PART-TIME FACULTY IN RURAL APPALACHIA: NOT WHAT YOU MIGHT THINK

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March 19, 2016
Appalachian Studies Association
Shepherdstown, West Virginia
Purpose of Research

Research Question

What are the perceptions of the professional roles and relationships of English part-time faculty at rural Appalachian community colleges?
Introduction

- Community colleges are important, especially in the rural Appalachian region.

- Community college faculty are primarily part-time.

- Part-time faculty play important roles students, departments, college, community
Literature Review

- 70% of community college faculty are part-time
- Largest # - English/Literature & primarily female
- Teach introductory courses
- Teach for various reasons
Definition: Rural Appalachian Community Colleges

- 60% of all community colleges are located in rural areas
- Rural towns or open country of <2,500 in population
# Rural Appalachian Community Colleges

## Disadvantages
- Rural setting
- Financial
- Cultural
- Social
- Hard to attract faculty
- Lower educational levels
- High illiteracy rates
- High unemployment
- High poverty rates

## Advantages
- Rural setting
- Financial
- Cultural
- Social
- Lower crime
- Laid back lifestyle
- Outdoor recreation
- Pride of ownership
Research Method

- Organizational Role Theory
- Qualitative study – semi-structured interviews
- Emailed community college Presidents
- Interviewed 9 English/Literature part-time faculty
- Five community colleges
- Rural Appalachia
Theoretical Framework

• Organizational Role Theory - behaviors, obligations, and privileges attached to a position a person occupies
  • roles (behaviors, obligations, and privileges) are pre-planned, task-oriented, and hierarchical
  • employee must accept the roles an organization confers upon them
  • creates functional organization
Data Analysis

- Rural Appalachia Community college
- Interviewed 9 part-time English/Literature faculty (self-selected)
- Taught 1\textsuperscript{st} and 2\textsuperscript{nd} yr. introductory English/Literature courses
- All graduated with MS or PhD
- Employed 1-25 yrs. at the comm. college
- Taught 3-18 credit hrs. per semester
- Primarily taught in the classroom
- 3 wanted to be full-time faculty
- Primary job = teaching
## Data Analysis

Part-time faculty and community colleges participating in study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Community College (pseudonym)</th>
<th>Student Enrollment</th>
<th>Area Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emma, Jane, John</td>
<td>River</td>
<td>2,900</td>
<td>34,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilyn</td>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>2,300</td>
<td>54,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Callie</td>
<td>Stream</td>
<td>1,800</td>
<td>45,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael</td>
<td>Creek</td>
<td>1,700</td>
<td>54,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary, Sophia, Anne</td>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>29,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Data Analysis

Economic status of communities of colleges participating in study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Colleges</th>
<th>Three-Year Average Unemployment Rate (%) 2008-2010</th>
<th>Per Capita Income 2009</th>
<th>County Poverty Rate (%) 2006-2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>River</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>$23,000</td>
<td>14.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>$19,500</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stream</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>$21,800</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creek</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>$24,000</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>$32,700</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appalachian Region</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>$24,500</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants’ Demographics

- Interviewed 9 English/Literature Part-time Faculty
- 2 males and 7 females
- Age range – 41 yrs.-75 yrs.
- 5 retired public school teachers
- All Caucasian
- HH income ranging <$25,000-$100,000
- 6 born & raised in rural Appalachia
Participants

Content/Happy
- Retired teacher
- Former teacher
- Ph.D. student

Not Content/Unhappy
- Mom
- Ph.D.
- Teaching at community college (permanent pt.)
Findings

- Reason teaching part-time
- Teaching only
- Departmental culture
- Lack of curriculum decisions
- Short-term contracts
- Number of courses
- Low salary
- Lack of job security
- Facilities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Number in study group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retired from primary job</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not seeking full-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not dependent on income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second career</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking full-time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependent on income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Conclusions

### Roles and Relations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thematic Role</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Difference maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Course developer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advisor / Mentor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional Insider</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Academic integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Social integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community player</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income provider</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appalachian citizen</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Study Recommendations

- College Administration
  - Recruit
  - Job security
  - Higher salary & compensation
  - Professional development
  - Role ambiguity
  - Orientation
  - Course development
  - Faculty governance
  - Committee service

- Academic advising
- Sense of belonging
- Recognition of work
- Upward mobility
- Departmental culture
- Recognition programs
- Directory listing
- Facility

- Community Insider / Outsider
Study Limitations

- Small sample size
- Location
- Self-selection
- Community College
- Academic Department

- Faculty demographics
Further Study

- Students
- Administrators
- Full-time faculty
- Roles - academic integration, teaching, academic advising, and curriculum decisions
- Happy part-time faculty
- Salary issues
- Job security
- Sense of belonging
- Recognition of work
- Departmental culture
- Community Insider / Outsider
- Longitudinal study
Thank You !!!