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COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY AND DEVELOPMENTAL EDUCATION: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

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Introduction

Community colleges have long provided broad access to large numbers of Americans who seek opportunities in higher education. Indeed, for many the only entrée into postsecondary learning is through an affordable public institution that can offer an array of career choices and possibilities for exploration or that can serve as a launching pad to a four-year institution. Yet many of these students arrive under-prepared for college-level work. Those adults who work with these hopeful youth in an effort to provide them with future opportunities experience multiple challenges. The circumstances that surround the majority of these students exert myriad social and economic pressures. Striving to promote excellence in this context requires a multi-faceted support system to help students achieve success.

One critical area of focus in addressing the increasing numbers of under-prepared students includes faculty professional development as a means to improve learning outcomes for students. This paper explores the issues focused on the faculty in community colleges. Specifically, the paper describes the context for the faculty and students in today's community colleges. An examination of the issues surrounding faculty preparation to teach developmental education follows. Adjunct faculty teach the majority of developmental education courses and their role is explored as well. Typical professional development practices for community college faculty are described followed by a case example presenting two community colleges and the ways in which those faculties engaged in professional learning opportunities. Finally, a set of implications is offered regarding the faculty preparation for developmental education.

Who are the faculty in community colleges today?

Ascertaining a clear and accurate picture of who is teaching in today's community colleges was no simple feat. The research base is thin. Recent studies rely on National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) data that includes student self-reporting and incomplete surveys. The data that provide a demographic portrait of faculty in community colleges was drawn primarily from NCES surveys administered during the fall 2003 and provides a sense of the overall trends that we can observe in community colleges today.

Community college faculty differs from other higher education institutions in a variety of ways. In 2003, 66 percent of community college faculty was part-time or adjunct in contrast 28 percent of faculty at four-year institutions.[1] Both the full-time and part-time faculty are slightly more than 50 percent female and both groups were overwhelmingly white (83 percent fulltime; 82 percent part-time)[2]. Additionally, smaller percentages of faculty in community colleges as compared with their colleagues in four-year institutions have a Ph.D. (13-20 percent). Seventy-one percent of community college faculty hold a master's degree. Among part-time faculty at community colleges, 5 percent hold a Ph.D. and 36 percent a master's degree. This contrasts with more than 58 percent holding doctorates and 26 percent holding master's in four-year institutions.

Over the last decade shifts have occurred for faculty. Obtaining positions in community colleges has become increasingly difficult (Martin, 2007). Faculty who haven't found employment in four-year institutions have approached community colleges as a career option (Adams, 2002, Brudney, 2001). A large wave of retirements has also been predicted as the faculty in these institutions age. The increased pressure to find work for highly qualified candidates might actually increase the pool of candidates with advanced degrees --rather than candidates with teaching experience. While some candidates may well choose a career as a community college faculty member we know that many graduate-prepared candidates accept these positions based upon job availability (Martin

[1] NCES survey, Special Analysis
[2] Ibid

2007). We know that the numbers of community college faculty with doctorates has increased slightly which may signify the downturn in our economy and our diminished job market rather than an increased interest in teaching in community colleges. The increased doctorates might also signify an increase in the production of Ph.D.s. Additionally, campuses may regard having more advanced degrees as a measure of quality.

Another significant dimension of community college professional status which sets them apart from their peers in four-year institutions involves their faculty associations. Across the country, community college faculty members belong to unions. States and local community college districts have their own professional associations. By and large, membership in these associations seeks to provide:

> Protection of rights to benefits, salary, academic freedom, tenure, intellectual property rights, conditions of employment, complaints and grievances, professional growth, district policies, legislative agendas.[3]

Additionally, these associations provide members with conferences, representation and free legal consultation for work related business. Some of the associations describe their missions as providing, in part, professional development opportunities and resources focused on teaching and learning (see for example North Carolina Community College Faculty Association). Overall, these unions seek to advocate for community college faculty "from the local level through the state level" to argue for better quality working conditions. Establishing union agreements for community college teachers is more similar to the K-12 faculty professional status than it is to other four-year higher education faculty members.

The data on community college faculty demographics have at least two limitations. First, as described above, the NCES surveys and much of the research others have conducted based upon these surveys were conducted most recently in 2003. There is a significant time lag. While we can extrapolate or extend the trends we see in the data, there remains

[3] Maricopa County Community Colleges Faculty Association

a gap in the actual research. More recent studies are much smaller. Second, these data are based upon national aggregated data. There are state and regional variations which are masked by looking only at national data. For example, a national study of the role of community colleges in providing remedial education conducted by the American Association of Community Colleges (Shults 2000) demonstrated regional differences. Of the more than 400 community colleges [of a total of 900+] that responded to the national survey, differences were found in response rates by geographic region and in urbanicity. Most of the findings reported in this paper, however, remain consistent with trends cited in previous studies.

One set of demographic trends directly impacting community college faculty includes the changing nature of their student body. The students attending community colleges today differ in multiple ways from their peers of one and two generations ago. The current community college faculty have experienced the shift and therefore need to become better equipped to teach today's students.

Who are the students today?

The primary ways in which today's students differ from those of 20 years ago or more is in three areas: language and cultural diversity, poverty, and work. Just as was noted for the demographic data on faculty, the data on community college students is limited by its national character. That is community college students exhibit local and regional differences which are not reflected in the national aggregated trend data reported.

Students attending community college differ from their peers in public and private four-year institutions along a variety of dimensions. Although the majority of community college students are white (60 percent), according to the 2003-04 NCES study, a higher percentage of community college students are diverse as compared with those at four-year institutions. At community colleges, 15 percent of students were black and 14 percent Hispanic, 5 percent Asian, while at four-year institutions those populations were smaller at 10 percent , 9 percent, and 6 percent respectively. In addition, the representation of black and Hispanic students in community colleges is slightly higher than in the general population.

Increased language diversity has created a set of challenges for students and for instructors. English may not be the language of origin for large numbers of students. Non-native English speakers comprise an increasing demographic for many community colleges. Whether international students, native or immigrant students, English may not be a first language. Meeting the needs of these English learners has posed serious challenges for community colleges institutionally and for instructors individually.

The fact that many community college students come from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds—especially those in developmental education courses—has produced another set of challenges that have an impact on learning. Higher levels of poverty are represented in community college student bodies in comparison with public and private four-year institutions (NCES). Community college students are also more likely to work part- or full-time. These obligations not only influence students' abilities to engage in courses but also influence their ability to complete assignments.

How are students placed in developmental courses?

