Enhancing Support for Adjunct Faculty
Best Practices Series

Enhancing Support for Adjunct Faculty

Virginia Community College System

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January 15, 1997
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AD HOC ADJUNCT FACULTY TASK FORCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Work conducted from September 1995 to May 1996
FOREWORD

January 1997

Our commitment to improve teaching and learning in the Virginia Community College System leads us to examine many issues including professional development, technology infrastructure, curricular review, and restructuring to name a few. Enhancing Support for Adjunct Faculty is the first in a series of “best practices” as described and written by faculty and administrators from within the VCCS. I asked our deans and provosts to examine their service to adjunct faculty. The results of their work with selected division chairs and adjuncts are included in this document.

The topic of this “best practices” is timely and critical, at the national level and local levels. In the VCCS, I have struggled with our balance between full-time and adjunct faculty. As we strive to improve instruction and the quality of student learning, the challenge of serving adjunct faculty becomes an imperative in higher education. As colleagues, they are a vital resource to our learning community.

We are hopeful that you will find this “best practices” meaningful and useful as you plan orientations, provide support, formulate policy, and study the needs of adjunct faculty members.

Arnold R. Oliver
Chancellor
INTRODUCTION

The community college mission is to train and educate the citizens of their service regions. To accomplish this goal, the services of the community college instructional staff are strengthened and augmented by adjunct faculty.

Adjunct faculty have long been an integral part of the instructional programs offered by community colleges. Without adjunct faculty, colleges would not be able to provide the citizens of their service regions with the continuing opportunities to develop and extend skills and knowledge through quality programs and services that so well characterize the community college mission. The part-time nature of adjunct faculty employment in no way lessens the impact of their instruction nor their contributions to the college mission. The value of adjunct faculty to community colleges should be reflected in the attitudes and practices of each college.

For greater uniformity throughout the Virginia Community College System, our Chancellor, Dr. Oliver, encouraged a study of the general practices and procedures used to serve adjunct faculty. Representatives from the Dean, Provost, Division Chair peer groups, along with selected adjunct faculty members, were organized to carefully examine the significant issues pertinent to the effective leadership of adjunct faculty in Virginia’s Community Colleges.

They planned and executed a joint Fall conference in 1995, which had adjunct faculty issues as its major purpose. Finally, they formed an ad hoc committee, made of the same peer group members, to investigate major concerns centered around adjunct faculty. The diligent work of this committee lead to this “best practices”, which we believe is a model for the support of adjunct faculty.

These practices, organized in the general areas of Recruitment, Selection and Appointment; Professional Development and Orientation; Support Services; and Supervision, Evaluation and Recognition, are not intended to be System requirements. Rather, they are to be used as a beginning point and basis for each college’s assessment of its own policies, procedures, and practices regarding adjunct faculty. Neither does this “best practices” attempt to prescribe the nature and content of the implementation; those specifics are left to the individual
colleges and may differ according to each college’s unique circumstance. While full implementation of the practices will require additional funding, the majority of practices can use existing institutional resources.

Understanding the necessity and importance of academic freedom, individual needs, and institutional requirements, the authors of this “best practices” propose their recommendations be used as suggested for the support of adjunct faculty in the Virginia Community College System.

While full implementation of the practices will require additional funding, the majority of practices can use existing institutional resources.
At most VCCS colleges, adjunct faculty teach 40 to 50 percent of the classes offered. Each college has the responsibility to demonstrate to its students, the citizens of its service region, sister institutions, accrediting agencies, and the Commonwealth of Virginia that quality teaching by credentialed faculty is taking place. It is essential that each college have in place recruitment, selection, and appointment practices which ensure that capable and properly credentialed adjunct faculty are employed. It is also important that practices be in place that recognize the dignity and reward the worth of those individuals who are hired as adjunct faculty.

**SUGGESTED PRACTICES:**

*Each college should:*

1. Establish clear, written policies and procedures for recruiting, selecting, and appointing adjunct faculty. Those policies and procedures should be consistent with minimum criteria established by the VCCS (VCCS-29) and by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or other accrediting agencies.

2. Establish clear, written policies and procedures for determining appropriate compensation of adjunct faculty. Those policies and procedures should include recognition and consideration of education, training, experience and rank (VCCS-29) and should be applied uniformly across the institution.

3. Require an interview for each adjunct faculty member hired. That interview should include a discussion of college and department goals, duties of part-time faculty, compensation, and conditions of employment (e.g. assignment contingent on...). Where possible, full-time faculty should be involved in the interview process.
4. Establish clear, written policies and procedures for maintaining official adjunct faculty files. Those policies and procedures should address the designation of the office(s) in which official adjunct faculty files are to be housed, documents that are required for a complete file, and procedures to assure that required documents are collected and filed in a timely manner.

