



Mesa College Flex Survey Report

2010/11

Prepared by:
San Diego Mesa College
Office of Instructional Services,
Resource Development, and
Research

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	1
INTRODUCTION	2
METHODOLOGY	2
HIGHLIGHT OF THE FINDINGS.....	3
Flex Activities: Workshops and Independent Projects	3
Evaluation of Flex Activities	4
Contributions of Flex 2010/11 Overall	5
Suggestions for Flex 2011/12	5
APPENDIX A. TABLES	6
APPENDIX B. OPEN ENDED RESPONSES.....	9
APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMENT	12

INTRODUCTION

The 2010/11 Flex Survey was conducted for Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 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" and is designed for faculty to conduct staff, student, and instructional improvement activities. These hours must be monitored for state apportionment.

All contract, adjunct, and prorata faculty 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 2010/11 Flex Survey constitutes the fifth 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 2011, the survey instrument used in previous years was used to collect feedback from adjunct, contract, and prorata faculty at Mesa College regarding their perceptions of the Fall 2010 and Spring 2011 flexible calendar activities.

An invitation to participate in the online survey was sent on March 14, 2011 to all faculty on the Mesa distribution lists. Two reminder emails were sent and the survey closed on April 1, 2011 for a three-week survey administration time period. The expected response rate was 40% - 45%.

Of the 835 faculty who had flex obligations for 2010/11 (625 adjunct faculty, which includes 28 pro-rata faculty, and 210 contract faculty), 281 responded to the survey, yielding an overall participation rate of 34%. Due to the small number of pro-rata faculty, their survey responses are included in the adjunct faculty responses.

The survey item regarding faculty status elicited 271 responses as ten faculty declined to respond. Of those that responded, 196 were adjunct and 75 were contract, yielding participation rates of 31% and 36% for adjuncts and contracts, respectively (see Table 1).

HIGHLIGHT OF THE FINDINGS

Flex Activities: Workshops and Independent Projects

Of the 196 adjunct respondents, 46% attended workshops only, 25% submitted independent projects only, and 29% did both. Of the 75 contract respondents, 43% attended workshops only, 8% submitted independent projects only, and 49% 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 (15%) and then Personal and Cultural Enrichment (15%). For the contract faculty who responded to the same question, the most frequently attended type of workshop was School/Department/Group/College-Wide (27% of workshop enrollments), followed by Curriculum/Instruction (15% of workshop enrollments) and Committee Participation (13% of workshop enrollments). The workshops that attracted the lowest numbers of adjunct respondents were Accreditation and Program Review (2% 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%, 1%, and 2%, respectively). 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 (37% of independent projects submitted), followed by Professional Organization (14%), and then Meetings and Committees and Technology (11% for each). For the contract faculty who responded to the same question, again, the most frequently submitted type of project was Curriculum & Instruction (43% of independent projects submitted), followed by Meetings and Committees (18%) and then Campus Activities (15%) (see Table 4).

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.*

The vast majority of adjunct and contract respondents felt that they had learned what they had hoped to learn from the workshops they attended, with the majority in agreement and most of the remainder in strong agreement. Almost half of the survey respondents (49% of adjunct respondents and 49% of contract respondents) moderately agreed that they will be able to incorporate the information they learned from the workshops into their teaching and more than one-third strongly agreed, while more than one-tenth was neutral. Overall, half of adjunct respondents (50%) and the majority of contract respondents (52%) moderately agreed and less than half (46% of adjunct respondents and 39% of contract respondents) strongly agreed that they were satisfied overall with the workshops they attended in 2010/11 (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.*

Almost three-quarters of respondents (72% of adjunct respondents and 74% of contract respondents) strongly agreed and over one-fourth (26% of adjunct respondents and 26% of contract respondents) moderately agreed that they learned what they had hoped to learn from their independent projects. Two-thirds of adjunct respondents (66%) and four-fifths of contract respondents (81%) strongly agreed and most of the remainder moderately agreed (30% of adjunct respondents and 16% of contract respondents) that they will be able to incorporate the information learned from the independent projects into their teaching. Over two-thirds of adjunct respondents (68%) and over three-quarters

of contract respondents (77%) strongly agreed and almost one-third of adjunct respondents (31%) and almost one-quarter of contract respondents (23%) moderately agreed that overall they were satisfied with their independent projects.