The majority of students are placed in developmental courses by a set of locally derived criteria (Shults 2000, Grubb, 1999, Kozeracki). These criteria typically include a set of placement assessments measures, college entrance exams, and state developed measures. Shults (2000) found that the majority of community colleges (58 percent) mandate all students to sit for assessments and 75 percent require course placement. The cut scores and policies were typically set locally (63 percent). However, Gerlaugh et al (2007) found in a national study that although "assessment is often mandatory, placement into developmental programs is largely voluntary."

Students in developmental courses arrive with a variety of academic, emotional and social challenges that influence their ability to learn. Several studies described the attitudinal issues which surrounded the students placed in developmental courses. (Grubb 1999, Kozeracki, 2005). Most students in developmental courses have experienced repeated failures in school and do not associate academics with positive experiences. (Kozeracki, 2005, p.41). The negative attitudes regarding education

influence motivation and performance. Additionally, many arrive in developmental courses with diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities that create another set of obstacles for learning and for the instructors. Further, many students whose placement exams qualify them for enrollment in a development course had actually passed the very same courses in high school. They do not understand why they are placed in developmental course –let alone why they are repeating a sequence.

The actual enrollment numbers in development courses are difficult to determine. Students' self reported course taking patterns from the NCES Survey of Beginning Postsecondary Students 2003-04[4] revealed that 21 percent of all postsecondary students enrolled in developmental or remedial courses during their first year. Twenty-nine percent of community college students reported taking developmental coursework during their first year – in contrast to 19 percent of students at public four-year institutions and 15 percent at private four-year institutions.

The American Association of Community Colleges conducted a national study of the role of community colleges providing "remedial education." In 1998 an average of 36 percent of students in their first year enrolled in at least one developmental course. The range for enrollment varied from .5 percent to 95 percent.[5] Mathematics was the most common remedial course, with 22 percent of beginning community college students in 2004 enrolled in remedial mathematics courses. Community college mathematics course-taking patterns contrasts with remedial reading (10 percent), remedial writing (10 percent) or remedial English (8 percent).

Dilemmas of Developmental Education

Developmental education enrollment poses an enormous set of opportunities and challenges for community colleges. Structural challenges evolve from the large numbers of developmental courses that are needed. In many campuses, there are designated units

[4] http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/2008/analysis/sa03.asp
Horn, L., and Nevill, S. (2006). Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Education Institutions: 2003–04: With a Special Analysis of Community College Students (NCES 2006-184). National Center for Education Statistics, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC.
[5] Shults, C. 2000

or programs for developmental or remedial learning. Creating and using appropriate assessments to accurately identify those students who most need developmental support courses requires a particular set of resources and expertise. In some cases these assessments are provided by the state but the administration and the application happens at a local level. Perhaps most challenging of all, however, are the instructional demands for teaching developmental courses.

Community College Faculty and Their Preparation to Teach: the Acute Challenge for Developmental Education

Community college faculties spend the greatest portion of their professional time devoted to teaching. It is the classroom interactions where faculty and students have the greatest opportunities to connect. Faculty also interact with community college students in a variety of other ways – from campus activities to formal and informal advising. They also serve on committees and provide service to their institutions in a number of ways that vary from place to place. It is, however, this central role of instruction for which community college faculty has the *least* preparation. Community college faculties, like many of their colleagues in higher education institutions, bring very little experience and training to the teaching dimension of their roles (Grubb 1999, Stahl et al 1992.). Indeed, teaching is the core process of community colleges (Wagoner 2008, Grubb, 1999). Faculty, however, arrive with little to no background in pedagogy and curriculum design (Grubb 1999, Wagoner 2008). Their areas of expertise surround a specific content area, mathematics or physics, for example. The faculty who teach developmental mathematics courses with a Ph. D. in Applied or Pure Mathematics will be ill equipped to understand the ways in which their students misunderstand fundamental mathematic concepts. The increased numbers of Ph.D. faculty members will only exacerbate this gulf between the expert and the novice.

Community colleges are hard pressed to serve *all* of their students. Not only has enrollment increased in community colleges in recent years but financial resources have

also diminished.[6] The students in community college developmental courses have particular needs that challenge these institutions even more. Research has demonstrated that successful developmental courses need, among other essential components, well-trained faculty who use a variety of teaching methods, programs that align with the mission of the institution, and supplemental support systems in place for students (Boylan, 1999, Smittle, 2003, Research and Planning Group for CA Community Colleges 2007).

Developmental courses demand more from their instructors than other courses (Smittle 2003, Shults 2000). The students have likely experienced repeated failure and lack of success in school. Recurring academic failures often lead to attitudes that can make learning more difficult. Studies have documented that students in developmental courses may have challenges with motivation and commitment (Kozeracki, 2005). Additionally, greater percentages of students in developmental courses have learning disabilities than those in typical content courses. Together these provide a significant set of demands for instructors. Not only do they need to understand the affective dimensions of their students and how to address them in the context of their classrooms (or perhaps outside the classroom) but they also have to teach the specific content and skills of their course. Many faculty have expressed "a desire for formal training on how to address the needs of students with disabilities." (Kozeracki 2005, p.43.

Faculty members who teach developmental courses require a particular set of skills, competencies and attitudes. They need to view their students in a proper context, understanding the myriad challenges they face and identifying plans to reach these students. [7] However, only 20 percent of institutions in a national study reported requiring full-time faculty to possess specific training for developmental education before teaching remedial courses (Shults 2000). Additional studies have suggested implications for hiring practices as well as strategies to support faculty to develop an array of teaching

[6] President Obama's recent announcement of federal stimulus funding provides some hopeful news in this regard.

[7] See for example, *Basic Skills as a Foundation for Student Success in California Community Colleges* (2007) Center for Student Success, Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges.

methods (Sheldon 2002, Roueche & Roueche, 1999). These implications involve hiring candidates with experience and attitudes particular to supporting students in developmental courses. Rather than viewing developmental teaching assignments as low status, these candidates might choose to work with this population of students and to create courses and methods specifically for these courses. Faculty can learn these skills "on the job" through professional development—although given the current conditions, it is unlikely they will engage in a coordinated and focused professional learning effort. Typically, community college faculty professional development is idiosyncratic and individually, not institutionally, guided. Faculty choose to participate in professional conferences and workshops that align with their interests which may or may not include teaching. Further, those few days planned by the college administration are widely unappreciated.

