would take table scraps, but that I would get to teach and I did" (p. 1).

"The department has been very welcoming but I lost classes right before the semester started or had been given classes right before classes started which made it difficult at times" (Participant 8, p. 2).

There's a sense of uncertainty, declining enrollment, when will I teach again? ... for the adjunct it may be their livelihood being an adjunct, do they need to start seeking out other institutions if they want to teach or can they have their teaching load met in one place? That's more economy than it is the institution, because I think that's just reality of the life of an adjunct (Participant 2, p. 5).

***Inspiring students.*** Most of the participants mentioned the students only briefly in their responses to questions, but when the subject of students came up, the participants stated to the researcher that the students are the reason why they teach. Many of the

adjunct faculty think of the institution separately from the students. One participant said, “All of my reward comes from my students. . . . And it doesn’t come very much from the institution” (Participant, 8, p. 6).

“I just thought it would be something that would be interesting, that I could share some knowledge with people”. “I love my students as I said; that’s why I do it” (Participant 8, p. 9).

I know how important it is to sustain that student enrollment throughout the semester and make sure that the students are more successful. So I feel like I have a personal deep knowledge of that and understand that if I’m not connected with the students then they’re not going to be connected to the institution (Participant 9, p. 5).

“Students have said “wow, you actually gave me a kudo about doing exceptionally well in the class”, and I see how that inspires them and invigorates them because they’re not getting it from other faculty, and the other thing is I don’t feel they’re getting it in their personal lives either” (Participant 9, p. 5).

***Upward trajectory.*** A common theme was the disappointment shared by many of the participants that there were not opportunities to be hired full-time. Some cited low enrollments, some blamed the number of applicants per position, and one said she heard a college leader say in an open forum that “the institution does not owe adjuncts anything” (Participant 6, p.5).

“It was something that I really loved and I thought that I would retire into this job field so just getting my foot in the door is something I really wanted to do” (Participant 3, p. 1).



“I also am realistic about never being full time, but I do notice there are some things, there are some limitations. I am just unable to attend some major staff development stuff because it’s not compensated and it’s just hard” (Participant 10, p. 7).

There is a lack of ability to move up and to excel, to move up at all ... No promotion ability. I’m an English teacher, there hasn’t been a full time position in 6-years and 125 people apply. How do I compete with that? maybe I will, I mean hopefully I’ll get an interview, I know the school, I know the students. ...In a perfect world that would be the normal trajectory. They are challenged with trajectory (Participant 8, p. 4)

**Research Question 2: experiences.** The second category, *experiences*, emerged as a multifaceted category where the participants replied to the question, Tell me about your experiences as adjunct faculty? Their experiences recounted an overall picture of a lack of belonging and community within their institutions. The three themes identified under this category include: (a) *communication*, (b) *socialization*, and (c) *challenges*.

**Communication.** There is a distinct lack of communication within the institution as per the participants interviewed. The lack of communication includes specific opportunities, notice of upcoming activities, and an absence of any feedback for the adjunct on how they are perceived to be performing.

“We have e-mail that we usually don’t use, I’m always saying we don’t know when things are happening because we don’t even look at it” (Participant 3, p. 3).

“Each department program coordinator is supposed to go in the class and observe the teachers at least once a year and have communication with the adjunct. I’ll tell you in 10- years I wasn’t observed once”. “They do have end of year surveys for the kids to fill

out and mine were always superior but that doesn't say that anybody even knew how I taught" (Participant 3, p. 3).

"So it seems the more regular you teach as an adjunct in a certain situation you not only find out but you take it upon yourself to be part of things going on to keep up with everything" (Participant 6, p. 2).

"I would say there's some general reminders to do your books.... But there isn't a real steady e-mail communication or any other communication" (Participant 5, p.4).

Participant 2 states the need for better communication, "Within the institution better communication needs to happen and I'm not talking about a newsletter, I'm talking about specific points of information" (p. 5). Participants that are more informed and communicated with formally and informally may be more content in their role as an adjunct faculty.

***Socialization.*** Socialization is the process by which someone is transformed from being an outsider to an insider. Adjunct faculty members who are socialized may feel personally invested into the department and institution in which they work. Participants in this study highlighted the important role that the lack of teacher evaluations play in the lack of socialization and the sense of isolation. Participant 5 further underscored how the lack of teacher evaluations demonstrated a lack of communication between adjunct faculty and their department, "I have been a little surprised at the lack of assessment. I don't get a report that you're doing a good job or whatever, I do hear that I'm doing a good job and they want me to continue which is nice but there's nothing in the books" (Participant 5, p.4). Similarly, Participant 10 stated, "I'll tell you in ten years I wasn't

observed once” (p. 4). “I would really like to be evaluated. I think that, again it’s a no brainer to me, I haven’t been evaluated in years” (Participant 10, p. 8).

“It has been an almost universally positive and good experience being an adjunct. I’m starting to feel a little limited now. I feel like there are just some things I’m not part of because I’m an adjunct and I feel like that’s starting to wear on me a little bit” (Participant 10, p.7).

Adjunct faculty consistently expressed the need for having a place to call their own — either to work with students or to store their belongings.

“They jam us into two huge rooms down at the end of the hall for all the adjuncts and that’s it, there’s no offices at all for adjuncts, there’s space, there’s computers in there, it’s nice but there’s nothing personal, no feeling of privacy, they’re gigantic rooms with a bunch of chairs” (Participant 3, p. 3).

“You know it is fine for tenured faculty to have office space with dedicated office hours but my office hours pretty much translate to e-mails from calls and in between classes, or after classes or before classes if the student reaches out to me” (Participant 9, p. 8). Participant 7 said of her institution, “They tend to give the adjuncts an office space and I’d say they kind of do a good job, we’re spread out all over everywhere, wherever they can find an office space and that’s fine. It’s really the only office space I’ve had that’s my space that I can go to and shut the door and work” (p. 4).

Some participants noted a distinct lack of collegiality within their institutions. This perceived lack of collegiality included disrespect and tension between full-time and adjunct faculty.

“Interaction between faculty and adjuncts is horrible, absolutely deplorable. I don’t even know these people; I don’t know their names and I have been here for 10 years. The adjuncts come and go, the faculty are a very small group, they’re tight, they hang out together, they go to dinner together and they don’t really know the adjunct faculty that come in and out....” (Participant 3, p. 3).

