

## **The State of Contingent Faculty at Radford University 2005-2011**

Report to the Faculty Senate

Prepared by the Resource Allocation Committee

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March 29, 2011

The Resource Allocation Committee would like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance of Dr. Debra Templeton (Institutional Research) in providing various statistics on adjuncts used in this report.

## **Introduction:**

The President of the Faculty Senate had asked the Resource Allocation Committee to examine and report on issues related to contingent faculty compensation and working conditions at Radford University. The university last conducted a study on contingent faculty in October 20, 2006, which was submitted to former Provost Wilbur Stanton. That study made some recommendations for improving specific aspects of the working conditions of adjunct faculty such as allowing parking payroll deduction, expediency of deciding on appointment time, and smoothing out the paycheck. Following that study, the university did implement some changes to improve the working conditions of part time faculty as discussed in the study. However, the most important determinant of part time faculty standard of living is the income they receive from the work contract. Part-time faculty compensation did not receive the attention it deserves for the past ten years. This report will analyze the current compensation system that is in place for part time faculty at Radford University. The report also makes specific recommendation to improve part time faculty compensation.

The American Association of University Professors<sup>1</sup> (AAUP) indicates that more than 50 percent of all faculty hold part-time appointments which do not come with benefits or a steady long-term contract. Part-time faculty are most likely to be the first to lose their employment contracts during periods of unfavorable economic conditions even though a considerable number of them use part-time employment among different institutions as their only source of income. The loss of employment contract can be especially costly given that adjunct faculty don't typically qualify for receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

The working conditions at Radford University for adjuncts are typical of that of other institutions of higher education. Part-time faculty receive no benefits or health insurance coverage. They can purchase the same insurance of tenured and tenure-track faculty but they have to pay for the entire monthly premium which can (under certain circumstances) exceed the amount they get paid for teaching at the university. They also hardly ever receive any pay raises, and their compensation per course has stagnated over the years. Radford University has also a preferential treatment in pay for some disciplines over others. The pay difference between disciplines can be as large as \$600 per course.

## **Three-Tier Pay Scale**

Radford University uses a three-tier pay scale for adjuncts. The pay scale is typically set by following the pay structure of other institutions (market rate). As of 2011, the base pay is \$2,700 per three credit hour course which most disciplines pay for part-time faculty. The maximum is \$3,300 which is only available for eight disciplines with two-third of those disciplines located in the College of Business and Economics (COBE). Table 1 shows the most recent pay scale for part-time faculty at Radford University by discipline. Also listed in the same table is the pay scale that existed in 2000. In 2008, the university added more disciplines to the higher pay tiers. For example, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Math/Stat, and Geology which were paid the standard pay in of \$2,600 in 2000, are currently being paid \$3,300 or \$3,100 as a result of being included in a higher pay tier. No rationale has been given to why or under what conditions disciplines can be included in the higher pay tier.

## Stagnating Compensation

Table 2 lists the compensation per three credit hour course for part-time faculty between 2000 and 2011 based on the cost-of-living analysis. The only increase for part-time faculty compensation was a \$100 increase (\$130 for UNIV 100) per three credit hour course over the last decade. Given that inflation rate in the U.S. has increase by 23% between 2000 and 2010, then the inflation adjusted pay is lower than the current-dollar compensation. Table 2 shows the real purchasing power (inflation-adjusted pay) of adjuncts and what the pay should be if adjuncts received an annual cost of living adjustment. The current standard pay of \$2,700 is below the inflation adjusted value of \$3,272.72 which what the compensation should be if part-time faculty received a cost of living increase every year since 2000.

Table 1: Part-Time Faculty Pay Scale Comparison in 2000 and -2011

Discipline	2000 Pay Per Course	2011 Pay Per Course
Standard Salary for Part Time Faculty	\$2,600	\$2,700
University 100 Faculty	\$870	\$1,000
Accounting	\$3,200	\$3,300
Economics	\$3,200	\$3,300
Management	\$3,200	\$3,300
Marketing	\$3,200	\$3,300
Finance	\$3,200	\$3,300
Computer Science	\$3,200	\$3,300
Educational Leadership	\$3,200	\$3,300
Information Systems	\$3,200	\$3,300
Counselor Education	\$3,000	\$3,100
Communication Sciences	\$3,000	\$3,100
Interior Design	\$3,000	\$3,100
Nursing	\$3,000	\$3,100
Math/Stat•	\$2,600	\$3,100
Geology•	\$2,600	\$3,100
Biology•	\$2,600	\$3,100
Chemistry/Physics•	\$2,600	\$3,100
Special Education•	\$2,600	\$3,100

Source: August 2, 2000, and July 2, 2008, Radford University Memos from the Provost Office listing adjuncts pay.