Role of Adjunct Faculty in Developmental Education

The role of adjunct faculty has become yet one more concern in terms of teaching developmental courses at the community college level. To meet the rising needs of developmental enrollment, adjunct faculty have been pressed into service in large numbers. The demand for additional developmental course sections has increased over time. Part-time faculty has increasingly been relied upon to address the developmental education needs in community colleges. Sixty-seven percent of faculty who teach developmental courses are part-time (Shults, 2000). According to the NCES study[8], the representation of adjunct faculty in developmental courses is proportional to their overall community college faculty status. Colleges use adjunct faculty because they cost less, and are easily employed, dismissed, and reemployed as needed (Cohen and Brawer 1996, Eney & Davison 2006). Further, developmental courses have been associated with lower status assignments and are often scheduled at less desirable hours (e.g. evenings). Common practice gives these less desirable assignments to adjunct faculty. They have the more challenging hours, students and courses. Unfortunately, part-time faculty have *even less* support and preparation to teach than full-time faculty (Eney & Davidson 2006, Keim 1999, Perin 2004). They also have less access to professional growth opportunities

[8] NCES 2003 Survey

than their full-time peers. They have less opportunity to participate in or to design a coherent developmental program.

Despite these reduced resources for part-time faculty, student achievement outcomes have not been shown to suffer in comparison to students with full-time faculty. Roueche, Roueche and Milliron (1995) conducted surveys, interviews and a comprehensive literature review in their study on adjunct community college faculty. They found no empirical data to show a difference in student ratings, student achievement in subsequent classes, or in student retention between full-time and adjunct instructors. However, more recent studies have shown lower programmatic outcomes for institutions with 70 percent or more development courses taught by adjunct faculty. (Boylan, 2002) Further, increased reliance on part-time instructors has been correlated with lower graduation rates (Jacoby, 2006).

Part-time instructors have been typically challenging to engage in professional development opportunities on campus. Forty-nine percent of all adjunct faculty are aspiring academics (Leslie and Gappa, 2002) and they often teach at more than one college to support themselves. Although they would like a tenure track position these are difficult to obtain (Martin 2007). Given their diffuse interests and their multiple obligations, adjunct faculty are a challenging group to harness for professional learning opportunities. To counter isolation and to grow professionally and connect to the institution, adjunct faculty have been known to participate in campus sponsored professional development (Martin 2007). However, given their part-time status they expected to be paid for their professional development time. This created a sense of inequity with the full-time faculty.

Typical Practices of Professional Development in Community Colleges

As noted above, community college faculty are insufficiently prepared for their teaching role. Professional development for faculty could fulfill this need by providing appropriate learning opportunities but it does not. Research on faculty development practices at the community college level is slim. Murray (2001) conducted a national survey to ascertain the state of the art. Additional smaller studies aimed to look at the

effectiveness of faculty development methods (Maxwell and Kazlauskass, 1992, and Angelo 1994). Overall, faculty professional learning opportunities have tended to cluster into four categories: 1) gatherings on campus for flex days; 2) department meetings; 3) informal conversations among colleagues; and 4) formal conferences off campus. The conferences and workshops focus on topics ranging from career management and quality of life, to curriculum, program and knowledge/skill development (including instructional knowledge/skills).

Murray (2002) found that the campus-wide activities tended to be diffuse and lack coherence. Without a set of intentional goals guiding the professional development work, the faculty in Murray's studies and in the Grubb and Associates (1999) study experienced isolation and pursued areas of their own interest. The flex days might feature an outside speaker or set of speakers intended to motivate faculty at the start of a school year. Planned by administrators, these days often garnered poor reviews (Murray, 2002; Kozeracki, 2005).

Department meetings scored somewhat higher , but were still variable and might not include any professional learningTypical meetings focused on administrative and business issues rather than instructional or curricular matters (Murray 2002). . None of these activities were described as focused on teaching and learning. Informal conversations between colleagues were also variable—these might involve discussions of teaching or students or personal matters. Logistical concerns such as lack of time, scheduling conflicts, and classroom assignments (which were not contiguous) – (Murray 2002, Grubb 1999) often impeded regular conversations.

Faculty members typically attended the annual conference of the professional association of their discipline—the American Mathematics Association, for example. These meetings tended to focus on developments in the field of their content area and allowed the instructors to develop in these arenas (Kozeracki, 2005). These professional association meetings did not attend well to pedagogy since the focus is much more on the

field of study. Further, little or no attention is paid to how to construct a course, let alone instructional implications for developmental courses.

In general, community college professional development programs were observed to be lacking clear connections to the goals and mission of their institutions. Richardson and Wolverton (1994) studied high performing institutions, and noted that they tend to link professional development opportunities systematically to institutional priorities, while the opposite was true in lower-performing districts. These studies began by looking at programs with good outcomes and then described the work they were doing which likely produced such high quality work.

In a review of professional development programs, Murray (1999a) explored common features of successful professional development programs:

- Strong institutional support from deans and other administrators
- Programs that were directed towards explicit goals, were formal, and involved structured activities
- Programs that linked to extrinsic or intrinsic faculty reward structures
- Programs where faculty participated in design and implementation phases (in part because administrators often misdiagnosed needs)
- Programs that allowed faculty to get pedagogical advice from peers working in the same discipline

Little research or internal evaluation has been done studying the effectiveness of professional development programs for improving community college instruction. Grant (2000) conducted a survey which demonstrated that "only 47 percent of responding colleges evaluated faculty development efforts, and only 43 percent have evaluation criteria." When evaluation was done, "methods used to determine effectiveness are, on the whole, not measures of changes in teacher or student behavior" (Richardson & Moore 1987), focusing instead on participation and satisfaction rates. In the K-12 area of research on professional development effectiveness, there is an emerging literature on the value of professional learning and its contribution to student learning (see for example,

Little 2005). Overall, this suggests that not only is more research needed in this area but that the assumptions that professional development leads to improved instruction and improved outcomes have yet to be demonstrated through research.

A study of successful professional development programs indicated that they typically improved practice in the short term but did not drive long-term institutional change, and were not clearly transferable to other settings (Schratz 1990). College administrators must grapple with apparent faculty PD preferences towards non-instructional PD activities that relate to increasing their knowledge in their discipline rather than local instructional challenges. Multiple studies have found evidence that a *"relatively small number of faculty take advantage of PD programs, and those faculty who do participate are often the ones who seem to need them least." (* Maxwell,W.E. & Kazlauskas, E.J. 1992). The lack of attention and focus at the community college level on professional development focused on pedagogy contrasts with a longstanding movement in K-12 professional learning where faculty focus on pedagogy and ways to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

What follows is a case from practice that supports these findings of typical professional development in community colleges writ large. Despite the lack of broad research, a focused case has enabled us to understand that little attention has been paid to a coherent approach to faculty development.