“In terms of treatment sometimes full-time faculty talk down to you and I can hear the condescension in their voice, even though they may not be aware of it. It’s more along the lines of you have this problem, are you sure you’re handling it correctly?”

“I find because I teach developmental and as we’ve talked about, developmental courses are often given to adjuncts because full timers don’t want them. But I find that because I teach developmental the assumption of the full-time faculty is I can’t teach anything else” (Participant 7, p.15).

When I first was hired here it was over the summer, and I had applied many times and they said, no we don’t need anybody. So I finally figured out the class schedule for the upcoming semester there were two English 10 classes, wrote them down, course numbers, and went to the assistant dean and said here’s my resume. I want to teach these classes and he said okay, you’re hired (Participant 8, p. 6).

When I first started I didn’t get training, a couple years later they had people that got into different positions and they did create a training for adjuncts; where to get copies and what do you do if you want tests locked up. I figured it out by going through and knocking on doors and asking (Participant 4, p.3).

“I think because I have been proactive and involved voluntarily in certain things, people know who I am and they reach out to me” (Participant 10 p. 3). Participant 9 discussed the need for self-advocacy and persistence in their role as an adjunct faculty:

So I want to think resources are there if one would know to ask about them and I think too if you take the initiative to think being an adjunct faculty can be a challenge because I’m juggling my personal life and I’m juggling my teaching life. I’m a person where if I want to make it happen I know I can make it happen if I find the time and ask the right questions and find the right resources. I can kind of teach myself, then to find out that there’s faculty that are here full time that don’t use it or see the value in it. (p. 4). Participant 5 echoed the need for self-advocacy and persistence with the following statement:

I think sometimes as an adjunct you’re told certain things but you really do need to ask to get all the details or questions answered that are in your mind, you’re not always told. Persistence and involvement in things other than just the classes you’re teaching is I think important because then you get a picture of the entire picture of what’s going on and that alone can answer some questions (p. 2).

**Challenges.** Adjuncts teaching in a community college face many challenges with inconsistent class scheduling, lack of professional development, and underprepared students. “In a community college setting, the breadth and depth of the challenges the students face can be overwhelming, I think from a challenge standpoint it’s just really getting a better sense of the support services that are available to students” (Participant 2, p. 3).

“Students, they don’t know who are adjuncts and who are full-time faculty, they don’t have a clue. And if they do know, it’s usually because they’re having a bad experience and the person is really disconnected, and we’ve heard some of that stuff, but the ones that are good the students have no idea; they’re there just as much as the full timers (Participant 5, p. 8).

“Finding an administrator and getting their attention, then finding the time to communicate with you, one on one, not like “hey, how are you doing?” I don’t want to be babied but at the same time ...” (Participant 7, p. 7).

“Sometimes I feel like, “hey, I’m here, don’t talk over me, don’t talk down to me, I’ve been doing this for 7- years. I’m not a child, I know how to do this”. It is almost a feeling of being invisible. It’s hard to absorb sometimes” (Participant 7, p. 7).

Not knowing my schedule, that’s the hardest thing. I was told if I wanted to teach in the fall, and again this is after all these years, I had to attend this training, this on course training. So again, 8:00 to 5:00, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 2-weekends ago that’s where I was without pay, I still don’t have my schedule it’s been almost 2- weeks and I still don’t know what I’m teaching (Participant 8, p. 8). I guess it’s safe to say a feeling of belonging as part of the institution is lacking. I was speaking to a friend of mine. We were talking about a really cool event that was happening and I said oh I didn’t hear anything about that, and she said, “aren’t you full time?” I said “no, I’m an adjunct” and she said, “well that’s why, it’s only for full time” (Participant 7, p. 8).

“I think there’s a couple different challenges. I think the first one is obviously getting feedback in terms of the quality of my teaching. It would be good to get positive

feedback. I mean what I get in terms of reinforcement is just the students buy-in” (Participant 9, p. 12).

“Adjuncts that are piecing together an existence from different institutions are on the fringes every single place they go to teach a class and don’t bring home more than \$24,000 a year. There are some adjuncts that are working to live” (Participant 9, p.14).

**Research Question 3: institutional support.** The third category, *institutional support*, generated possible institutional practices based on the participants’ replies to the question, what specific supports or practices would you like from the institution in which you teach? The two themes identified under this category include: (a) *recognition*, and (b) *professional development*.

**Recognition.** The lack of a process to integrate adjunct faculty was the prevailing thought in the participants’ replies. “My perception of what higher education or administration they don’t even know you’re there, the class is getting taught” (Participant, 7 p. 8).

“They usually have a holiday party and every year since I’ve been there they have it and you pay your own way and it’s a nice thing. This year they didn’t have it. I mean there’s just such a feeling, I mean really, it costs the college nothing and you’re not going to have a holiday get together” (Participant, 7 p. 8).

“So, I think more colleges need to implement recognitions ... without calling it adjunct recognition or full-time faculty recognition, keep it all together” (Participant 7, p. 15).

I talk to people and I think one of the biggest things is they’re more integrated into the regular college systems would be an improvement. Adjuncts are

welcome to attend everything but it's not always tailored to their schedules, and the challenge is always financial. I mean to me it all comes down to money really, the job is just not paid a lot and there's no benefits, there's no job security and it's a hard job and if that's your main income you know, that's a really sort of fragile way to make a living (Participant 5, p. 11).

Recognition ceremonies that would happen once a year suddenly don't recognize any adjuncts at all. Whether it's classroom specific or teaching specific, or campus-wide or other community events when adjuncts used to participate or had the opportunity to and suddenly aren't included; that's very noticeable and it's a huge morale problem (Participant 6, p. 4).

Human Resources starts opportunities for non-teaching things for you to feel part of the campus and then they sort of fizzle and they never get carried out, it's very noticeable. I think any campus that offers meetings or groups that adjuncts can be a part of non-classroom activities, wellness events or other things like that, if they have those on a regular basis there's an opportunity that's a good thing. If they start them they need to finish them or it's very noticeable. It leads to a lower sense of morale with adjuncts when activities are begun and then just go away. It makes it obvious adjuncts are not priority, so the intentions that start should be the intentions that are carried throughout and followed through on (Participant 6, p. 5).

***Professional development.*** Several participants expressed concern that, although they would like to attend the few professional opportunities available, their schedules do not allow them the flexibility to attend. Participants mentioned various reasons as to why



attendance was impossible. The reasons ranged from inconvenient times professional development is offered, lack of communication about offerings, and lack of compensation to attend.