- these courses were paid \$2,600 per course in 2000 then moved up to a higher pay tier starting 2008.

Table 2: Inflation-Adjusted Part-Time Faculty Pay Per Three Credit Hour Course

Pay Per course	Year 2000	Year 2010	Real purchasing power of 2000 pay in 2010 dollar	Pay per course with a cost-of-living increase since 2000
UNIV 100	\$870	\$1000	\$794.45	\$1,095.10
Tier 1: Basic Pay	\$2600	\$2700	\$2,145.01	\$3,272.72
Tier 2 Pay	\$3000	\$3100	\$2,462.79	\$3,776.21
Tier 3 Pay	\$3200	\$3300	\$2,621.68	\$4,027.96

Inflation adjustment was computed using the Southern Region Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

### **Part-Time Faculty Contributions to Radford University Mission:**

Radford University has about 216 Part-Time Faculty who are vital to the primary mission of the university. In the 2010-2011 academic year, part time faculty generated 21% of the total credit hours produced by Radford University. They facilitated the launch of the Core Curriculum by replacing full time faculty or directly participating in teaching the Core Curriculum. They were also increasingly important during the past budgetary shortfalls when they allowed the university to continue its course offerings even as faculty were lost due to the workforce transition program. Below are some of highlights the magnitudes of the recent contributions part-time faculty have made to Radford University.

- Since 2005 Part-Time faculty generated between 17% (2009-2010) to 28% (2006-2007) of the credit hours at Radford University.
- Since 2005 Part-Time faculty taught a total of 5447 section. The lowest number of sections was 686 sections (2009-2010) and the highest was 1032 section (2006-2007). There has been an increase of 20.4% in the number of courses taught by part time faculty since last year.
- Since 2005 Part-Time faculty generated 335,982 credit hours. The highest credit hour generation was in 2006-2007 when part-time faculty generated 65,427 credit-hours. In 2010-2011 credit hour generation by part time faculty was 49,856 credit hours, an increase of 24% over previous year (2009-2010).

- Since 2009-2010 there has been an increase of 26% in the number of students enrolled in courses taught by part time faculty.
- Between 2006 and 2009, the number of part time faculty has decreased from 265 to 193 faculty due largely to budget shortfalls. However, the university hired more part time faculty last year bringing their numbers up to 216 part time faculty as of 2010.
- Almost half of our part-time faculty (49%) are in their prime earning years between 35-55 years of age. This is an indication that for those part-time faculty, teaching at Radford is an important source of income for themselves and families.
- In the last year the university has experienced a surge in the number of courses taught by contingent faculty and the current fiscal situation will mean that contingent faculty will increasingly become a permanent part of the teaching faculty.
- Part-time faculty provide an immense support for tenure-track faculty by absorbing more students in their sections, teaching unpopular class times, and teaching new courses.
- Adjuncts standard salary increased by only \$100 in the last 10 years. Their compensation has seriously stagnated to the extent that they are paid less in real dollars compared to their pay in 2000.
- There exists a three-tier payment system for part-time faculty where the standard salary is as low as \$2,700 for most fields to the maximum of \$3,300 for 17 other departments/programs. We urge the university administration to reexamine the pay scale across fields.

#### **Summary of Issues of Concern:**

- There is no documented rationale for the three-tier payment system that is currently in place.
- Serious income stagnation for the last decade.
- Part time faculty pay never receive an increase in their pay, merit increase or bonuses from the state.

#### **Committee Recommendations:**

- (1) The Resource Allocation Committee recommends that the university establishes a policy where part-time faculty receive annual raises similar to the average annual pay increase for full-time faculty.
- (2) The Resource Allocation Committee recommends that the minimum pay per credit hour be at least \$1000 similar to the UNIV 100 pay.

(3) The Resource Allocation Committee recommends that the university revisits the three-tier payment system that is currently in place and establishes transparent criteria for assigning different pay to different disciplines.

