



A resource created by **The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success**
pullias.usc.edu/delphi

Advocacy and Equal Access Opportunities for Non-Tenure Track Faculty at Middlesex Community College *2020 Applicant for the Delphi Award*

By Jennifer Yeh and Jordan Harper

From the Delphi Project database of

Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

- ✓ Resources and Initiatives Exclusively for NTTF
- ✓ Support for Teaching

Example Best Practices to Support Change Processes

- ✓ Dedicated Advocacy Position
- ✓ Representation Across Committees

Middlesex Community College (MCC) recognizes that student achievement is intertwined with faculty success, which of course includes adjunct faculty. MCC has a history of including non-tenure-track faculty (NTTF) in consideration of past initiatives, such as opening the availability of some Professional Development (PD), workshops and stipend opportunities. However, after two accreditation reports in 2013 indicated a need to better integrate part-time faculty into the college, MCC took actionable steps to make improvements in these areas. MCC developed a two-part program that 1) equalized the access of all professional development (PD) opportunities and 2) established a dedicated Adjunct Liaison position to ensure part-time faculty had dedicated support and someone to advocate on their behalf. Over the years, MCC has made considerable efforts to include adjuncts in the college's priorities on increasing persistence and retention rates, bridging achievement gaps and addressing accreditation issues.

Resources and Initiatives Exclusively for NTTF

In response to accreditation reports implicating a lack of cohesion between part-time faculty and the college, a mini-grant was awarded in 2013 by the MCC Foundation to launch a project model for increasing inclusivity. The project's early initiatives included open houses, NTTF-specific events, and the creation of an "Adjunct Junction" webpage dedicated to empowering NTTF. The webpage has served as a jumping point for further developments in improving the working conditions of NTTF.

MCC has improved adjunct resources on campuses in response to NTTF requests through the Adjunct Liaison. For example, the liaison worked with the MCC Classroom Taskforce, another campus committee, to remodel the spaces that NTTF occupy with new furniture, paint, carpet and ceiling tiles. The remodeled facilities have since provided a more inviting atmosphere, including a subsequent increase in NTTF collegiality and student meetings in these spaces.

The certificate program supports NTTF goals of obtaining a full-time position. Recognition and certification are received in various fields, such as STEM Support and Technology. The program requires attendance in workshops, implementation of classroom changes, and publishing results on the state's open-resources website. Publication on the state's open resources website allows adjuncts to demonstrate their proficiencies in various areas, such as evidence-based pedagogy, and therefore increase overall job marketability of NTTF.

In 2021, MCC also started offering the ability to earn micro-credentials through the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE) with a specific focus on diversity, equity and inclusion.

The mentorship program pairs NTTF with adjunct mentors for outreach and to promote inclusivity with the goal of helping new employees acclimate to the college more easily. An "adjunct night" was also organized to encourage the integration of faculty and recognize achievements by celebrating long-serving NTTF and those who have earned certification; however, the event was halted at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the college has placed renewed energy and attention to its diversity, equity and inclusion work, NTTF have been included in those efforts.

Although the pandemic halted these plans, the college held virtual meetings for NTTF to address the ongoing concerns regarding COVID-19, decreasing enrollment and more. The entire administration participated in the meetings so that NTTF could ask a wide range of questions and receive immediate answers. NTTF found this format to be the easiest way to attend meetings as they did not have to figure in commute time or take time away from their teaching responsibilities at other nearby institutions.

Support for Teaching

MCC believes that student success is strongly interwoven with equal opportunities in PD for NTTF. Student performance inadvertently suffers when faculty are not granted equal access to all opportunities. Therefore, institutional-wide efforts have been made to include adjunct faculty in initiatives. Stipends for participation in PD and other initiatives are offered to NTTF who have served at least one year of service. Adjunct faculty can apply for funding to receive hourly compensation for attending conferences, training programs, workshops, other discipline-related work, seminars, curriculum development, research and more.

The iPad pilot program, and its successor — the Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program, provide English Composition classes with technology to support learning. From the beginning, NTTF were intentionally sought after to be included in the training, implementation and evolution of these programs as classroom technology continues to change.





