



Mesa College Flex Survey Report

2009/10

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INTRODUCTION

The 2009/10 Flex Survey was conducted for Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 flexible calendar activities in accordance with Title 5, which mandates that flex professional development activities be evaluated.

The academic calendar includes Instructional Improvement (flex) days for all classroom faculty. Flex is defined in Title 5 as "in lieu of instruction." It is designed for faculty to conduct staff, student, and instructional improvement activities. These hours must be monitored for state apportionment.

All faculty (contract, adjunct, prorata) who have a 16-week classroom assignment are required to meet their flex obligation. There is no flex obligation for short-term (less than 16 weeks) or long-term (more than 16 weeks) assignments.

The 2009/10 Flex Survey constitutes the fourth annual administration of the survey at Mesa College. The survey report, which was requested by the Mesa Flex Subcommittee, will be incorporated in the Flexible Calendar Program Review.

METHODOLOGY

In Spring 2010, the survey instrument used in 2006, 2007, and 2008 was refined and then used to collect feedback from adjunct, contract, and prorata faculty at Mesa College regarding their perceptions of the Fall 2009 and Spring 2010 flexible calendar activities.

The survey was administered via the Internet, and an email invitation to participate in the survey, including a hyperlink to the survey site, was sent on April 12, 2010 to all faculty on the Mesa distribution lists. Two reminder emails were sent out and the survey closed on April 30, 2010, resulting in a three-week survey administration time period.

Of the 761 faculty who were invited (542 adjunct faculty, which includes 29 pro-rata faculty, and 219 contract faculty), 208 responded to the survey, yielding an overall participation rate of 27%. The first survey item regarding faculty status elicited 202 responses as some faculty declined to respond to the question. Of those that responded, 143 were adjunct faculty and 59 were contract faculty, yielding participation rates of 26% and 27% for adjuncts and contracts, respectively (see Table 1 in Appendix A). **Survey results may be generalized to the respondent pool only and do not necessarily reflect the perceptions of the larger population of faculty.**

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FINDINGS

Flex Activities: Workshops and Independent Projects

Of the 143 adjunct respondents, 40% attended workshops only, 30% submitted independent projects only, and 30% did both. Of the 59 contract respondents, 46% attended workshops only, 14% submitted independent projects only, and 41% did both (see Table 2).

For the adjunct faculty who indicated the types of workshops they attended, the most frequently attended type of workshop was School/Department/Group/College-Wide (36% of workshop enrollments), followed by Curriculum/Instruction (19%) and then Personal and Cultural Enrichment (12%). For the contract faculty who responded to the same question, the most frequently attended type of workshop was School/Department/Group/College-Wide (31% of workshop enrollments), followed by Committee Participation (14% of workshop enrollments) and Curriculum/Instruction (12% of workshop enrollments). The workshops that attracted the lowest numbers of adjunct respondents were Accreditation, Generic Pre-Approved Workshops, Program Review, and Research (1% for each) (see Table 3). The workshops that attracted the lowest numbers of contract respondents were Health and Wellness, Professional Development Online, and Research (1% for each). Although Committee Participation and Program Review are limited to appointed faculty, the Accreditation workshops were open to all faculty.

For the adjunct faculty who indicated the types of independent projects they submitted, the most frequently submitted type of project was Curriculum and Instruction (46% of independent projects submitted), followed by Professional Organization (11%), and then Meetings and Committees, Technology, and Self-Improvement/Wellness (9% for each). For the contract faculty who responded to the same question, again, the most frequently submitted type of project was Curriculum & Instruction (34% of independent projects submitted), followed by Meetings and Committees and Self-Improvement/Wellness (13% for each) and then Campus Activities (11%) (see Table 4). The largest difference in percentage between 2008 Flex and 2009/10 Flex was seen in the submission of Meetings and Committees independent projects for adjunct faculty respondents, which decreased from 17% to 9%, and the submission of Professional Organization independent projects for contract faculty respondents, which dropped from 13% to 6%.

Evaluation of Flex Activities

The survey asked respondents to rate the workshops if they attended workshops only, their independent projects if they submitted independent projects only, or both workshops and independent projects if they indicated that they participated in both. This was done using the skipping/branching feature of the survey software.