The Case of Foothill-De Anza Community College District

It should be noted that the case of Foothill and De Anza Colleges is somewhat anomalous in that they were committed to focusing on the improvement of teaching and learning through a multi-year project that included this study. This, in itself, is unusual from an institutional perspective, yet the growing interest in the field of community college research and developmental education specifically suggests that this case is of particular importance.

Foothill-De Anza Community College District is located in the heart of Silicon Valley, California. It is one of the largest community college districts in the country. The two campuses provide credit classes for approximately 43,000 students per quarter. Many students are the first in their families to attend college and come from families struggling to make ends meet. Developmental education needs are similar to national trends. The 06-07 Annual Report identified "75–80 percent of our first-time freshmen do not have college-level skills in math."[9] The outgoing chancellor, Martha Kanter, a leader recently tapped by President Obama to serve in the US Department of Education, wrote in a recent annual report,

> Our early vision of "Educational Excellence and Opportunity for All" has guided our educational endeavors in serving more than a million students seeking to improve the quality of their lives by preparing to transfer to a university, enter the workforce, retrain for new careers or enrich their knowledge to attain their educational goals.[10]

The chancellor forged partnerships and connections locally and nationally. For example, the district is an active member of the League for Innovation in the Community College (a national consortium of leading two-year institutions). The district has been well known for its innovative work in a variety of arenas including distance learning, dialogues and programs regarding cultural diversity, basic skills initiatives, and the creation of small learning communities for students.

Beginning in 2005, Foothill-De Anza Community College District engaged in conversations regarding two inter-related challenges: how to improve student performance and how to inspire widespread pedagogical excellence. Assuming a link between improving instruction and professional development, these conversations yielded a multi-year study of the district faculty's professional development experiences.

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[9] Ibid

[10] 2006-7 Foothill-De Anza Annual Report

Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Describe and analyze the professional development experiences of faculty, including new tenure track faculty, new adjunct faculty, and tenured faculty
- Examine institutional practices and systems that inhibit, promote and/or reward professional development
- Prepare recommendations to enhance professional development for all faculty, based on the research findings.

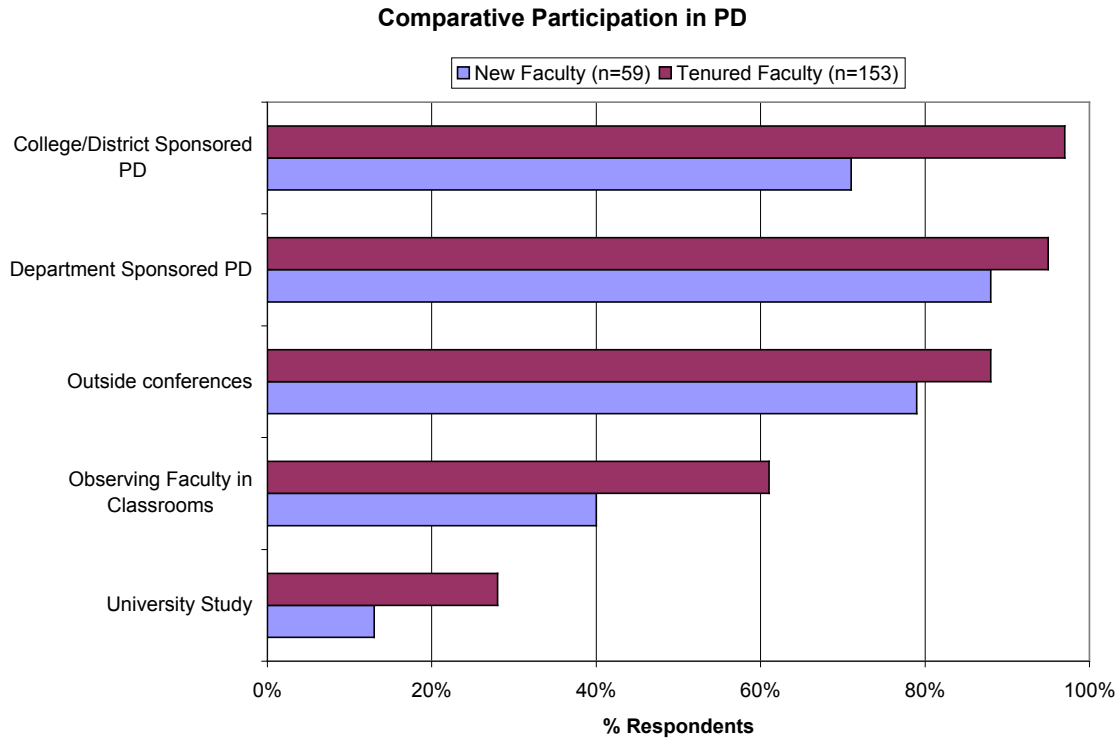
The research, conducted by Gerstein and Ragey (2008), occurred in two phases. During the first phase, 2006-07, the focus was on new faculty. The total number of faculty identified for participation in this study was 210, including 102 new full-time faculty and 108 part-time faculty. New full-time faculty was defined as members in their first through fifth year of teaching with full-time appointments on one of the two campuses. New part-time faculty included those who had completed at least three quarters of teaching on one of the two campuses, had earned employment preference, and had been teaching between four and nine quarters in the district. The second phase, during 2007-08, included a focus on tenured faculty at both campuses who had served six years or more (the longest tenure was 44 years). One-hundred sixty-five (out of 378) tenured faculty participated in the survey and another 26 participated in focus group interviews. Data collection methods included: individual interviews, surveys, and focus group interviews. After two years of inquiry we had the opportunity to look across the faculty sample we had studied for emerging trends that could be of interest to the colleges. To that end, several are noted below.

Participation in Professional Development

Overwhelmingly, faculty at all levels of experience engaged in similar types of formal and informal professional development experiences. According to both the survey questionnaires and the focus groups, faculty attended conferences as their primary source of professional development. Both new and tenured faculty participated in college and

department sponsored professional development–much of that was informal (meetings, committees, etc.). The formal professional development chosen by faculty was typically outside conferences. Conferences ranged from study in one's disciplinary area to issues more focused on teaching and learning at such meetings as the International Society of Teaching and Learning.

Table 1[11]



Common strategies that faculty engaged in when interested in learning about teaching included observing faculty, studying books together, and gathering in groups to discuss instructional techniques.

> *[A faculty member] started meeting amongst our divisions of science and math, to discuss teaching things like problem students, testing, discussion strategies.*

[11] Survey questionnaire (07 and 08)

We are reading a book together on the teaching of reading. It's wonderful and very helpful. We take turns guiding the discussion each week.

