

WNCC Part-Time Instructor Survey 2004 – REPORT

Survey Purpose and Methodology:

The WNCC Part-Time Instructor's Survey 2004 was designed at the request of SPFIE¹ chaired by Don Carlson. One of SPFIE's goals for academic year 2003-2004 was to address concerns of part-time instructors. As a result of discussions at SPFIE and the initiative of the Division Chairs, a 29-question survey was mailed out to all 315 part-time instructors at WNCC in early May 2004. The survey included a cover letter from all Division Chairs highlighting the purpose of the survey: "*We need your help making Western Nevada Community College a better place to teach and learn. As part of our strategic plan for improving WNCC, we need to learn more about the background and concerns of part-time instructors.*" The survey was mailed directly to each instructor's home address and included a stamped envelope to be returned to Institutional Research by May 31, 2004. 160 part-time instructors responded to the survey by the deadline; **the response rate was 51%**.

The survey was comprised of 28 questions designed to identify part-time instructors, categorize their attitudes about teaching at WNCC, and identify areas that would improve their teaching. The 29th question was an opportunity to write additional comments to the question "*What else would help you be a better teacher?*" The report is designed to exclude all questions not answered in order to provide an accurate percentage of responses on each question. All answer percentages in this summary are rounded. The responses to question 29 were typed up by Barbara Ford and coded by Susan Priest to look for common concerns.

Summary of Survey Data:

Demographic Issues – Identifying Part-Time Instructors – Questions 1-10

- Equal mix of men & women.
- Less than half of the part-time instructors have taught more than 8 semesters.
- 62% teach 3-6.5 credit hrs.
- All divisions represented in the sample.
- 85% do not teach at other colleges in Nevada or California.
- 52% have a full time job outside WNCC.
- Only 26% are retirees.
- 41% would like to participate in the community at WNCC, 40 % have no opinion about their participation, and 19% do not want to participate at WNCC, outside of teaching.
- 48% would like to teach full time at WNCC. (*The response rate is higher among those part-time instructors who have a full-time job. Pay may be an issue.*)
- 43% depend on income earned from teaching at WNCC.

Information on services for Part-Time Instructors – Questions 11-18

- 52% have used and found the "WNCC Part-Time Faculty Information Guide" helpful.
- 39% didn't know that there are course outline available for help with their class syllabi.
- 42% didn't know an email address at WNCC was a possibility.
- 67% didn't know private health insurance was available through WNCC.
- 50% have used the WNCC website and found it helpful.
- 41% have used Media Services and found it helpful.
- 55% have not used the WNCC Library (although they know that it is available.)
- Least known service: health insurance (you pay premiums)-q14
- Best known service: WNCC library (q 17-18)
- Least used service: health insurance (14)

¹ The college committee entitled "Strategic Planning for Institutional Effectiveness"

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- Best used services: part time faculty guide (Q 11) & WNCC web site (q 15)

Request for additional information for Part-Time Instructors – Question 19

- Out of the 160 returned surveys, there were 641 responses to this question.
- The top 4 areas that part-time instructors identified as information/services that would improve their teaching were:
 1. How to market your classes (& increase enrollment) – 66 responses (41% of the 160 respondents)
 2. Course outlines for help with syllabi for the courses that I teach – 63 responses (39% of the 160 respondents)
 3. Information on creating my own web pages for course that I teach – 60 responses (38% of the 160 respondents)
 4. Online manual for part-time instructors – 59 responses (37% of the 160 respondents)

Levels of satisfaction among Part-Time Instructors – Questions 20-28

- 88% were satisfied with student interest & preparation (#20)
- 90% were satisfied with student participation (#21)
- 90% were satisfied with course content (#22)
- 72% were satisfied with administrative support (#23)
- 73% were satisfied with facilities (#24)
- 52% were satisfied with technical support (#25)
- 44% were satisfied with how course evaluations are communicated (#26)
- 59% were satisfied with pay per contact hour (#27)
- 14% were completely satisfied in general (#28)
- 77% were mostly satisfied in general (#28)

Written responses to “What else would help you be a better teacher?” – Question 29

- 82 people wrote additional written comments (51% of the respondents.)
- Those 82 respondents generated 109 specific suggestions for improvement.
- The 109 specific suggestions for improvement covered 23 distinct topics.
- Out of the 23 distinct topics the top 3 areas of concern were:
 1. **Communication:** There were 21 distinct written comments that mentioned the need to improve and/or increase communication between part-time instructors and administration, departments, support staff and other instructors. If you added in the number of comments related to communicating expectations to part-time instructors (*comments like “Where is the quality control? I have taught here for four years and nobody has ever questioned my syllabus, observed me or evaluated me.”*) the number of communication related comments would rise to 27. (25-33 % of those who answered question #29, and 20-24% of specific comments)
 2. **Professional Development:** There were 10 distinct requests to provide more opportunities for part-time instructors to receive training and professional development. (12% of those who answered question #29, and 9% of specific comments)
 3. **Pay (rate of pay & payroll issue):** There were 9 distinct comments indicating both a desire for more pay and addressing issues related to payroll delivery. (10% of those who answered question #29, and 8% of specific comments.)

Issues & Recommendations:

Overall, there is a high rate of satisfaction among part-time instructors. However, part-time instructor satisfaction and quality of teaching would improve if WNCC would address all issues related to communication. Every effort should be made to increase and improve all levels of communication with part-time instructors. Communication covers many issues from clearly identifying job expectations, providing information on available support services, evaluating instructors, and actively seeking feedback and suggestions from part-time instructors. Secondly, there is the issue of continuing to create opportunities for part-time instructors to improve their teaching techniques, assessment ideas, and technology skills. Finally, WNCC should explore new ways to increase pay for part-time instructors.

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