An Exploration of Contingent Faculty Experiences at a Private, Liberal Arts College

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Dedication

My dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband Jeremy, and our joyous children Juliana and Donovan. And, to the most good-natured, giving person I know, my sister Lauren. Whom without, none of this research would have been possible.
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Abstract

Both internal and external factors have incited higher education institutions to reevaluate and restructure antiquated policies and practices that influence contingent faculty support systems and contingent faculty interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members. Higher education institutions now employ over a half million contingent faculty nationwide, with numbers of contingent faculty hiring continuing to grow (Maldonado & Riman, 2009).

Currently, much of the research on contingent faculty stresses the use of contingent faculty and full-time faculty perceptions of contingent faculty at the community college level (Meixner, 2010; Tomanek, 2010; Wallin, 2004). Differences between full-time and contingent faculty are difficult to label because of the diversity of contingent faculty motivations (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005; Wagoner, 2007). Therefore, depending on how researchers conduct their study questions contingent faculty either seem satisfied, vulnerable and disenfranchised, or somewhere in the middle which produces a confusing picture of contingent faculty experiences (Wagoner, 2007; Waltman et al., 2012). This qualitative study explores contingent faculty experiences at a single institution through their own voice. Focus on an interpretative phenomenological approach allows for rich, descriptive storytelling that communicates the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the contingent faculty’s experiences, and their perceptions of how they identify and connect with their institutional support systems and institutional members. Such specificity also highlights the institution’s cultural values and norms. While some shared experiences were similar among contingent faculty, there were also experiences unique to the individual. Exploration of contingent faculty voice is imperative in driving institutional platforms that aid in creating positive institutional support systems for contingent faculty.
Keywords: contingent faculty, external factors, internal factors, interpersonal relationships, institutional support systems, qualitative study, voice
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Chapter I: Introduction

Statement of the Problem

As colleges continue to strive to remain financially sound by growing student populations and campuses, it seems their budgets consistently dwindle, which includes cutbacks to full-time faculty hiring (Maldonado & Riman, 2009). More than ever, colleges are relying on contingent faculty to excel not only in teaching, but other institutional goals (Maldonado & Riman, 2009). Contingent work is defined by Labor Economists as “any job in which an individual does not have an explicit or implicit contract for long-term employment or in which the minimum hours worked can vary in a nonsystematic manner” (Umbach, 2007, p. 93). According to the U.S. Department of Education’s Digest of Educational Statistics, higher education institutions now employ over half a million contingent faculty nationwide (Maldonado & Riman, 2009). Contingent faculty includes both full- and part-time positions that are off the tenure-track and represent three out of four new faculty appointments (Kezar & Sam, 2013). There is little doubt that with college enrollments increasing, employment of contingent faculty will continue to increase (Maldonado & Riman, 2009). Both internal and external factors have incited appeals for reform in higher education and its contingent faculty employment policies and practices (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Department and institutional work environments of contingent faculty tend to be negative because of outdated policies and practices that do not support contingent faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2013).

Contingent faculty offer institutions flexibility by increasing or decreasing the number of courses being offered based on student enrollment numbers (Meixner, Kruck, & Madden, 2010). Further, contingent faculty hiring allows institutions tractability in hiring at lower costs (Waltman, Bergom, Hollenshead, Miller, & August, 2012). As such, contingent faculty salaries
are much lower than full-time faculty (Kimmitt, 2009). Even so, many contingent faculty make the choice to teach and their vulnerability to an institution’s exploitation is evident (Modarelli, 2006). Contingent faculty cannot continue to be a means to service an end (Modarelli, 2006). Demands to teach a wider range of students with diverse needs, as well as teachers being held accountable for learning outcomes, puts tremendous pressure on contingent faculty to perform to high standards with little support (Waltman et al., 2012). While some disciplines have larger percentages of contingent faculty, many contingent faculty consistently experience the same common problems. They lack the compensation, benefits, inclusion in departmental social events, curriculum decision-making, professional development, respect, well-equipped offices and supplies, and overall open lines of communication that full-time faculty members enjoy (Fagan-Wilen, Springer, Ambrosino, & White, 2006). However, although contingent faculty can be a valuable resource in helping an institution achieve its mission, such experiences have led many contingent faculty to feel a sense of low job security and for their teaching standards to be compromised (Wallin, 2004). Research suggests contingent faculty who feel undervalued will not bring the same quality of teaching compared to those that feel valued and a part of the department team (Milliken & Dustin, 2008). Umbach (2007) states most contingent faculty spend less time with students and use less engaging teaching methods than tenure-track faculty. Furthermore, such minimal job security for contingent faculty can lead to relying heavily on positive student-teacher evaluations and possible grade inflation (Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006). As such, contingent faculty have just as much opportunity as full-time faculty to impact and influence an institution and its members either negatively or positively. With the increasing hiring of contingent faculty, institutions’ understanding of contingent faculty experiences and
how contingent faculty perceive their institutional support systems, plays an integral role in how institutions will reform their practices and policies for contingent faculty.

**Research Problem**

Current literature and research has yet to truly explore what contingent faculty are experiencing (Meixner et al., 2010). In order to equip institutions with the necessary understanding of contingent faculty, and practices and policies that provide institutional support systems for their contingent faculty, more qualitative studies that explore the experiences of an individual institution’s contingent faculty, are needed. One-on-one interviews with contingent faculty at their specific place of employment will strengthen current research by giving lived-perspectives from various contingent faculty on their day-to-day experiences at their institutions. By describing, explaining, and finding common themes in the sample participants’ language, the research will offer a concrete picture of contingent faculty’s experiences relevant to their specific institutions. Such research will aid in advancing the specific institution’s awareness of how to include, manage, evaluate, and recognize their contingent faculty (Waltman et al., 2012). By doing so, contingent faculty may be given opportunities to feel more valued through their institutional support systems which include their interpersonal relationships with members of their institutional community.

**Justification for the Research Problem**

In recent years, the broader social, economic, and political landscapes in which colleges and universities operate has changed (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Both external and internal influences such as lack of government support, new technologies, competition, rising costs, and changing characteristics of students are some of the few reasons for the need to re-evaluate the employment practices and policies at higher education institutions, such as the use of contingent
faculty to meet institutional missions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Significant transformations in the American workplace, because of market changes, have led many types of organizations to restructure their current employee-employer relationships through new policies and practices (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Therefore, many higher education constituents feel that colleges and universities should make the same types of transformations in restructuring antiquated contingent faculty-institutional relationships and the policies and practices that influence such relationships (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

David W. Leslie and Judith M. Gappa, are two of the pioneers and prominent researchers on contingent faculty working conditions and job satisfaction. The social and demographic environments have changed little since Leslie and Gappa’s beginning research of part-time faculty in 1982 (Merriam, 2010). Much of their research developed in the 1990’s and 2000’s, and continues today. However, most of their research has focused on contingent faculty at community colleges through both qualitative and quantitative research, which has not yet gotten to the core of faculty perception through their own description (Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Meixner, 2010). While Leslie and Gappa note the discrepancies that exist between contingent faculty and full-time faculty, their research hasn’t yet fully developed contingent faculty’s voice with regard to their own experiences at a small, four-year, private liberal arts institution (Gappa, 2008).

A qualitative study at a single institution will aid in eliminating any confusion of what other institution’s contingent faculty may be experiencing, and instead illustrate specifically what contingent faculty are experiencing at their own place of employment. It is important to recognize that part-time faculty come from various backgrounds and institutions. Therefore, a flexible set of institutional support systems-rewards, incentives and recognitions is needed to
account for such contingent faculty diversity while also addressing the individuality of institutions’ cultures, values, and missions (Gappa, 1993).