Why not have an evening or a week or 2- days where the whole department comes together, you know, adjuncts, full time, administrators so all feel integrated, you're all in the same level, you're all learning how to do this. Instead of saying, "oh this is for full timers, this is for adjuncts, we're going to put you in separate corners so you don't associate" (Participant 7, p. 15).

"We'd really like staff development, like that's a huge thing for us. However, they do that, however that gets defined.... not just in compensating but inviting us and making it worthwhile for us to invest in our development" (Participant 10, p.9).

## **Summary**

The purpose of the current qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of adjunct faculty who teach in Central New York Community Colleges. This chapter incorporated three categories and eight themes that emerged from the research questions. The first category, expectations, incorporated three themes: (a) inclusion (b) inspiring students, and (c) upward trajectory. The second category, experiences, incorporated three themes: (a) communication, (b) socialization, and (c) challenges. The third and final category, institutional support, incorporated two themes: (a) recognition, (b) professional development.

The following, final chapter of the current study provides a further summary of the findings while also describing the study's limitations and the implications for further research.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the current study was to use the voice of adjunct faculty to gain insight into their lived experiences and their expectations of support and recognition by the institutions that they serve. Support and recognition of adjunct faculty is important because adjuncts are highly influential in their role of teaching the majority of students in community colleges. Information gained from the current study could lead to institutional practices that embrace adjuncts in the overall vision and mission of the institution, thereby increasing the loyalty and effectiveness of adjunct faculty. The more satisfied adjunct faculty are within their roles, the better they will represent the college to their students. This study utilized a qualitative phenomenological approach to describe and improve understanding of adjunct faculty's experience in SUNY community colleges.

As noted in Chapter 1, there is a gap in the literature of qualitative studies regarding adjunct faculty's voices and perspectives. Few studies exist that examine adjuncts at community colleges from a qualitative perspective. Research such as the current study could provide a greater understanding of adjunct faculty's perceptions as they relate to their feelings of value, respect, and support. Quantitative studies have shown that adjunct faculty want to be seen as educators. The findings from quantitative studies also demonstrate that adjunct faculty are committed professionals who want recognition of their status as educators, professional development opportunities to

increase their effectiveness in the classroom, and a feeling of being valued in their respected departments as adjunct faculty members (Dolan et al., 2013; Kramer et al., 2014). Indeed, in many cases, it appears that adjuncts remain in their jobs because of their attachment to their profession, despite the low economic rewards and the lack of recognition these positions offer.

A variety of researchers found that outside the classroom, when adjunct faculty members reflected on their position within the larger institutional context, they viewed themselves as undervalued based on their working conditions. The working conditions included: (a) low salaries, (b) extended periods of work, (c) excessive workloads, (d) no physical space allocated to them on campus, and (e) limited or nonexistent participation in institutional matters. Additionally, lack of appropriate “terms of employment” and “respect and inclusion” were factors associated with job dissatisfaction (Feldman, 2001; Levin & Hernandez, 2014; Waltman et al., 2012). Studies conducted using qualitative methods also corroborated the findings from the current study

Based on the problem statement and a review of the literature, the following research questions guided the current study:

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?

3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts for their contributions?

Open-ended questions were used in the current study. Open-ended questions are primarily used in qualitative research to allow participants to answer in their own words and allow the researcher the flexibility to probe more deeply and encourage expansion of responses. After the participants answered interview questions, member- checking was conducted, yielding positive responses that confirmed the accuracy of the transcription.

For this study, data obtained via participant interviews was open-coded in accordance with recommendations for developing a coding system. Axial coding was used to cluster the codes into themes from all participants' transcripts. The researcher developed assertions and compiled data for each assertion by finding the data that best captured the themes in the transcripts. The assertions were tested with peer review from other qualitative researchers.

The current chapter summarizes the research process that was utilized to learn more about adjunct faculty's perceptions of support and belonging, specifically reflecting the views of adjunct faculty who teach in community colleges in Central New York. The research findings are discussed, and implications for institutional changes to support and recognize adjunct faculty are explored. Recommendations, limitations of the study, and a conclusion are presented within this chapter.

### **Implications of Findings**

This chapter discusses the three categories and eight themes that emerged from addressing the research questions. The first category, expectations, incorporates three

themes: (a) inclusion (b) inspiring students, and (c) upward trajectory. The second category, experiences, incorporates three themes: (a) communication, (b) socialization, and (c) challenges. The third and final category, institutional support, incorporates two themes: (a) recognition and (b) professional development.

**Expectations.** The first research question, related to adjunct faculty's expectations, elicited thoughtful replies from the participants. Many of the participants stated that they had no expectation of the institution prior to teaching. After some additional thought, many of the participants described their desire to share knowledge with students, to be part of academia, and to be hired full-time eventually. The three themes identified under this category include: (a) inclusion (b) inspiring students, and (c) upward trajectory.

**Inclusion.** Most of the participants noted the need for more emphasis on the integration of adjunct faculty into the fabric of the institution. They reported that after a few years at their respective institutions, they had expected to be more fully included than they currently are. "Disheartening" was a word used by a few of the participants to describe adjuncts' feelings regarding their lack of inclusion. In the current study, 100% of the participants had more than 5-years of continuous teaching at their respective institutions. Similarly, Leslie and Gappa (2002) found that adjunct faculty typically had 5 or more years of continuous teaching at their current institutions.

Adjunct faculty in the current study noted that adjuncts reported feeling that their contributions are limited to their immediate classrooms, with little effort made by full-time faculty members or administrators to include them into campus life. Some of the participants reported volunteering their own time for communication with students,

advising students, and attending professional development opportunities. The institutions are missing an opportunity to support adjuncts in their quest to become valued members of their institutions by not providing these opportunities. Spaniel and Scott (2013) shared the finding that there are many adjunct faculty members who want to participate more fully and be more deeply engaged.

***Inspiring students.*** Most of the study participants mentioned their students when describing their experiences. All of the participants stated that the students are the reason why they teach, as if this reason was self-evident. Many of the adjunct faculty reported that they think of the institution separately from the students. They told discouraging stories regarding the challenges faced by today's students. Participants recounted stories of students who ate only when they went to the campus food pantry, homeless students, and many single students who were caregivers with young children. Adjuncts genuine and heartfelt need to make a difference in students' lives was evident in many of their anecdotal stories about the students. The participants took pride in the successes of the students they teach but stated that they held tenuous positions in their relationship with the institution. To sum up, adjuncts do not feel connected to their institutions; their feelings of belonging come from their students.