Overall, independent projects were rated more highly than were workshops, perhaps due in part to the response bias known as social desirability effect, which posits that subjects may respond in ways that they believe will cause other to perceive them more favorably, i.e., a faculty member who submitted an independent project may be more likely to rate his or her own project more highly. The higher ratings of independent projects may also be due to the fact that the design and execution of an independent project is generally more within the control of the individual faculty member submitting the project and would thus be designed and conducted according to the preferences of the faculty member submitting the project.

Contributions of Flex 2010/11 Overall

In response to the directive, “Please indicate the extent to which each of the following was improved through Flex 2010/11 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.

More than half of respondents (54%) indicated that course content was a little improved through Flex 2010/11, while 41% stated that it was very much improved. The majority (59%) indicated that their teaching methodology was a little improved, and more than one third (38%) believed that it was very much improved. Slightly less than half of respondents (48%) stated that their department/school/campus communication was a little improved, while 46% thought that it was very much improved. The majority of respondents (52%) indicated that student support was a little improved through Flex 2010/11, and less than half (42%) believed it was very much improved. Less than half of respondents (42%) indicated that the enhancement of their personal/professional development was a little improved, and 54% thought that it was much improved.

Suggestions for Flex 2011/12

Responses to the question “Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve Flex 2011/12?” are listed verbatim in Appendix B and are categorized thematically.

APPENDIX A. TABLES

Table 1. Faculty status and participation

Faculty Status	N of Respondents	Total N	Participation Rate
Adjunct	196	625	31%
Contract	75	210	36%
Decline to respond	10	N/A	N/A
All Faculty	281	835	34%

Adjunct respondents include 6 pro-rata faculty. The total number of pro-rata faculty at Mesa in 2010/11 was 28 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.	91	46%	32	43%
I submitted independent projects only.	49	25%	6	8%
I did both.	56	29%	37	49%
TOTAL	196	100%	75	100%

Table 3. Themes of workshops attended

Workshop Themes	Adjunct		Contract	
	N	%	N	%
A: Accreditation	6	2%	19	8%
B: School/Department/Group/College-wide	113	36%	63	27%
C: Committee Participation	10	3%	31	13%
D: Technology	30	9%	15	6%
E: Personal and Cultural Enrichment	42	13%	13	6%
F: Curriculum/Instruction	47	15%	35	15%
G: Generic Pre-Approved Workshops	11	3%	6	3%
H: Health and Wellness	8	3%	3	1%
O: Professional Development Online	11	3%	2	1%
P: Program Review	6	2%	18	8%
R: Research	9	3%	5	2%
S: Assessment and Student Learning Outcomes	24	8%	23	10%
Total Enrollments	317	100%	233	100%

Note: Faculty may enroll in multiple workshops.

Table 4. Types of independent projects submitted

Independent Projects	Adjunct		Contract	
	N	%	N	%
Campus Activities	10	7%	9	15%
Community Outreach	5	4%	3	5%
Curriculum and Instruction	51	37%	26	43%
Meetings and Committees	15	11%	11	18%
Professional Organization	20	14%	8	13%
Research/Writing	10	7%	2	3%
Self-Improvement/Wellness	13	9%	1	2%
Technology	15	11%	1	2%
Total Independent Projects Submitted	139	100%	61	100%

Note: 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	67	46%	25	36%
	Agree	74	51%	39	57%
	Neither agree nor disagree	5	3%	4	6%
	Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	1%
	TOTAL	146	100%	69	100%
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from the workshops into my teaching.	Strongly agree	54	37%	24	35%
	Agree	72	49%	34	49%
	Neither agree nor disagree	16	11%	9	13%
	Disagree	3	2%	1	1%
	Strongly disagree	1	1%	1	1%
	TOTAL	146	100%	69	100%
Overall, I was satisfied with the workshops I attended.	Strongly agree	67	46%	27	39%
	Agree	73	50%	36	52%
	Neither agree nor disagree	6	4%	5	7%
	Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	1	1%
	TOTAL	146	100%	69	100%

