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# San Jacinto College: Support and Success for Part-time Faculty

*2024 Finalist of the Delphi Award*

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From the Delphi Project database of

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San Jacinto College (SJC) is a large, two-year, public community college located in Texas, serving a diverse student body with more than 64% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The college's mission is centered on student success, academic progress, four-year transfer, and workforce development. Currently, SJC employs 553 full-time faculty and 545 part-time faculty (PTF). To ensure part-time VITAL faculty feel valued as an essential part of the community, the College has made changes over the past several years aimed at supporting their success. Recognizing the important role part-time VITAL play in the institution's mission, the college has introduced several new programs and practices. These initiatives include creating a dedicated support position, improving salary structures, increasing mentoring, and providing professional development opportunities for this population. To make these changes, the college relied on best practices from scholarship, implemented a part-time specific committee, and conducted needs assessment of PTF.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term VITAL faculty to refer to contingent and non-tenure-track faculty (e.g., instructors and lecturers, adjuncts, research faculty, academic librarians) using an asset-minded approach.

## Example Best Practices

### Dedicated Administrative Support Position for Part-time Faculty

In 2023, SJC introduced a new Director of Teaching and Learning position within the Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL); this position focuses specifically on supporting new and part-time faculty. The creation of this position allows for specific attention to the needs of part-time faculty, including addressing structural challenges they experience, designing professional development that meets their needs, and increasing their awareness of resources and opportunities through relevant communication.

The existence of a dedicated support position in SJC's organizational structure also conveys that the College values their part-time faculty.



### Salary and PTF Compensation

In 2022, the College conducted a job evaluation study for staff and faculty positions. This evaluation allowed the College to better define job classifications and assess the fairness and competitiveness of compensation. As a result, part-time faculty compensation has improved significantly. Notably, part-time faculty wages were increased, and overload pay and stipends for professional development were also adjusted to reflect this increase.

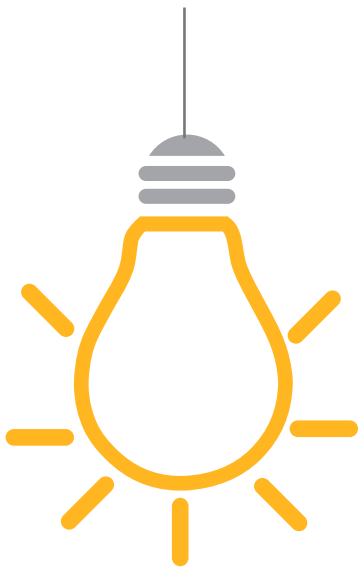
### Mentoring Structures to Promote Institutional Integration and Networking

SJC implemented a mentoring program where every PTF is assigned a department mentor and a Part-Time Faculty Ambassador (PTFA). This approach allows PTF to have access to both discipline-specific guidance and information about college-wide events and resources that may not be communicated by their department. Each PTFA is assigned about 40-50 PTF with whom they communicate regularly. The PTFA uses a proactive approach in reaching out to PTF, which helps PTF feel valued. While the PTFA initially relied primarily on email, they added monthly Zoom meetings specifically for PTF to provide an additional way for PTF to ask questions, share concerns, and connect with others.

In 2023, the PTFA also introduced an in-person event to celebrate PTF and help them establish relationships with colleagues. The mixer provided an opportunity for part-time faculty to meet, get to know each other, and receive important information about campus resources and technical support. Due to the high level of participation, PTFA is planning to hold a mixer each semester.

### Professional Development Opportunities

The College offers a conference, EQUIP: Part-Time Faculty Conference, specifically for PTF. Initially, the conference was offered as a half-day event each year. In 2022-2023, it was offered as a full-day conference, but based on feedback from PTF, EQUIP is now being held each semester as a half-day event. Sessions cover topics such as teaching strategies, classroom management, and educational technologies. EQUIP also includes a resource



fair session where college staff and full-time faculty (FTF) share information about their departments and services, as well as the opportunity to get a headshot. By focusing on their unique needs, EQUIP promotes a sense of belonging among PTF.

CETL has also created several opportunities for PTF that offer portable credentials or micro-credentials through partnerships with external professional development organizations. In Fall 2023, 56 PTF completed one of two six-week online, asynchronous, cohort-based programs focused on instructional effectiveness with the guidance of a facilitator; participants spent approximately 2-3 hours weekly on course activities. The office also offers less intensive, self-paced online micro-credential programs that take about six hours to complete. One of these programs is Supporting Mental Health on Campus: A Holistic Approach to Cultivating Wellness, which is aimed at enhancing faculty awareness of student needs.

