OPEN DISCUSSION WITH PART TIME FACULTY SUMMARY
(APRIL 16, 2012)

On Monday, April 16, 2012, the Faculty Development Projects & Resources Subcommittee sponsored an Open Discussion geared toward part-time faculty members. Professor John Barteld from the Business Administration Department served as the facilitator for the discussion. A total of five faculty members attended the workshop, representing a handful of academic departments. The discussion generated several questions for consideration, many of which would be great ideas for future workshops. Faculty members shared concerns and advice on a variety of topics. A summary of this discussion is provided below.

Everyone was excited to have this opportunity to meet and talk about their concerns and challenges with teaching.

- They welcome the idea of planning similar sessions in the future.
- They are eager to participate in future workshops geared towards their concerns.
- Some part-time faculty members would be willing to serve as facilitators of these workshops.

There is no formal pedagogical training for part-time faculty.

- Many part-time faculty members agree that they have lots of great experience in their respective fields; however, they are nervous about teaching and have no experience designing a course or teaching classroom full of college students.
- Where do I begin in terms of preparing a course?
- One suggestion was to ask other students “What do you like or not like about how your professors teach?”
- What are teaching methods or strategies I could employ in my classroom?
- How do I create a syllabus?
- What should I consider when designing course objectives?
- What methods of student evaluation should I use? (Quizzes, Exams, homework, projects, etc?)
- One faculty member recommended that part-time faculty teaching a pre-requisite course should talk to the faculty member that teaches the next course in the series in order to get a better understanding of how best to prepare these students. How can FDC (or others) help facilitate this?
- Part-time faculty recommended that there be opportunities to observe other faculty members and have meetings about course preparations in as far advance as possible.
- In History, Professor Kay McAdams facilitates learning Communities with part-time faculty. This seems like an excellent model!

How do we get students to do the assigned reading, engage in class and think critically?

- This is especially challenging when many high school students have grown accustomed to memorization rather practice critical thinking skills.
- One faculty member says that he invites alumni to come back as a guest speaker in order to motivate his students.
• “Find a hook.” Find some point of relevance that will engage the class from the start of the lecture. This connection could be local, generational, etc.
• Try to have something that makes the students laugh.
• How do you construct and promote a good discussion?
• For a 3-hr evening class, how does one keep the level of rigor up?
• Try using “Active Learning Strategies.” (See attached pdf).
• How do you teach students that come in with varied levels of preparation?
• How can faculty effectively use projects whether they teach 3 x 50 min. lectures per week or 1 x 3 hour lecture per week?
• What can part-time faculty do to improve student and full-time faculty respect?

Part-time faculty members that are not familiar with Blackboard would like assistance in learning how to use this tool.
• Those that already use Blackboard talked about the benefits of using it for discussion groups.
• It is easy to encourage and keep track of student participation.
• Students seem very comfortable with this style of participation.
• It was recommended that the professor request that students stay focused on the discussion topic and use formal language.
• What are some ways faculty might evaluate students in terms of Blackboard discussions?

We need lots more SMART classrooms!
• Part-time faculty members expressed an overwhelming desire/need to teach in SMART classrooms.
• They would love to take advantage of various technological methods of instruction, but frequently get scheduled in non-SMART classrooms.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen Halligan