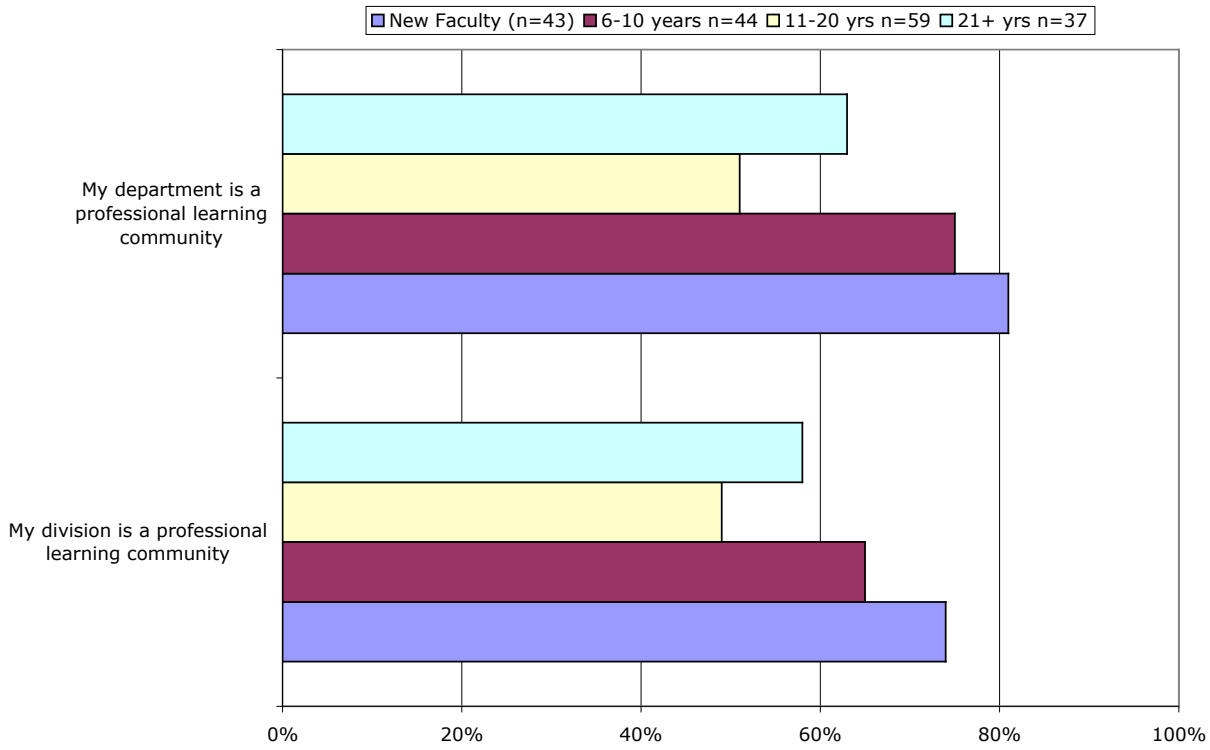
Faculty also appreciated learning together by attending conferences in groups. They found that larger numbers allowed them to strategically choose the sessions to target, to have someone to practice a strategy with upon returning home, and they developed stronger professional relationships simply by traveling together.

Department and Divisions as Learning Communities

In our studies both years we looked at the degree to which faculty regarded their departments and divisions as professional learning communities. These professional "homes" for faculty were variously regarded as important sites for professional learning and growth. Both the survey and the interview data suggested that the degree to which the faculty regarded these places as professional learning communities appeared to change over the course of one's career. Faculty more frequently considered their departments to be professional learning communities than their divisions. The survey data demonstrated that after the first 10 years faculty members regard both their departments and divisions less as professional learning communities. The second table below compares how the two faculty groups broadly regarded their department and division as a learning community.

Table 2[12]

Sense of Professional Learning Communities by Cohort

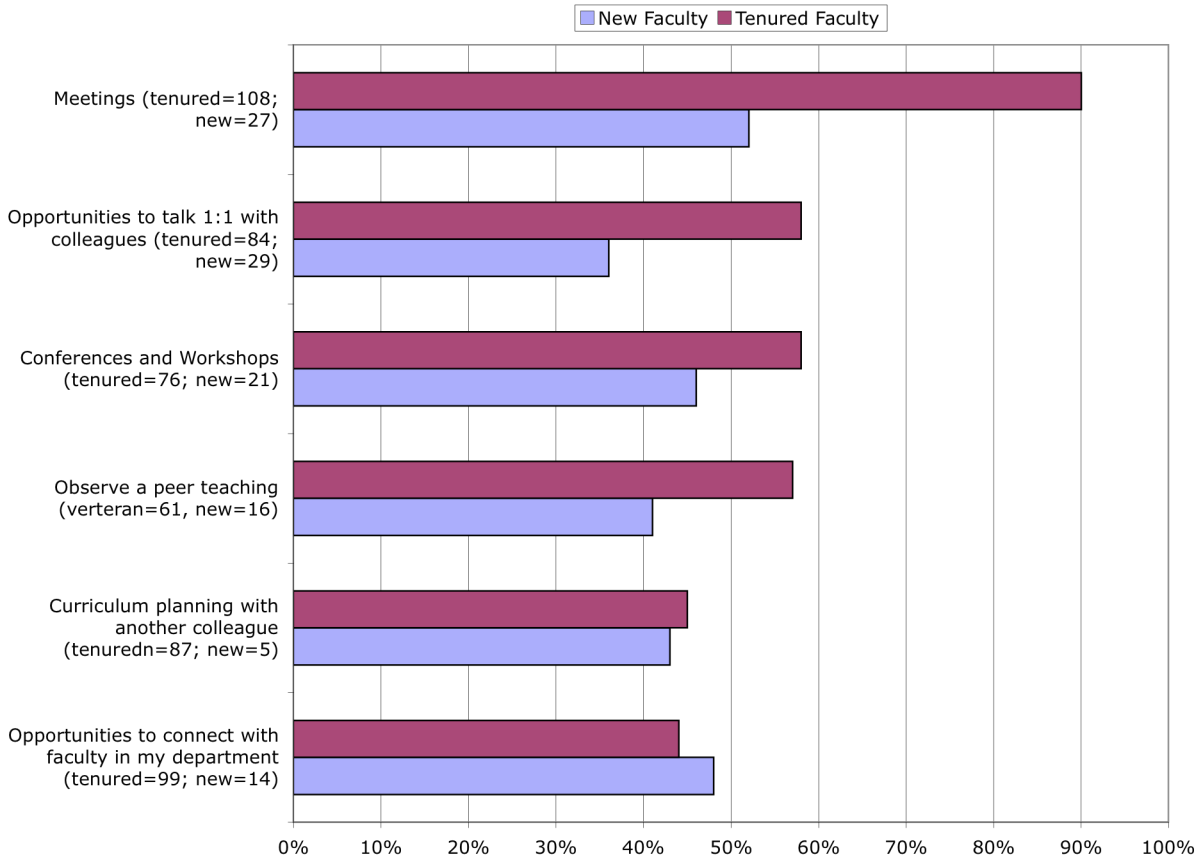


Departments provided faculty with opportunities to meet with colleagues one-on-one, to participate in curriculum planning, observe each other teach, and plan lessons. These were considered typical professional learning community activities that supported good instruction and powerful learning among faculty.[13] Meetings were the primary activity cited by faculty at Divisions. This is a low level activity where professional learning may not necessarily occur but rather administrative matters were addressed. We found these patterns to hold true regardless of the amount of time spent as a faculty member. The two tables below compare these two patterns for new and tenured faculty.