**Deficiencies in the Evidence**

The faculty job experience has received little regard from administrator, policymakers, and higher-education scholars, and little empirical research still exists today (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Feldman & Turnley, 2004). Until the 1980’s, contingent employees were often branded the missing persons of organizational research (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). Despite Gappa and Leslie’s (1993) ground-breaking research, much of the research on contingent faculty has been conducted within the past 10 years. Recent studies within the past decade have just begun the process of exploring contingent faculty working conditions in relation to the resources provided them to perform their jobs. As Meixner et al. (2010) suggests, most of the research on contingent faculty has been quantitatively focused through surveys and questionnaires with gaps in understanding contingent faculty needs, interests, and experiences. Few studies have covered the cultural fabric—the values, norms, and underlying assumptions that contingent faculty experience at their individual institutions through their voice (Kezar & Sam, 2013). The need for more qualitative studies that reflect contingent faculty’s voice is essential in understanding contingent faculty as their numbers continue to grow and play an integral role at their institutions. While there has been some argument that institutional policies for contingent faculty must improve, there remains a lack of research on the subject, and institutional environments for contingent faculty remains unexplored, undisputed and unchanged (Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Kezar & Sam, 2013).
Relating the Discussion to Audiences

As numbers indicate, contingent faculty hiring is growing, and therefore, institutions and their various internal and external communities and stakeholders need to understand and care about contingent faculty experiences (Maldonado & Riman, 2009). Contingent faculty make up 42.7% of all faculty at private institutions (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Exploration of an individual, private institution’s contingent faculty will provide the chance to better understand contingent faculty experiences at a private institution and how contingent faculty perceive their role and support systems within their own institutional community (Smith, 2007). This is important as it takes away the ability to generalize all contingent faculty as experiencing the same issues at various institutions. Instead, specific study of one institution will account for the distinctiveness and uniqueness in understanding an institution’s own cultural fabric. Such will allow the institution the prospect of opening-up connections to better understand their own contingent faculty. In turn, the institution will perhaps extend their capability in delivering a more beneficial education because they are able to provide their contingent faculty with support systems that aid in helping to execute valuable curriculums specific to their mission.

A qualitative study at a single institution provides increased understanding of contingent faculty’s institutional support through their various experiences that are specific to the institution’s cultural values and norms. By focusing on a single institution, experiences are not simplified, but instead, focused and comprehensive on the particular institutional support systems and relationships most important to contingent faculty at their institution. Such research provides an opportunity for an institution to build strong relationships with their contingent faculty community which may also offer the chance to provide students with a more valuable education (Modarelli, 2006). Further, understanding contingent faculty experiences could
perhaps assert recommendations and further exploratory research of what is needed for contingent faculty support and institutional success (Meixner et al., 2010; Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

**Significance of Research Problem**

Although research on contingent faculty working conditions and job satisfaction began in the late 1970’s and early eighties, today, the research remains vague at dissecting contingent faculty’s own perceptions of what they are experiencing at their individual workplace (Umbach, 2007). Much of the research classifies faculty as a generalizable, homogenous group, and most institutions treat all contingent faculty alike (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2012; Gappa, 1993; Umbach, 2007). As such, research suggests institutions often fall short in supporting their contingent faculty by assuming all contingent faculty identify and connect with their institutions in the same way (Arsdale, 1978; Hoyt, 2012). Various institutions act as unique “labor markets” and yet, if stakeholders in higher education could distinguish the differences in experiences and perceptions between contingent faculty at different institutions, much could be learned in order to improve contingent faculty’s connection to their specific institution (Conley & Leslie, 2002). Exploration of contingent faculty experiences at their individual institution will provide stories of rich dialogue that will address issues beyond compensation to interpersonal relationships within the contingent faculty member’s place of employment. Therefore, a study that focuses on one specific institution will answer precisely what support systems are in place that encourage or discourage their contingent faculty from making a deep connection with their institution (Arsdale, 1978).
Positionality Statement

During my graduate studies, one of my Graduate Communication professors, who would later become a mentor, approached me about teaching at the collegiate level. She felt my writing, critical and analytical thinking and presentations skills were strong. So, she invited me to teach one of her feminist seminar courses to nineteen female freshman. I recall leading a discussion topic on MTV music videos and their depiction of women as overly sexualized and objectified possessions. It was during that teaching session I realized I actually enjoyed what I was doing. For the first time in five years since earning my bachelor’s degree in Business Administration with a minor in Marketing and Corporate Communication, a two-year job as a financial advisor for Quick and Reilly Investments, and a career as an Account Executive at CBS radio, I had found “my calling.” After graduating with my Master’s in Public Relations and Advertising in December 2007, I began applying for contingent faculty positions around the Boston area to teach in spring 2008. I’ll never forget the day I sent my CV to a small liberal arts college in the surrounding Boston area, as my life forever changed. The new founding Chair of the Communication Department invited me for an interview the following day. As the saying goes, “the rest is history.” I was hired to teach my very first two, paying college courses, Communication Law and Professional Communication.

This small, yet momentous step on my journey, led me to teach as a contingent faculty member for the next three years at four prestigious colleges/universities around Boston. It was during that time that my passion for teaching became a realization and my goal became to teach full-time. As a former contingent faculty and current full-time faculty member, many conversations about offering more contingent faculty support have been fleeting. Based on my experience, there have been indications of a devaluation of contingent faculty which creates a
low sense of job security, and necessitates additional exploration. I desired to earn the benefits not only in pay, but in reputation, of being considered more than contingent faculty. I use the term “more than” contingent faculty because I was subject to certain stigmas and assumptions at all schools I was employed—that contingent faculty didn’t work as hard or do as much for the institution as full-time faculty members, and often, that they didn’t have as meaningful a credential as the Ph.D.. Contingent faculty were treated differently than full-time faculty, and often, provided fewer resources, and much lower pay despite being required to successfully meet institutional outcomes and student needs. Through my teaching experiences, I witnessed apparent inequities in the employment and expectations of contingent faculty versus the support and compensation they received. It seemed an incredible impossibility for one to be able to transition from a contingent faculty member to a full-time faculty member. Not only are jobs few, but erasing the mindset of administrators and full-time faculty of being just “part-time” can prove daunting. However, by spring 2011, after many obstacles, such as agreeing to finish a doctorate, I was hired full-time as an Assistant Communication Professor.

I realize my experiences such as lower pay, lack of inclusion in department meetings and job security as a former contingent faculty member, will present bias. Those experiences of feeling vulnerable and exploited have led me to want to study this topic further in the first place. For example, as a contingent faculty member I had to teach at least 4-5 classes per semester often at three different institutions, to be able to afford to live. At the time, the current institution under study was paying me $2,200 per course. Yet, I felt I was contributing to the overall success of my students and the institution, and quite frankly, was doing just a good a job as full-time faculty members, and therefore deserved higher pay. However, the low pay made me feel that I was not as important, less worthy than faculty who were earning much more. I too, was putting time and
energy in to my teaching, meeting with students regularly outside of class, and spending hours developing my curriculum, and grading. Further, it wasn’t only the pay, I would often notice that contingent faculty were not asked, and I later found out, not really allowed, to join any faculty committees. It’s as if our voice didn’t matter, like we were invisible as Gappa (1993) believes. Contingent faculty had to deliver all the same responsibilities inside the classroom as a full-time faculty member, such as good teaching and timely grading, yet we were not being provided the resources such as professional development workshops and inclusion in department meetings to become more effective and efficient at our jobs. I will never forget when I asked where my office would be and I was directed to a tiny common office for all contingent faculty. It was on the lower level basement of the library in a corner across from student restrooms. At that point, I knew contingent faculty were marginalized, exploited, and vulnerable. From day one on my journey as a contingent faculty member, I knew I wanted to be a voice for a population that was more valuable than the resources they were being given.