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	76	72%	32	74%
	Agree	27	26%	11	26%
	Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	TOTAL	105	100%	43	100%
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from my independent project(s) into my teaching.	Strongly agree	69	66%	35	81%
	Agree	31	30%	7	16%
	Neither agree nor disagree	3	3%	1	2%
	Disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	TOTAL	105	100%	43	100%
Overall, I was satisfied with the independent project(s) I submitted.	Strongly agree	71	68%	33	77%
	Agree	32	31%	10	23%
	Neither agree nor disagree	1	1%	0	0%
	Disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	Strongly disagree	0	0%	0	0%
	TOTAL	104	100%	43	100%

Table 7. Contribution of Flex 2010/11 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	10	4%	134	54%	102	41%	246	33
Your teaching methodology	7	3%	144	59%	92	38%	243	35
Department/school/campus communication	13	6%	112	48%	106	46%	231	47
Student support	15	7%	116	52%	94	42%	225	53
Enhancement of your personal/professional development	10	4%	112	42%	143	54%	265	14

APPENDIX B. OPEN ENDED RESPONSES

All comments in response to the question, Do you have any suggestions for how we can improve Flex 2011/12? are listed verbatim and have not been edited except to protect the identities of specific individuals. They are arranged according to theme.

ADJUNCT FACULTY-RELATED RECOMMENDATIONS

As an adjunct with a varied schedule, it is hard to make meetings/activities during the week. On-line activities are very helpful as well as weekend events. I would like to see more e-mail reminders of upcoming events or an automated e-mail to remind faculty of the event if they have signed up for a particular activity.

Continue to offer/increase workshops or trainings that can be completed online as it is difficult as an adjunct to attend most face-to-face meetings.

We need more meetings at different times. As an adjunct faculty member, it is difficult to attend meetings, due to other teaching commitments.

Workshop on adjuncts preparing to apply for full time jobs

FEEDBACK ON WORKSHOPS

I consider that the workshops I attended were supportive to the better actions I have already been taking. The chance to meet with others among the faculty and leaders is always welcome. I especially enjoyed meeting with ***'s groups and exchanging experiences and strategies. I always get a big boost from the astronomy visit arranged by *** and others.

For the acceleration meeting I attended. I think if the question and answer section was shortened, then there would be more time to complete the breakout sections.

Our school meetings are starting to improve.

Sometimes there should be more formality in the department meetings...from the participants and not the organizers.

To make it so Departments cannot turn compulsory workshops that are not such, like the informal from the publisher they pick and force on professors or workshops that are described as workshops when in reality they are social events. I simply do not wish to be part of such a corrupt practice.

NO COMMENT

NA

No.

PRAISE FOR FLEX

Doing a great job! I like the choices offered and feel when I'm able that there are various opportunities for enrichment.

Great job! The Flex committee has been enormously supportive and helpful, in providing the flex programs, and evaluating the independent projects proposals in a timely manner. Thank you.

I think this system is robust and offers many options to fulfill needed flex hours. Thank you.

I think it is easy to use.

I think the program is excellent as it currently stands.

In all honesty, I have been wonderfully served by the program and I have no substantive suggestions at this point.

IN COMPARISON TO OTHER COLLEGES, I FEEL THAT MESA COLLEGE HAS THE MOST CONVENIENT AND MOST USER FRIENDLY ONLINE FLEX PROGRAM THAN ANYONE OUT THERE. GREAT JOB EVERYONE!

It is fine

No, I think it's great how it is.

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING DISCONTINUING FLEX

abandon it.

Abolish it entirely. Whatever dollars are spent toward FLEX should be cut from the budget. The FLEX program should be a low priority in these difficult times - a wasted bureaucracy. It is time to get back to basic expenditures in education. Save a teacher, save a course!

Beyond removing it from the list of mandated activities and re-shaping it into true professional development? Not much . . .

Get rid of flex. It's a ridiculous requirement.

Takes far too much of everyone's limited time for the relatively small benefit.

