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Supporting and Creating Space for Part-time Faculty at Montgomery College

2019 Finalist for the Delphi Award

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From the Delphi Project database of

Example Best Practices to Support Non-Tenure-Track Faculty

- ✓ Orientation and Onboarding Sessions
- ✓ Resource Centers for Part-time Faculty
- ✓ Professional and Leadership Development
- ✓ Recognition and Rewards

Retelling the story of part-time faculty is of paramount importance to Antonio ‘Tango’ Thomas, the Director of the Institute for Part-Time Faculty Engagement & Support at Montgomery College. Seen as an integral part of the college fabric, there is an institutional belief that part-time faculty must have resources at their disposal in order to successfully achieve the educational mission of the college.

Orientation and Onboarding Sessions

Montgomery College has identified the importance of part-time faculty-specific orientation/onboarding sessions. Traditionally, the orientation and onboarding process is a siloed experience for incoming part-time faculty. The Institute for Part-Time Faculty Engagement & Support designed an orientation process aimed to familiarize part-time faculty members with the college, their department and their overall job. These part-time conferences are held twice a year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall. Some specific topics covered during these conferences are as follows:

- Onboarding information (payroll, ID cards and benefits, access to and location of classrooms)
- Syllabus and textbook requirements
- Information on institutional policies
- Academic goals
- Montgomery College student profiles
- Intercultural competence
- Student success initiatives

In addition, part-time faculty members receive training on teaching techniques and methods and ways to manage the classroom.

Resource Centers for Part-Time Faculty

Montgomery College is comprised of three different campuses: Takoma Park/Silver Spring, Rockville and Germantown.

Each campus, in addition to its Workforce Development and Continuing Education center, has a part-time faculty resource center. In these resource centers, part-time faculty will find lockers, office materials, computers, printers, and even kitchen space. Since part-time faculty are not normally given office spaces, this common resource center serves as a place for instructors to meet with students, check their email, prepare lesson plans, grade papers and meet and network with colleagues.

Aside from a physical presence, the Institute for Part-Time Faculty Engagement and Support also makes sure to keep an updated virtual presence. Their website provides instructors with up-to-date administrative and academic information, as well as a copy of the faculty handbook specific to part-time faculty.

This opportunity directly aligns with the college's notion that part-time faculty are imperative to the fabric of the college and allows part-time faculty to support institutional goals and develop as leaders.

Professional and Leadership Development

The Institute for Part-Time Faculty Engagement and Support actively encourages part-time faculty to participate in cohort programs, learning pathways and training sessions put on within the institute and across the university. The professional development and training part-time faculty attend are aligned specifically with academic affairs initiatives including the following:

- Embedded classroom support
- Offering alternative scheduling and delivery
- Implementing alternative and customized assessment and placement
- Designing alternative and customized credentials
- Enhancing pathways from Montgomery County Public Schools to the Universities at Shady Grove

Aside from in-house professional development, part-time faculty also have access to the Professional Development Assistance Program that pays a maximum of \$900 per employee for external college professional development and training. This access allows part-time faculty to learn from others outside of the college and receive a wealth of knowledge and training that can positively impact their teaching and holistic development as faculty members.

The Institute also pushes part-time faculty to get involved in the numerous leadership opportunities offered at the college. These leadership opportunities include participating on curriculum committees, academic regulations and academic master plan committees, and sixteen part-time faculty seats on functional councils (Academic Services, Employee Services, Student Services and Success, Operational Services Council, Faculty Council, Germantown





Campus Council, Rockville Campus Council, Takoma Park/Silver Spring Campus Council, and Workforce Development & Continuing Education Council). These designated council seats recognize the immensely valuable experiences and input of part-time faculty. This opportunity directly aligns with the college's notion that part-time faculty are imperative to the fabric of the college and allows part-time faculty to support institutional goals and develop as leaders.

Recognition and Rewards

Montgomery College recognizes part-time faculty by giving three specific awards to outstanding part-time faculty:

- The Excellence in Teaching/Counseling Award is intended to recognize individual part-time faculty who have strong track records as exceptional teachers, helping students realize their full potential.
- The Excellence in Scholarly or Professional Accomplishments Award identifies outstanding faculty who have written books or scholarly articles or who are distinguished leaders in their profession or discipline.
- The Part-Time Faculty of the Year Award is given to one part-time faculty member who demonstrates phenomenal teaching or counseling/advising, has an inspiring and long lasting effect on student learning and success, exhibits unique and substantial scholarly and professional accomplishments and shows sustained service to the college community.

The recipient of each award is given a monetary gift as a way to honor part-time faculty contributions to their specific discipline and the college at large.

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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