**Research Question**

- What are the experiences of contingent faculty at a private, liberal arts college?

**Sub Question**

- How does contingent faculty at a private, liberal arts college perceive their institutional support from both the institution and through interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members?

**Theoretical Framework**

**Social Exchange Theory**

Social exchange theory (SET) suggests “that individuals form relationships with those who can provide valued resources. In exchange for these resources individuals will reciprocate..."
by providing resources and support” (Umbach, 2007, p. 93). Further, individuals who feel supported and rewarded will have greater commitment to an organization (Umbach, 2007). As Homans (1982) argued, social exchange will not likely continue unless each party rewards the other. Social exchange happens under two provisions: there is a goal to meet an end through social interaction with other people, and means must be adapted to foster achievement of such ends (Blau, 1964). One can think of these provisions with contingent faculty having the end goal of providing students with a sound learning experience through their teaching, thus the social interaction lying between contingent faculty and their students. Further, contingent faculty may adapt their teaching methods and style, thus their means of teaching, to achieve valuable learning experiences for their diverse student populations. Additionally, the provisions can also be applied more broadly between contingent faculty and their institutions. Institutions have an end goal of hiring contingent faculty to teach a course start to finish through social interactions with many vested parties. Moreover, institutions have a responsibility to adapt their employment policies and practices (means) to aid in contingent faculty support systems that explicitly define contingent faculty job roles, sustain contingent faculty employment, and help contingent faculty provide a valuable education to students.

Social exchange is voluntary for individuals, and as Gouldner (1964) believed, the “starting mechanism” for such exchange was the reciprocity of such rewards so as to continue to receive them (Blau, 1964, p. 92). Reciprocity is ambiguous; it relies on exchanges being dependent on the actions and behaviors of the participants, as well as the cultural values of the members, within an exchange (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). However, Blau argued (1964) that the “starting mechanism” for exchange is not reciprocity, but in the existential conditions of exchange, it focuses beyond economic exchange (p. 92). Instead, exchange is innate, and the
reciprocity of benefits is merely a check-and-balance system to put individual interests aside, and instead reinforce collective group bargaining for group social norms (Blau, 1964). Further, the exchange may not always be known in advance and the nature of the return is often left up to the discretion of the one who makes it (Blau, 1964). These ideas can be applied to contingent faculty at higher education institutions. Contingent faculty voluntarily teach, and so, they give their time, energy and knowledge, in exchange for the resources, both extrinsic, for example pay, and intrinsic, like collegiality, that their institution provides. However, contingent faculty are expected to follow group norms that match their individual institution’s culture of how contingent faculty should behave with regard to their job roles. Yet, those contingent faculty that feel they are not supported nor provided adequate resources for their teaching, will most likely be less committed to their institutions and their students. The return on investment for contingent faculty lies in the hands of those with power within their institutional domains such as administration and full-time faculty, who may govern the types of exchange and the degree of reciprocity given (Blau, 1964).

Social exchange expands beyond economic exchange and looks at feelings such as trust, obligation, and gratitude (Blau, 1964). In contrast to economic commodities, the benefits of social exchange are sometimes unspecified and not able to be quantitatively measured (Blau, 1964). Rules of exchange are governed by the participants with more power in an exchange relationship (Blau, 196; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). There is value in both the extrinsic and intrinsic benefits, and the significance of both are rarely determined by one single factor although the interpersonal relationships between exchange partners influences both benefits (Blau, 1964). Social exchange relationships flourish when employers “take care of employees” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 882). Therefore, the only way to take care of employees is to
understand them. As such, the exploration of contingent faculty experiences will rely on Homans’ and Blau’s work by exploring individual contingent faculty experiences through their own perceptions of what extrinsic and intrinsic support systems exist in being a contingent faculty member at their individual institution. Social exchange theory will help discover whether the exchange for reciprocity between contingent faculty and their institution is equally valued and supported, if contingent faculty and their institution are equally committed to providing a mutually beneficial relationship, and how relationships and power influence exchanges between participants.
Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review explains the reasons for contingent faculty hiring and growth, contingent faculty’s institutional experiences, perception by administration and full-time faculty of contingent faculty, contingent faculty impact on students and their institution (quality of teaching), and the need for a qualitative research study that focuses on contingent faculty’s voice as a means to providing understanding of contingent faculty experiences that will benefit contingent faculty’s institutional support (Dedman & Pearch, 2004; Waltman et al., 2012).

There is not a consistent definition for contingent faculty (Merriam, 2010). For purposes of this paper, contingent faculty are labeled as those that have less than a full-time teaching loads and who are compensated at a rate below that of full-time faculty members (Wallin, 2004). Presently, more than half of all instructional staff in higher education have temporary appointments (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Between 1992 and 2002 the number of contingent faculty employment grew 79 percent in higher education (Merriam, 2010).

In previous years, adjuncts had been defined by their career objectives and working conditions (Merriam, 2010). There were seven categories of adjunct faculty created by Tuckman and Tuckman (1981) that were later revisited by Gappa and Leslie (1993) and broken down into four groups based on experience, motivation, and engagement (as cited in Merriam, 2010). Tuckman’s “full mooners,” those that held another job and worked at least 35 hours per week made up the largest percentage of contingent faculty (Merriam, 2010, p. 18). Further, Leslie and Gappa (1993) discovered that over half of all contingent faculty are employed full-time beyond their academic work, and are most suitable to be classified as “specialist, expert, or professional” (as cited in Merriam, 2010, p. 19). The remaining classifications are “career-enders-” those that...
cut-back on their full-time work, “freelancers-” those who choose to combine two or more part-time jobs based on their needs, and “hopeful full-timers-” those who wish to eventually have a full-time job in academia (Merriam, 2010, p. 20).

**Reasons for Contingent Faculty Hiring & Growth**

An institution’s employment of contingent faculty depends on its response to both internal and external factors affecting an institution, as well as the individual institution’s circumstances, values, and cultures unique to an institution (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). However, there are some core reasons, both internal and external, that drive contingent faculty hiring across varied institutions (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Employment of contingent faculty has become more complex in a time of organizational downsizing and job uncertainty (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Colleges and universities have sought revenues from tuition and fees, grants and contracts, and endowments and auxiliary enterprise, all while trying to remain efficient during changing times (Liu & Zhang, 2007). In turn, colleges have implemented more business-style strategies to survive during such market changes (Liu & Zhang, 2007).