Graph 1: Age Distribution of Part Time Faculty

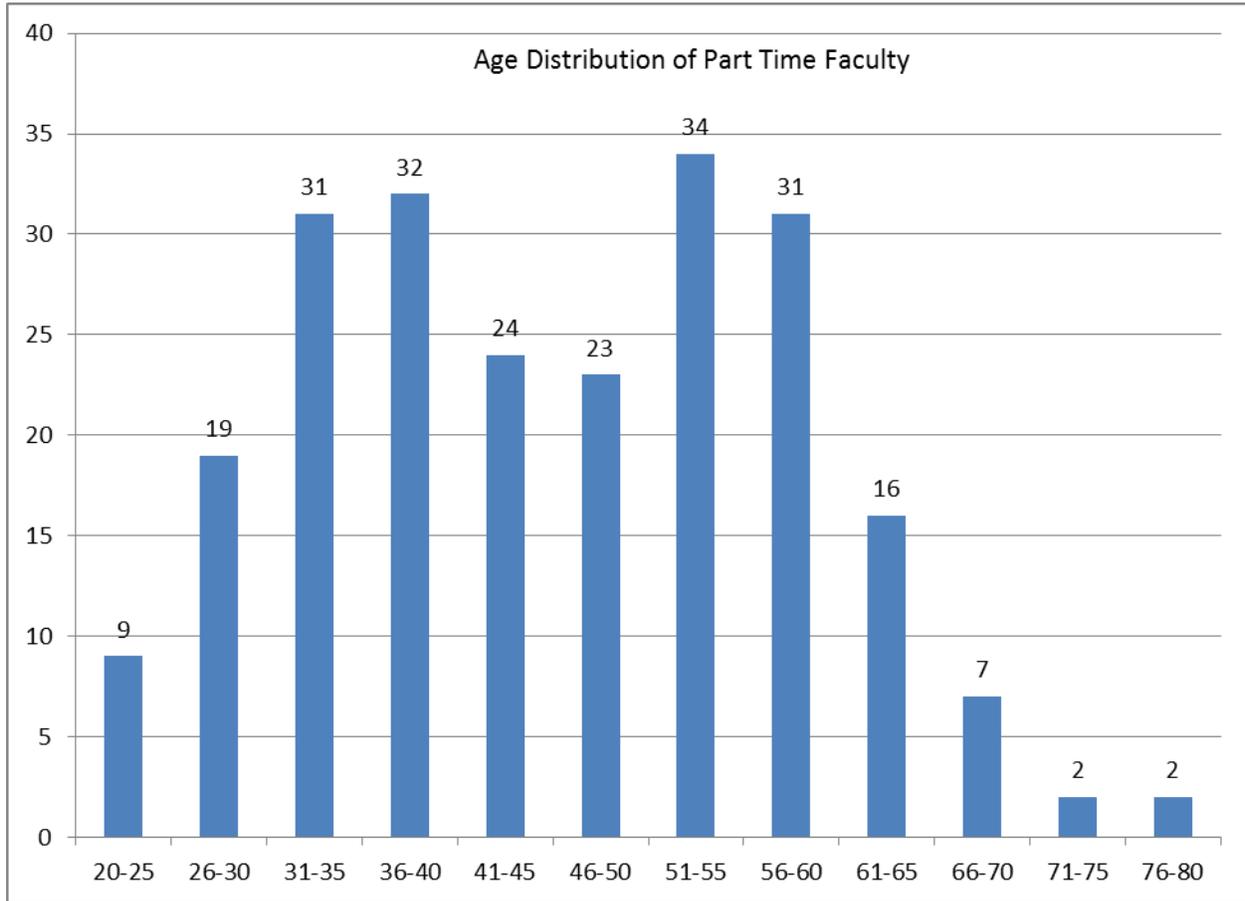
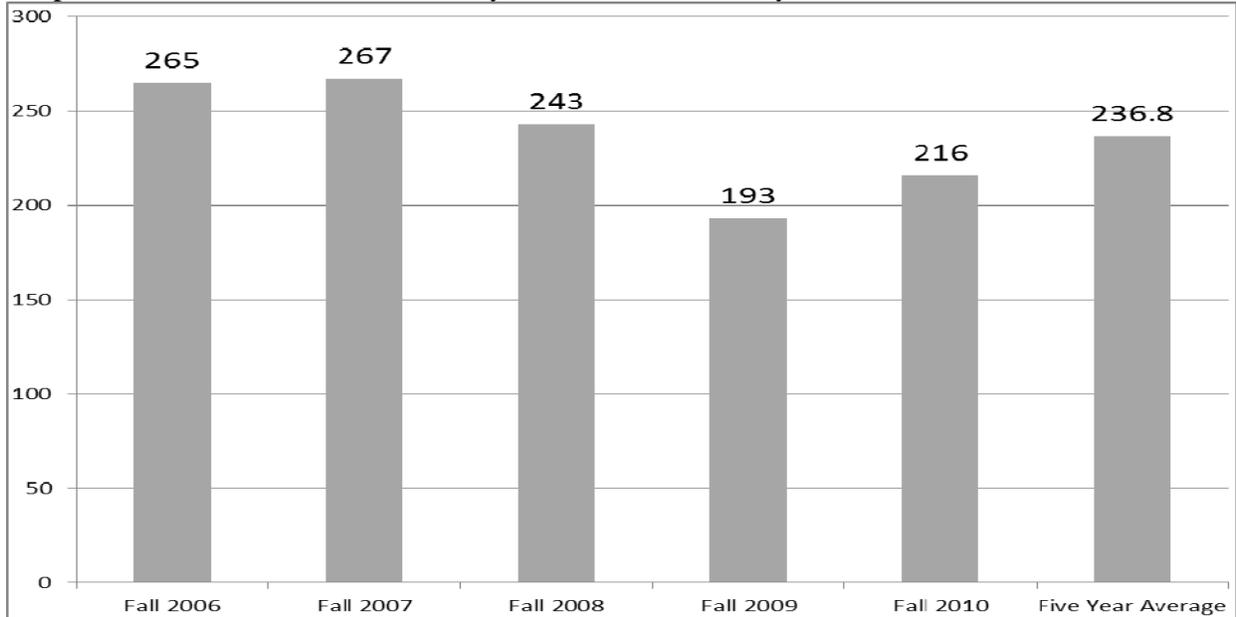