Additionally, PTFA has recently started developing an online asynchronous orientation program, with the first module focusing on student services. The flexible modality and focus are aimed at ensuring that all PTF are aware of the support and services available to them and to their students.

Importantly, PTF who complete professional development, including attending the conference, earning credentials or micro-credentials, or completing the orientation, are compensated to recognize their time and effort.

### **One-stop Informational Repository**

In 2021, SJC developed an online repository called HomeBase that offers tailored information and resources relevant for PTF. This repository includes links to college resources, the organizational chart of the institution, a SJC 'lingo' folder to explain all vocabulary specific to SJC, and informal training created by PTFA. While the repository was initially developed using the College's Learning Management System, it is now being transitioned to the College's internal content management and collaboration platform. This move will allow for increased real-time communication between PTF, PTFA, and the Director of Teaching and Learning, as it allows for instant messaging, the ability to quickly share announcements, and regular monitoring of communication channels for greater responsiveness to questions.

## **Best Practices in Process to Support VITAL Faculty**

### **Changes Grounded in Research**

SJC's initiatives for supporting VITAL faculty are based on well-researched frameworks. Their work has been guided by resources that reflect their specific institutional context and part-time VITAL faculty population, including from The Delphi Project on the Changing Faculty and Student Success, Achieving the Dream's Practitioner's Guide, and research from the Community College Research Center (CCRC). As many leaders

in higher education have perspectives and knowledge specific to their individual role and experiences, using resources such as these can offer knowledge and models that help leaders broaden their perspectives and create additional possibilities for providing support to VITAL faculty.

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***Professional development opportunities have been made possible in part through intentional alignment of programs with the College's annual strategic priorities.***

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#### **Creation of Part-Time Faculty Ambassadors (PTFA) Committee**

In 2022, San Jacinto College created a specific committee under their Distinguished Faculty Recognition Program to address the support needs of part-time VITAL faculty: The Part-Time Faculty Ambassadors (PTFA). The committee is composed of full-time faculty who have served as PTFA mentors and also includes several part-time VITAL faculty, ensuring that their voices are prioritized in the process of creating greater support for this population. As the programs and practices for PTF continue to expand, the committee realized that it could be more effective if members gave more specific focus to one program/event rather than having everyone plan everything. Therefore, they divided the PTFA into three new committees: one focused on PTFA mentoring, one on the EQUIP Conference, and one focused on professional development. Each of the committees meets regularly with the CETL Director to create a feedback loop for sharing information and feedback and to plan for upcoming events and meetings.

#### **Alignment with Institutional Goals and Partnerships**

Professional development opportunities have been made possible in part through intentional alignment of programs with the College's annual strategic priorities. In addition, CETL has developed partnerships with other offices and committees on campus, including the Culture of Belonging and Excellence Title V Grant Advisory team and the Deputy Chancellor/President, to inform planning processes and develop programs for PTF support and engagement. These purposeful efforts allow for program funding and buy-in from faculty and campus leaders that promotes a culture where professional development of PTF is an institutionalized expectation.

In terms of professional development, SJC has enhanced opportunities developed internally (e.g., mentoring and the EQUIP Conference) through partnerships with external organizations that have expertise and capacity for providing programs. The combination of approaches results in a variety of high-quality and tailored supports for PTF given staffing and resource constraints.

## Needs Assessment and Evaluation

The College uses surveys to collect data and feedback from both part-time and full-time VITAL faculty to assess the effectiveness of existing programs and identify new areas for improvement. An employee engagement and job satisfaction survey is conducted every two years. Results are reviewed by the Human Resources Organizational Talent and Development Office and then shared with the college leadership, who use the data to refine and inform planning processes for PT faculty support. The overall results are also communicated to the entire college community to promote transparency and enhance motivation for future participation.

The CETL office also specifically surveys PT faculty during the EQUIP Conference to gather insights on their professional development needs and the resources required for their success. These surveys help the CETL team plan the professional development programs to ensure they are aligned with the needs of the PT faculty. The College also uses other data to evaluate program success. For instance, student success data provided evidence for the effectiveness of the sustained professional development programs offered in 2022-2023, as faculty who completed the credential had higher student course completion rates after participating than they did before engaging in the program.



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 VITAL faculty at [pullias.usc.edu/delphi/](https://pullias.usc.edu/delphi/)

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