**Internal Educational Reasons for Contingent Faculty Hiring**

**Lower Financial Risk and Flexibility in Hiring Contingent Faculty**

Contingent faculty hiring allows institutions flexibility in meeting external demands (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Waltman et al., 2012). Non-tenure track faculty length of contracts varies across institutions, but the most common length across all institutions is one year (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). First, institutions can hire several contingent faculty for the same amount of money it costs to hire one full-time faculty member (Waltman et al., 2012). Second, even though enrollment numbers are on the rise, departments only have room for a certain number of full-time faculty (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). Therefore, hiring contingent faculty
allows for more classes to be taught to meet the needs of expanding classrooms (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). Third, the use of contingent faculty members is increasing at research universities as they minimize full-time faculty’s teaching loads in order for them to publish more work and teach graduate courses over lower level courses (Halcrow & Olson, 2008; Waltman et al., 2012). Both former reasons help control full-time faculty’s work load (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Further, at times contingent faculty may be asked to teach experimental classes rather than start a new program because contingent faculty are a lower-cost financial risk than starting a new program (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Tenure

There has been a loss of trust by the public in the return on value in the investment for a college education (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Spiraling tuition costs, and the perception that faculty often pursue their own research rather than teaching, have placed both higher education and the tenure-system in a state of question (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Many feel tenure allows faculty members to be invincible without any room for challenge to be able to question whether a tenured-faculty member is doing quality work (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Further, such tenure restricts the ability of an institution to increase flexibility financially, and in personnel if needed (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

External Educational Reasons for Contingent Faculty Hiring

Rising Retirement Ages

In 1994 the amendment to relinquish a mandatory retirement age through the Age and Discrimination in Employment Act allowed tenured faculty to continue employment beyond age 70. Many contingent faculty work beyond the age of 70 as there is no mandatory retirement age (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). The mean age of professors at public and private institutions is
48.6 (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). In turn, institutions are unable to free up money to recruit new faculty. Further, there are more faculty that are coming out of Ph.D. programs, and so, there are more candidates earning their Ph.D.’s than there are jobs (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). In 1997 at the meeting of the *American Historical Association*, faculty job openings increased by 23.5 percent, yet there were 777 applicants at the conference against only 220 open positions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

**Lack of Government Support**

Decreases in financial government support have affected institutional operations through such measures as hiring freezes of full-time faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

**Technology, Communication, and On-line Education**

Introduction of new technologies required that institutions make investments in technology products, systems, building infrastructures, and personnel to teach and manage such adaptations (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). However, investments in technology decreased investments in full-time faculty salaries (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Such changes were seen in increases in competition through new communication and institutional technologies magnified by “convenience institutions” like *University of Phoenix*, that rely heavily on technology by serving student populations that aren’t interested in a liberal arts education and instead are profit-driven institutions that are afraid to lock-up money through full-time or tenure-track faculty hiring (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, p. 21). Changing market requirements and demographics of student populations have called for a flexible contingent faculty that can meet demands such as niche teaching-the evening and summer course, the mid-career-refreshers, the non-degree programs, that tenure-track faculty in traditional fields cannot adapt to (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).
Specialized Disciplines and Changing Student Populations

There is a movement from traditional disciplines to specialized disciplines within higher education. Contingent faculty bring a wealth of expertise and professional knowledge to teaching within new areas of specialization (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Waltman et al., 2012, p. 413). Traditional disciplines have been challenged because of changing demands and new styles of diverse student populations (Gappa & Leslie, 1993; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Therefore, nontraditional student enrollment numbers have been on the rise (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Nontraditional students are more likely to drop-in and drop-out of college, which makes hiring of contingent faculty appealing to institutions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). For the past twenty years, half of the added students at higher education institutions have been 25 years or older (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

A 1997 study found that 75 percent of traditional students need more remedial or developmental education assistance than before (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). As such, traditional faculty often cannot or choose not to be able to provide extra assistance to those students (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Such reasons call for institutions to hire more contingent faculty who often have years of part-time teaching experience at various colleges and universities which transfers to competence in the classroom and student tutoring (Gappa & Leslie, 1993).

Connections to the Community

Contingent faculty also have connections to the community, and are on the forefront of knowing about new technologies, ideas, and practices within their respective fields (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). They offer institutions the opportunity to minimize risk by being a small monetary investment and require less commitment from the institution, yet, they have the knowledge to
provide quality education (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Further, financial constraints have put pressure on university and college full-time faculty to develop relationships with external communities through entrepreneurial activities that could help support the institution through funding, but this takes time away from full-time faculty teaching (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005).

There is little doubt that with college enrollments increasing, employment of contingent faculty will increase too. Growing internal and external demands such as changing market conditions and student populations, and financial constraints, have intensified institutional demands to expand their contingent faculty use (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Contingent faculty are often required to have the same job duties, skills, and performance objectives of full-time faculty (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Such complexity within contingent faculty positions help institutions achieve flexibility and reduce constraints from internal labor markets, however, at the cost of contingent faculty job security, less favorable working conditions, and little opportunity to advance (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Therefore, contingent faculty can be viewed as unimportant academic workers in core positions that are treated more inferior than their tenure counterparts by not being given the same access to institutional support systems (Liu & Zhang, 2007).

**Contingent Faculty Experiences**

Contingent faculty are often in a less favorable positions than their tenure-eligible colleagues (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Baldwin & Chronister (2001) illustrated five themes that emerged from dialogue between two non-tenure-track faculty, but can reasonably be applied to most contingent faculty experiences. Themes are as follows: (a) full-time non-tenure track faculty will continue to thrive to meet the demands of a complex, dynamic society, (b) faculty on term contracts are in a less favorable situation than tenured faculty, (c) non-tenured faculty are often treated as easily replaceable short-term solutions, (d) few institutions have spent the time
and energy on figuring out systems that work for positively influencing contingent faculty experiences, and (e) a quality higher education is influenced by non-tenure track faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). However, despite the positive influence contingent faculty have on institutions, few institutions have spent the time defining and executing sufficient policies and practices that clearly define roles for and support contingent faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Literature suggests that contingent faculty need to feel a part of the intellectual life of the campus and have an active role in governance (Green, 2007). However, many contingent faculty are considered the “invisible faculty” (Christensen, 2008, p. 32; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). Contingent faculty members, even if representing a majority at an institution, often receive very little support under poorly defined policies (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). They often have no power which leads to frustration and discontent (Wallin, 2004). Contingent faculty face the frustrations of lack of respect from other full-time faculty and administrators, lack of inclusion in governance, and short terms of employment (Waltman et al., 2012). Further, three themes voiced by contingent faculty as concerns with their working conditions are: receiving outreach, navigating challenges, and developing skills (Meixner et al., 2010).

The problem uncovered in most contingent faculty research offers that institutions often neglect contingent faculty (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). For example, reports of non-tenured faculty as saying, “no one with tenure would ever do what we do,” and another, “we do not have the same kind of voice. We have a lower voice,” confirm such neglect (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, pp. 56, 59). Not only can contingent faculty be considered a neglected majority, but an excluded majority (Dedman & Pearch, 2004). For instance, meetings often run at times that contingent faculty can’t make it (Dedman & Pearch, 2004). Overall work environments for contingent faculty tend to be negative with overt evidence of hierarchical influence on contingent faculty-
such as exclusion from curriculum input or subtler instances—such as not being listed on department websites (Kezar & Sam, 2013).