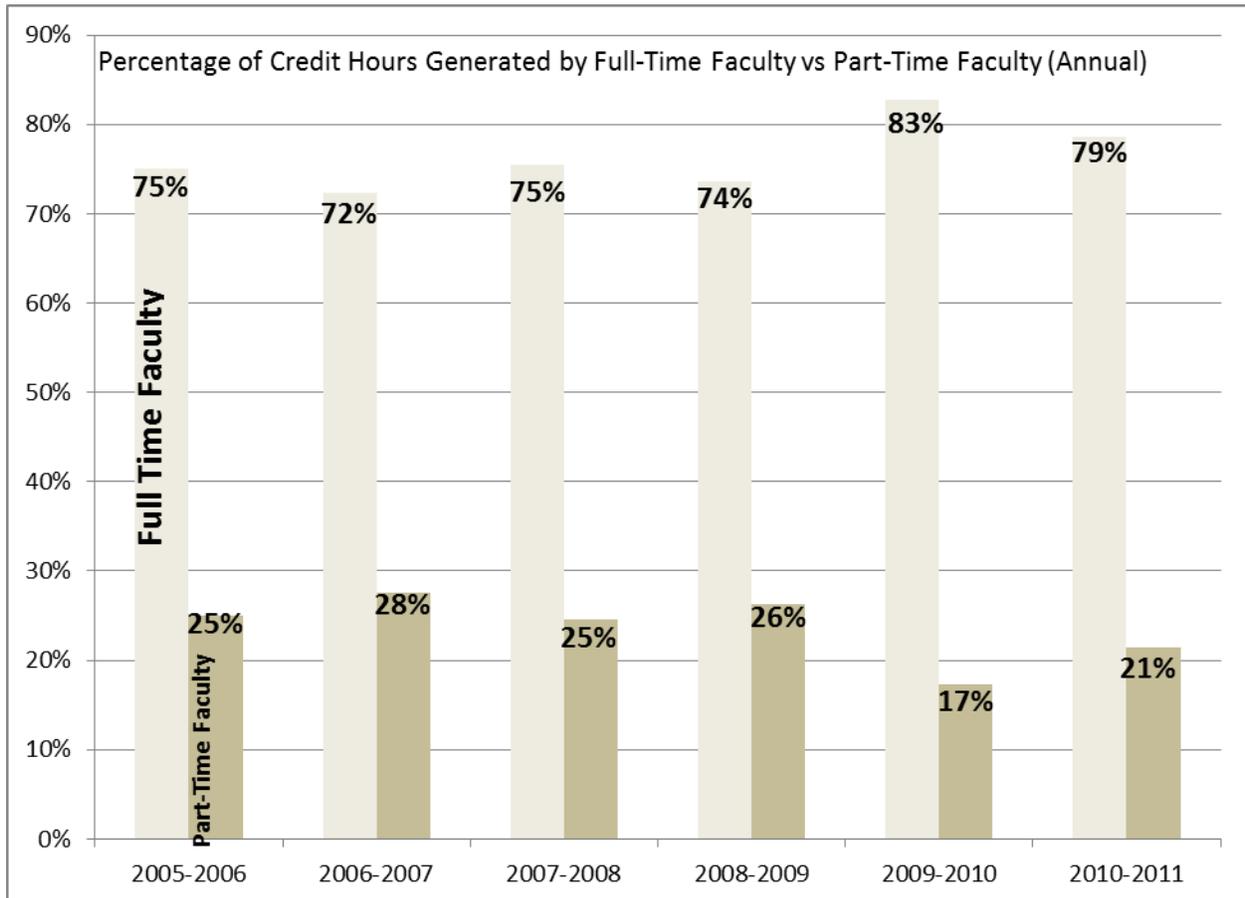
Table 3: Age Distribution of Part Time Faculty