***Upward trajectory.*** Disappointment was a common theme shared by many of the participants; they report that there are not many opportunities available for being hired full-time. There were a few participants who had interviewed for available full-time positions, only to be passed over. In addition, they did not receive explanations or feedback as to why they had not been hired for the full-time position. Many of the adjuncts believed that because they had served as an adjunct for several years, there was a

perception on the part of the institution that they were not deserving of a full-time position. In contrast, some of the participants believed that the longer they taught at the institution, the more likely it would be that they would be hired full-time. Many of the participants in this study shared the experience of not being chosen after interviewing for a full-time opportunity and reported that they had not been told what skills or qualities they lacked that the chosen person possessed.

**Experiences.** The second category, experiences, was rich with descriptive data, resulting from the participants' similar replies to the question, "Tell me about your experiences as adjunct faculty." They recounted an overall picture of no sense of belonging and lack of a feeling of community within their institutions. The three themes identified under this category include: (a) communication, (b) socialization, and (c) challenges.

**Communication.** Several participants described a distinct lack of communication from the administration. Examples included lack of administrative communication on specific opportunities for networking, upcoming professional development activities, and feedback on their personal performance. Half of the participants stated that their department communicated general reminders, albeit on an inconsistent basis. The other half reported little to no communication from their departments.

Participants in the current study stated that they receive few notices from the administration. One participant reported a conversation with other adjunct faculty where they admitted to not checking their e-mail, because they did not see the point. The lack of communication from the institution has contributed to detachment and low morale among adjuncts. Adjunct faculty believe that college administrators should commit to a

consistent process for sharing information with adjuncts to allow them to be more effective in their roles. However, communication is a joint process that demands shared individual responsibility to create a global culture of communication. Accordingly, adjunct faculty need to commit to seeking information when needed, as well as receiving and responding to the communications that are provided, whether they are e-mails, reports, forums, and/or notices of employee events. According to current study participants, the situation would be improved if colleges created opportunities for conversations and gave all college employees time and support to discuss issues; and to find solutions; together. The discussions must be open, honest, and contain the voices of all employees.

***Socialization.*** A lack of support from the participants' institutions was a key issue noted in the current study. This lack of institutional support hindered the socialization process of adjunct faculty. While department chairs provided some level of support in terms of basic communication, cultures of respect and collegiality were missing.

Participants highlighted the important role that the lack of teacher evaluations play in their sense of isolation. As reported by participants, the absence of evaluation and feedback also contributes to adjuncts' feelings of invisibility. The participants indicated that they wanted feedback on their teaching style and advice on how to aid in the retention of students for their institution.

The findings from the current study corroborated the findings from Gappa and Leslie (1993). The participants reported a sense of marginalization, competition between colleagues, inferior status, and a lack of emotional connection to the campus. They also



reported a perception of second-class status due to their interactions with administrators and full-time faculty and general institutional practices.

The participants in the current study agreed on the importance of having a designated space to call their own- a place to put their belongings and meet with students. Very few of the adjuncts that were interviewed had office space; most reported either having a shared space or not having any space to call their own. Kezar (2013b) reported that offices give adjunct faculty a space to go before, after, and between classes, plan their lessons, connect with colleagues, and meet with students; thus, offices enable them to engage in professional behaviors that resemble those of their full-time colleagues, leading to a sense of being a valued and recognized member of the institution.

As stated by the participants in this study, there is a culture of negativity towards adjunct faculty on the community college campuses that they serve. This is evidenced by quotes reported in Chapter 4 regarding disrespect and condescension from full-time faculty. Adjunct faculty's sense of disrespect from full-time faculty was experienced in departmental meetings, in interactions with institutional leadership, and in a general perception of being ignored or devalued by colleagues. The adjuncts reported a perceived assumption from some full-time faculty that their teaching is of low quality. Participants related stories of full-time faculty questioning their ability to teach upper level courses simply because they currently teach developmental courses. This finding corroborates the results of other studies suggesting that full-time faculty perceive adjunct faculty as: 1) having lesser qualifications, 2) being poor teachers, 3) having a negative impact on the collegial environment of departments, and 4) lowering the overall

educational quality of their institution (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Cross & Goldenberg, 2009; Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

**Challenges.** Adjunct faculty typically teach the majority of developmental courses in a community college (CCSE, 2014). The unique characteristics of the students who take the developmental courses as their first step to success indicates some level of extra and/or special needs. “In a community college setting, the breadth and depth of the challenges the students face can be overwhelming, I think from a challenge standpoint it’s just really getting a better sense of the support services that are available to students” (Participant 2, p. 3). Participants reported that developmental courses can be challenging to teach for the simple reason that students who take them are not as prepared for college as students who do not take developmental courses. Current study participants reported that there has been an increase in the numbers of students with intellectual disabilities attending college and being placed in developmental classes. Typically, adjunct faculty have not received training in meeting the special classroom management needs of students with intellectual disabilities. Although developmental class students are challenging students to teach, adjunct faculty celebrate the successes of all their students and relate feelings of pride when they retain any of their students.

Another challenging aspect of adjunct status is related to adjunct faculty being employed at a college on a temporary, as-needed basis. This situation leads to concerns about job security and concerns about having the resources to pay their bills.

Periodically, adjunct faculty may be assigned a course in advance, only to have the section cancelled due to low enrollment, or have the course reassigned to fulfill a full-time faculty member’s teaching contract. Frequently, when this happens, the adjunct

faculty member does not have enough time to secure another part-time teaching opportunity. The participants stated that class cancellations do not happen regularly, but when they do, it is devastating to their personal financial budget.

**Institutional support.** In the current study, participants revealed good ideas of basic ways that institutions could support them better. The third category, institutional support, generated possible practices that could be put in place to improve their institutional situation. The two themes identified under this category include: (a) recognition, and (b) professional development.

In the current study, there were reports of inconsistencies within the institutions, even within-divisions, regarding practices that deal with adjunct faculty. They include: hiring processes, orientation, contract terms, salary, evaluation, promotion, and a host of other working conditions. The participants in the current study shared stories of variable demonstrations of support from their institutions. For example, one of the community colleges had valuable professional development opportunities for adjunct faculty but had no offices or space where they could work. The participants stated that they appreciated the opportunities for professional development but believed that if the college valued them, they would ensure that office space is available.

