

Considering the full faculty: The case for lecturer inclusion¹

Introduction:

Purposeful consideration and inclusion of lecturers in academic life will better serve our students, and the University as a whole. With co-constructed creative solutions, problems associated with current conditions and practices that affect lecturers may be ameliorated and conditions conducive to full participation of the whole faculty may become normalized. Further, the contributions from all faculty members will be valued and incorporated into academic decision-making. The quality of education, resiliency, flexibility, responsiveness of the institution will be enhanced when we are able to access and support the diverse perspectives, experience and expertise of the full faculty.

This document contains:

- A summary of the current environment for lecturers at CSUSM with examples of problematic practices;
- An explanation of four ramifications that demonstrate the counter-productive nature of the current campus practices and why change is necessary;
- Examples of actions that would address problems associated with inattention to the majority contingent workforce.

Background:

At CSUSM, like many universities across the nation, lecturers are a majority of instructional faculty (approximately 63% of FTES delivered by lecturers noted in CSUSM Academic Senate, Spring 2013) and are an unrecognized human resource. Creating an environment that encourages the contributions of lecturers has not been attended to in a regular, systematic way. This has resulted in practices that create problematic working conditions that in turn, negatively influence our students' learning conditions. Even with the goal of increasing the number of tenure-line faculty, problems associated with a majority contingent workforce should be addressed in order to enhance institutional effectiveness. This is a tremendous opportunity for CSUSM to show leadership in an area of national importance.

Current Conditions:

The following section describes the existing conditions in which lecturers function within the institution and the practices that inhibit their ability to contribute fully as faculty members. CSUSM

¹ This report, prepared by Terri Metzger, June 2013, is based on campus surveys, generally available data, scholarly and news articles, academic white papers as well as formal and informal discussions among lecturers. Fredi Avalos, Jennifer Lynch, Laura Makey and Kimber Quinney made significant contributions to the report.

cannot adequately meet its mission, address priorities or initiatives when the majority of the faculty who work directly with students (lecturers) are not part of the process.

Lecturer perspective and expertise are generally excluded from institutional business:

- Lecturers have little voice in formal University shared governance. There is one Lecturer senator and one seat of a standing committee (Faculty Affairs Committee) and three seats total on other committees (Faculty Center Advisory Council, University Grants Committee, Faculty Awards Selection Committee). Representation is not proportional and the service is unrecognized and uncompensated.
 - College level: Lecturers are excluded from college-level shared governance activities, thereby not represented and the students we teach are not represented. Lecturers teach the majority of first year students, under represented students. In 2012-13, the CHABSS Dean agreed to seat a volunteer, representative lecturer committee, however the Dean does not consult or assign tasks due to uncompensated nature of the work.
 - Department level: Lecturers are not consistently included in department business. The invitation to participate varies in degree, year to year, and department by department.
- Lecturers are not consulted in discussions related to Academic Affairs so our perspective is not included. Specifically, Deans and department chairs do not consult with lecturers, representative bodies do not include lecturers, so our perspective is missing in the information or recommendations the Provost's office receives. (There is one known anomaly—a lecturer was included on CHABSS strategic plan task force and compensated.)
- The full spectrum of faculty rights and responsibilities are not extended to lecturers. Lecturers are primarily assigned to teaching yet some lecturers voluntarily participate in service and scholarly/creative activities without compensation, support or acknowledgement. In a few cases, there are additional assignments such as course coordinator, or course releases funded by CFA or Faculty Center.

Practices inhibit effective function of lecturers, who comprise the majority of faculty:

- There is little institutional commitment to lecturers as a group. There is no “ownership” of lecturer coordination or support by the institution, so little strategic communication, needs assessment, support or community building occurs outside of our grassroots efforts.
- Lecturers have little stability in courses taught. Lecturers receive late assignments to courses, are “bumped” from courses, develop a course but are re-assigned, all of which reduce quality of instruction.
- Department Chairs have supervisory authority delegated from Dean, but little to no training for leadership and management responsibilities, aside from guidance for following the CBA to assign work. A department chair has a significant effect on the lecturer work environment. Lecturers are forced to continually address issues related to inconsistent or problematic actions by chairs, constraining their time that could be focused on student needs.
- Lecturers are systematically excluded from organizational support, thus harming the student learning environment. Important information is not shared equally (e.g., program/course student learning outcomes). Lecturers are not provided a level of support equitable to what is

afforded to TT faculty. Regular professional development money, competitive grants, department EL monies, networked computers, office space, telephones, ergonomic office equipment, etc., are provided to TT faculty but not lecturers, or in an inconsistent way.

