Adjunct Survey Comments
Fall 2012

Note: The following comments are extracted verbatim from the Adjunct Survey with the exception that all individual names and references to particular departments have been deleted to protect confidentiality. Typos and minor punctuation edits have been made. The responses have been grouped in broad categories to improve narrative flow. In a few instances individual responses have been divided into more than one category.

Compensation

The pay per course for adjuncts has not changed in many years. NJIT is losing qualified adjuncts to other universities such as Stevens because NJIT's pay is lower. Please consider increasing the standard pay scale.

2 Percent. That is the percent of all the tuition collected from the students in my class that I receive in salary. I do 100 percent of the work and receive 2 percent of the tuition. I have been an adjunct at NJIT for 20 years.

According to me the time I devote for the class outside my teaching time for quizzes correction and preparation is not properly compensated. I teach because I love to teach and part-time fits my need. The salaries should increase to show that the college appreciates the knowledge and time devoted by adjuncts.

Adjunct contract rates are low, are not competitive with comparable universities, and have not been increased in many, many years.

I think that the salary for adjunct is too low compared to Rutgers NJCU or any nearby university. On top of our lecturing hours we still have to spend time for office hours which we didn't get any pay. The common exam is also pain in the neck as we need to devote more hours checking the papers.

Given the grossly underpaid work this constitutes the least that adjuncts should have is help from teaching assistants.

Early in my career I was a full time tenure track professor at another institution. I chose to work in industry and have for over 30 years. Coming back to academics at 60+ years old I don't have a current/recent publication record and thus am not considered for full time positions at the type of institution with which I want to be associated like NJIT. This is somewhat annoying because I have years of teaching experience, many years of practical experience, a doctorate from a top research university and I believe very strong capabilities in my field. Traveling to 3 different colleges/universities in 2 states and teaching anywhere from 5 to 7 classes each semester makes it difficult to accomplish what I would like.

NJIT should increase the pay for adjunct's contract or allow partial employee benefits.

Salary for adjuncts has not been changed in at least 14 years...disgraceful.

Strongly recommend the Faculty Council to evaluate salary compensation for adjunct faculties. Extremely non-competitive compared to similar competitive programs (especially if retention is important).

The compensation for adjunct instructors has not changed in nearly 15 years. The rate is not competitive with comparable research universities.
Very little pay to adjuncts too much pay for tenure track positions. My pay was less than the tuition paid by 1 student.

I spend more time than expected on the course with material prep and students. The compensation is not adequate for time expended. Would entertain other benefits offered by university as well as TA or assistant to help with Moodle papers etc.

Considering the amount of the performed work financial compensation is below the average (comparing similar institutions in the region).

In addition although NJIT pays better than other places I teach the amount paid to adjuncts is far below what is paid to full time academics even considering that there is no research requirement for adjuncts. As an adjunct at several institutions I work many hours per week to make an inadequate income with virtually no benefits.

I enjoy a lot teaching at NJIT. However in my opinion the hours that I have to put in for lectures, preparation, grading and travel are not reflected in the department’s salary.

Adjunct pay is way too low for the job we do it is also very low comparing with other institutions.

I have been teaching as an adjunct at NJIT for the last 7-8 years. During that time my salary has not changed at all. It would be nice to see even a symbolic increase over time.

I have been teaching here since 2007 and never had a pay raise. I also strongly object to evening and summer courses being paid $700 less per course.

I have noticed over the years that excellent work and loyalty does not get rewarded. Also there has not been a single increase in adjunct pay since I started instructing here in 2004.

I think that the salary for adjunct is too low compared to Rutgers NJCU or any nearby university. On top of our lecturing hours we still have to spend time for office hours which we didn’t get any pay. The common exam is also pain in the neck as we need to devote more hours checking the papers.

Adjuncts should be paid more money.

When will a full-time position become available?

Any time NJIT wants me full-time I am there.