Contingent faculty typically teach six courses per year across different universities with an average pay of $2,500 per course (Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006). As such, compensation for contingent faculty has become a controversial issue. Some argue that contingent faculty do not have the same responsibilities as full-time faculty such as meetings and student advising nor the education credentials and teaching experience of full-time faculty, so their pay is commensurate with their responsibilities and experience. On the other hand, other researchers argue that contingent faculty teach the same students and material as full-time faculty members and represent a valuable resource for students. Therefore, they should be granted equal pay. Contingent faculty salaries are 25% to 35% less than full-time faculty and often remain fixed, while full-time faculty salaries increase annually (Christensen, 2008). In turn, lower pay can cause an environment of hostility between full-time members earning more than their contingent counterparts, as well as lead to the exploitation of the contingent faculty workforce (Christensen, 2008). Such low pay and no benefits makes personal survival difficult for contingent faculty (Morton, 2012). Yet, although pay is low, contingent faculty numbers continue to thrive with some sense of belonging and community (Morton, 2012). Contingent faculty view themselves as contributors in providing quality education to students which gives them a sense of belonging within an institutional community (Morton, 2012). Some contingent faculty teach for the extra money, some teach for the pure love of teaching and the satisfaction in giving back to the community and future generations, and some teach with the hope they will be hired full-time (Green, 2007; Morton 2012).
Social Identity Theory

Organizational Belongingness

Organizational identification, an individual’s sense of belongingness, is a much more powerful predictor of job satisfaction over pay (Merriam, 2010). There is a need for significant interpersonal and social relationships in the workplace (Merriam, 2010). Accordingly, a need to belong is vital in inspiring human purpose (Merriam, 2010). People need to feel a part of something in order to reject loneliness (Merriam, 2010). Social identity within the theory is defined as “…that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group or groups together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Merriam, 2010, p. 28). Organizational belongingness considers the individual members of the organization to be involved in all opportunities available to all members of the organization (Merriam, 2010). Inequities in power, opportunity, development and participation can stifle organizational belongingness (Merriam, 2010). Individuals think they have meaning to their organizations if they know their roles and if they feel their contributions are valuable to an organization’s success (Merriam, 2010). If individuals identify as an effective and supported member of their organizational community, then Social Identity Theory posits that the organization itself highly influences an individual’s sense of belonging (Merriam, 2010). Further, individuals define themselves based on their terms of memberships and whether their decisions are based on the good of the organization (Merriam, 2010).

Organizational Commitment

Previous research on commitment targeted areas related to job persistence, absenteeism, and performance, however, current studies include feelings of worth, gratification with
organizational affiliation, involvement, and synchronization with organizational goals on commitment research (Merriam, 2010). There are two sides of organizational commitment: (a) calculated commitment-commitment is a function of the rewards and costs of being an organizational member, and (b) attitudinal commitment-when individuals have a stake with and make an effort toward organizational goals and values (Merriam, 2010). Attitudinal commitment is less tangible, and more likely to be seen with contingent faculty, because calculated commitment deals more with financial line items (Merriam, 2010). Affective commitment is one of the constructs under attitudinal commitment, which contends that employees who are affectively committed to an organization stay with an organization because they choose to do so (Merriam, 2010).

Higher education institutions that include, reward, and value contingent faculty contributions are more likely to have contingent faculty who will increasingly develop strong emotional ties to the institution (Merriam, 2010). Further, contingent faculty will be more likely to take on tasks that are relative to institutional goals rather than individual interests (Merriam, 2010). If contingent faculty identify with their institution, their sense of belonging increases, and if contingent faculty feel like they belong, they are able to identify with their institution more (Merriam, 2010). For example, fairness as a policy and practice are two support systems that could increase a sense of belongingness for contingent faculty (Merriam, 2010).

Contingent Faculty Motivations

Relative Deprivation Theory

Feldman and Turnley (2004) sought to conduct some of the first empirical research that went beyond criticism of hegemonic discourse and negative consequences in becoming a contingent faculty member, and instead, utilized Relative Deprivation Theory to explain
contingent faculty motivations in being contingent faculty. For example, why contingent faculty do what they do, and outcomes—what contingent faculty receive/expect/feel, in being contingent faculty members in their higher education communities (Feldman & Turnley, 2004). Relative Deprivation Theory is broken down as such: wanting x and deserving x (Feldman & Turnley, 2004). “The greater the discrepancy between present job conditions and desired job conditions (that is, the greater relative deprivation), the more negative adjunct faculty’s attitudes will be” (Feldman & Turnley, 2004, p. 286). Interestingly, the theory does not solely focus on objective rewards of contingent faculty, but instead, explores contingent faculty working conditions with relation to jobs they currently hold versus jobs they currently desire (Feldman & Turnley, 2004).

Demographic characteristics, such as age, serve as standards of comparison used to assess job quality and motivations for accepting contingent employment, and are factors that have been considered when assessing reactions to part-time and temporary work (Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Feldman & Turnley 2004). In a series of studies, Feldman and his colleagues believed that not only do differences exist between contingent and full-time employees, but among contingent employees themselves (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). These notions are similar to Umbach’s (2007) argument that contingent faculty should not be illustrated as a homogenous group.

Although the development of part-time faculty reactions to contingent employment through Relative Deprivation Theory has only been quantitatively studied, it offers the opportunity to better understand contingent faculty’s own meaning of their workplace conditions and job satisfaction (Feldman & Turnley, 2004). Such research has led higher education institutions to position themselves to better grasp the working relationships between contingent faculty and permanent employees (Feldman & Turnley, 2004). In addition, how such
relationships may influence contingent faculty’s outlook on their working conditions and job satisfaction (Feldman & Turnley, 2004).

**Contingent Faculty Job Satisfaction**

**Motivator Hygiene Theory**

Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels have not changed much for contingent faculty over the past twenty years (Waltman et al., 2012). Although there has been a significant amount of research using Herzberg’s Motivator-Hygiene Theory in the business sector, little research has been done that specifically relates to contingent faculty and job satisfaction (Tomanek, 2010). However, what little research has been done has implemented Herzberg’s model when studying the dilemmas of part-timers in higher education (Hoyt et al., 2008). “Herzberg’s two-factor theory identifies motivator factors that intrinsically motivate and satisfy workers and hygiene factors that extrinsically bring dissatisfaction to employees” (Hoyt et al., 2008, p. 28). As such, both quantitative and qualitative studies have focused on job satisfaction levels using Frederick Herzberg’s 1960’s motivator-hygiene model to measure satisfaction and dissatisfaction levels which revealed a need for a modified theory on job satisfaction to be created for non-tenure-track faculty (Hoyt et al., 2008; Waltman, 2012). Both methods proved to be significant in studying contingent faculty job satisfaction, but qualitative research has offered a richer understanding of lived experiences of contingent faculty. Similarly, both types of studies revealed the lack of a consistent definition of what constitutes a contingent faculty member.

**Job Preference Influence on Contingent Faculty Work Attitudes**

Maynard and Joseph (2008) studied faculty status preference influence on job satisfaction and institutional commitment. They investigated the job attitudes of full-time faculty compared to contingent faculty (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Looking at a single institution they measured
whether contingent faculty prefer their current status or would rather hold a full time position, thus testing how work status preference influences the relationship between faculty and status and satisfaction (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Further, their investigation examined underemployment and person-job fit for contingent faculty. Maynard and Joseph (2008) broke down underemployment into five dimensions: (a) more education than required by the job, (b) involuntary employment in a field outside of area of education, (c) more skills or experience than required by the job, (d) involuntary employment in part-time, temporary, or intermittent work, and (e) low pay, relative to previous jobs or others with similar education backgrounds (p. 141). Their results concluded that contingent faculty were more dissatisfied with advancement, compensation, and job security compared to full-time faculty members, but were satisfied with other aspects of their job (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Further, satisfaction levels of voluntary contingent faculty were in fact similar to full-time faculty compared to part-timers who desired full-time employment (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Status alone does not determine satisfaction, but rather preferred employment situation is a stronger predictor (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Interestingly, the practices above of compensation, advancement, and job security prove to be enduring policies that must change no matter if a contingent faculty member is voluntary or involuntary (Maynard & Joseph, 2008).