- Up until recently, lecturers were excluded from faculty center events. Within the past 2 years, lecturers have been invited to faculty center professional development events, however the professional development needs of many lecturers, especially those with non-traditional hours, remain unaddressed.

Ramifications of Lecturer Working Conditions at CSUSM:

Current practices and conditions increase CSUSM's risk for legal action, limit student learning, hobble institutional effectiveness and perpetuate inequities.

Current practices and conditions increase liability and risk for legal action. Institutional norms for resolving issues internally are based on practices in place when contingent faculty members were not the majority of faculty. The norms are no longer aligned with institutional circumstances. Increased risks include:

- Legal suits claiming disparate impact on opportunity for quality education due to (unintentional) pattern of discrimination since CSU-wide more than 70% of lower division courses are taught by contingent faculty who have less support and fewer resources (statistic from CSU answers to Little Hoover Commission Questions).
- FERPA violations from inadequate access to private space for lecturers to meet with students;
- Academic freedom violations that result from invisibility, isolation and vulnerable employment conditions of lecturers;
- Bullying and harassment problems due to antagonism directed toward lecturers;
- Unfair labor practice suits due to inconsistent application of policies among departments or colleges;
- Lack of preventative training for lecturers on legal issues increases institution's legal liability. The organization assumes lecturers search out policies and procedures such as FERPA rather than provide training.
- Undue safety risks incurred by lecturers as a result of inequitable support. For example, some lecturer office spaces do not have telephones, preventing them from receiving official emergency notifications. Recent violence on campuses nationwide makes an equitable method of notification imperative.

Current practices and conditions affect student learning. The conditions previously described discourage certain behaviors (e.g. "high impact teaching" practices, external research grants, community partnerships, student/faculty interaction outside of class meetings, advance planning for courses, innovations in teaching) that would improve the student learning experience. The conditions work *against* teaching excellence.

- Lecturers cannot confidently prepare the intensive teaching pedagogies/ “high impact practices” that campus documents reference such as student learning communities because workload and work assignment are subject to change and/or decided too close to the start of term to allow for adequate preparation.
- Lecturers have little incentive to spend time on campus, and there is little opportunity for students to interact with lecturers outside of class, an important component of student success.
- Lecturers work in an organizational culture that devalues their work and report experiencing forms of silencing and marginalization (see lecturer survey results 2011, 2013). When these characteristics are perceived as entrenched and unlikely to change, innovation in teaching is constrained. Additionally, innovations may be risky to implement if the chair or department culture doesn’t support them (e.g., online learning, hybrid course delivery, active learning, community service learning).

Current practices and conditions adversely affect campus ability to meet external standards and internal initiatives.

- For example, we cannot meet the auditable, federal requirement for course textbook orders to be published simultaneously with the course schedule because lecturers receive work assignments months later than the schedule publication. The timing of work assignments also interferes with having accessible course material available for students in a timely manner.
- Additionally, assessment/ WASC requirements may be confounded by current practices (not paid for service) and conditions (excluded from campus discussion, sensitivity to academic freedom violations) experienced by lecturers.
- Internal priorities such as equity/multi-culturalism are stifled by the exclusion of the majority of instructional faculty from full citizenship in academic life. Lecturers cannot secure external funding from federal agencies because we do not have adequate institutional support to be eligible for federal grants (e.g., protected time for research, space, equipment, travel funds). Community Service Learning and community engagement efforts cannot be sustained with short notice of course assignments often experienced by lecturers.

Current practices and conditions are inequitable.

- Workload: A heavy burden is placed on TT faculty because lecturers’ work assignments do not include service on campus; service needs are growing but are completed by a shrinking percentage of the faculty; lecturers are nominally included in shared governance (one senator on Academic Senate, not included in college-level governance for any college).
- Professional support and opportunities: Lecturers’ needs are low priority. Regarding funding, lecturers may be eligible to apply for some opportunities but are excluded from regular department and college-level monies. In some departments and situations lecturers do not have adequate access to the most basic support of photocopiers and supplies.
- The structural inequities reinforce a divide between TT and NTT; lecturers are routinely subjected to disrespect, condescension, micro-aggressions, even hostility from TT faculty (See lecturer survey results, 2011, 2013).