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING FLEX PROCESS

1) Allow enrollment in seminars throughout the entire semester. Now you have only until midnight the day of the seminar to enroll. Obviously only those who have attended will get credit for attending but I have decided to attend at the last minute and struggled to get to a computer to "enroll" even though I'd attended and signed in at the meeting. The deadline is imposed by IT and needs to be eliminated. 2) Allow enrollment in independent projects, especially attendance at professional meetings outside of semester deadlines, eg, May, June, even for adjuncts. My annual, week-long attendance at a professional conference can't be counted since it occurs every year in June. That's nuts. This is a conference about teaching my subject!! 3) Don't send emails to everyone on the Flex committee or everyone in the college when there's a question about an independent project submittal. Contact the faculty person individually first - There's no need for a dean or chair to be involved when all you need is a date clarification or a sentence added about course improvement. 4) I've never seen the "FLEX handbook" that the committee has made reference to. Put it on line and send all faculty the link. Stop telling faculty to comply with the flex handbook when you reject proposals. Instead (with the handbook on line) send a link to a specific page in the on line handbook, eg. the page discussing deadline dates, and a less judgmental dialog like: "We can't approve your project with the date you cited but if you resubmit with the appropriate dates, in accordance to the Flex handbook (see URL <http://herestheflexdatesuidiot.sdccd.edu>) your project's content appears fine and approval is likely pending the date change."

The independent project approval requirements should be incorporated in the submission form, so that rejections are minimized.

When we make a mistake on our submission, first send it back to us to fix, not right away to the Vice President and the Dean. They have better things to do than fix our mistakes!

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING FUTURE WORKSHOP TOPICS

I would like to see sessions that address the mental health needs students bring into the classroom. In addition, I would like to see more diversity education [ie, LGBT], and communication skills building such as Motivational Interviewing techniques.

More workshops on Teaching Tips for LARGE classes (over 50 students) and Strategies for Online Learning.

Personally I would like to see more technical courses which would aid in course preparation, class presentation techniques and course website development.

Still looking for a stretching class. I asked the Campus Police to offer one, since they do such a great job at the start of the Rape Aggression classes, but I was ignored.

Workshops in stress management and team building. Professional boundaries and more effective communication among colleagues. How to tackle dysfunctional departmental environment.

It seems like many Department Chair will need to be replaced over the next several years, either through rotation of job duties which should be occurring, or retirement. Yet most faculty have no idea what the job duties are, or how they are supposed to learn to fulfill them. Therefore many people turn it down, won't consider it, or have a fear of the unknown. Why not have a workshop "The world of Department Chairs" so anyone, rather out of curiosity or future goals, can take the course.

Keep high attention placed upon educational methodologies aimed at the norm cultural range of the prototypical College student: average age, generalized San Diego cultural practices/customs. Evaluate economic matters: such as student loans, costs of textbooks, etc. Evaluate the student counseling/advising resources for educational objectives/professional choices and academic questions for research objectives.

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING SCHEDULING

Many of the flex activities offered during faculty improvement days sounded very interesting but I could not schedule all of them for those 2 days - it would be good if they were repeated during the term so they are more available.

OFFER MORE COURSES. There were barely any offerings during flex week.

Schedule flex activities over entire term. Some of the workshops which I would have benefited from were scheduled during January and conflicted with other commitments. I would appreciate it if these could be repeated during the term.

The options above are in reverse order than usually shown, with agree on left and not right. Provide more diverse offerings throughout the semester, or offerings at repeated times during flex week and throughout the semester. People could re-offer the same thing.

SUGGESTIONS REGARDING TECHNOLOGY

I think the web site is difficult to navigate. I would love to see something a bit easier to use.

More use of internet resources.

APPENDIX C. SURVEY INSTRUMENT

San Diego Mesa College Flex Survey 2010/11

Please respond to the questions regarding Flex activities that occurred in Fall 2010 and/or Spring 2011. The results of this survey will be kept strictly confidential.

What Flex activities did you do during Fall 2010 and/or Spring 2011?

- ☐ 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.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
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>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
I will be able to incorporate the information I learned from my independent project(s) into my teaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	<i>Strongly agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i>
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 2010/11 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 2011/12?

What is your faculty status?

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