[12] Survey questionnaire
[13] See for example McLaughlin and Talbert (1993)

Table 3[14]

Division Professional Development Activities

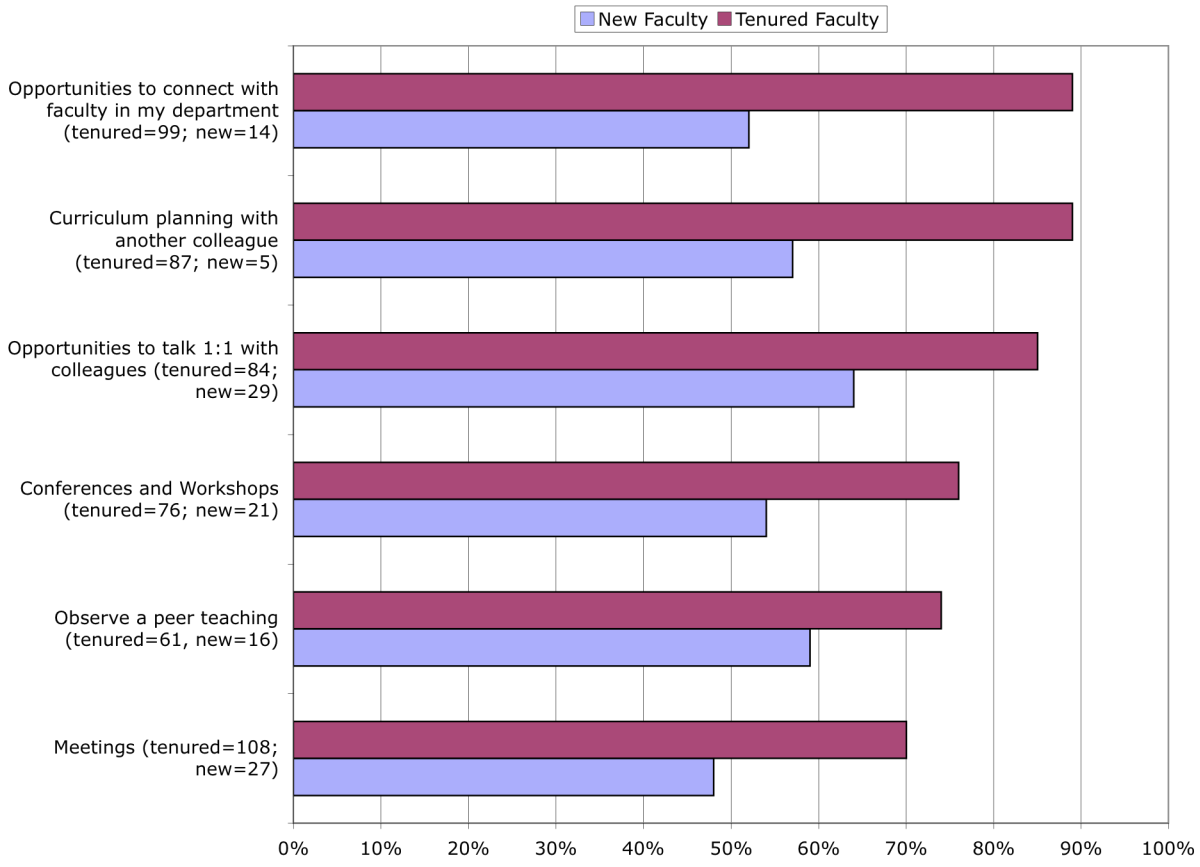


In Table 3 the most significant professional development opportunity noted by both new and tenured faculty were meetings. This contrasts significantly with the higher level opportunities for learning found in departments (Table 4). It was in departments that faculty described on surveys and in interviews how they planned curriculum with colleagues (approximately 90 percent of tenured faculty) or talked with colleagues regarding issues of instruction and curriculum (approximately 90 percent of tenured faculty).

[14] Survey questionnaire (07 and 08)

Table 4[15]

Department Professional Development Activities



An area of common concern for faculty regardless of their length of service involved a sense of isolation. More and more faculty were living a distance from the campuses where they taught and were unable to casually spend time there and build bonds with colleagues. They had long commutes and many had young families with multiple obligations. Additionally, the advent of on-line teaching had further diminished opportunities for faculty members to spend time on campus. These factors conspired to exacerbate the sense of professional isolation that faculty members experienced.

Faculty members cited learning in groups as some of their most effective opportunities for growth. Whether attending outside conferences with colleagues or participating in a

[15] Survey questionnaire (07 and 08)

study group with peers or visiting another classroom, each of these activities was named as more effective for supporting improved teaching and learning by faculty members. Learning together helped create connections across disciplines and forge relationships that supported faculty members throughout their career paths. Some of the most rewarding experiences that faculty described were more informal professional development—learning with other colleagues. These professional learning experiences were often unrecognized by the institutions for a variety of reasons, including a lack of bureaucratic supports which would have required engaging the Faculty Senate and Faculty Associations to rewrite the contract.

Motivation to Participate in Professional Development

The research of both cohorts of faculty described the sources of encouragement and motivation for engaging in professional development. The opportunity to look across the faculty, from first-year faculty to those with more than 30 years of experience on campus allowed us to examine possible trends in a variety of areas. As discussed earlier, the focus of professional development appeared to follow a pattern. Motivation also appeared to display some tendencies according to experience. In early years, faculty were driven more to learn pedagogy and their discipline. In later years, faculty were driven more to learn for intellectual stimulation.

New faculty articulated their motivations to study how students learn and how to improve their teaching. The following quotes typify their experience and interest.

