

HOW FLEXIBLE IS YOUR FLEX OBLIGATION?

By Phyllis Eckler

It has come to the attention of our new staff development officer, Bill Shamhart, that adjunct faculty have been financially penalized in recent years for not completing their flex requirement by the due date. In 2007-2008 fifty-eight adjunct faculty members were docked pay at the end of the year and in 2006-2007 forty-nine part-timers had one week's pay revoked for not submitting documentation of completed flex hours. This unfortunate situation occurs, for the most part, because of a lack of awareness of the state's requirement for teachers to spend the equivalent of one week per year on improving their skills and/or their institution.

What is "flex"?

Your flex obligation is a professional development requirement that is paid for as part of an adjunct faculty member's annual salary. The state pays faculty for one extra week per year, outside of teaching, that is to be used for improving their teaching skills, contributing to college governance or participating in activities that will benefit the campus and its students. In the case of adjunct faculty, one week of work translates into the average hours of one's weekly teaching assignments for the fall and spring semester (intersession hours don't count).

What kinds of activities fulfill this obligation?

There are a wide variety of activities that can be used for "flex", particularly in the case of adjunct faculty. Any work done on behalf of the college or students outside of teaching time can be used to fulfill this obligation. Attending department meetings, faculty meetings, conferences, workshops (on or off campus) can all be considered for flex credit. Working on a committee (except in cases where ancillary activity pay is granted), representing the college in the community or taking college classes to improve one's skills in your particular subject area or an area relating to it (such as a second language or CPR) also count toward flex. If one has an idea of a skills development project that falls outside the above parameters he/she may submit it to the flex committee for approval by using the "Individually Planned Activity or Research" form found on the Staff Development site www.glendale.edu/staffdevelopment. Additionally, any faculty member who presents a flex workshop on campus will receive three hours of flex credit for each hour of presentation time. Contact our staff development officer Bill Shamhart shamhart@glendale.edu to schedule your presentation.

How do I submit verification of the flex work that I have done?

In many workshops flex sign in sheets are available and flex verification forms should be handed out at the conclusion. These are two different forms and one verifies the other. At college, department and committee meetings (which are required for full-time faculty and therefore not usable for flex) often times there is neither a sign-in form or flex verification form available for adjunct faculty who attend for flex credit. At those meetings one can use the form found at this site <http://www.glendale.edu/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=2242>. For conference attendance a registration receipt, confirmation letter or memo from the presenter is acceptable.

proof. For more examples of acceptable activities and verification requirements check out the Flex Manual which can be downloaded from the staff development site (referenced above).

By what date do I need to complete my flex requirement?

An Individual Flex Completion Form (available at <http://www.glendale.edu/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=2244>) along with verification forms or memos must be submitted to the Staff Development office (through campus mail or e-mail) no later than May 7, 2009. If one has a conference or course that will not be completed until later than that date, it may be listed on the form but verification must be submitted by June 11, 2009. Failure to adhere to these deadlines may result in the docking of some or all of week's hourly wages.

Don't become a statistic like the one's that preface this FAQ...get your flex obligation done and submitted. You may even enjoy the opportunity to learn something new, meet new people and/or engage in a new activity. Check out the staff development website for a list of ongoing workshop opportunities on campus and start collecting those verifications.

For more information on applicable dates and activities please contact Bill Shamhart at shamhart@glendale.edu