Age	Frequency
20-25	9
26-30	19
31-35	31
36-40	32
41-45	24
46-50	23
51-55	34
56-60	31
61-65	16
66-70	7
71-75	2
76-80	2
Unknown	2
Total	232

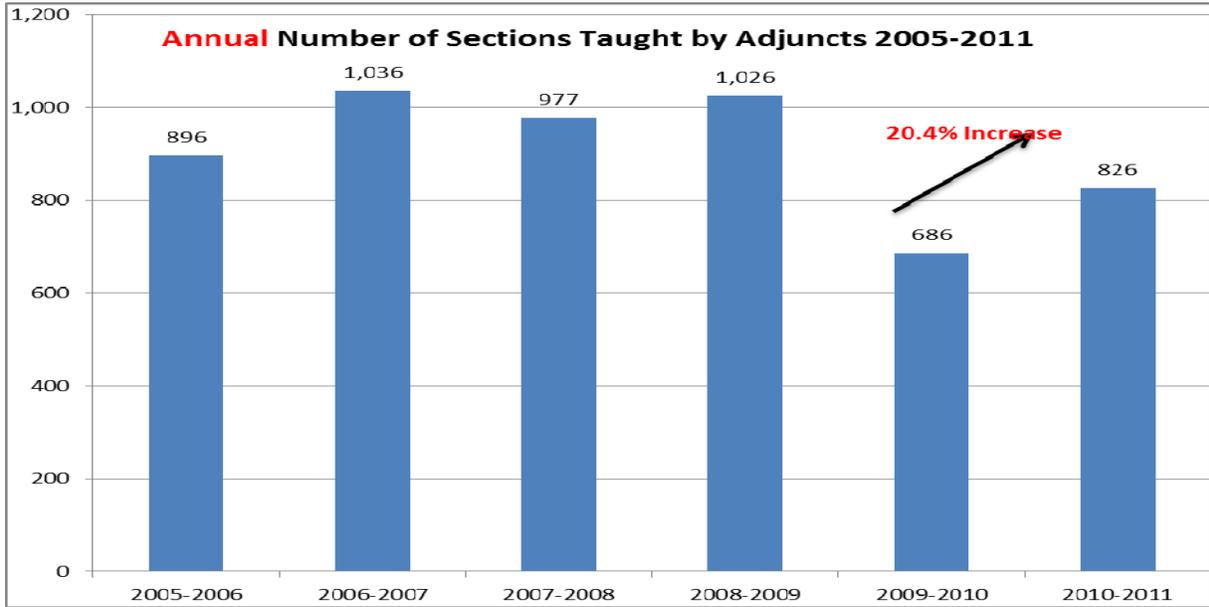
Graph 2: Number of Part-Time Faculty at Radford University 2006-2010



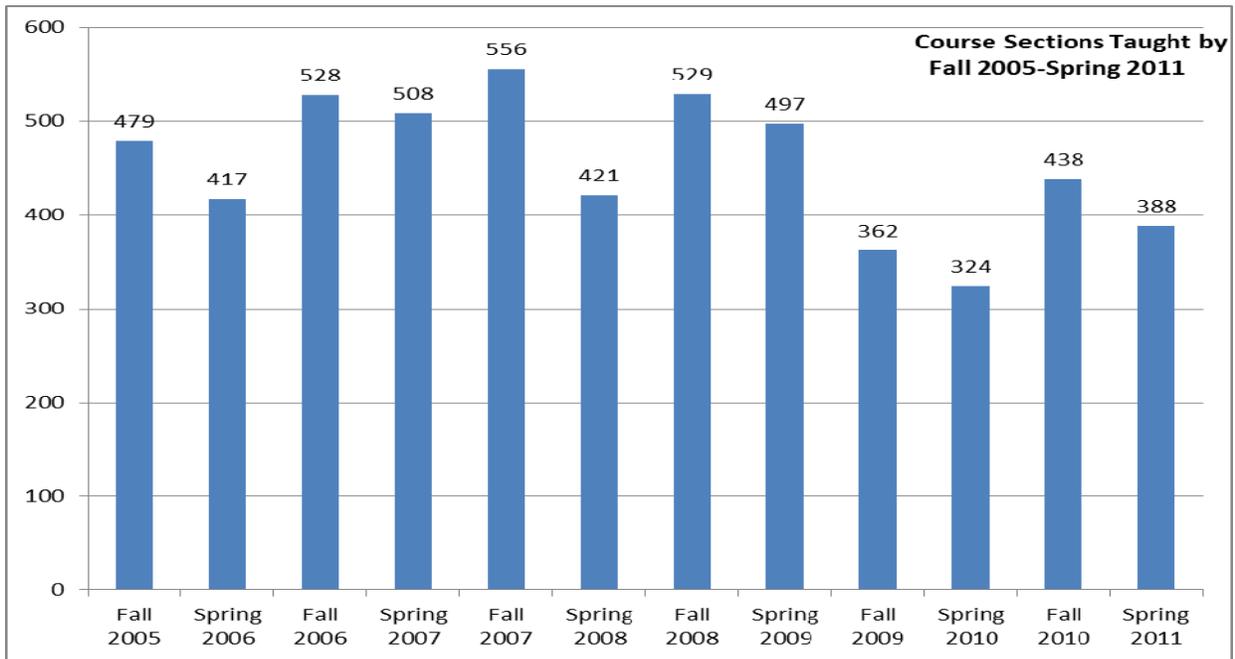
Graph 3: Percentage of Credit Hours Generation between Full-Time Faculty vs Part-Time faculty 2005-2006