Workshops

The survey had three Likert-scale items regarding workshops:

1. *I learned what I had hoped to learn from the workshops I attended.*
2. *I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops into my teaching.*
3. *Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended.*

For both adjunct and contract faculty, approximately half of the respondents positively agreed that they had learned what they had hoped to learn from the workshops, they will be able to incorporate the information they learned from the workshops into their teaching, and they were satisfied overall with the workshops they attended. Between 29% and 41% strongly agreed, very few or none disagreed, and those who strongly disagreed were few and far between (see Table 5).

Independent Projects

The survey had three Likert-scale items regarding independent projects:

1. *I learned what I had hoped to learn from the independent projects I submitted.*
2. *I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from my independent projects into my teaching.*
3. *Overall, I was satisfied with the independent projects I submitted.*

In response to these three statements, approximately three quarters of all respondents (between 72% and 75%) strongly agreed, 22% to 24% agreed, 0% to 4% was neutral, 0% to 3% disagreed, and 0% to 3% strongly disagreed (see Table 6).

Contributions of Flex 2009/10 Overall

In response to the directive, “Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was improved through Flex 2008 overall”, respondents noted the degree of improvement in five areas: Course Content, Teaching Methodology, Department/School/Campus Communication, Student Support, and Enhancement of Your Personal/Professional Development. These categories were derived from the responses to open-ended items on the 2006 and 2007 Flex Evaluation Surveys.

More than half of respondents (54%) indicated that course content was a little improved through Flex 2009/10, while 40% stated that it was very much improved. The majority (57%) indicated that their teaching methodology was a little improved, and approximately one third (34%) believed that it was very much improved. Slightly less than half of respondents (49%) stated that their department/school/campus communication was a little improved, while 40% thought that it was very much improved. More than half (53%) indicated that student support was a little improved through Flex 2009/10, and slightly less than half (48%) believed it was very much improved. A relatively larger number of respondents (n = 43) thought that this item was not applicable to their workshops and/or independent projects. Half of respondents (50%) indicated that the enhancement of their personal/professional development was very much improved, and 46% thought that it was a little improved.

Suggestions for Flex 2010/11

Responses to the question “Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve Flex 2010/11?” are listed verbatim in Appendix B.

APPENDIX A. TABLES

Table 1
Faculty status and participation

Faculty Status	N of Respondents	Total N	Participation Rate
Adjunct	143	541	26%
Contract	59	219	27%
All Faculty	208	761	27%

Six individuals did not respond to the item regarding faculty status, but they are included in the total. Adjunct respondents include 4 pro-rata faculty. The total number of pro-rata faculty at Mesa in 2009/10 was 29 and this figure is included in the total N for adjunct faculty.

Table 2
Types of flex activities engaged in by faculty

Activity	Adjunct		Contract	
	N	%	N	%
I enrolled in and attended workshops only.	59	41%	27	46%
I submitted independent projects only.	42	29%	8	14%
I did both.	42	29%	24	41%
TOTAL	143	100%	59	100%

Adjunct includes 4 pro-rata faculty

Table 3
Themes of workshops attended

Workshop Themes	Adjunct		Contract	
	N	%	N	%
A: Accreditation	2	1%	5	3%
B: School/Department/Group/College-wide	77	36%	49	31%
C: Committee Participation	9	4%	22	14%
D: Technology	24	11%	13	8%
E: Personal and Cultural Enrichment	26	12%	17	11%
F: Curriculum/Instruction	40	19%	18	12%
G: Generic Pre-Approved Workshops	3	1%	4	3%
H: Health and Wellness	7	3%	1	1%
O: Professional Development Online	10	5%	2	1%
P: Program Review	3	1%	14	9%
R: Research	2	1%	2	1%
S: Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes	11	5%	9	6%
Total Enrollments	214	100%	156	100%

Adjunct includes 4 pro-rata faculty. Faculty may attend multiple workshops.

Table 4
Types of independent projects submitted

Independent Projects	Adjunct		Contract	
	N	%	N	%
Curriculum and Instruction	53	46%	18	34%
Meetings and Committees	10	9%	7	13%
Campus Activities	4	4%	6	11%
Technology	10	9%	3	6%
Professional Organization	13	11%	3	6%
Self-Improvement/Wellness	10	9%	7	13%
Research/Writing	8	7%	5	9%
Community Outreach	6	5%	4	8%
Total Independent Projects Submitted	114	100%	53	100%

Adjunct includes 0 pro-rata faculty. Faculty may submit multiple independent projects.