> *All the professional development study I do is about helping the students read and write more effectively.*

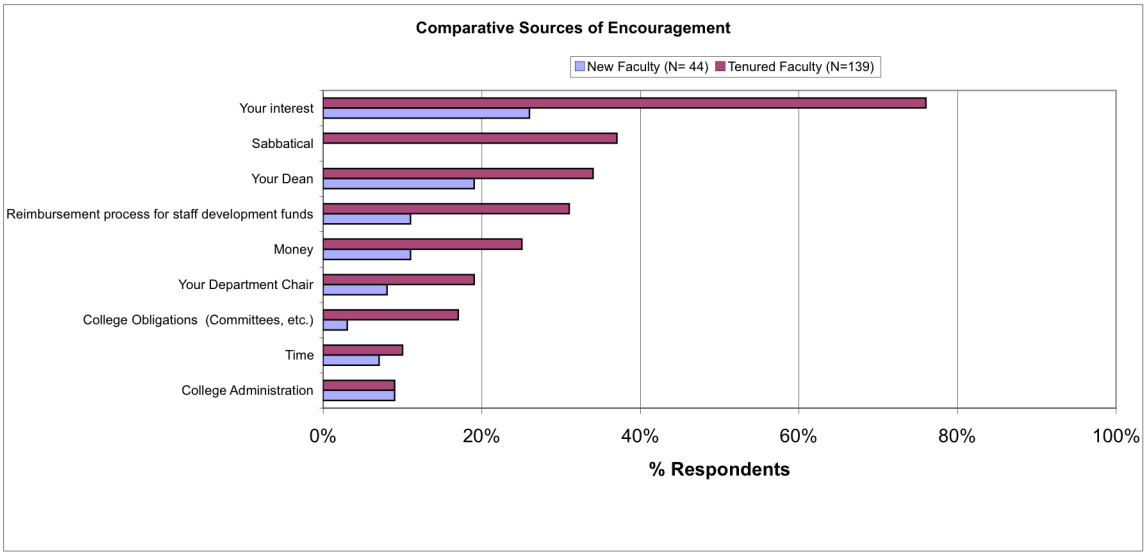
> *My main focus is always student learning and teaching strategies. I would like to get more workshops and conferences on student learning but I don't think I often find that. So it sometimes goes under the guise of teaching strategies, but then I sort of pick out how do students learn from those teaching strategies.*

I want to learn more effective ways to reach and teach my students, especially underserved students. Every time I go and learn one new thing and I'll bring it back and give it a try.

I want to keep improving on instructional excellence,..because one of my objectives is just to get better and better and better. And work on some very important things like really make sure I'm educating the students where we make sure we have retention in classes. Retention! Retention! Figuring out how I can hang on to some of these students that have been dropping away, making it interesting and interactive, learn how to do those tricks in the classroom to keep people learning.

According to the survey questionnaire the three primary sources of encouragement for tenured faculty participation in professional development included: personal interest, sabbaticals (professional development leave), and their dean. New faculty shared two of the top three sources of encouragement with their tenured colleagues. The top three sources of encouragement for new faculty participation in professional development included personal interest, their dean, and the resources for staff development (money and the reimbursement for staff development). Controlling for the possibility of a professional development leave, all faculty named the same chief sources of encouragement for participating in professional development. Personal interest was the number one source of encouragement for both groups. Table 5 shows these results:

Table 5[16]



Faculty interviews provided a slightly different picture regarding interest and motivations for professional development. When queried about the reasons why they engage in professional development the top three reasons for each cohort were actually different. It appeared that for tenured faculty the greatest sources of motivation for professional growth have to do with intellectual stimulation, an interest in pursuing personal interests and warding off stagnation and an interest in ones' discipline. In contrast, new faculty members were more motivated by becoming better instructors first and foremost. Then they were interested in learning more of their discipline and connecting with colleagues and making more money. This suggests that early in one's career the focus of professional learning is on developing the skills to teach and learn one's discipline. Later in ones' career it appears that pedagogy is less of a pressing concern as faculty gain skills and experience. They can then turn their attention to their own personal interests and concerns about stagnating in their roles. Table 6 displays these data.

[16] Survey Questionnaires (07 and 08)

Table 6 [17]

Motivation to engage in PD	New Faculty N=24	Tenured Faculty N=26
Becoming a better teacher	19	8
Gather knowledge, grow in discipline, stay current	14	11
Networking, connecting with colleagues	12	4
Advancing in salary column	12	10
Intellectual stimulation	8	14
Personal interests, change, no stagnation	-	13
Engaging students	-	7
Foster sense of community	4	-
Expand own interdisciplinary and cross cultural skills	2	-
Increasing efficiency	-	2

Challenges for Professional Learning

For both cohorts of faculty the top three barriers to participating in professional development included time, money and bureaucracy. Regardless of experience level, these three constraints held constant. Faculty were hard pressed to find sufficient time to engage in professional learning. They found the resources available insufficient to support the actual expenses of engaging in the programs (e.g. travel to conferences, fees, etc.). And they found the bureaucratic processes involved with applying for credits (for salary and professional advancement) and reimbursements to be a tremendously cumbersome.

Implications for the Future of Community College Faculty Professional Learning

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching is considering what is needed to engage community college faculty in creating and teaching courses that could catapult the developmental education programs forward. What do we know about how faculty are currently poised to assume these responsibilities and what might be needed to engage them?

[17] Focus group interviews (07 and 08)

Create Faculty Inquiry Groups[18]

At both Foothill and De Anza Community Colleges the faculty engage in professional learning on and off campus. Those who engage in learning on campus were typically generating opportunities within their departments and are learning with colleagues. We heard many robust examples of faculty who study together, who observe each other, and who were eager for more opportunities of this nature. Many of these examples included faculty who were collaborating with colleagues across the college in multiple departments. This type of learning was of particular interest to them. These examples of professional learning communities indicated that faculty were innovative and willing to engage in inquiry with colleagues on campus.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching engaged in a multi-year effort with faculty from community colleges across California, the Strengthening Pre-Collegiate Education in Community Colleges (SPECC) project, which among other things focused on supporting faculty inquiry. Through asking questions about the teaching and learning in their own classrooms community college faculty learned a great deal (Huber 2008). "[E]ducators are using faculty inquiry to explore and assess different approaches to classroom instruction as well as for course and program design and evaluation." Through careful observations and documentation faculty members had the opportunity to investigate and try to improve their work. As one participant described, "I've never so thoroughly documented my teaching nor have I really been this rigorous in checking to see if what I'm doing is really working" (Huber , 2008, p. 9).

