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David J. Burns  
*Xavier University*

Yvonne Smith  
*University of La Verne*

Keith Starcher  
*Indiana Wesleyan University*

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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.

Dr. Yvonne Smith, Ph.D. (Texas Tech University) is Professor of Management at the University of La Verne. She has published in strategic thinking and ethics and is currently editor of the Journal of Biblical Integration in Business. Her research areas include strategic cognition, group power structures, work values in the 21st century, and issues of power in a postmodern era.

Keith Starcher, Ph.D. (University of South Florida) is Professor of Business in the DeVoe School of Business at Indiana Wesleyan University. He has 30+ years of experience in both Fortune 500 and family-owned companies, having begun his career working with Westinghouse and most recently served as President of Zion Industries.