



**Faculty Career Development Services**  
**The Wallace Center**  
**Spring 2015 Adjunct Faculty Community Pilot Summary**  
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*Prepared by*

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**BACKGROUND**

Spring 2015 Faculty Career Development Services (FCDS) collaborated with Tom Hanney, Sr. Lecturer, Center for Multidisciplinary Studies, to offer an RIT Adjunct Faculty Community pilot program. The goals of the pilot included: increase adjunct faculty development opportunities, provide adjuncts with a sense of community, facilitate the creation of professional relationships, and offer information on teaching strategies and resources available at RIT.

**ADJUNCT FACULTY SURVEY**

FCDS conducted an online survey of current RIT adjuncts in January 2015 to gather information on what they wanted in terms of programs or topics for discussion and how/where they wanted to meet. This survey informed the direction of the pilot.

In summary, those who responded were interested in all of the mentoring options suggested in the survey. The greatest interest was shown in workshops (40), one-on-one mentoring with an experienced faculty member (32), and informal networking lunches or dinners with a speaker (30). In one of the clearest responses in the survey, adjuncts preferred “in person” and “on campus” for these development meetings. Lunchtime and early evening edged out other times as the most convenient times to meet. (See Appendix A for survey results.)

“Thank you for taking this on; it seems like a much needed addition to RIT's approach and to their relationship building with adjuncts!” –  
*Survey feedback, Jan. 2015*

## SPRING 2015 ADJUNCT COMMUNITY EVENTS

Two events were held for adjuncts, each designed to meet the highest survey responses:

### 1. Dinner and Discussion: Managing Student Behavior in Your Class - March 18, 5:30-7 pm

Guest Speaker – Dawn Meza Soufleris, PhD, Associate Vice President for Residential Education and Community Standards, Division of Student Affairs

- The event began with dinner, followed by Dawn’s presentation, concluding with time for networking. Nineteen adjuncts from across the campus attended.
- Feedback was mostly positive. Nine of the twelve respondents said they were very satisfied, with two saying they were satisfied (see Appendix B).

“It would be great to be able to network with other adjuncts and seasoned instructors in order to share ideas and experiences.” –  
*Survey feedback, Jan. 2015*

### 2. Lunch and Learn: High Tech Cheating - May 5, 12-1:30 pm

- Guest presenters: Sue Mee and Linette Koren, Library Liaisons, RIT Libraries, The Wallace Center
- This event included lunch and a presentation on cheating in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, followed by time for networking. Eleven faculty attended. While only four surveys were received, they were mostly positive (see Appendix C).

## CONCLUSION

Both events were well received by the attendees. FCDS believes it is on the right path for increasing professional development and engagement for adjunct faculty. These opportunities serve as safe places for adjuncts to ask questions and for peer-mentoring to take shape. The program is expected to grow once established.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the success of the Spring 2015 pilot, FCDS will incorporate the Adjunct Community as part of its annual plan of work, following a peer mentoring model which involves those of a similar status exchanging experiences, ideas, and concerns.

- Topics will be selected based on adjunct feedback and surveys. FCDS will reach out to department heads to learn what they feel their adjunct instructors need for professional development.
- Two opportunities per semester will be offered.
- FCDS will select RIT faculty as facilitators and presenters, as well as expert RIT alumni and/or staff specialists to present and share their knowledge, resources, and services.
- Efforts to get the word out about the benefits of this program to the adjunct population will be increased via communication directly to adjunct faculty, department chairs, deans, staff assistants, etc.

## Appendix A: Adjunct Faculty Survey Results

January 2015

\*67 responses

### Activities respondents would like to see offered:

40 - Workshops

32 - One-on-one mentoring with an experienced faculty member

30 - Informal Networking Lunches or Dinners with a speaker/topic

27 - Guest Speakers/Presentations

27 - Webinars

21 - Faculty Learning Communities

14 - Informal Networking Lunches or Dinners without a speaker/topic

### Topics of interest:

46 - Teaching strategies (e.g., large class sizes, labs, etc.)

40 - RIT resources for adjuncts

36 - Classroom management (e.g., expectations, student behaviors, plagiarism)

32 - Course design (instructional design)

30 - Assessments in your courses (e.g., grading, evaluating student work)

24 - Online or blended teaching

23 - Identifying with your students (e.g., "millennials," non-traditional students, cultural differences)

19 - Educational theory/practice

12 - Work-life balance

### Other:

- RIT expectations
- As with some others, I have taught here long enough that I find these topics from other campus resources; but would like to feel more connected with departments, with recognition that I really work there. I try to attend meetings that cover basic topics, to stay involved, but would prefer new challenges and technology updates.
- Improving student evaluations
- Working with international students (esp. writing)

### Best time of day:

26 - 5-7 pm (dinner hour/early evening)

22 - 12-1 pm (lunch hours)

18 - 10-12 pm (late morning hours)

18 - 2-5 pm (afternoon)

12 - 8-10 am (early morning hours)

11 - Saturday morning

11 - Saturday afternoon

### Preferred Delivery Mode:

45 - In person

18 - Online via webinars

15 - Online self-paced tutorials/trainings

10 - One-to-one individualized sessions

10 - No preference

**Other:**

- Simple asynchronous text, organized and searchable.
- Small groups 6-7 people
- Group sessions so that adjuncts have a chance to meet each other and work together

