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Making Maryville University the Adjunct Destination 2020 Applicant for the Delphi Award

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From the Delphi Project database of

Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

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Since its inception in 1872, teaching has been and continues to be a top priority at Maryville University. In 2015, key stakeholders at the university designed a strategic plan titled, “A New Century of Higher Education: Maryville 2022” that uses four pillars to frame future initiatives and priorities for the institution: Active Learning Ecosystem, Transformational Innovation, Diversity and Inclusiveness, and Strategic Growth. In order to realize their strategic goals and achieve significant strategic enrollment growth, the university increased its expectations and support regarding faculty professional development. Furthermore, Maryville sought to make its institution the adjunct destination nationwide by implementing a phased “Adjunct Destination” plan that clearly signals the institution’s investment in the growth and development of faculty who have significant commitments to teaching and exist off the tenure track.

Onboarding

Maryville University is being more intentional about helping all of their adjunct faculty understand and meet the strategic institutional expectations, as well as to help them feel like meaningful members of the campus community. To do so, they created an online Adjunct Academy and an on-boarding site for adjunct faculty. These resources have several key goals:

- Clarify expectations about the teaching/learning process in line with the university’s strategic plan;
- Offer professional development opportunities designed to prepare faculty to meet these teaching/learning expectations;
- Engage faculty in continuous quality improvement of their course offerings; and
- Encourage connections and involvement with the university through engagement in the Adjunct Academy and other professional development opportunities.

The on-boarding site launches with a welcome video from the President so that faculty can see, hear and feel the support from the highest level of the institution.

The online Adjunct Academy is housed within their learning management system, Canvas. The academy is comprised of around 20 modules that offer first-hand experience with Canvas from the student/learner point of view (e.g., navigating modules, taking quizzes, tracking grades). It also gives new adjunct faculty a chance to experiment with the Canvas tools and digital content (e.g., embedded videos, links to external content) while also modeling best teaching practices at Maryville. Other modules include policies and procedures such as Title IX and sexual misconduct, academic integrity, and supporting students with disabilities, as well as important resources related to diversity and inclusion and the library.

Once the onboarding modules are completed, adjunct faculty have the opportunity to choose their own adventure and navigate different pathways relevant to their own professional development — one for teaching face-to-face and the other for teaching online. The Adjunct Academy has reached over 1000 adjunct faculty members since its creation.

During these faculty development weeks, Maryville hosts a variety of activities, workshops and sharing sessions designed to help improve instructors' pedagogical practices.

Faculty Development

In addition to onboarding opportunities, adjunct faculty are invited to participate in Maryville's two weeks of dedicated faculty development; these events take place in August (REAL Week) and May (Perspectives Week). During these faculty development weeks, Maryville hosts a variety of activities, workshops and sharing sessions designed to help improve instructors' pedagogical practices. To tailor the needs and interests of adjunct faculty, Maryville has begun to offer designated sessions for adjuncts. These activities, workshops and sharing sessions are held both virtually and asynchronously to reach adjunct faculty who may not necessarily be on campus on a frequent basis. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, adjunct faculty were offered a \$350 stipend for engaging in professional development around hybrid teaching and learning.

In Spring 2020, Maryville piloted a program to engage adjunct faculty on a deeper level in their online environment. Four courses were selected with specific goals and aims around updating course content, revising and/or creating instructor notes, and identifying changes that need to be shared with all faculty as they teach the course. The faculty members who led this program were adjuncts. In this regard, they were able to engage in peer-to-peer learning opportunities and, as lead faculty, they were available to offer a vehicle for input and recommendations on improving course content. Since then, the program has expanded to include 30 courses each semester.

Pathways to Promotion

Another phase in the Adjunct Destination program is to provide a pathway two pathways to promotion for adjunct faculty. The first path involves the





promotion of adjunct faculty members to full-time status with benefits where their primary focus is on teaching. The second path, while not yet fully implemented, provides an opportunity for adjunct faculty to apply for promotion based on their deep interest in and demonstrated commitment to the strategic, academic focus of the institution. This focus may include professional development, teaching, scholarship, mentorship, and other contributions to enhance the department within which they teach. These adjunct faculty members will become Active Learning Ecosystem (ALE)-certified instructors and they will become eligible for such benefits as higher pay, an appropriate title, and longer-term contracts. To become ALE certified, adjunct faculty will need to participate in a Teaching Bootcamp, receive a

number of certifications (e.g., Apple Teacher certification), and complete teaching observations by a peer and the program director.

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.

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