**Support**

Adjunct faculty are not offered shared office space. At times when I taught more than one class this would have been very helpful. There’s no lockers or other storage for personal belongings. My coats and sweaters would get filthy from having to place them on desks stools or floors.

As an employee of NJIT I would like to obtain additional support such as administrative use of computers copiers as there is only one in the building and it is often used by others. There is no private space to work with students. I have no interaction with any other staff. I spend more time than expected on the course with material prep and students.
Adjuncts are generally not given as much guidance help and advice as they need. It is not fair to expect the department secretary to advise and help them. There are many issues that need to be communicated to the new adjuncts. One person didn't know about Moodle. Several others didn't have their computers set up so one of the full-time instructors asked the tech aide in the program to do that - not part of the job either of the instructor or the tech aide.

I would benefit from a mentoring or preservice program the first year of teaching instead of the "sink or swim" approach currently used within the dept.

My department was very supportive of my teaching and advancing my academic career but ultimately the university was largely indifferent to work conditions, salary etc. Further there was little done to acculturate adjuncts, improve teaching, or make us feel a part of the university. I realize many adjuncts do not do so full time because they have other work. However I do not think that justifies the general indifference to adjunct teaching especially given the amount of courses being taught by adjuncts.

NJIT does not care for Adjunct professors. Their salary is very low although they spend a lot of additional hours in miscellaneous activities. I’ve served on PhD and MS defense committees, set up new syllabi, helped students in their research; but the reward is zero. My requests in the past for travel grants to present papers in conferences have been denied. Low salary, no health benefits, no travel expense --- just nothing for working over 20 years. I’ve taken additional students in my class over the class size. But when the enrollment is a little low, the course is cancelled at the last moment. That’s very unfair to an Adjunct faculty member who could have taught elsewhere. Bottom line: All that our colleges care about is money. This is the true picture of academic world not confined to NJIT alone. This is all my personal feeling. Best wishes to you all.

NJIT needs to provide adjunct professors with health insurance and travel expenses to participate in related conferences.

Logistics - If requested by an adjunct NJIT should provide an adjunct with a portable computer which the adjunct would return to NJIT at the end of the adjunct's assignment. - NJIT should ensure that an office is readily available to each adjunct when needed by each adjunct.

Tenure or recognition for service at some point would be nice. This semester I will have been an adjunct for 30 years. I understand that there are a number of other long term adjuncts as well.

There is not a lot of support for Adjunct faculty. Often we are not even informed of our teaching position until the week or two before semester begins... After a couple of years it would be great if the commitment to adjuncts was made at least a semester in advance. I also have never had a peer review of my work or had any commentary on the success of my teaching except through student evaluations... and since those went electronic that participation has gone way down. Finally I have received one raise in 5 years... and that was 4 years ago... with continuous good reviews from students this seems a bit unreasonable. But there is no clear format in which to make a salary increase request. Finally if the dept provides any support or resources they do not inform us of them. It all seems a little loosey goosey.
Working Conditions

The uncertainty of continued employment as an adjunct was always a problem. Often you wouldn’t be notified if you were even teaching until the last minute before the semester started. It always seemed that adjunct faculty are expendable even though they make up a large percentage of the faculty. As such they always seemed to be treated as expendable. The term "second class citizen" comes to mind when thinking of how adjuncts were treated.

There is no system of checks on senior faculty members and some senior full time faculty members also have a tendency to be bullies. I had one very bad experience being bullied by 2 full time tenured faculty members and felt I had nowhere to go to report it without risking my very tenuous adjunct position. With that said there were also several full time senior faculty members who acted like mentors and role models for younger faculty members myself included so it’s not fair to lump all of the senior faculty into one group.

Early in my career I was a full time tenure track professor at another institution. I chose to work in industry and have for over 30 years. Coming back to academics at 60+ years old I don’t have a current/recent publication record and thus am not considered for full time positions at the type of institution with which I want to be associated like NJIT. This is somewhat annoying because I have years of teaching experience, many years of practical experience, a doctorate from a top research university and I believe very strong capabilities in my field. Traveling to 3 different colleges/universities in 2 states and teaching anywhere from 5 to 7 classes each semester makes it difficult to accomplish what I would like.

