

Analysis of Adjunct Instructor Pay Compared to Full-time Instructor Pay at Colorado Community Colleges

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Factors

Adjunct instructor pay per unit	\$520	
Work hours per class meeting per unit	1.2	<i>Example: A 3-unit course meets for 1.25 hours twice a week, +0.25 hours for meeting with students, +2.00 hours for course prep. Total amount of time (not including travel) is 3.5 hours per class meeting per 3-unit course, or about 1.2 hours per unit per meeting.</i>
Number of class meetings per semester	30	<i>16-week course minus holidays.</i>
Total hours per unit	36	
Total annual teaching demand (units)	30	<i>Full-time community college instructors are required to teach 5 3-unit courses in both the fall and the spring. This demand will therefore be used as a baseline for comparing full-time and part-time employment (though many adjuncts teach more than 5 courses per semester).</i>
Teaching workload per year (hours)	1080	<i>This represents two semesters of teaching workload.</i>
Annual administrative work (full-timers)	160	<i>Estimate of the administrative workload full-time faculty are expected to commit to, including committee matters and department meetings. This number represents a generous estimate of 5 hours per week for 32 weeks.</i>

Comparison

Approximate starting salary for full-time instructor	\$33,000	<i>This is a conservative figure. Many community colleges pay a higher starting salary.</i>
Gross annual adjunct pay at current rate	\$15,600	
<i>Difference</i>	<i>\$17,400</i>	
<i>Percent Difference</i>	<i>52.7%</i>	<i>Currently, adjunct annual pay is less than half the starting salary for full-time instructors with identical teaching workloads.</i>
Gross hourly full-time pay	\$26.61	<i>This includes administrative responsibilities.</i>
Gross hourly adjunct pay	\$14.44	
<i>Difference</i>	<i>\$12.17</i>	
<i>Percent Difference</i>	<i>45.7%</i>	<i>Currently, adjunct pay is 47.8% less per hour than starting full-time instructor pay.</i>

Summary

Adjunct instructors are paid approximately half what starting full-time instructors are paid even when added administrative workload is accounted for. The gross annual pay shown is not a living wage, especially for a person with a graduate degree, so part-time instructors must generally hold other jobs, take on a larger course loads, teach in summer and winter sessions, and/or cut expenses. Many go into debt.

Corrected for Additional Summer Teaching

Total annual adjunct instructor teaching demand (units)	42	<i>Since there are extremely few winter session teaching opportunities, part-time instructors who are trying to make a living by teaching must teach during summer semester. The number to the left includes an additional 12 units for summer semester (four standard courses). It should be noted, though, that it is difficult for an adjunct to get teaching contracts for 4 summer courses because fewer courses are offered during summer and full-time instructors get precedent (for which they receive pay above their salary).</i>
Corrected annual adjunct teaching (hours)	1512	<i>This is now significantly more working hours per year than full-time instructors even when the full-timer's administrative responsibilities are accounted for.</i>
Gross annual adjunct pay at current rate	\$21,840	
<i>Difference between full-time and part-time gross annual pay</i>	<i>\$11,160</i>	<i>Though having a higher workload, adjuncts annual pay is significantly less than starting full-time instructor salary, and is still not a living wage.</i>
<i>Percent difference in gross annual pay</i>	<i>33.8%</i>	

Summary

Because many colleges are filling demand for teaching staff with part-time adjuncts, there are fewer than the expected number of full-time opportunities. Therefore, a great many with the desire and qualifications to teach at the college level are working as part-time instructors for multiple institutions. When this is done at Colorado community colleges, these persons can expect to make only about \$23,000 per year. This is approximately 25% less pay than starting full-time instructors, which part-timers will need to teach 50% more courses and work at least 400 more hours per year to earn.

Proposed Adjunct Pay

Factors

Proposed adjunct instructor pay per unit	\$715	
Percentage increase in pay per unit	37.5%	
New gross annual adjunct pay	\$30,030	<i>This is at least a livable wage.</i>
<i>Difference between full-time and proposed part-time annual pay</i>	\$2,970	<i>Still less than starting full-time instructor salary.</i>
<i>Percent difference in annual pay</i>	9.0%	
New gross hourly adjunct pay	\$19.86	
<i>Difference</i>	\$6.75	<i>Incentive to get a full-time teaching job is at least an additional \$8/hour wage.</i>
<i>Percent Difference</i>	25.4%	<i>Adjunct pay still significantly less per hour than starting full-time instructor pay.</i>

Summary

The increase in pay per unit shown is needed to accommodate a livable wage for college instructors forced to work as part-time adjuncts. At this increase pay level there is still a significant difference between part-time and full-time pay.

Notes

Other factors to consider: adjuncts do not receive benefits of any kind, must generally travel further and more frequently to get to their workplace, have no assurance of getting work from semester to semester, have lengthy unpaid periods between semesters for which they cannot collect unemployment benefits, often do not have office space, and are not included in department decision-making.

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