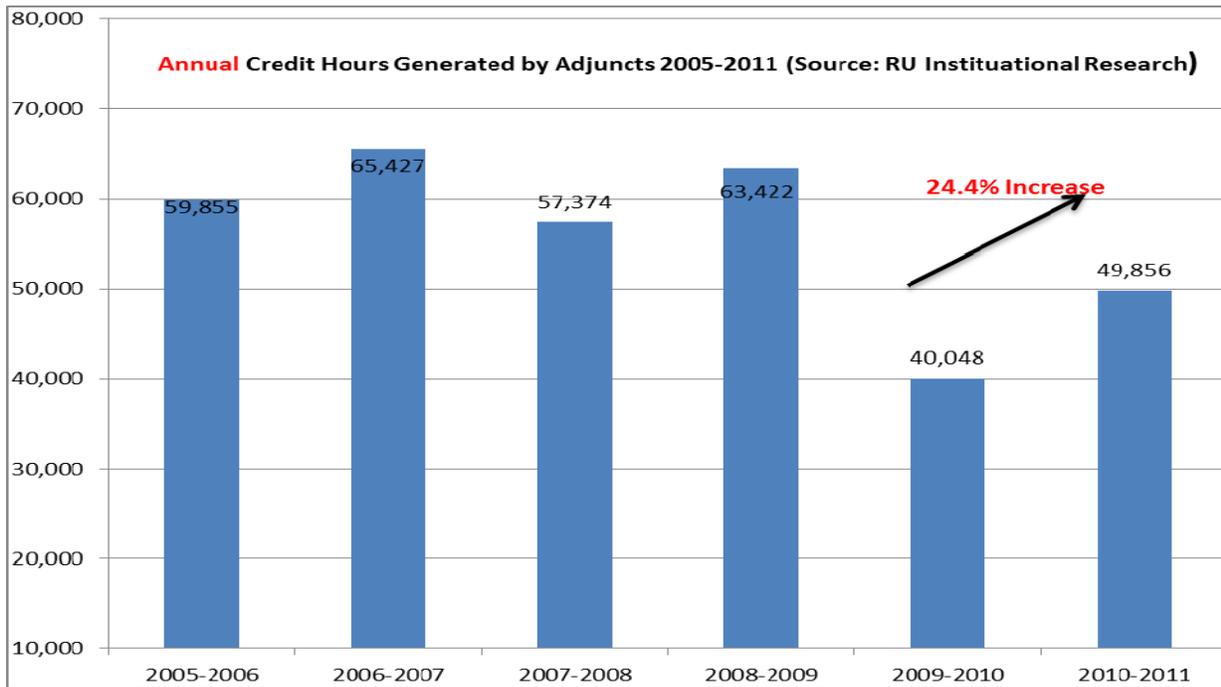
Graph 4: Annual Number of Sections Taught by Part-Time Faculty 2005-2011