Voluntary vs. Involuntary Employment

Other research has found that 97% of contingent faculty members at a university were satisfied with their job, a higher percentage than the national 91% (Hoyt et al., 2008). Three sources of satisfaction for contingent faculty are scheduling flexibility, social contact with colleagues, and job autonomy and challenge (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). However, studies have revealed that academic support and recognition are lacking at universities (Hoyt et al., 2008).
Further, only 38% of contingent faculty agree that full-time faculty take an interest in their success as teachers, and only 32% agree that they are recognized for their teaching contribution (Hoyt et al., 2008). When measuring voluntary and involuntary employment a case can be made for institutions to provide ongoing professional development, training, and support to contingent faculty (Hoyt et al., 2008). For example, classes that list the contingent faculty name instead of TBD, name plaques outside a contingent faculty’s office, and inclusion in award ceremonies are uncomplicated approaches in improving contingent faculty retention, appreciation, and morale (Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006). Moreover, many contingent faculty want to be given opportunities to work with full-time faculty so they could improve their teaching techniques in the classroom (Hoyt et al., 2008). Contingent faculty are an integral piece to the teaching and learning at colleges and universities and therefore, should be supported (Hoyt et al., 2008).

**Career Stage**

Career stage is defined as “the commonalities of job experiences of workers at the same point in their careers” (Feldman & Turnley, 2001, p. 3). As such, there may be some expectation of unhappiness that contingent faculty feel, but the levels of unhappiness depend on their career stage (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). As such, Feldman and Turnley (2001) asked several open-ended questions to contingent faculty, such as “what type of impact do you think working as a contingent employee is likely to have on your career and what could your current organization or supervisors do to make this type of employment more productive and satisfying” (p. 5)? Their study revealed contingent faculty dissatisfaction with lack of advancement opportunities and job security, poor supervision, poor fringe benefits, low pay, and being treated like a “second-class citizen” (Feldman & Turnley, 2001, pp. 7-8). Some contingent faculty have been teaching part-time for years with the endless hope of one day getting hired full-time (Feldman & Turnley,
2001). However, late-career contingent faculty have more positive attitudes than early-career contingent faculty (Feldman & Turnley, 2001).

**Administration Reasons for Hiring and Perceptions of Contingent Faculty**

Higher education faculty have become more diverse (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Institutions have grown increasingly complex with different missions, cultures, resources, and priorities (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Faculty members no longer include the traditional male, but both females and males of varied ethnic backgrounds (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Today faculty members must balance both their complex professional and personal lives (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005).

Contingent faculty responsibilities are vast. Responsibilities include maintaining an institution’s growth, student advancement, and paying their own bills. Deans and chairs at many institutions hire non-tenure track faculty to fill specific roles and responsibilities they consider unworthy for tenure-track faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Moreover, many administrators see contingent faculty as replaceable (Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaroe, 2005). Research suggests that administrators are often more concerned with how contingent faculty can support the college, rather than how they can support contingent faculty (Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaroe, 2005). Furthermore, many administrators use contingent faculty as a means to lower costs and increase flexibility (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaroe, 2005). For example, a senior administrator stated contingent faculty provide a “safe zone” for faculty staffing during enrollment declines and execution of new programs (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, 35). Further, administrators see contingent faculty as a way to maintain budgetary efficiency because they often carry heavier teaching loads compared to tenure-track faculty at lower costs (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).
Contingent faculty play a central role in undergraduate education, yet, teaching is not as high a priority in most higher education institutions (Mazurek, 2012; Umbach, 2007). Such dichotomy presents a problem when selling an institution to prospective parents and students on their value, but not supporting the people who give such value (Mazurek, 2012). As such, because the contingent faculty workforce has grown in recent years, teaching cannot continue to be seen as a line-item on which universities do not spend any investment (Mazurek, 2012). The opportunity for contingent faculty appointments as almost appealing puts more pressure on institutions to understand what their contingent faculty are experiencing and how they view their institutional support as their hiring becomes more widespread (Baldwin & Wawrzyncki, 2011).

Contingent employment is not necessarily short-lived; yet, of the thousands of part-time faculty members, the average salary in 2010 was $2,700 per course (Mazurek, 2012). As Gappa et al. (2005) note, a rethinking and restructuring of institutions to meet contingent faculty demands must be put in place. The reality of faculty life can often conflict with the interests and goals of diverse contingent faculty (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). There are five essential elements of academic work that are interpreted differently: employment equity, academic freedom, balance and flexibility, professional growth, and collegiality and community involvement (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). In turn, understanding the individual experiences of contingent faculty and how they view their individual institutional support systems can help higher education institutions more fully understand how the five essential elements of academic work are impacted by the specific measures they are employing. Faculty members drive the quality of education at institutions (Gappa et al., 2005). This belief emphasizes the need to understand contingent faculty experiences and how they perceive their institutional support systems.
Contingent faculty are used as “scapegoats” in higher education (Dedman & Pearch, 2004, p. 28). “If administrators are concerned about how to serve their community and improve the lives of students, it is logical that they would make every effort to develop and support each faculty member, at least for the good of the community” (Wagoner, Metcalfe, & Olaroe, 2005, p. 37). Contingent faculty would feel less disconnect and marginalization if other members of their institution took time to engage with them even if for a brief period (Meixner et al., 2010).

**Contingent Faculty Instruction, Commitment and Impact on the Institution**

**Instruction**

Past studies have revealed that contingent faculty feel their most positive aspects to contingent faculty employment are the work itself, the relationship with students, and flexibility (Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Waltman et al., 2012). However, research suggests that compared to full-time faculty, contingent faculty interact less frequently with students, spend less time preparing for classes, and have lower expectations of their students (Umbach, 2007). Considering contingent faculty play a central role in undergraduate education, it is important to examine the impact that contingent faculty have on the institution, instructional quality, and their commitment to teaching (Umbach, 2007). So far, literature that has examined the teaching practices of contingent faculty has been difficult to interpret because it depicts a complex and contradictory picture (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Some studies have found relatively little difference between contingent and full-time faculty teaching practices and student grades, while other studies have illustrated contrasting differences between the two (Merriam, 2010).

Instructional quality variables of active leaning, preparing well-rounded citizens, and diversity experiences do not differ greatly between the type of institution and proportion of part-time faculty versus full-time faculty at a college or university (Umbach, 2007). However, a
straight comparison of part-time faculty instruction versus full-time faculty instruction has showed that part-time faculty do place less of an emphasis on those three variables compared to full-time faculty (Umbach, 2007). Compared to their tenure-track peers, contingent faculty underperform in their delivery of undergraduate instruction (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Further, differences between contingent faculty ranks have come up in research. Emphasis on the need to understand how teaching and learning processes vary across disciplines is important because instructors in different fields think of knowledge in different ways (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). For example, Baldwin and Wawrzynski (2011) used Holland’s Theory to explain that certain personality types and environments influence proper protocol and human behavior. Their study found that part-time contingent faculty are far less inclined to use subject and learning-centered teaching strategies than tenure-track faculty (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Moreover, their study revealed the greatest teaching differences exist between part-time contingent faculty, and full-time contingent faculty and tenure track faculty in the disciplines that focused on the arts, investigation, social, and realistic environments (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Their results stress the differences between part-time contingent faculty teaching and other faculty, as well as an approach that supports effective teaching through professional development opportunities that do not assume all faculty to be the same (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011).