5. Specify clearly in its recruiting materials the nature of the adjunct position and minimum qualifications.

6. Pay adjunct faculty as frequently as is feasible and by direct deposit, if possible.

7. Maintain a pool of qualified applicants for adjunct positions through periodic, and, in some cases, continual recruitment.

**FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:**

*It is suggested that each college:*

1. Support and encourage the VCCS to investigate means by which adjunct faculty could purchase/participate in benefits (e.g., tax sheltered annuity, health and life insurance).

2. Compensate adjunct faculty at a level which is competitive with compensation provided by other state institutions and/or by the local market.

3. Include in the official adjunct faculty file the State application, all official transcripts, contracts and/or payment documentation, forms (e.g., Employment Eligibility Verification, Child Support Enforcement), a credentials evaluation form, and documentation of how the pay rate was established.
SECTION II: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ORIENTATION

Best Practices Series

Enhancing Support for Adjunct Faculty

In an age of technology and change, it is essential that all faculty, including adjunct faculty, maintain currency in their disciplines and improve their skills in teaching students. Since a significant number of the courses offered by community colleges are taught by adjunct faculty, each college should provide professional development opportunities for adjuncts, both in specific disciplines and in pedagogy. Full-time faculty should work closely with adjunct faculty within their disciplines as mentors/facilitators to improve the teaching process and to ensure continuity from class to class.

Since most new adjunct faculty are not familiar with specific college policies and procedures (administrative structures, course enrollment, withdrawals, grades, behavior expectations for students and faculty, evaluations, and other general conditions of employment), each college should provide a required orientation program for those faculty. Policies and procedures change and orientation should not be a one-time requirement but should be scheduled regularly or on an “as needed” basis. By VCCS policy, colleges must also provide all adjunct faculty with an Adjunct Faculty Handbook that should contain policies and procedures, conditions of employment, and other appropriate information.

Adjunct faculty are an important part of every college’s instructional program and have much to contribute as professionals. Colleges should provide the opportunity for adjunct faculty to participate in organizational functions, on appropriate committees, and in activities such as faculty meetings.
SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

Each college should:

1. Provide regularly scheduled orientation sessions for all adjunct faculty and establish minimum expectations for participation.

2. Schedule professional development for adjunct faculty or include them in full-time faculty activities. Schedules should accommodate adjunct faculty needs, and there should be established minimum expectations for participation.

3. Provide each adjunct faculty member with an adjunct faculty manual and other standard college publications. The manual should be revised each year and include appropriate policies and procedures and information on the college organization, conditions of employment, evaluation, the college calendar, and, when possible, the schedule of professional development opportunities.

4. Assign each adjunct faculty member to a full-time faculty mentor/liaison.

5. Establish an adjunct faculty advisory committee to provide a medium for input on adjunct faculty issues (e.g., orientation, professional development activities).

6. Appoint adjunct faculty to appropriate division/college committees.

7. Encourage adjunct faculty to attend meetings/activities as appropriate.

8. Provide opportunities for adjunct faculty to attend VCCS peer group meetings.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:

It is suggested that each college:

1. Encourage participation in at least one orientation and one professional development activity each year.

2. Identify funding for adjunct faculty professional development (e.g., travel, speakers).

3. Train full-time faculty to be effective mentors/liaisons.
SECTION III: SUPPORT SERVICES

Adjunct faculty provide a significant proportion of the teaching at VCCS colleges. To help assure that adjunct faculty deliver quality instruction in a productive manner, colleges should make available support services which are commensurate with those available to full-time faculty.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

Each college should:

1. Provide each adjunct faculty with an adjunct faculty handbook and an orientation to the college.

2. Provide access to supplies and clerical services (paper, chalk, typing, duplication, message taking, appointment scheduling, etc.)

3. Provide access to services which directly support and enhance classroom instruction, which should include audio-visual and other instructional technology equipment and software, library privileges and services comparable to those of full-time faculty, multi-media and computer labs, and academic resource facilities.

4. Provide assistance in developing course syllabi and course outlines, and in establishing grading/assessment standards through assigned faculty mentors/liaisons, supervisors, and/or academic resource centers.

5. Facilitate access to supervisors or mentors/liaisons for continued assistance.
6. Support access to students and peers by providing appropriate office and work space, telephone access, mail box, computer access (including Internet), and file storage.

