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Adjuncts and Institutional and College Mission: Maintaining Distinctives in an Era of Part-Time Faculty

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ABSTRACT

In 1969, roughly 78 percent of the instructional faculty at colleges and universities were full time and tenured or on tenure track. By 2009, that percentage had declined to 33 percent. Given their part-time status, adjunct faculty members are commonly viewed as a supplementary workforce. Evidence suggests that this looser connection extends to the mission of the university.

Today, institutional mission is becoming increasingly important to colleges and universities as higher education has become much more competitive. The competitive environment is forcing colleges and universities to focus more attention on segmentation and differentiating their missions from those of the competition. This differentiation is especially important for private institutions who must establish a rationale for their higher tuition rates. There is relatively little literature on the subject of adjuncts, however. This is surprising given the growth in their ranks and the growth in the importance of colleges and universities to convey unique missions. This paper reviews existing research and establishes an agenda for further research in this area.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

David J. Burns, D.B.A. (Kent State University) is Professor of Marketing at Xavier University. He has co-authored several books and published over 100 journal articles and book chapters. His research interests include mission integration, retail location and atmospherics, ethics, and consumer culture.

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