Some research argues that contingent faculty rely heavily on student evaluations, therefore, creating grade inflation (Kirk & Spector, 2009). On the other hand, other research disputes such claims that final grades assigned by contingent faculty do not differ significantly from grades assigned by full-time faculty teaching the same course (Kirk & Spector, 2009). Further, while some researchers have hypothesized that the achievement of students taught by
contingent faculty does not differ from the achievement of students taught by full–time instructors, study results have yielded staggering numbers that have proved otherwise (Kirk & Spector, 2009). It has been found that contingent faculty assign higher grades than full-time faculty, and that there is a relationship between student performance and faculty status (Kirk & Spector, 2009). Students ranked lower in performance when taught by contingent faculty (Kirk & Spector, 2009). An introductory required course taught by contingent faculty has a greater chance of first-year college students dropping out (Merriam, 2010). Although all types of faculty are evaluated by students, Baldwin and Chronister (2001) found that many non-tenure track faculty had concerns in the evaluation criteria being used and the placement of too much power in the students’ hands. Yet, many contingent faculty wish to be evaluated in the same manner as tenure-track faculty so they are not perceived as “second-class” (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, p. 63).

**Commitment**

There is danger in creating a bifurcated system of the tenured “haves” and the part-time “have-nots” which can leave many contingent faculty feeling a lack of motivation to implement creative pedagogy (Halcrow & Olson, 2008, p. 4). Furthermore, because contingent faculty receive such low pay, they often teach many courses at a number of institutions which can hurt teaching quality because of the sheer number of students (Halcrow & Olson, 2008). Such circumstances cause contingent faculty to be less available to students because of the immense effort of getting from campus to campus (Dedman & Pearch, 2004). Such lack of availability of contingent faculty impacts the quality of academic programs, specifically, faculty-student relationships, and collegiality (Merriam, 2010). There is a significant difference in fulltime faculty’s preparation for class and attendance of teaching workshops against contingent faculty
(Umbach, 2007). Indication that full-time faculty are more committed to teaching compared to contingent faculty overall and across various colleges and universities is evident (Umbach, 2007). However, the higher the proportion of contingent faculty to full-time faculty, the less time full-time faculty spend on class preparation (Umbach, 2007). Further, private institutions’ contingent faculty spent less time preparing for class compared to public school contingent faculty (Umbach, 2007).

**Impact on Institution**

Umbach’s (2007) evidence suggests, through social exchange theory, that the more invested an institution is in their contingent faculty through institutional support, the more support contingent faculty will give back to their institutional community. Further, there are implications on an institution in hiring contingent faculty (Umbach, 2007). Institutions must consider ways to positively impact contingent faculty through support structures if they feel contingent faculty have a responsibility to be as committed to their teaching as their full-time peers (Umbach, 2007). On the other hand, if institutions feel contingent faculty should not be as committed, such can have an effect on undergraduates, as contingent faculty will not feel as represented or important to their full-time counterparts (Umbach, 2007).

There are discrepancies between studies of contingent faculty impact on teacher preparation, contingent faculty commitment to instruction and their institutions, student retention, achievement, graduation rates, and satisfaction (Meixner et al., 2010; Umbach, 2007). Some research findings point to a negative relationship between contingent faculty and student outcomes, while others find little impact of contingent faculty on student outcomes (Meixner, 2010). Such contradictions demand that more robust studies of contingent faculty experiences are needed (Meixner et al., 2010).
Contingent faculty are the only ones who can impact an institution to adopt change beyond mobilization (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Up to this point, contingent faculty have focused on narrow goals of pay and benefits, rather than deeper issues such as climate and inclusion (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Contingent faculty have yet to focus on how their responsibilities contribute to the teaching and learning environment of their institutions (Kezar & Sam, 2013).

Contingent Faculty Resolutions

Within the past decade, studies have highlighted initiatives by institutions to make the necessary changes to aid in their contingent faculty’s success (Maynard & Joseph, 2008). Measures such as: socialization, compensation, inclusion in faculty governance and professional and curriculum development, recognition, and administrative and technical support are a few support practices that institutions could exercise for contingent faculty (Fagan-Wilen et al., 2006; Kezar & Sam, 2013).

Professional Development

Contingent faculty who feel ill-supported and undervalued will not perform as effectively (Milliken & Jugens, 2008). Contingent faculty are often unaware of professional development training opportunities, and they report a need for institutional support (Milliken and Jugens, 2008). Their most desired resources are an increase in pay and to receive benefits. Institutions must recognize that pay states worth (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). Consequently, institutions and administrators may not be able to execute every support system needed, but it is worth fixing the problematic practices to ensure the institutions’ longevity, and the students’ success both in and out of the classroom (Milliken & Jugens, 2008).

The probability for professional development is limited for contingent faculty (Wallin, 2004). Professional development is defined as “those processes and activities designed to
enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students…” (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). The needs of contingent faculty are not significantly different from full-time faculty’s (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). Therefore, such programs as a comprehensive orientation, mentoring, and contingent faculty recognition are three ways to improve opportunities for professional development (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). A comprehensive orientation assists contingent faculty in becoming comfortable with the college and mission, as well as prepares them to succeed in the classroom (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). Often contingent faculty are hired at the last minute and given only a calendar to follow (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). Instead, advanced notice of teaching assignments would allow contingent faculty to get more organized and feel better prepared to teach (Feldman & Turnley, 2001). Orientation programs would provide a sense of security and belongingness for new hires (Wallin, 2004). Furthermore, systematic mentoring from a tenured or full-time faculty member would provide adequate guidance and support for contingent faculty to improve instructional quality (Zeigler & Reiff, 2006). Systematic mentoring requires effort beyond the transmission of information and policies and focuses on developing a reciprocal relationship of purpose and interaction (Zeigler & Reiff, 2006). Benefits of mentoring such as building community foster bonds that strengthen teaching, learning, and productivity (Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Morton, 2012).

**Inclusion**

If nothing else, there should be mandatory contingent faculty meetings in which a contingent faculty committee schedules a time that works for everyone, as well as mandatory department meetings with both full-time and contingent faculty (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006). Such meetings could help strengthen collaboration between tenure-track and contingent faculty, and help eliminate preconceived notions between them (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006). Further, improved
information sharing is vital in keeping contingent faculty in the “loop” and in providing academic support to improve classroom teaching (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006). Time given to integration will help further consistency in the classroom and amongst departments in meeting goals and agendas (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). Socialization creates the opportunity for contingent faculty to understand the mission of the college, culture of the department, and a shared vision of the future (Pearch & Marutz, 2005). For example, some colleges, arrange for a dean or department chair to work late one evening a week and rotate the evening in order to maintain contact with contingent faculty members. A liaison could provide contingent faculty inclusion in major speakers, presentations, and special events on campus (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006). Further, administrators must ask if there is a way an institution can divert funds from another source, structure a graduated pay scale, or extend lower cost benefits to contingent faculty (Wallin, 2004). This ensures that contingent faculty can have faith that their voice will be heard (Pearch & Marutz, 2005).