The continued existence of the counter-productive practices and problematic work environment as referenced above impedes the contributions of Academic Affairs to our campus mission. A fragmented, unsupported faculty cannot provide the educational opportunities that our students need. *The current institutional culture puts lecturers in a marginalized position and therefore diminishes the success of their students.*

Suggestions to Improve Campus Conditions (and Thereby Improve Student Learning):

At the grassroots level, we have been advocating for lecturer consideration and inclusion and there has been forward movement in some areas:

- Faculty development opportunities: The Faculty Center now includes lecturers in the invitations to faculty development opportunities; First Year Programs has co-sponsored three annual conferences for faculty (mostly lecturers) who teach First Year students (4th conference scheduled for August); CHABSS piloted a small pool of competitively awarded faculty development money for lecturers in 2013.
- Inclusion: the CFA and administration compelled the Academic Senate to revise the vote for chair procedures to align with the CBA/ lecturers now can participate in the advisory vote; the Dean of CHABSS seated an uncompensated lecturer advisory committee when the college TT faculty did not pass the referendum to include lecturers and staff in college shared governance committees; the Dean of CHABSS included a lecturer on the strategic plan task force; calls for faculty center fellowships are open to all faculty ranks.
- Equitable support: Instructional Design Support (IDS) team and Library services are two exemplars of supporting faculty regardless of rank or hiring classification.

These successes provide a foundation for realizing the full potential of our campus. For Academic Affairs to function more effectively and meet our students' needs, contingent faculty issues must be addressed. Below are 5 target areas with examples of actions that Academic Affairs could implement in order to reduce barriers and create more effective conditions.

1. Improve quality of lower level management: Provide *comprehensive leadership and management training for department chairs*—chairs have a direct impact on safe, inclusive and consistent work environment for lecturers. Department chairs need more than nuts and bolts of work assignments/CBA. Training could take the following form(s): workshops, tutorials, books, articles, panels of past chairs, mentoring.

2. Include lecturers in Academic Affairs business: Intentionally *include lecturer perspective* on task forces, committees, other working groups, including search committees. Expand avenues to legitimize lecturer contributions and perspective such as the CHABSS Lecturer Advisory Committee. This inclusion should be modeled at the highest levels of administration, practically implemented, and compensated.

3. Improve communication and community for lecturers: Increase the institutional commitment to lecturers and their students through a *funded action group comprised of lecturers and/or a campus-wide coordinator* position staffed from the lecturer ranks in order to develop organized communication and outreach strategies for the lecturers. Communication is a key tool to build a sense of inclusion and community among lecturers, as well as to reduce the sense of isolation and invisibility lecturers report at CSUSM (See 2011, 2013 campus lecturer surveys, 2013 teaching and learning survey).

4. Provide equitable and proportional support: Examine and *mitigate the inequities in levels of support* between hiring classifications, such as, the ratios of PD grants and sabbatical leaves given to eligible lecturers compared to TT faculty, distribution of networked computers, distributions of college professional development monies, etc. by WTUs and/or FTES generated.

5. Integrate lecturers into academic life: Fund *assigned time for service to lecturers*— this could begin with full time lecturers as a pilot and grow to include lecturers with 3-year appointments who choose to participate. An accountability mechanism is already in place with Faculty Activity Reports submitted by TT faculty. Assigned service time would improve student access to an integrated, informed, invested professoriate, alleviate TT faculty workload, enhance lecturer morale through recognition and voice, plus the expertise and perspective of more faculty members will be available to the institution.

Conclusion:

Lecturers are essential to the overriding academic mission of CSUSM and the CSU system. Lecturers are a tremendous resource for both students and the organization that should be recognized and utilized. Attention to and consideration of campus conditions and practices as they affect lecturers will address existing problems and reduce potential missteps. Creating a culture of inclusion and mutual respect for everybody allows us to find creative solutions quickly and nimbly respond to change.