

**San Diego Mesa College
Evaluation of Fall 2006 Flex Activities**

Introduction

An evaluation survey was conducted for Fall 2006 flexible calendar activities in accordance with Title 5, which mandates that all flex professional development activities be evaluated. The survey was administered electronically via the Internet. An email with a link to the survey was sent out on the 12th and 13th of October to 766 faculty members, and the response rate was 27.8% with a total of 213 responses. The first survey item regarding faculty status, which elicited 212 responses, indicated that 138 of the 553 adjunct faculty members at Mesa responded to the survey, yielding an adjunct faculty response rate of 25.0%, while 74 of the 213 contract faculty members responded to the survey, yielding a contract faculty response rate of 34.7%.

Flex Activities: Workshops and Independent Projects

Of the 205 respondents who indicated the type(s) of activities in which they participated, 93 (45.4%) enrolled in and attended workshops only, 26 (12.7%) submitted independent projects only, and 86 (42.0%) did both. Approximately one-half of adjunct faculty enrolled in and attended workshops only, while the majority of contract faculty did both types of flex activities. However, 19.1% (N = 25) of adjunct faculty submitted independent projects only, whereas only 1.4% (N=1) of contract faculty did so. The proportion of faculty who submitted independent projects only was much higher for adjuncts perhaps because the independent projects are more convenient and amenable to adjunct faculty schedules.

Table 1. Types of Flex Activities Engaged in by Adjunct and Contract Faculty

	What is your faculty status?					
	Adjunct		Contract		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
I enrolled in and attended workshops. only	68	51.9%	25	33.8%	93	45.4%
I submitted independent projects only.	25	19.1%	1	1.4%	26	12.7%
I did both.	38	29.0%	48	64.9%	86	42.0%
Total	131	100.0%	74	100.0%	205	100.0%

Respondents were asked to indicate the themes of the workshops they attended. Each individual may have attended multiple workshops with different themes. Of the 183 respondents to this question, 155 (84.7%) attended School/Department/Group/College-wide workshops, 77 (42.1%) attended Curriculum/Instruction workshops, and 50 (27.3%) attended Personal and Cultural Enrichment workshops.

Table 2. Themes of Workshops Attended

Responses	Count	% of respondents who selected response
School/Department/Group/College-wide	155	84.7%
Curriculum/Instruction	77	42.1%
Personal and Cultural Enrichment	50	27.3%
Technology	43	23.5%
Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes	40	21.9%
Committee Participation	36	19.7%
Generic Pre-Approved Workshops	21	11.5%
Online Professional Development	20	10.9%
Academic Program Review	19	10.4%
Health and Wellness	10	5.5%

For the 113 individuals who indicated the type(s) of independent project(s) they submitted, the most frequently submitted type of project was Curriculum and Instruction (N = 58, 51.3% of question respondents), followed by Professional Organization (N = 27, 23.9% of question respondents) and then Meetings and Committees (N = 23, 20.4% of question respondents).

Table 3. Types of Independent Projects Submitted

Responses	Count	% of respondents who selected response
Curriculum and Instruction	58	51.3%
Professional Organization	27	23.9%
Meetings and Committees	23	20.4%
Research/Writing	14	12.4%
Technology	13	11.5%
Campus Activities	12	10.6%
Self-Improvement/Wellness	9	8.0%
Community Outreach	8	7.1%

Survey Items

The survey had three Likert-scale items which pertained to the fulfillment of expectations held for flex, applicability of flex to teaching, and overall satisfaction with flex. The three Likert-scale items were:

1. The workshops I attended and/or independent projects I submitted met my expectations by teaching me what I had hoped to learn.
2. I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops and/or independent projects into my teaching.
3. Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended and/or independent projects I submitted.

Responses to Survey Items: Overall

Approximately half of the respondents agreed positively with the three statements, while about one-third to two-fifths of the respondents strongly agreed. Those who disagreed accounted for 7 to 12% of the respondents, while no one strongly disagreed with the first statement and less than 2% did so for the second and third statements. While there was slightly more disagreement with the statement, “I will be able to incorporate the information I learned into my teaching,” than with the other statements, overall, most respondents positively agreed or strongly agreed with all three statements.

