The Adjunct Faculty Development Process

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Abstract
Student success in mathematics relies on having qualified, passionate, and dedicated instructors. In community colleges, such instructors are likely to be adjunct instructors. Thus, improving student outcomes in community college mathematics hinges on helping adjunct faculty members develop and grow professionally.

This article is intended for full-time and tenured mathematics faculty and administrators who have primary responsibility for hiring and supporting adjunct faculty. The idea for the article emerged from a discussion between the authors after a session on adjunct faculty at the 2013 AMATYC Annual Conference in Anaheim. Our intention is to provide an organizational structure for creating and prioritizing practices that develop a high quality talent pool of adjunct mathematics faculty.

Helen Burn is an instructor in the department of mathematics at Highline College and director of the Curriculum Research Group. She has served as chair of the Pure and Applied Sciences division and as Mathematics Department coordinator at Highline. She is a consultant to the Characteristics of Special Programs in College Calculus project of the Mathematical Association of America. In addition to her research on part-time faculty in community college mathematics, she has been a co-PI (2006–2013) to the NSF-funded grant The Math You Need, When You Need It: Modular Student Resources to Encourage Successful Incorporation of Quantitative Concepts in Introductory Geoscience. Helen received the 2014 Washington State Two-Year College Mathematics Education Reform Award for her decade-long work in reforming precollege mathematics within her department and her state. She holds a BS from The Evergreen State College, an MS in mathematics from Western Washington University, and a PhD in higher education from the University of Michigan Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education.

John K. Kawai is an assistant professor and supervisor of the Math Tutoring Lab at Los Angeles Valley College. His primary focus is on developing support services and content for mathematics remediation in a community college setting. He is the recent recipient of the Services for Students with Disabilities Outstanding Service Award for outstanding effort in accommodating students with disabilities. Professor Kawai has 7 years’ lecture experience on a community college and university level, including adjunct positions at South West College, East Los Angeles College, College of the Canyons and California State University, Los Angeles, where he continues to teach, mentor teaching associates, and provide workshops on job search or interview tactics for mathematics graduate students. John’s mathematics background stems from working as a computer graphics visual effects researcher at James Cameron’s effects studio, Digital Domain. Credits from the studio include blockbuster movies such as Titanic, Avatar, and Apollo 13. John received a BS in math and computer science from University of California, Los Angeles; an MS in applied mathematics from California State University, Los Angeles; and a PhD in computer graphics from the University of Utah. His prior areas of research and publication include automated lighting design, clothing simulation, particle systems, and simulated global illumination techniques.