The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL)'s "100% Completion" program provides NTTF with strategies for increase student course completion. Focus is placed on persistence, retention, and how to help students succeed in class, including particular intervention plans for those who are at risk of withdrawing, failing courses, or discontinuing education after the semester. Data gathered on student success metrics have provided evidence of the program's positive results. More specifically, NTTF sections have shown notable improvements in student course completion rates. NTTF makes up 20% of SoTL's membership; combined with the clear impact that NTTF faculty have over student success, the program relies heavily on adjunct faculty to carry out its goals.

Like other institutions, MCC had to pivot during the pandemic. As the college has added hybrid-flexible classrooms, NTTF faculty have been encouraged to apply for use of these classrooms. After training on the technology and pedagogy, NTTF can teach their courses to students in the classroom while simultaneously teaching students who are tuning in remotely.

As the college has placed renewed energy and attention to its diversity, equity and inclusion work, NTTF have been included in those efforts. The first major initiative occurred with the faculty academy based on the work of Dr. Paul Hernandez. In the first cohort, NTTF comprised 20% of the accepted faculty. In the second cohort, NTTF comprised 42% of the accepted faculty. Applications for the third cohort are currently underway. This year-long academy allows faculty to focus on students who often come from underserved populations.

In addition to this work, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion along with the Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation (TRHT) have supported and encouraged NTTF. Three adjuncts have been trained as facilitators and two are faculty equity fellows as the college continues to do this difficult and important work.

Dedicated Advocacy Position

An Adjunct Faculty Liaison position was established by the provost after the Adjunct Junction project demonstrated the importance of representation on all levels of the institution. The position is held by a current full-time faculty member with extensive prior experience as an adjunct to truly relate to and understand the needs of part-time faculty. Originally, the Liaison's role was set at five hours per week to represent and voice the opinions/concerns of NTTF. Over the years, the Adjunct Liaison's role has developed into a more holistic supportive role. The Liaison serves as the point person for NTTF to have questions answered or receive guidance toward resolution of issues. Together with representation and advocacy, the Liaison also encourages NTTF to participate in PD opportunities and communicates relevant information about topics such as deadlines and contractual requirements.

Since MCC decided to dedicate a permanent staff position to represent NTTF and to make all PD equally accessible to both NTTF and full-time faculty, there have been notable improvements in student success outcomes. The idea is that students, who are central to the mission of MCC, thrive alongside NTTF faculty. Furthermore, student success outcomes are negatively impacted when NTTF — at times covering upwards of 70% of semester courses — feel disempowered, overworked and underappreciated. Empowering NTTF inherently contributes to MCC's core mission to close student achievement gaps, improve persistence and retention and increase overall student success.

Representation Across Committees

To represent NTTF at multiple levels of the college, the Adjunct Liaison is engaged in various institutional committees. The liaison provides valuable feedback at all levels of the college.

The liaison serves as co-chair of the Teaching and Learning Space Optimization Task Force and works with other campus groups (e.g., faculty and departments) to improve physical spaces on campus with the goal of enhancing learning and teaching. Most recently, the Adjunct Liaison received feedback from NTTF requesting better adjunct workspaces on campus.

NTTF also have the opportunity to serve on the academic, student support and college-wide committees. There is NTTF membership on the COVID Emergency Management Team as it worked through pandemic-related issues and how to return safely to campus. For the 2022-2023 academic year, there will be NTTF representation on the Executive Board of the Faculty Staff Assembly, which is the governance structure at the college.

The offices of Professional Development and the Provost, in conjunction with the Adjunct Liaison, have also worked to address challenges around issues of job security and community inclusion on campus. These concerns were identified following a published report by the Community College Research Center. A three-phase project was then developed to provide individualized professional support for NTTF, which includes mentorship, a certificate program and an adjunct appreciation event.

While some of this three phase project slowed because of the pandemic, the college made other opportunities available for NTTF through the micro-credentialing and DEI stipend opportunities as mentioned in previous sections. The goal will be to revitalize this program as the college fully reopens while maintaining some of the benefits of the virtual environment, especially in regards to accessibility for NTTF with their very difficult work schedules.

Visit The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success for more example practices and a wide range of resources and toolkits to better support faculty off the tenure track at: pullias.usc.edu/delphi

USC Rossier
*Pullias Center for
Higher Education*

pullias.usc.edu