7. Provide access to non-instructional privileges afforded full-time faculty (e.g. parking and use of faculty lounges).

8. Include adjunct faculty on all mailing lists for all college publications such as newsletters, annual reports, minutes of relevant meetings, and bulletins.

9. List adjunct faculty in appropriate college publications such as catalogs, personnel directories, and telephone directories.

10. Provide access to all college procedure/policy manuals and other informational materials such as college catalogs, student handbooks, LRC Resource Guides.

**FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:**

*It is suggested that each college:*

1. Provide training for adjunct faculty in preparation of course outlines syllabi, test construction, grading, and other teaching methodologies.

2. Provide access to instructional resources such as publications on teaching/learning styles, student assessment, and exemplary teaching methods.
SECTION IV: SUPERVISION, EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION

Best Practices Series

Enhancing Support for Adjunct Faculty

Most adjunct faculty come to the System without previous community college teaching experience. They have no experience “benchmarks” upon which to judge the level, depth, and quality of their teaching performance. Even experienced faculty should receive guidance and information to improve their teaching skills. In order to assure excellence in teaching and learning, it is critical that colleges have clearly defined processes to provide constructive feedback on those performances. The processes should include elements of direct supervision and formal evaluation.

Adjunct faculty, like full-time employees, deserve positive recognition for their accomplishments. That recognition serves to motivate and engender devotion to the college and the profession. It is, therefore, important that the processes that provide constructive feedback to adjunct faculty include recognition of outstanding service.

SUGGESTED PRACTICES:

Each college should:

1. Provide adjunct faculty an approved adjunct faculty handbook which includes information about its evaluation and recognition plans/policies.

2. Clearly designate the lines of authority and supervision for adjunct faculty, including identifying the individual who is to be the supervisor and the evaluator.

3. Conduct a formal evaluation of each adjunct faculty member at least yearly, based upon established and published criteria developed in consultation with adjunct faculty. The evaluation should include elements of student and supervisor evaluations and the individual results should be communicated to each adjunct faculty member before being made a permanent part of the personnel file.

4. Establish and publish a mechanism to recognize efforts of adjunct faculty in meeting promotion criteria (as outlined in the VCCS-29). The mechanism should include opportunities for promotion in rank and increased compensation.
5. Regularly assess the needs of adjunct faculty and use the findings to improve support for adjunct faculty. A sample of a survey instrument is in Appendix A.

6. Recognize and/or reward adjunct faculty for excellence in teaching.

7. When possible, include adjunct faculty in the allocation of professional development funds.

8. Invite adjunct faculty to participate in college cultural and social events and in graduation ceremonies.

9. Include adjunct faculty on college committees, program advisory committees, and college task forces.

10. Invite adjunct faculty to attend faculty and division meetings.

11. Involve adjunct faculty in decisions affecting curriculum changes and textbook adoptions.

**FURTHER SUGGESTIONS:**

*It is suggested that each college:*

1. Use mentor/liaison full-time faculty to assist in supervision of adjunct faculty.

2. Use designated off-site individuals to assist in supervision.

3. Establish an adjunct faculty advisory committee to provide input on matters pertaining to adjunct faculty.

4. Send annual letters of appreciation to adjunct faculty.

5. Use time of service (perhaps a raise for every 30 credits taught) as a factor in the compensation plan.
The Adjunct Faculty Needs Assessment is included in this “best practices” as an example and may be duplicated and used without the permission of the author.

Research funded by VCCS Research Grant Awarded for 1996 Spring semester and was distributed to VCCS deans and provosts on disk and hard copy.
## ADJUNCT FACULTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