The last several years the classes were also over populated making it very difficult to devote adequate time to each student within the allotted class time.

Given the grossly underpaid work this constitutes the least that adjuncts should have is help from teaching assistants.

Hope they would care a bit more about adjunct faculties because we are still faculty and we give the same if even better teaching quality.

How can you run this university with adjuncts but not offer them any medical or other benefits? You should be ashamed of treating people this way and it should be made illegal.

I do not feel as connected as I should to the faculty.

Pedagogy

I recognize that the decision to employ adjuncts is largely a financial one but I do believe it comes with considerable pedagogical drawbacks. As a cohort adjuncts typically tend to grade "easier" in order to maintain favor with the University (especially since our PRIMARY means of evaluation are through student evaluations). Also employing different adjuncts on a semester by semester basis leads to inconsistencies in the curriculum. Lastly operating on a per semester contract renewal basis makes it unlikely that adjuncts will put considerable effort into new course development since it is uncertain whether they will be asked to teach the material again.

Most of the graduate students did not deserve to be in graduate course. I do not know how such students get admission into graduate program. Most of the students are enrolled in 4 or 5 or more courses and their overall performance is very bad. I also noticed the excellent grades are awarded to most students even though they do not deserve.
NJIT over-uses adjuncts for cost savings. Need more full-time instructors who will also be available to assist and advise students. Quality of student education suffers. Adjunct pay rate has not increased in over 10 years. Every semester is a battle with Registrar on scheduling. Best adjuncts don't teach at NJIT.

**Strategy** - NJIT should reevaluate its use of adjuncts in higher level courses. If these courses are perceived as more important NJIT's use of adjuncts in higher level courses may cause students to question how well they are being served.

**Students** - Overall student quality is questionable. Although several students in my courses have been very good I have been disappointed by the number of students who fail to follow explicit course requirements and then expect a grade higher than what they have earned. Overall the quality of my students' written communication has been poor.

Transfer students are often not properly prepared for full time university nor are they given proper guidance and orientation in their transition. Students who do not have a fluent command of English should be required to delay their education until they have taken the necessary English courses/training. Students complain that some of their professors do not have a proper command of the English language in order to teach students their field of expertise. I really admire and appreciate my colleagues. I really enjoy working with students.

Let me begin by stating that although I love teaching at NJIT I believe that evaluating faculty based on student evaluations alone is a big mistake. It is extremely important to evaluate the work that is produced by the student and their rate of success outside that particular classroom. In other words how they do in the next class since knowledge builds with time.

**To End on a Positive Note**

I absolutely LOVE teaching at NJIT. I've been doing it for a long time and I never tire of the students and the demands of the curriculum. It is always a challenge to keep the course alive and relevant for the students. However it is research I enjoy doing. I find the students bright, hardworking and creative. That combined with the diversity of the student body is why I stay.

I am currently serving as adjunct at The College of New Jersey and Mercer County Community College and I feel that my experience at NJIT taught me how to refine my teaching methods to best reach my students. One of the best tools NJIT provided me was the Student Evaluations - I learned from this what the students like most about the Lab is using the surveying equipment and I learned that my class time management needed significant improvement.

It has been an enjoyable experience and look forward to teaching more classes

Through my work as an adjunct I have enjoyed the opportunity to work with multi-discipline based students which to me is the essence of my professional field. It strengthens my full-time work as a university lecturer.

I find the students interested and respectful. They are a pleasure to teach and to get to know. I had requested my classroom layout to be changed to group tables as opposed to straight rows to facilitate this project learning type of course and I got it. Thanks.

The course was taught on Moodle and the support from Blake Haggerty and others was excellent: prompt and useful. Teaching the class was a very rewarding experience.