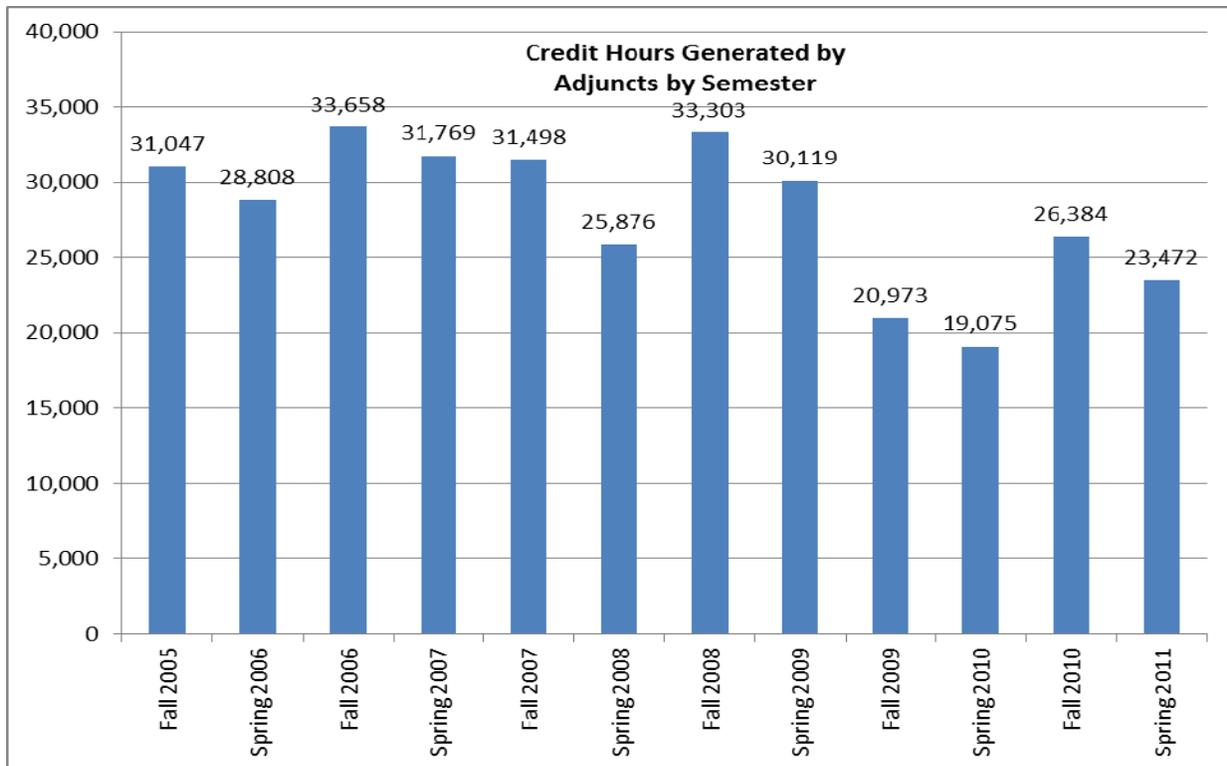
Graph 5: Course Sections Taught by Part-Time Faculty by semester Fall 2005-Spring 2011



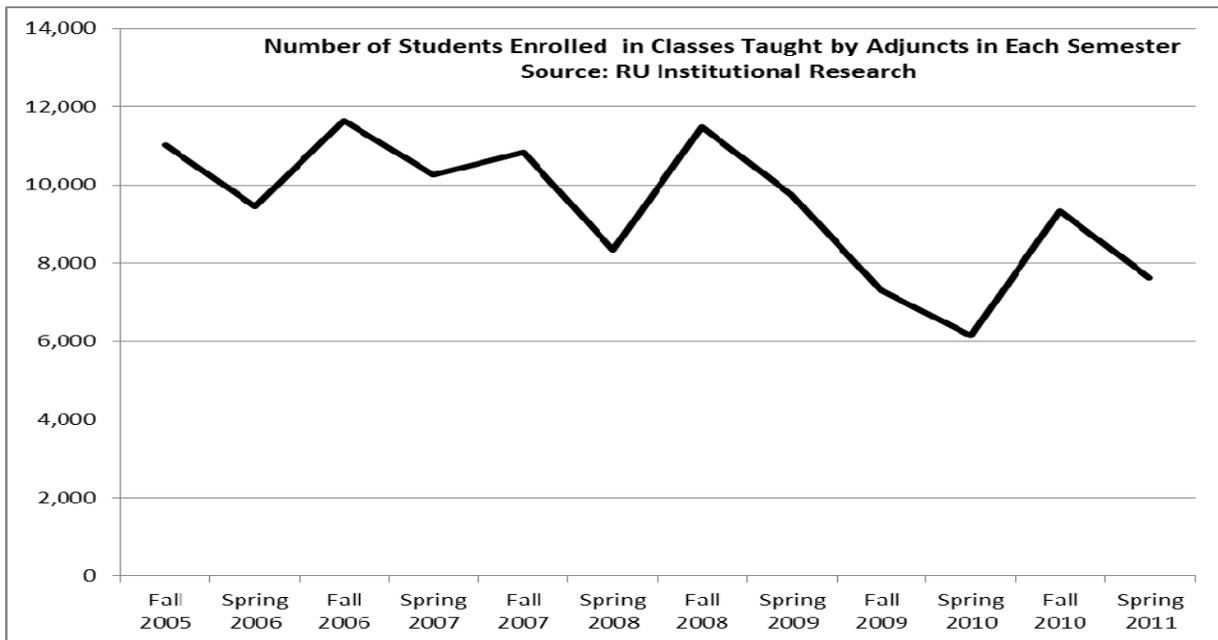
Graph 6: Annual Credit Hours Generated by Part-Time Faculty 2005-2011