### I. Please indicate the appropriate response:

SA- Strongly Agree  A- Agree  N- No Opinion/Not Applicable  D- Disagree  SD- Strongly Disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SA</th>
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<tr>
<td>As an adjunct faculty member, I would like:</td>
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<td>1. Assistance in selecting A-V materials</td>
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<td>2. A tour of the library and learning resources center</td>
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<td>3. A list of library resources</td>
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<td>4. Assistance in planning courses</td>
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<td>5. Assistance in planning instructional methods</td>
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<td>6. Sample course outlines</td>
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<td>7. Sample course examinations</td>
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<td>8. An opportunity to attend general faculty meetings</td>
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<td>9. An opportunity to attend division and/or department meetings</td>
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<td>10. An opportunity to attend college social events</td>
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<td>11. An opportunity to attend graduation</td>
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<td>12. An opportunity to attend faculty in-service activities (workshops/seminars)</td>
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<td>13. An opportunity to be a member of a college committee</td>
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<td>14. An opportunity to attend a campus-wide orientation session</td>
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<td>As an adjunct faculty member, I would like:</td>
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<td>15. An opportunity to attend a division and/or department orientation</td>
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<td>16. An opportunity to attend an advisory/committee meeting in my discipline</td>
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<td>17. To have an adjunct faculty handbook</td>
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<td>18. To have a copy of the college’s catalog</td>
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<td>19. To have a copy of an adjunct faculty handbook/ manual</td>
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<td>20. To have a copy of the college’s student handbook</td>
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<td>21. To have a full-time faculty member as a mentor/advisor to consult for information on college policy, course syllabus, course outline, grading procedures, etc.</td>
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<td>22. To have office space</td>
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<td>23. To have access to office supplies (chalk, pens, notepads)</td>
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<td>24. To have information on college support services such as typing and duplication</td>
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<td>25. To have access and instruction in the use of AV equipment</td>
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<td>26. To have access to a learning laboratory for adjunct faculty equipped with teaching guides, handbooks, etc.</td>
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<td>27. Information about the college’s automatic test-scoring services</td>
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### ADJUNCT FACULTY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

**APPENDIX A**

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<td>As an adjunct faculty member, I would like:</td>
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<td>28. To have access to a reserved parking space on campus</td>
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<td>29. To receive the college newsletter/bulletin</td>
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<td>30. To receive the student newspaper/newsletter/bulletin</td>
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<td>31. To have a mailbox on campus</td>
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<td>32. To have more interaction with college administrators</td>
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<td>33. To have more interaction with college faculty</td>
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<td>34. To have classroom visits from my supervisor</td>
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<td>35. To have access to clerical services (typing, duplicating, taking messages)</td>
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<td>36. To receive information on adult learning styles</td>
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<td>37. To receive information on effective teaching styles</td>
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<td>38. To receive information on motivating students</td>
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<td>39. To receive information on the historical background, mission, and philosophy of this community college</td>
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<td>40. To receive information on the legal rights of students (privacy, non-harassment)</td>
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<td>41. To receive information on the college’s policies regarding field trips, inclement weather, and emergency procedures</td>
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<td>42. To receive information on the college’s absenteeism, drop/add, withdrawal, and grading procedures</td>
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<td>43. To receive a profile on the student population (age, race, gender, academic backgrounds, etc.)</td>
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<td>44. To receive information on meeting the needs of special students (i.e., disabled, learning/hearing impaired)</td>
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<td>45. To receive information on the college’s academic standards</td>
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Please list below any other service or information you would like to receive:

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Comments on questions 1-45:

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As an adjunct faculty member, I would like:
II. Please respond to the following:

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<th>ITEM</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adequate orientation was provided prior to my assuming my teaching duties.</td>
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<td>College laboratory space and equipment are adequate.</td>
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<td>Classroom and laboratory equipment are maintained in operating condition.</td>
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<td>Classrooms are clean.</td>
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<td>Bookstore hours are adequate.</td>
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<td>Library and Learning Resource hours are adequate.</td>
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<td>Library holdings are adequate to support my course.</td>
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<td>Audiovisual services are adequate.</td>
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<td>Security on campus is adequate.</td>
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<td>Yearly merit salary increases would be (is) an incentive for me.</td>
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<td>Yearly salary increases for seniority would be (is) an incentive for me.</td>
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<td>Verbal or written recognition from my supervisor would be (is) an incentive for me.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Receiving .5 credit hour pay for additional days of travel to the college would be (is) an incentive to me.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
II. Please respond to the following:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>ITEM</th>
<th>SA</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>59. Receiving partial payment for classes prepared for or taught that were later reassigned or cancelled would be (is) an incentive to me.</td>
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<td>60. I have been evaluated by my supervisor during the past year.</td>
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<td>61. I have received results of student evaluations each semester.</td>
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<td>62. I have been contacted about my scheduling preferences for future semesters.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Comments on questions 46-62:

63. How many years have you taught at this college? ____________________

64. In which division(s) are you currently teaching? ____________________
65. When do your classes meet? (Check all that apply)

a. _____ Day (before 5:00 p.m.)

b. _____ Evening (after 5:00 p.m.)

c. _____ Weekends

d. _____ Both day and evenings

66. How did you learn about the opening at the college? (Check all that apply.)

a. _____ From an administrator at the college

b. _____ From a faculty member at the college

c. _____ From an advertisement

d. _____ From a friend who is connected with the college

e. _____ Other (Please explain)

The college can assist me most by: ______________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

General comments: ________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Questions or Feedback about this document or any other VCCS “best practices” publications may be directed to:

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