Table 5
Evaluation of workshops—Likert items

		Faculty Status			
		Adjunct		Contract	
		Count	%	Count	%
I learned what I had hoped to learn from the workshops I attended.	Strongly agree	39	39%	16	31%
	Agree	55	54%	29	57%
	Neither agree nor disagree	6	6%	5	10%
	Disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	2%
	TOTAL	101	100%	51	100%
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops into my teaching.	Strongly agree	36	36%	15	29%
	Agree	48	48%	25	49%
	Neither agree nor disagree	14	14%	9	18%
	Disagree	2	2%	1	2%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	2%
	TOTAL	100	100%	51	100%
Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended.	Strongly agree	40	40%	21	41%
	Agree	49	49%	26	51%
	Neither agree nor disagree	11	11%	2	4%
	Disagree	0	0%	1	2%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	2%
	TOTAL	100	100%	51	100%

Adjuncts include 4 pro-rata faculty.

Table 6
Evaluation of independent projects—Likert items

		Faculty Status			
		Adjunct		Contract	
		Count	%	Count	%
I learned what I had hoped to learn from the independent project(s) I submitted.	Strongly agree	61	73%	23	72%
	Agree	20	24%	7	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	4%	1	3%
	Disagree	0	0%	1	3%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	TOTAL	84	100%	32	100%
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from my independent project(s) into my teaching.	Strongly agree	61	73%	24	75%
	Agree	19	23%	7	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	4%	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	3%
	TOTAL	83	100%	32	100%
Overall, I was satisfied with the independent project(s) I submitted.	Strongly agree	62	74%	24	75%
	Agree	19	23%	7	22%
	Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	3%
	TOTAL	83	100%	32	100%

Adjuncts include 4 pro-rata faculty.

Table 7
Contribution of Flex 2009/10 to improved professional development

	Not at all improved		A little improved		Very much improved		Total	N/A
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	Count
Your course content	11	6%	101	54%	74	40%	186	21
Your teaching methodology	17	9%	106	57%	62	34%	185	22
Department/school/campus communication	21	12%	87	49%	71	40%	179	27
Student support	14	9%	85	53%	60	38%	159	43
Enhancement of your personal/professional development	7	4%	89	46%	97	50%	193	12

APPENDIX B. OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

All comments in response to the question, Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve Flex 2010/11?, are listed verbatim and have not been edited except to protect the identity of a specific person.

A DIVERSITY COMPONENT IN EACH WORKSHOP

allow for outside wellness classes to be used.

Convince district IT staff to allow enrollment in any workshop through the end of the semester, rather than expire enrollment after midnight the day of. Add more presentations. Extend the deadlines for completing Flex obligations.

Due to scheduling conflicts among faculty, I sometimes have to set up meetings with one or two people. It is not really appropriate to open it up to faculty in general, but it can't qualify as an independent proposal. (If it is listed, people for whom it is not intended sometimes show up.) Can we have an option to have an unlisted workshop or can we have an independent proposal that may include one or two people? Thank you!

Eliminate it as a waste of time that could be better spent preparing for classes.

Expand the definitions for descriptors for Independent Projects to accommodate research and professional activities reflective of the visual/performing arts (e.g. exhibitions, curatorial projects). Some of the activities I've engaged in in the past have also integrated several categories (arts research, community outreach and development, exhibition, etc.), and find it difficult to define such independent projects under one category of activity.

Frankly, Flex needs a radical revision. Professional development is a GOOD thing -- a chance for faculty members to acquire needed information and updates in the field. But as it's evolved at Mesa, it's just become another requirement to fulfill, leading to more animus and resentment. We need to re-think professional development from the ground up.

I greatly appreciate the opportunity to use FLEX as a vehicle for self improvement in my field. As an adjunct, many times there is discussion within a dept. meeting that is mostly the purview of the contract faculty. I would like to see an opportunity to learn the basics of power point.

I like the good personal and course development with so much variety to choose from.

I really enjoy the diversity of the Flex opportunities. Has really improved over the years. Thanks.

