

Still Not Making Progress on the 75% Goal for Full-time Faculty Instruction:
A Proposal for Student and Faculty Success

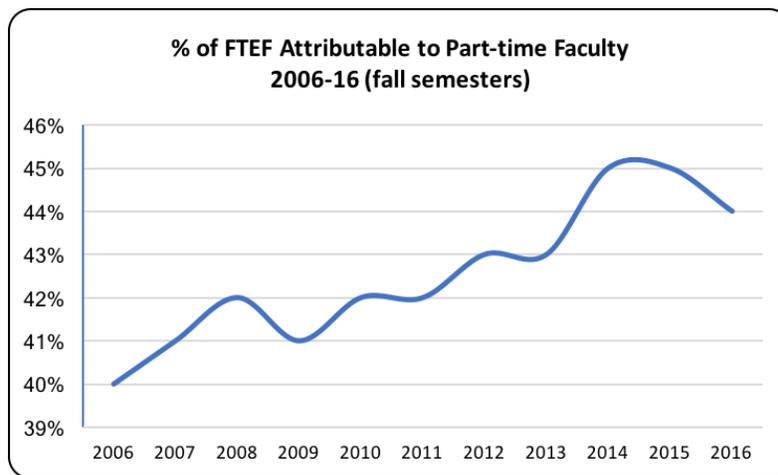
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Our system's inequitable reliance upon part-time faculty is not a bug; it's a defining feature of teaching in the California Community Colleges. Given this reality, we suggest lifting the 67% workload cap on part-time faculty as a viable means of improving working conditions and promoting student success.

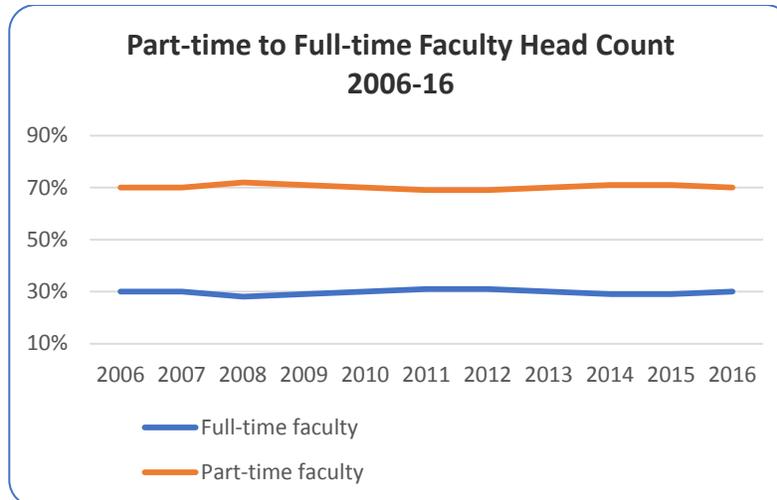
We realize the long-standing practice of limiting the load taught by individual part-time faculty, currently set at 67% of a full-time load, is a sacred cow for many. But we hope you will read and respond to this blog post with an open mind! We're interested in generating dialogue about how to move the needle on part-time faculty equity while also better serving students.

It's universally recognized that we need more full-time faculty to serve our students. In 1988, the system's vision that full-time faculty teach at least 75% credit classroom instruction was memorialized as a goal in the Education Code. However, over almost 30 years since, the funding required to make progress has been sporadic at best.

Over the past 10 years, the percentage of credit instruction by part-time faculty has increased rather than decreased, ranging from about 40% to 47% during this period and currently hovering around 44% (see graph).¹ It is significant that over the same period, the head count of part-time to full-time faculty has averaged 70% to 30%.



¹ Data retrieved from Chancellor's Office Data Mart on 5/5/17. The percentages represent the amount of instruction taught by part-time faculty based on the Chancellor's Office FON (Full-time Obligation Number) annual district full-time position requirement.



In addition to the 30-year failure to reach the 75% full-time faculty goal, the system has also failed to make progress on part-time faculty workplace equity, an issue the Legislature embraced when it initiated, nearly 20 years ago, three community college budget line items funding office hours, health benefits, and compensation parity (equal pay for equal work). These funding sources have been subject to severe reductions whenever state revenues falter, and have been rarely restored when the overall revenue picture improved.

Why would a state so concerned about student success and so reliant on a part-time workforce be so reluctant to provide essential budgetary support for its faculty? It is surprising that system leaders have been willing partners in the state’s exploitation of part-time faculty and unwilling to do all they can to address student needs.

The literature concludes that *faculty contact* is the most significant factor in determining student success. Full-time faculty are under contract and compensated for maintaining such contact, but part-time faculty, who teach almost half of the courses are not required by state law to be compensated for student access outside the classroom. When part-time faculty do make themselves accessible, they rarely have office space in which to meet. In this era of student success, it should be shocking to see that many colleges have turned their backs on the state funding, however meager, for part-time faculty office hours.

Limited to 67% of a full-time load, frequently paid at a rate much less than the full-time equivalent, and with little or no support for health care, professional development activities, and personal leave allowances, many part-time faculty are forced into a frenetic work life of traveling from one college to another. This leaves only a minimal amount of time and energy for consultation with students, which is key to their success.

How can the system remain complacent under this current two-tier system in which the majority of faculty must function under such stressful conditions? In addition to the negative impact on the faculty, what is the consequence of this daily strain on service to students and the colleges? Are we comfortable with this situation?

Imagine lifting the 67% workload cap. Imagine how your department could improve. Some part-time faculty might teach a few extra courses, while others might keep their same load. In either case, part-time faculty would be more likely to focus their professional careers on a single college, and both the campus and its students would surely benefit. Part-time faculty would have more time to spend with students and participate in shared governance and department work.

Were part-time faculty able to teach a larger load at one college, these could all occur:

- Increased student success due to more part-time faculty availability;
- Decreased daily faculty travel (beneficial for the environment);
- Physically and mentally healthier faculty;
- More faculty participation in shared governance;
- Greater faculty integration into the life of the college;
- Part-time positions would become more appealing and would attract more talent;
- Part-time positions and faculty would be more stable;
- Being a part-time faculty member could become a more viable career choice;
- Increased part-time faculty equity;
- Part-time faculty would be professionally supported and could support themselves;
- Fewer part-time faculty would have to share the same office space;
- Scheduling fewer part-time faculty would save districts time and money;
- Colleges would have less trouble finding part-time faculty to teach courses;

While we agree that it's important to continue advocating for movement toward the 75% full-time instruction goal as well as pay parity for part-time faculty (equal pay for equal work), unfortunately, decades of the same advocacy strategy have not moved the needle. We suggest there's a simple change that would make systemic progress to better serve our students and address the exploitation of part-time faculty. *Lifting the 67% Workload Cap would be an achievable goal to add to our advocacy repertoire in our effort to craft a more equitable system for students and faculty alike.*

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The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of FACCC or other board members. The FACCC blog is open to FACCC members and invited guests who desire to spark discussion and dialogue on issues critical to community college faculty.