**Professional development.** Several participants expressed concern that, although they would like to attend the few professional opportunities available, there are various reasons as to why their attendance was not possible. Their reasons ranged from inconvenient times for offered professional development programs (schedule conflicts), lack of communication about offerings, and lack of compensation for their time to attend.

Further, the lack of available professional development opportunities indicates that institutions are not investing in improving the quality of their school's education.

Adjunct faculty who are present on campus and who participate in day-to-day operations have more opportunities for interaction with peer faculty and administration than those who are less present. However, most of the participants in this study were on campus during the day and still had limited opportunities to interact. Therefore, overall, the only interactions with full-time faculty that adjunct faculty tend to receive are infrequent meetings with the department chair. The lack of interaction with full-time faculty contributes to low morale, also reported by current study participants.

The challenges that prevent adequate professional development for adjunct faculty at community colleges include: teaching schedule conflicts, resource limitations, and absence/lack of integration with full-time faculty.

***Recognition.*** Leadership scholars state that recognition is the most important currency, and it costs you nothing (Kouzes and Posner 2012). Adjunct faculty stressed the value of non-monetary acknowledgement such as recognizing years of service at annual college appreciation ceremonies and including adjunct faculty on web pages, class schedules, and college directories. Adjuncts appeared to understand the financial constraints facing institutions and stated that they just want it to be known that they are there. Other stories from the participants described campus events that had included adjuncts in the past, that simply stopped including adjunct faculty, such as years of service ceremonies and wellness challenges.

As discussed in Chapter 1, Honneth (1995) developed three criteria for social recognition: love, respect, and self-esteem. He described love as a strong connection

between small groups of people. He described self-respect as something that is gained when people see themselves as deserving equal rights. Per Honneth, self-esteem is the result of recognition by others as individuals with specific qualities and abilities that result in a positive contribution to societies' goals (Honneth, 1995).

Honneth's theory of recognition is in line with how adjuncts perceive their role within an institution and the changes that are necessary for adjuncts to be recognized within the institution. Honneth's theory may serve as the momentum needed for meaningful change.

Per Honneth, self-esteem is provided when one's work contributions are honored by the community. One's self-esteem is also enhanced by relationships of solidarity with others in working through collaborative social activities. In being recognized as having something to contribute to the community, one becomes "recognized as a person whose capabilities add constitutive value to a concrete community" (Honneth, 1997, p. 30). Adjunct faculty have a right to demand that their denial of recognition be corrected; they need to be provided with recognition for who they are and for what adjuncts contribute to the quality of higher education.

**Unanticipated findings.** In the current study, adjunct faculty prioritized factors in job dissatisfaction differently from the reports of Baldwin & Chronister (2001), Cross & Goldenberg (2009), and Gappa & Leslie (1993). For example, low compensation was a reality that the adjuncts in this study recognized, but it was not the reason why they felt excluded in their institutions. Adjunct faculty in this study were not concerned with the poor compensation they receive, nor were they concerned with not having a role in the institution's governance structure. However, Kezar and Sam, (2014) corroborated our

finding that “to the adjuncts, compensation and decision-making opportunities are secondary to the challenges they face with working conditions, feelings of legitimacy for the group, and interaction opportunities to break down barriers between full-time and adjunct faculty.” The current study and Kezar and Sam’s (2014) study were conducted more than 20 years after Gappa and Leslie (1993). The changes in the global economy may have made difference in adjunct faculty’s change of focus from higher compensation to a focus on recognition and belonging.

Another surprising finding of the current study was that the four male participants were much more verbal in their request for public acknowledgement and recognition using concrete physical manifestations/objects and public ceremony than the female participants. While both genders stressed the importance of recognition, the males requested more tangible items like a plaque, lapel pin or a medallion. Females in this study wanted people to know their name but did not note a need for a material demonstration of recognition. This unanticipated finding may be due to gender differences that exist within male and female communication styles and further research with a larger sample size may be warranted.

### **Limitations**

The sample size of this study was small. There were four community colleges represented, and only two to three participants per community college were interviewed. It is possible that if additional subjects from each community college had been interviewed, different themes might have emerged. In addition, the representation of individual teaching fields and departments was also not large; thus, it was not possible to

evaluate whether faculty from different departments and fields of teaching had experiences that differed by discipline.

Data from a more diverse group of adjuncts in terms of age, institution size, gender, and cultural diversity might have provided different challenges than were reported by the adjuncts interviewed in the study. Furthermore, all ten participants in the study were of Caucasian descent; thus, no racial diversity was represented. The representations of the disciplines themselves were also not diverse. Modern language, history, and physical science are just a few of the disciplines not represented. Business, computer technology, English, criminal justice, and sciences were the disciplines represented in the current study.

Finally, data were self-reported by the participants and therefore are limited to the researcher's assumption that all participants were describing their own experiences objectively. The participants could have geared their responses to the questions asked according to what they perceived the researcher's bias to be.

### **Recommendations**

There are a growing number of adjunct faculty at many community colleges; yet, there appears to be a lack of awareness on the part of the institution of the need for practices to support adjunct faculty.

Employment policies and practices for adjunct faculty should be as carefully documented and communicated as those for full-time faculty. The more the institution depends on adjunct faculty, the greater the institutional responsibility is to provide them with orientation, supervision, evaluation, professional development, and opportunities for integration into the life of the institution. In addition, the administration needs to work

toward creating a more positive experience with faculty and staff — one that is consistent, and empathetic. Recommendations for changes in institutional practices are detailed below.

The institution should offer an in-depth orientation for adjunct faculty that includes reviewing the faculty handbook, resources available for students, an overview of the strategic plan, and institutional policies and procedures. By providing adjunct faculty with the resources they need, adjuncts may feel more supported. Resources typically available for full-time faculty could be advertised and made more readily available for adjunct faculty. These resources may include mentoring opportunities that would address career development, feedback, and feeling more connected with the faculty.

Providing increased opportunities for adjunct faculty to collaborate and network with full-time faculty, administration, and staff would increase the adjuncts' sense of support and belonging. Greater collaboration and networking opportunities within their circle of academia may allow adjuncts to contribute their ideas and gain expertise from others' experiences in the classroom. Collaboration with full-time faculty may be increased by having them work together, attend professional development together, and have opportunities to engage with one another on institutional initiatives. Additionally, adjunct faculty should be included in departmental and campus-wide meetings.