I would like a full-time teaching position in the Architecture Department

I would like for the Flex team to consider offering Flex credits for attendance at professional conferences within one's discipline since these tend to enhance my teaching and ability to bring new ideas into the classroom more quickly. This Spring semester there were not very many interesting Flex opportunities offered. Most of them were meetings, or were not directly related to my field, even though the information gave me ancillary ideas for curriculum content. One area where FLEX team could improve its offerings is in the area of training faculty members in small groups (not in an on-line webcast format) on the meaningful use of technology in the classroom outside of Powerpoint presentations and Blackboard/Vista. Another area is in on-going physical fitness type FLEX opportunities --- walking program, or singing, or Tai Chi for example, or a program to take advantage of the landscape/garden design that Mesa in particular does so well.

It seems to be working well/applicable and useful as Flex is presently arranged and administered. I have no suggestions.

Keep up the great work. Thanks, L

Make objectives for InProjects more clear

make the process easier to understand Stop sending emergency messages to complete flex 2 months ahead of the due date no need to get messages from dean, when the flex project was entered and approved but not completed yet Overall the process is cumbersome, not well explained and mostly a pain.

More emphasis on "Best Practice" workshops -- seeing what other teachers do in the classroom, across discipline

lines.

More interdepartmental interaction.

More on Blackboard and Internet.

My flex work came from an honors project but the student failed to receive a grade because the Admissions Office did not open a new case for him. I contacted several people multiple times to assign the student a grade and no one ever responded to me. Only when the student told me he received the grade did I become aware of the process was over.

Offer credit for real activities. Eliminate credit granted through Department Meetings and School Meetings that are time fillers when not cancelled whimsically.

Offer some of the popular workshops more than once - sometimes it is difficult to attend a particular workshop because of time/scheduling conflicts.

Original legislative intent was to require teachers to regularly improve their teaching skills. Vast majority of workshops do not have that as their objective. We should try and work back to the original intent.

Place primary and fundamental emphases upon teaching methodology; its enhancement, its practice, its adaptability to the cultural changes accelerating among the learning recipients given proximate/primary age levels and demographic circumstances.

Please keep offering the meetings that discuss the contruction progress. It is more meaningful when we can ask questions

The flex program is excellent, no specific suggestion at this time.

The flex program is great. It is a way for the college to keep track of all the fine study the teaching faculty would do anyway.

Would very much like to be in a workshop on the use of clickers in the classroom to quickly assess student learning.

APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

San Diego Mesa College Flex Survey 2009/10

Please respond to the questions regarding Flex activities that occurred in Fall 2009 and/or Spring 2010. The results of this survey will be kept strictly confidential.

What Flex activities did you do during Fall 2009 and/or Spring 2010?

- ☐ *I enrolled in and attended workshops only.*
☐ *I submitted independent projects only.*
☐ *I did both.*

Alpha designators are used to designate the different themes of Mesa's workshops. These designators precede the titles of the workshops. Please indicate the themes of the workshops you attended.

- ☐ *A: Accreditation*
☐ *B: School/Department/Group/College-wide*
☐ *C: Committee Participation*
☐ *D: Technology*
☐ *E: Personal and Cultural Enrichment*
☐ *F: Curriculum/Instruction*
☐ *G: Generic Pre-Approved Workshops*
☐ *H: Health and Wellness*
☐ *O: Professional Development Online*
☐ *P: Program Review*
☐ *R: Research*
☐ *S: Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes*

Please evaluate the workshops you attended by indicating your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I learned what I had hoped to learn from the workshops I attended.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops into my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate what type(s) of independent project(s) you submitted.

- ☐ Curriculum and Instruction
☐ Meetings and Committees
☐ Campus Activities
☐ Technology
☐ Professional Organization
☐ Self-Improvement/Wellness
☐ Research/Writing
☐ Community Outreach

Please evaluate your independent projects by indicating your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements.

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I learned what I had hoped to learn from the independent project(s) I submitted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from my independent project(s) into my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Overall, I was satisfied with the independent project(s) I submitted.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was improved through Flex 2009/10 overall.

	<i>Very much improved</i>	<i>A little improved</i>	<i>Not at all improved</i>	Not applicable
Your course content	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your teaching methodology	☐	☐	☐	☐
Department/school/campus communication	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student support	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enhancement of personal/professional development	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve Flex for 2010/11?

What is your faculty status?

- ☐ *Adjunct*
- ☐ *Contract*
- ☐ *Pro-rata*
- ☐ *Decline to respond*