Table 4a. Overall Responses: Statement 1

		Count	%
The workshops I attended and/or independent projects I submitted met my expectations by teaching me what I had hoped to learn.	Strongly agree	84	40.8%
	Agree	101	49.0%
	Disagree	20	9.7%
	Strongly disagree	0	.0%
	Not sure	1	.5%
	Total	206	100.0%

Table 4b. Overall Responses: Statement 2

		Count	%
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops and/or independent projects into my teaching.	Strongly agree	75	36.2%
	Agree	102	49.3%
	Disagree	25	12.1%
	Strongly disagree	4	1.9%
	Not sure	1	.5%
	Total	207	100.0%

Table 4c. Overall Responses: Statement 3

		Count	%
Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended and/or independent projects I submitted.	Strongly agree	87	42.0%
	Agree	101	48.8%
	Disagree	15	7.2%
	Strongly disagree	4	1.9%
	Not sure	0	.0%
	Total	207	100.0%

Responses to Survey Items: Adjunct and Contract Faculty

The adjunct and contract faculty responses to the items reflected the same pattern seen in the overall responses, with approximately half of the respondents positively agreeing with the statements regarding met expectations, applicability to teaching, and overall satisfaction, almost as many strongly agreeing, few disagreeing, and those who strongly disagreed being few and far between. There was slightly more disagreement among contract faculty than adjunct faculty with the three statements. Strong disagreement was only seen from 3% of adjunct faculty in response to applicability to teaching and overall satisfaction. Overall, between 85% and 92% agreed or strongly agreed that their expectations were met, the information they learned was applicable to their teaching, and they were satisfied overall.

Table 5a. Adjunct and Contract Faculty Responses:
“The workshops I attended and/or independent projects
I submitted met my expectation by teaching me what I had hoped to learn.”

What is your faculty status?						
	Adjunct		Contract		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	52	39.4%	32	43.8%	84	41.0%
Agree	67	50.8%	33	45.2%	100	48.8%
Disagree	12	9.1%	8	11.0%	20	9.8%
Not sure	1	.8%	0	.0%	1	.5%
Total	132	100.0%	73	100.0%	205	100.0%

Table 5b. Adjunct and Contract Faculty Responses:
“I will be able to incorporate the information
I learned from the workshops and/or independent projects into my teaching.”

What is your faculty status?						
	Adjunct		Contract		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	49	37.1%	26	35.1%	75	36.4%
Agree	64	48.5%	37	50.0%	101	49.0%
Disagree	14	10.6%	11	14.9%	25	12.1%
Strongly disagree	4	3.0%	0	.0%	4	1.9%
Not sure	1	.8%	0	.0%	1	.5%
Total	132	100.0%	74	100.0%	206	100.0%

Table 5c. Adjunct and Contract Faculty Responses:
 “Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops
 I attended and/or independent projects I submitted.”

What is your faculty status?						
	Adjunct		Contract		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	57	43.2%	30	40.5%	87	42.2%
Agree	62	47.0%	38	51.4%	100	48.5%
Disagree	9	6.8%	6	8.1%	15	7.3%
Strongly disagree	4	3.0%	0	.0%	4	1.9%
Total	132	100.0%	74	100.0%	206	100.0%

Reponses to Survey Items: Workshops and Projects

In terms of having expectations met, finding flex to be applicable to teaching, and being satisfied overall, the majority of those who attended workshops only or did both workshops and independent projects agreed positively with the statements. However, the majority of those who did only independent projects strongly agreed with all three statements. This overall difference in levels of agreement could be attributed to the fact that independent projects by their very nature give faculty more direction and control over their own flex experiences than do workshops, which are organized and designed externally. The stronger agreement among those who submitted only independent projects may also be partially due to social desirability response bias, whereby self-evaluations tend to be more favorable than evaluations of work performed by others.

Table 6a. Workshops and Projects:
 “The workshops I attended and/or independent projects
 I submitted met my expectation by teaching me what I had hoped to learn.”

What flex activities did you do during the fall semester?								
	Workshops only		Independent projects only		Both		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	34	36.6%	14	56.0%	35	41.2%	83	40.9%
Agree	49	52.7%	8	32.0%	42	49.4%	99	48.8%
Disagree	9	9.7%	3	12.0%	8	9.4%	20	9.9%
Not sure	1	1.1%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	.5%
Total	93	100.0%	25	100.0%	85	100.0%	203	100.0%

Table 6b: Workshops and Projects:
 “I will be able to incorporate the information
 I learned from the workshops and/or independent projects into my teaching.”

What flex activities did you do during the fall semester?								
	Workshops only		Independent projects only		Both		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	23	24.7%	16	64.0%	35	40.7%	74	36.3%
Agree	53	57.0%	6	24.0%	41	47.7%	100	49.0%
Disagree	14	15.1%	2	8.0%	9	10.5%	25	12.3%
Strongly disagree	2	2.2%	1	4.0%	1	1.2%	4	2.0%
Not sure	1	1.1%	0	.0%	0	.0%	1	.5%
Total	93	100.0%	25	100.0%	86	100.0%	204	100.0%

Table 6c: Workshops and Projects:
 “Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops
 I attended and/or independent projects I submitted.”