Institutions should communicate consistently with adjunct faculty about how and when they will be evaluated by students in the institution. Chairs should review with adjunct faculty the process for receiving feedback on the student evaluations. In addition, administration, chairpersons, and full-time faculty should communicate with the adjunct



on a personal level by learning their name and acknowledging them by saying hello when passing them on campus.

A system should be developed for adjunct faculty to communicate and connect with campus-based list-serves, websites and printed newsletters, not as adjuncts, but included the same as any other employee of the institution. By extending invitations to events and inclusion on webpages and directories, there may be an increase in an adjunct's feeling of belonging and recognition.

Conduct ongoing instructional development and pedagogy in the form of webinars should be conducted that can be viewed by adjuncts on their own time. In recognition of adjuncts' time and financial constraints, offer different times and dates for professional development with evening and online options. Adjunct faculty should be compensated for their development time as movement towards showing how much the institution truly values adjunct faculty.

Awards and recognition should be provided, including uniform awards for recognition of years of service at Employee Appreciation Day. The simple act of recognizing adjunct faculty as individuals' worthy of acknowledgement is an important step for institutions.

**Future research.** There are a few areas that appear to be absent from the literature regarding adjunct faculty. Suggestions for future research include:

The current study's generalizability would be improved by using an expanded sample size that includes other categories of adjuncts. The other categories could potentially include adjuncts with full-time jobs who teach because they want to share

their expertise, adjuncts who have retired from their field, and adjuncts who teach at multiple community colleges and who teach to make a living.

In addition, a study using a mixed methodology that includes both quantitative and qualitative data collection with a larger sample size would allow the researcher to look at sub-categories such as race, age, marital status and other variables more effectively. Furthermore, information gleaned from a larger pool of participants may offer statistically significant factors associated with job satisfaction and propose additional policy recommendations for improving adjunct faculty job satisfaction. Focus groups using convenience sampling and with sociological theories guiding the study may help to provide a link between motivation and adjuncts' job satisfaction. A mixed methodology looking at other variables may offer insights that were not revealed in this qualitative study.

Another area of opportunity is to conduct administrative interviews of the top leaders in higher education to discover their perceptions of where adjunct faculty exist in terms of their place within their specific institutions. The opportunity to conduct a mixed methods study with higher education leadership may at the very least raise awareness that there is a problem with adjunct faculty not feeling valued.

A potential study may be to investigate whether improvement of an adjunct faculty's perception of respect, would yield better success with student retention and success. How do adjunct faculty's feelings of being undervalued and not respected within their institutions impact student retention and success?

There are differences between community colleges and 4-year colleges in specific institutional practices that support and recognize adjunct faculty. To address the

differences, best practices at other community colleges and 4-year colleges could be identified with ways to support adjunct faculty through professional development offerings, social interactions, communication pieces such as newsletters and announcements, orientations, and feedback sessions. Capturing and reviewing trend data related to community college adjunct faculty would display the support services, and professional development available for adjunct faculty. A model of best practices could be developed and replicated across campuses.

A focus on social justice and inclusion may be increased by researching the lived experience of different minority groups teaching on a college campus. Research should be geared towards establishing the same opportunities for every employee within the environment regardless of gender, religion, race, or sexuality.

## **Conclusion**

Adjunct faculty are relied on to support the core mission of the institution—educating students. Few studies exist that examine adjuncts at community colleges from a qualitative perspective. An important reason for the need to increase understanding of the perceptions of adjunct faculty is that adjuncts teach most students in higher education in the US; thus, adjuncts are significant influences in creating the teaching and learning environment.

Limited research exists investigating the perceptions and experiences of adjunct faculty at community colleges. The purpose of this study was to use the voice of adjunct faculty to gain insight into their lived experiences and their expectations of support and recognition by the institutions that they serve. In the current study, adjunct faculty reported that they desire to belong to a collegial community and to work collaboratively

with colleagues. Furthermore, adjunct faculty want to feel valued by both their peers and their institutions. The following research questions guided the qualitative research in the current study:

### **Research Questions**

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts for their contributions?

The current study has significance for community college policy, practice, and theory. It addresses the literature gap in the perceptions of adjuncts at community colleges and describes what the adjunct faculty need from an institution to feel included, respected and valued. Additionally, this exploration of the expectations and lived experiences of community college adjuncts will ultimately lead to a better understanding of the ways in which institutions can more effectively recognize adjuncts' contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success.

The presented literature review addresses studies related to the following four themes: characteristics of adjunct faculty, adjunct faculty job satisfaction, institutional support, and institutional change. The studies that were reviewed depicted an upward

trend in researchers attempting to understand the need for positive changes for adjuncts in higher education. The consensus of the current review is that institutions have a responsibility to make changes to acknowledge and recognize adjuncts as positive contributors to the quality of higher education for the benefit of students.

The current study employed a qualitative phenomenological method to explore the lived experience of adjunct faculty who teach in SUNY community colleges in Central New York. A qualitative study methodology was deliberately chosen by the researcher to elicit the voice of the adjunct faculty population; often, this group has not been given a voice. The current study used a convenience sampling method, and ten adjunct faculty from four Central New York SUNY community colleges participated in the study. The participants were recruited from five different departments: Business (two males and two females), Computer Technology (one female), English (one male and two females), Criminal Justice (two males), and Sciences (one male).

Data collection consisted of semi-structured interviews, using open-ended questions. Each participant engaged in an individual 45-minute interview with the researcher. Data were obtained via participant interviews and were subsequently open-coded. From there, axial coding was used to cluster the codes into themes.

Many categories and themes emerged from the data. The three main categories incorporated elements related to the lived experiences of adjunct faculty teaching in a SUNY community college in Central New York. The first category, expectations, incorporated three themes: (a) inclusion (b) inspiring students, and (c) upward trajectory. The second category, experiences, incorporated three themes: (a) communication, (b)

socialization, and (c) challenges. The third and final category, institutional support, incorporated two themes: (a) recognition and (b) professional development.

The current study reiterated that all adjunct faculty need to be integrated into the life of the institution. Adjunct faculty should not be expected to exist on the fringes of the institution. Among the participants in this study, the researcher sensed an inherent optimism that the institution will develop policies and practices to better integrate them into the fabric of the institution, eventually.

College administrators should ask themselves whether their expectations for adjunct faculty are aligned with student needs. They could encourage adjunct faculty to interact with students outside of class, participate in professional development, and incorporate high-impact practices in their teaching. Institutions should reallocate existing dollars to make sure that adjunct faculty have the support they need to help students succeed.