**Preferred Location:**

51 - RIT campus central location

18 - RIT campus within your college

8 - Off campus Rochester area

**Respondents by College:**

18 - CLA

13 - CIAS

10 - CAST

9 - COS

7 - CMS

6 - KGCOE

5 - GIS

4 - GCCIS

3 - CHST

3 - SCB

0 - NTID

**Length as an adjunct at RIT:**

31 - 1-3 years

23 - More than 5 years

13 - 4-5 years

0 - Less than 1 year

**Other comments/suggestions:**

- I am also a retiree, so come with a lot of teaching experience. It is always good to keep up with changes. In the 7 years I've been teaching, the numbers of students with disabilities is on the rise. Also, mental health issues and severe stress in the student's work-life balance are off the charts, and it would be great to have someone like Dawn Soufleris come and speak about warning signs, next steps (other than send an alert through SIS), other on-campus resources, etc.
- This sounds like a fabulous opportunity. I have many years of teaching experience with adult learners but teaching kids, often right out of high school, has its own set of challenges. It would be great to be able to network with other adjuncts and seasoned instructors in order to share ideas and experiences.
- I would be interested in support for classroom management, understanding policies at RIT, working with challenging/difficult students.
- I am not interested in attending these, but they may be helpful for new staff. I have been teaching at RIT since 2001.
- This is a great initiative (4).
- Not really sure the details of this "program" but I am interested in more info.
- Developing a culture of service among adjuncts that has potential benefits is a topic that would be worthy of a mentoring program.
- The pilot should distinguish between populations -- new and established adjuncts need different things. Make sure teaching expectations are clear to the new faculty (homework hours, course hours, likelihood of being hired by one's department eventually, how to get involved in research and writing).
- After adjunct teaching for 3 terms, I finally feel like I am part of the program I am in. As opposed to someone helping on the side with not much support. More required interactions and training early on after signing the 1st contract.
- SIS, grading, IT; the nuts and bolts of the university.
- It is essential for adjuncts to work together so that we can better our programs and build up our professional resources.

**Appendix B Adjunct Community: Managing Student Behavior in Your Class**

**Event: March 18, 2015**

**\*12 responses/19 attended**

**Overall satisfaction with this event: 11 out of 12 were Very Satisfied/Satisfied**

**What did you like BEST about the Adjunct Community event?**

- Great speaker!
- Dr. Soufleris' presentation
- The presentation was very good
- Presentation of relevant material in a congenial and lively way
- The information about millennials
- Everything we talked about is right on target
- Knowledge about how to deal with attendance
- Concise information, thoughtfully presented
- The presentation content was interesting and well presented
- Diversity in depth of representation
- Seeing other adjuncts and learning something about students we currently work with
- Connecting with other faculty and staff

**What did you like LEAST about the Adjunct Community event?**

- Would've liked more time for discussion
- Maybe more examples
- Would like to have more synergy with departments, opportunities for adjuncts to present, not just listen.

**Will you attend another Adjunct Community event? Yes = 10, Maybe = 1**

**What other topics would you like to see presented at our Adjunct Community Mentoring Events?**

- Dealing with students whose written communication is not up to standard due to culture.
- Navigating available resources to professors, where/how to find them. Faculty culture.
- Using new learning strategies such as online learning tools and how to do classes using open documents/group work!
- Plagiarism/cheating (2)
- Tools for developing newer/more engaging digital media
- More talk about how to manage the social media and multitasking that I see my students are doing. I personally need options, because mine don't work.
- I also know that the adjuncts have expertise and would like to hear from them.

## **Appendix C: Responses to the High Tech Cheating Evaluation**

**Event: May 5, 2015**

### **What did you like BEST about this event?**

- I greatly enjoyed the discussions and sharing of experiences on the topic of academic dishonesty. I also found the progression of web sites that Linette demonstrated to be very well chosen - from "somewhat reputable looking at first glance" to "who do they think they are?"
- It was very well researched and had current examples of websites that promote cheating.
- Getting to see and hear other Adjuncts' perspectives on campus matters and a bit of a more global sense of the campus lens.
- Thank you for a very informative session.

### **Describe a few of your "take-aways" from the session.**

- Cheating is becoming a cultural issue; Technology is making it easier for students to cheat; Assignment design makes a huge difference, because some scenarios provide more opportunity to cheat than others, and the higher the stakes, the more motivation there is to cheat.
- I was unpleasantly surprised by how many sites are out there that offer papers for sale. I did not know it was that common place. Also, I have current examples of popular sites so I can see what is floating around out there.
- Unfortunately, I found myself mulling this over quite a bit; it seemed the program was coming from a perspective of "us versus them" regarding teachers and students and the perception seemed to be that we as teachers should be concentrating on more policing roles. I found that disheartening and contrary to a lot of the other messages we've received regarding student pressures and stresses on campus being something we should be sensitive towards.

### **Do you have any suggestions on how we might improve this event?**

- I thought it was great!
- I think more focus on mitigation techniques would have been helpful. Given the information presented, it's hard not to be overwhelmed and just give up.
- No, you had food, drink and good discussion and take away information. What more could we ask for?
- The event itself was run well; the speakers were very organized and did their homework. I truly appreciated their attempts to share what they considered to be useful information. And yet, we ended on such a bizarre note: there was the suggestion that we should check students' clothes, glasses, hats, other eye-wear, and even soda bottles before class exams. I don't buy into that level of paranoia regarding student cheating, and I don't think that is a valuable focus of our time or energy by any means.

### **Are there any other events/workshops that you would like to see offered or any other comments you'd like to share with us?**

- Consider inviting representatives of other academic service departments to have discussions with adjuncts on what they can provide.
- I'd love to focus on how to bring the concept of learning for the sake of personal growth and education back into the mix. How to encourage students to see their time at college as a time to build upon their knowledge rather than just a means to an end (grades, jobs, etc.).