What flex activities did you do during the fall semester?								
	Workshops only		Independent projects only		Both		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Strongly agree	35	37.6%	16	64.0%	36	41.9%	87	42.6%
Agree	50	53.8%	6	24.0%	42	48.8%	98	48.0%
Disagree	7	7.5%	2	8.0%	6	7.0%	15	7.4%
Strongly disagree	1	1.1%	1	4.0%	2	2.3%	4	2.0%
Total	93	100.0%	25	100.0%	86	100.0%	204	100.0%

Comments and Suggestions

The flex evaluation ended with two open-ended items soliciting comments regarding workshops attended or independent projects submitted and suggestions for future workshops and projects. The types of responses yielded by these two open-ended items were indistinguishable from one another in terms of content. Therefore, the comments and suggestions were examined together in the content analysis.

The two open-ended items yielded 76 discrete comments/suggestions, which were grouped into 10 themes.

Table 7. Flex Comments/Suggestions Grouped by Theme

Themes	N	%	Responses	N	%
Workshops of interest	19	25.0%	Workshops on technology	6	31.6
			Workshops on adjuncts	2	10.5
			Workshops on foreign language instruction	2	10.5
			Workshops on non-violent communication	2	10.5
			Workshops like 4faculty.org	1	5.3
			Workshops on best practices	1	5.3
			Workshops on coping with stress	1	5.3
			Workshops on creating surveys	1	5.3
			Workshops on SLOs	1	5.3
			Workshops on stretching/increasing flexibility	1	5.3
			Workshops on student/classroom issues	1	5.3
Scheduling	11	14.5%	Need to be more considerate of adjunct faculty schedules	8	72.7
			Need to rearrange flex schedule	3	27.3
Criteria for qualifying as flex credit	9	11.8%	Appreciate that so much can count as flex credit	2	20.0
			Need to rethink the criteria for what counts as flex credit	2	20.0
			Should offer Flex credit for attending Commencement	2	20.0
			Cultural activities, e.g. museums, concerts, should count	2	20.0
			Cultural activities, e.g. museums, concerts, should not count	1	10.0
			Need more flex workshops of substance	1	10.0
Personal/professional enrichment	9	11.8%	Complements/enriches my teaching	5	55.6
			Flex contributes to my personal enrichment	4	44.4
Special commendation for specific workshops	8	10.5%	Attended City College workshops	3	37.5
			Faculty Life Drawing Workshop was excellent	1	12.5
			Hank Beaver's workshop was excellent	1	12.5
			Library Open House was excellent	1	12.5
			SLO workshops were excellent	1	12.5
			WebCT workshop was excellent	1	12.5
Personal issues	7	9.2%	Personal issues (no flex obligation, needed more time, etc.)	7	100.0
Overall praise for flex	6	7.9%	Flex is excellent overall	4	66.7
			Good opportunity to blend with other faculty	2	33.3
Room for improvement	3	3.9%	Flex manual needs improvement	1	33.3
			Need more participant interaction in the workshops	1	33.3
			Need to use Flex to break the status quo	1	33.3
Unexpected cancellation	2	2.6%	Flex presenter did not show up/unexpected cancellation	2	100.0
Negative criticism	1	1.3%	Flex is bureaucracy	1	100.0
Total	76	98.7%	Total	76	100.0

The most frequently-mentioned comments were related to the themes of workshops of interest (25.0%), scheduling (14.5%), and criteria for qualifying as flex credit (11.8%), as well as personal/professional enrichment (11.8%). The need to be more considerate of adjunct faculty schedules was the most frequently submitted comment or suggestion (N = 8). There were mixed feelings regarding the theme of criteria for what qualifies as flex credit, with some faculty conveying satisfaction with the criteria (N = 4) and others expressing skepticism (N = 4). Equally present were comments pertaining to the personal and professional enrichment that flex brings to the faculty (N = 9).

Looking back and heading forward...

The results of the flex evaluation suggest that for Fall 2006 flexible calendar activities, the vast majority of faculty, contract and adjunct who attended workshops and/or submitted projects, agreed or strongly agreed that their expectations for flex were met, the information they learned could be applied to their teaching, and their overall feeling was that of satisfaction. The comments and suggestions indicated that more consideration needs to be given to adjunct faculty schedules. Many faculty expressed gratitude for the personal and professional enrichment that flex provides. Feelings were mixed regarding criteria for what counts as flex, and several suggestions were made for future workshop offerings. Kudos to the Fine Art department for their life drawing workshop, Hank Beaver, the LRC, WebCT, and SLO presenters for the honorable mentions made by their faculty peers.