The limitations of the study included a lack of diversity in the study's participants, a small sample size, and self-reported data. Resultant study recommendations are based on changing institutional practices to foster more opportunities for adjunct faculty to be integrated into the life of the institution. Recommendations for future studies include more of a focus on social justice for all adjunct faculty. A focus on social justice would include the fair and just relations between adjunct faculty and their institutions of higher education. Future studies could measure each institution's terms for the distribution of wealth, opportunities for personal activity and social privileges.

Adjuncts love to teach. They love the students; thus, they are willing to tolerate certain poor working conditions and a lack of job security. What adjuncts want is to feel

as if they are an integral part of the institution, with a feeling of belonging, support, and recognition. They want to be included, communicated with, and evaluated on a regular basis. Adjuncts want feedback and an opportunity to give input when discussing curriculum changes for classes they teach. Adjunct faculty want to be given an opportunity to grow professionally and to be respected for their unique skill sets. They want to collaborate with other employees, including both full-time faculty and other adjuncts. Ultimately, adjuncts want to be included and recognized by their institution.

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**Appendix A**  
**IRB Documents**

## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 1 OF 2

#### COURSEWORK REQUIREMENTS\*

\* NOTE: Scores on this Requirements Report reflect quiz completions at the time all requirements for the course were met. See list below for details.

See separate Transcript Report for more recent quiz scores, including those on optional (supplemental) course elements.

- **Name:** Amy Mech (ID: 5703130)
- **Email:** akm00143@sjfc.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** St. John Fisher College (ID: 3316)
- **Institution Unit:** Executive Leadership
- **Phone:** 315-415-5030
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Social & Behavioral Research
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Report ID:** 20464030
- **Completion Date:** 16-Aug-2016
- **Expiration Date:** 16-Aug-2019
- **Minimum Passing:** 80
- **Reported Score\*:** 97

#### REQUIRED AND ELECTIVE MODULES ONLY DATE COMPLETED SCORE

Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127) 15-Aug-2016 3/3 (100%)  
History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483) 16-Aug-2016 4/4 (100%)  
Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Cultural Competence in Research (ID: 15166) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)  
Consent and Subject Recruitment Challenges: Remuneration (ID: 16881) 16-Aug-2016 3/5 (60%)

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

**Verify at:** <https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?375b2727-a789-4716-8c31-694439e132e6>

#### CITI Program

Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)

Phone: 888-529-5929

Web: <https://www.citiprogram.org>

## COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI PROGRAM)

### COMPLETION REPORT - PART 2 OF 2

#### COURSEWORK TRANSCRIPT\*\*

\*\* NOTE: Scores on this Transcript Report reflect the most current quiz completions, including quizzes on optional (supplemental) elements of the course. See list below for details. See separate Requirements Report for the reported scores at the time all requirements for the course were met.

- **Name:** Amy Mech (ID: 5703130)
- **Email:** akm00143@sjfc.edu
- **Institution Affiliation:** St. John Fisher College (ID: 3316)
- **Institution Unit:** Executive Leadership
- **Phone:** 315-415-5030
- **Curriculum Group:** Social & Behavioral Research - Basic/Refresher
- **Course Learner Group:** Social & Behavioral Research
- **Stage:** Stage 1 - Basic Course
- **Report ID:** 20464030

• **Report Date:** 16-Aug-2016

• **Current Score\*\*:** 97

**REQUIRED, ELECTIVE, AND SUPPLEMENTAL MODULES MOST RECENT SCORE**

History and Ethical Principles - SBE (ID: 490) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE (ID: 491) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Belmont Report and CITI Course Introduction (ID: 1127) 15-Aug-2016 3/3 (100%)

The Federal Regulations - SBE (ID: 502) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Assessing Risk - SBE (ID: 503) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Informed Consent - SBE (ID: 504) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE (ID: 505) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Research with Children - SBE (ID: 507) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Research in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools - SBE (ID: 508) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Internet-Based Research - SBE (ID: 510) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Vulnerable Subjects - Research Involving Workers/Employees (ID: 483) 16-Aug-2016 4/4 (100%)

Unanticipated Problems and Reporting Requirements in Social and Behavioral Research (ID: 14928) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Conflicts of Interest in Research Involving Human Subjects (ID: 488) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Cultural Competence in Research (ID: 15166) 16-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Populations in Research Requiring Additional Considerations and/or Protections (ID: 16680) 15-Aug-2016 5/5 (100%)

Consent and Subject Recruitment Challenges: Remuneration (ID: 16881) 16-Aug-2016 3/5 (60%)

**For this Report to be valid, the learner identified above must have had a valid affiliation with the CITI Program subscribing institution**

**identified above or have been a paid Independent Learner.**

**Verify at:** <https://www.citiprogram.org/verify/?375b2727-a789-4716-8c31-694439e132e6>

**Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program)**

Email: [support@citiprogram.org](mailto:support@citiprogram.org)

Phone: 888-529-5929

Web:

<https://www.citiprogram.org>

**St. John Fisher  
College  
INFORMED  
CONSENT FORM**

**Title of study:** Adjunct faculty in a community college

**Name(s) of researcher:** Amy Mech      Supervisor: Dr. Cathleen McColgin, Ph.D.

**Phone for further information:** 1-315-415-5030

**Purpose of study:**

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by me, Amy Mech, a doctoral student at St. John Fisher College. I hope to learn about: 1) your expectations of support and belonging prior to beginning employment as an adjunct faculty member at a community college and 2) your actual experiences as adjunct faculty. Further, I hope to get your perspective on what specific practices institutions could put in place that would improve feelings of support and recognition among adjuncts.

**Place of study:** Various locations

**Length of participation:** 45 minutes - 1 hour

**Risks and benefits:** The expected risks and benefits of participation in this study are explained below:

We believe there are no known risks associated with this research study; however, a possible inconvenience may be the time it takes to complete the study.

If you agree to participate in the study, then your consent does not waive any of your legal rights. However, in the event of harm (psychological discomfort) arising from this study, neither St. John Fisher College nor the researchers is able to give you any money, insurance coverage, free medical care, or any compensation for such discomfort.

**Method for protecting confidentiality/privacy:**

To ensure that all materials are kept confidential and private, all information will be stored in a password protected file on the principal investigator's laptop. Participant numbers will be used to identify audiotapes and notes. Names will not appear in the researcher's notes, and names will not be heard within or associated with the audiotapes. A research journal will be used to keep track of interview appointments, the length of interviews, any observations made during the interviews, and any of the researcher's thoughts occurring before, during, or after the interviews. Dates and times of transcriptions will also be recorded. The notes in the journal will have ID numbers in place of participant names to ensure confidentiality. The key that links the participant's names with participant ID numbers will be kept separate in a locked file cabinet in the researcher's residence.