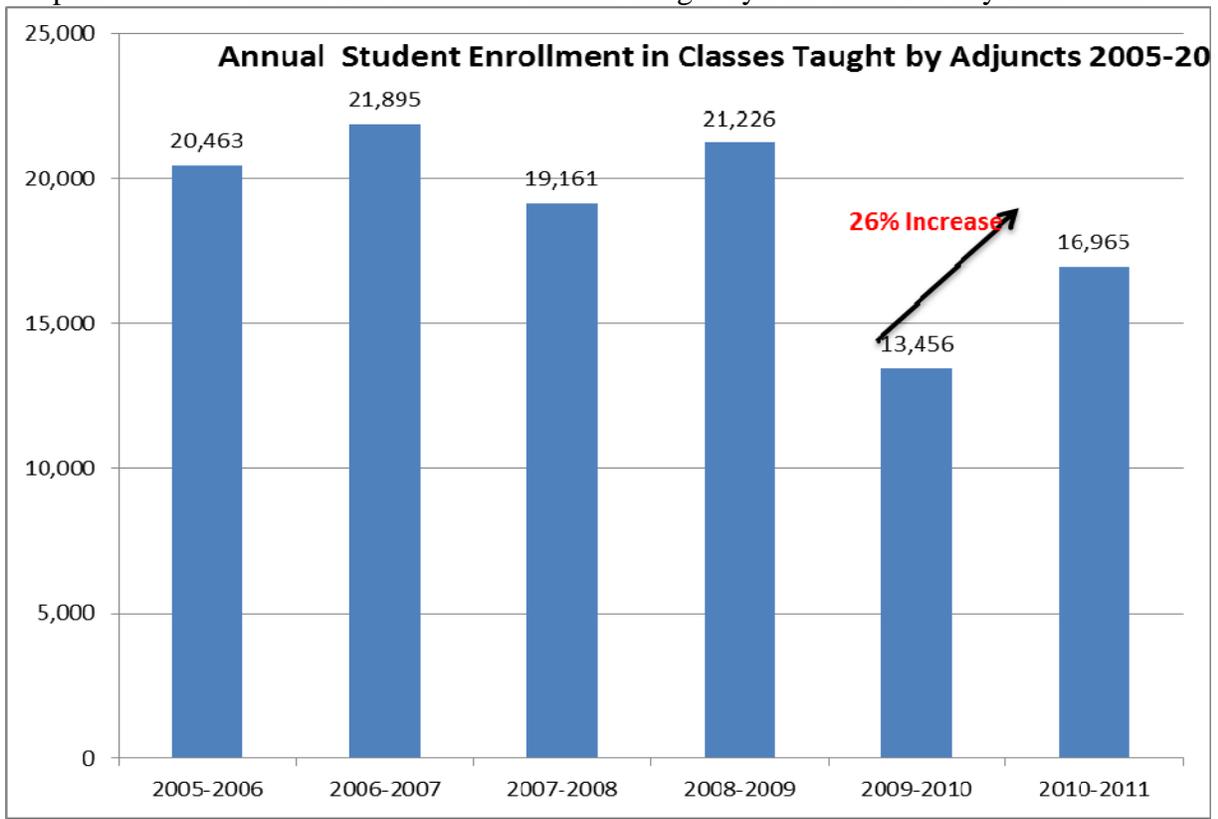
Graph 7: Credit Hours Generated By Adjuncts by Semester Fall 2005-Spring 2011



Graph 8: Number of Students Enrolled in Classes Taught by Adjuncts by Semester Fall 2005-Spring 2011



Graph 9: Annual Student Enrollment in Classes Taught by Part-Time Faculty 2005-2011



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<sup>i</sup> Background Facts on Contingent Faculty, AAUP Website :  
<http://www.aup.org/AAUP/issues/contingent/contingentfacts.htm> <accessed March 1, 2011>