The broader literature, SPECC, and the Foot Hill-De Anza case suggest that despite these particular examples of collaborative learning, faculty are quite isolated from one another (Gerstein & Ragey, Huber 2008, Townsend & Twombly 2007). Whether it's the heavy teaching loads, the block schedules, the distance that faculty travel to work, the size of the colleges, the heavy emphasis on utilizing technology and distance learning, the focus on productivity and accountability, or simply perception, faculty identified their

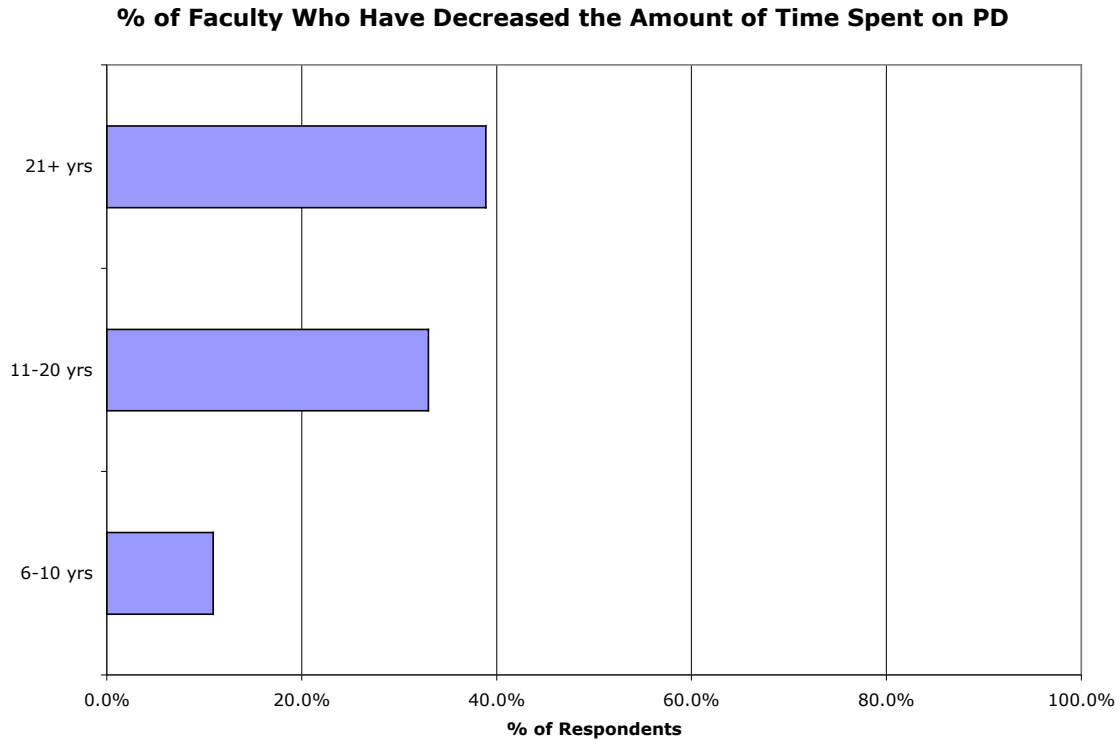
[18] Some have referred to these groups as professional learning communities, or faculty inquiry groups.

experience as fairly isolated and this was not well regarded. At Foothill and De Anza, faculty reported an interest in more opportunities for learning with their campus colleagues. The more senior faculty described an eroded community and increased isolation. The newer faculty described isolation and a need for colleagues to help them as they made their way. Wherever they were in their career path, faculty expressed an interest in learning with others—whether within their departments or across departments. This is good news. Professional learning communities are a well-researched and effective vehicle for strengthening teaching and improving student achievement.

Renew and Reform the Systems of Recognition

We know that faculty engage to some degree in professional growth throughout their career. In the FHDA study, faculty sought recognition for their professional development through professional credits. All faculty in our samples reported the system was unnecessarily bureaucratic, cumbersome and idiosyncratic. Further, these faculty reported that they typically encountered a mismatch between credits or awards and effort expended. Time spent on professional development appears to diminish over the career of a faculty member, as illustrated in Table 7 below. There is a drop off in the time devoted to professional development after 10 years; 33 percent of faculty in years 11-20 reported decreased time spent on professional development over the course of their teaching career while 39 percent of faculty teaching more than 21 years reported a decrease. Those who have worked for 21 or more years are typically at the top of the pay scale. As a result, the financial incentives to engage in professional development activities diminished over time. The lack of financial and recognition rewards may contribute in part to the drop off in time spent on professional development. Foothill and De Anza are facing a demographic shift of large numbers of upcoming retirements that mirrors the nation. This change affords an opportunity for renewing and reforming the system of reward and recognition.

Table 7[19]



We heard from administration at both campuses that changing the reward and recognition system would involve significant negotiations with the faculty associations. The perceived barriers to improvement appeared daunting.

Utilize Strategic Hiring Practices and Learning Opportunities

Much research points to the importance of hiring faculty to teach developmental education courses who have significant teaching experience. If their teaching experience has focused especially in developmental education, then all to the good (Roueche & Roueche, 1999, Shults, 2000, Boylan, 2002). In the absence of hiring experienced faculty, campuses need to provide professional development for the current faculty to build upon their strengths, support them to build a repertoire of strategies, and align the developmental practices with the goals of the institution.

[19] Survey questionnaire

Support Ancillary Services for Faculty and for Students

We know from research that successful programs include or make available a variety of concomitant services to students that support their enrollment in development programs. Tutoring, academic advising, study skills workshops, counseling and other non-academic supports have been found to accelerate student performance and increase completion rates in developmental courses (Boylan, 2002, Boylan et al, 1995). Additionally, we know that faculty often assume multiple duties playing the role of advisor, study skills teacher and counselor. Providing support for ancillary services—whether it's professional development for faculty engaged in these roles or linking developmental course taking to other services.

Conclusion

Wagoner (2008) described community colleges as open systems just as many educational institutions are open systems. They have permeable boundaries that allow outside influences to impact the actors and the work. Indeed, the large numbers of adjunct faculty and the dynamic nature of the student body further demonstrate the ways in which the community college is a particularly open system. Just as teachers in K-12 and the schools in which they work do not exist in a vacuum, the faculty and the community colleges are affected by the politics and the economics that surround them.

The number of students enrolling in developmental courses has increased over the last decade and is likely to continue along this trajectory for some time. The open access mission of community colleges guarantees that these courses will not only serve greater numbers but will challenge the faculty at each campus. These shifts in enrollment necessitate strategic and deliberate efforts to address the needs of both faculty and students through focused professional development efforts, coordinated and aligned developmental education programs, and opportunities for faculty to learn from and with one another.

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A series of background papers was prepared for Carnegie to support its work in developmental mathematics in community colleges, to devise measures for student success, and to help identify problems of practice for potential future work.

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