The interviews will be audiotaped, transcribed, and stored on a password protected external hard drive. The interviews will be taped on my personal Voice Memo iPhone application and downloaded to the external hard drive to transfer to transcriptionist. The

transcriptionist will never have access to the participant identities. The voice memos will be deleted from the password protected iPhone after transfer to the external hard drive. A pilot test of the interview questions will be conducted by selecting two adjunct faculty members who have worked within a community college for many years. These individuals will review the questions to ensure they are clear and to provide the investigator with extensive feedback as to the relevance of the questions. Field notes will be kept in a locked file cabinet only accessible by the researcher for a minimum of 3-years following the conclusions of the study and will then be destroyed.

**Your rights:** As a research participant, you have the right to:

1. Understand the purpose of the study, and have the expected risks and benefits fully explained to you before you choose to participate.
2. Withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.
3. Refuse to answer a particular question without penalty.
4. Be informed of the results of the study.

I have read the above, received a copy of this form, and I agree to participate in the above-named study.

Print name (Participant)

Signature Date

Print name (Investigator)

Signature Date

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College has reviewed and approved this project. If you have any further questions regarding this study, please contact Amy Mech at [akm00143@sjfc.edu](mailto:akm00143@sjfc.edu). If you experience emotional or psychological discomfort due to participation in this study, please contact the Health and Wellness Center at (585) 385-8280 for appropriate referrals.



## **IRB Expedited Application Introduction**

The study will explore the expectations and experiences of adjunct faculty regarding their feelings of institutional support and belonging at community colleges. As educational institutions face the realities of greater reliance on adjunct faculty, the research could ultimately lead to an understanding of the ways institutions can recognize adjunct faculty contributions to the overall quality of higher education and student success. The goal of fully integrating part-time faculty into the academic life of an institution is particularly crucial for community colleges, as adjunct faculty are employed in large numbers, providing a powerful force for representing these colleges to students and stakeholders (Gappa & Leslie, 2010). The researcher will use a qualitative research design to answer the following research questions:

1. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their expectations for institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
2. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what are their lived experiences of institutional practices in supporting and recognizing their contributions?
3. From the perspective of adjunct faculty in community colleges, what specific practices could institutions put in place that would improve support and recognition of adjuncts for their contributions?

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to use the voice of the adjunct faculty to examine their expectations of institutional support and recognition. The lived experiences of the adjunct faculty will also be examined in this study. Adjunct faculty members report that they desire to belong to a collegiate community and work collaboratively with colleagues (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2007). Furthermore, adjunct faculty want to feel valued by both their peers and their institutions. The voices of adjunct faculty could inform institutional practices that embrace adjuncts in the overall vision and mission of the institution. (CCCSE, 2015).

## **Methodology**

The study will explore the expectations and experiences of adjunct faculty regarding support and belonging in their contingent roles in community colleges. The research design will be a qualitative method semi-structured interviews. A phenomenological approach using semi-structured in-depth interviews of adjunct faculty was selected to detail and understand the aspects of adjunct faculty expectations and experiences regarding perceptions of belonging and support within community colleges.

## **Sample**

Qualitative, semi-structured interviews approach will allow the meaning of the lived experience of adjunct faculty to emerge through the interview process. Research participants will be recruited using current academic and professional circles as a source for the initial nomination of participants. Sampling in this study will be purposeful and guided by saturation. In previously reviewed qualitative phenomenological studies, saturation was reached between three and 12 subjects. Snowball sampling will be used to

identify additional research participants. In snowball sampling, you begin by identifying someone who meets the criteria for inclusion in the study. Once this identification is accomplished, they will be asked to recommend others they know who also meet the criteria (Patton, 2002). Inclusion criteria: (1) participants must be adjunct faculty who have taught for at least two semesters at a community college, (2) participants must desire full-time teaching assignments, and (3) participants must be able to speak English.

The investigator will explain the purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary, such that participants may withdraw at any time without consequence. No major risks are anticipated for participants; however, minor risks may be anticipated, including psychological discomfort, embarrassment, or distress if they are recounting difficult situations that they have experienced. The participants will also be assured that confidentiality will be maintained by the removal of any identifying information such as names, schools, locations, and dates. The audiotapes will never contain their name, only their participant ID number. Informed consent will be obtained from each participant.

### **Dissemination**

This is a doctoral dissertation that will be published through St. John Fisher College's digital library. Results of this study will be shared at professional workshops and conferences.

### **Disposition of Data**

The data will be kept under lock and key in my personal residence in Tully, New York for a minimum of 3- years. The researcher has obtained the Certificate of Completion for Protecting Human Research Participants Training Module (Appendix A).

## **Data Collection Tools**

## Interviewee Background

- How long have you taught as adjunct faculty?
- How many institutions have you served as an adjunct?
- What is your highest degree?
- Do you have a full-time non-teaching job?
- Are you married?
- How old are you?
- Do you have children?
- Are your children under the age of 18?

## Interview questions/Requests for information

- Tell me about your expectations as adjunct faculty.
- Tell me about your experiences as adjunct faculty.
- How has your experience been different from what you expected?
- How has your experience been similar to what you expected?
- What are some of the most challenging aspects of your experience serving as adjunct faculty?
- What specific supports or practices would you like from the institutions in which you teach?

## **Letter of Introduction**

My name is Amy Mech and I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Doctorate in Executive Leadership program at Onondaga Community College, governed by the School of Education at St. John Fisher College (SJFC) in Rochester, N.Y. As part of conducting research for my doctoral dissertation, I am very interested in exploring the lived experience of adjunct faculty who work within a community college. To facilitate note-taking, I would like to audiotape our conversations. For your information, only the researchers on this project will be privy to the tapes, which will not mention your name, and which will be destroyed after they are transcribed. Please sign the release form. In addition, you must sign a consent form to meet SJFC Institutional Review Board (IRB) human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that: (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) there is no intention to inflict any harm. I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of St. John Fisher College has reviewed and approved this project. For any concerns regarding this study and/or if you experience any psychological or emotional discomfort related to participation, please contact the Health and Wellness Center at (585) 385-8280 for appropriate referrals. Thank you for agreeing to participate.