**Institutionalization**

Higher education institutions must remain relevant by rethinking organization structure and the academic career by supporting all types of faculty in their varied roles, as well as revisiting the past relationships between faculty members and their institutions (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). “One of the most significant way to create sustainable change is to reshape the underlying values and norms of the institution” (Kezar & Sam, 2013, p. 58). Once the intellectual contributions of contingent faculty members are realized by institutions, improvement will ensue (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Faculty members determine the quality of an institution, and therefore, administrators and faculty members must make a commitment to work together in an environment of respect and equity (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). Instead
of a “one-size-fits-all” model, a culture of collegiality and professional growth will ensure a shift in the right direction to a deeper understanding of the institutional mission and the faculty that carry such mission out (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005, p. 36). A fragmentary approach will not provide long-term commitments in dealing with the instrumental forces in academic workplaces, a newly diverse faculty, and societal expectations about balancing work and domestic responsibilities (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). However, change can be part of a three-stage process under institutionalization (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Institutionalization refers to the policies and practices that are part of underlying assumptions or norms that become engrained in the culture of an institution (Kezar & Sam, 2013). The three-stage process consists of: mobilization-preparing for change, implementation-change is introduced, and institutionalization-the system is successfully functioning in its changed state (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Such change occurs through strong leadership at all levels within in an institution (Kezar & Sam, 2013). However, while most colleges and universities can move through the process of mobilization, some stall during the implementation phase for such reasons as getting trapped in long-term discussion (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Establishing an action plan and definitive rational for change help institutions make the commitment to changing policies and practices (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Further, the challenge in contingent faculty mobilization occurs because of the “divisions among faculty, the unwillingness of the administration to change the status quo, the isolation of continent faculty, and the reluctance of contingent faculty to get involved due to issues such as heavy workloads, isolation, or even apathy” (Kezar & Sam, 2013, p. 81).

**Research Studies and Framings**

In their book, *The Invisible Faculty: improving the status of part-timers* (1993), Gappa and Leslie question hegemonic discourse when referencing contingent faculty, and look to
empower the disenfranchised group through a critical perspective. Their research sought to explain the reason behind diminishing full-time and tenure-track faculty, and the perpetuation of contingent faculty assumptions by others (Leslie & Gappa, 2002; Gappa, 2008). Gappa and Leslie are influential because they began the process of focusing on contingent faculty and their relationship to the institution in which they are employed, as well as the institution’s policies and practices which affect such relationships. Further, they have also studied management practices with regard to such contingent faculty matters (Gappa, 2000; Gappa, 2008).

Leslie and Gappa’s research set the tone for institutions to look at other models that would reject the pervasive status differentials among different faculty (Gappa, 2002). However, most of their research targets “the proliferation of labels,” and marginalization of contingent faculty by tenured faculty, rather than, contingent faculty’s own perceptions of their lived-experiences such as how they view their institutional support systems (Gappa, 2008, p. 51).

Like Leslie and Gappa, other monumental researchers, such as Wallin (2004) and Hoyt et al. (2008), too focus on the need of institutions to value contingent faculty, but they take their research a step further by stating the implications of doing such.

The non-tenure faculty “issue is emerging within the larger context of questions about the academic tenure system, which has structured faculty careers and academic employment practices for nearly a century” (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001, p. 9). Baldwin and Chronister’s (2001) research, in their book, *Teaching without tenure: Policies and practices for a new era*, are part of a select few whose recent work takes an in-depth look at non-tenure track faculty experiences through semi-structured interviews. Their attempt to describe the range of positions and professional experiences that non-tenure faculty have at various institutions across the country, and to expose the superficiality and inaccurate efforts that have been made at
representing non-tenure track faculty are valuable (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Their research reveals who non-tenure track faculty are, clarifies the roles they play in higher education, and names policies and practices that can support non-tenure track faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001).

Much of the research on contingent faculty stresses on use of contingent faculty, professional development opportunities, and full-time faculty perceptions of contingent faculty through academic hierarchy models that illustrate current contingent faculty status (Tomanek, 2010; Wallin, 2004). Very few studies incorporate contingent faculty voices (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Contingent faculty research lacks the in-depth point-of-views of contingent faculty experiences, and often uses analysis of information from such educational entities as U.S. Department of Education, and anecdotal stories or secondary sources to examine contingent faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2013; Tomanek, 2010; Wallin 2004). Exploring how contingent faculty view their institution, the roles they play within their institutions, and the significance of their institutional contributions are essential for any institution that employs contingent faculty (Tomanek, 2010). However, such exploration is complexly rooted in social processes between contingent faculty and the dynamics of social interaction both individually and within groups at their institutions (Blau, 1960). Research that moves beyond job satisfaction of contingent faculty to the “processes of exchange,” may help both contingent faculty and their institutions make a commitment to each other that would mutually benefit each party (Blau, 1960, p. 545; Umbach, 2007). “Processes of social association can be conceptualized following Homans’ lead as an exchange of activity, tangible or intangible, and more or less rewarding or costly, between at least two persons” (Blau, 1964, p. 88). Further, such social processes of exchange can be in
material goods, but also non-material goods, such as the symbols of approval or prestige (Homans, 1958).

Differences between full-time and contingent faculty members are difficult to label because of the diversity of contingent faculty motivations (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005; Wagoner, 2007). Depending on how the researcher/s conduct their study questions, part-timers either seem satisfied with their job, vulnerable and disenfranchised, or somewhere in the middle (Wagoner, 2007; Waltman et al., 2012). For many, such conclusions produce a confusing picture of contingent faculty experiences, and, as a result, call for more concrete studies of the contingent faculty profession (Wagoner, 2007). Most of the literature on contingent faculty has been written by part-time or full-time faculty with a focus on community colleges. Instead, a qualitative study that focuses on an individual institution’s own contingent faculty will allow for those contingent faculty participants to express their experiences specific to their institution (Meixner et al., 2010)

Summation

As contingent faculty hiring continues to rise in all academic areas nationally and internationally, this analysis of the literature, illustrates the need for executable strategies and solutions that advocate for institutions to develop committed models and/or programs that better and more fully support and promote contingent faculty (Milliken & Jurgens, 2008). A qualitative research study that asks open-ended questions to contingent faculty will point to specific recommendations that will make contingent faculty working conditions more suitable for contingent faculty in achieving success at both the institutional and personal levels. Such a study will provide concrete solutions to changing institution policies and practices toward contingent faculty by painting a clearer, more concise picture of what contingent faculty truly value to feel
part of an institution’s success and overall culture (Dedman & Pearch, 2004). Contingent faculty’s voice will allow for institutions to incorporate the use of contingent faculty into their strategic plans, thus allowing for institutions “…to seek mutual benefit in employing contingent faculty…” (Dedman & Pearch, 2004, p. 29). As such, contingent faculty will feel more supported and integrated into the system, and full-time faculty can focus on other job requirements (Milliken & Jurgens, 2008). At a time when many are questioning the value of a college education due to rising costs and a lagging economy, such findings will prove imperative for both contingent faculty and institutions in achieving their mission (Dedman & Pearch, 2004).
Chapter III: Research Design

Methodology:

The researcher followed an interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) through a qualitative study that explored experiences of four individual contingent faculty at a small, private liberal arts college. The following research and sub question drove the study:

Research Question

- What are the experiences of contingent faculty at a private, liberal arts college?

Sub Question

- How does contingent faculty at a private, liberal arts college view their institutional support from both the institution and through interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members?

Research Design

An IPA approach through a qualitative study allowed participants the opportunity to speak candidly and specifically through subjective reflection, and the researcher, the opportunity to capture the sense-making of the participants’ experiences through her writing (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, qualitative research gave contingent faculty the opportunity to identify similar lived-experiences by collectively sharing their “stories” of institutional experiences through their own voice (Creswell, 2013). The role of the researcher is to allow the participant to step outside of their everyday experiences and instead, encourage more profound descriptions of their experiences through their own complex nuances of sense- and meaning-making (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Advantages

Reflective storytelling of contingent faculty’s particular individual experiences gave
meaning to their experiences within their consciousness (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). An IPA approach offered great flexibility in analysis of individual contingent faculty discourse and allowed for sensitivity to context (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, an IPA approach focused on process and quality, and the research benefited from such concentrated focus because the sensitivity to the specificity underlied the general (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). While some contingent faculty may have similar experiences across varied institutions one cannot assume all contingent faculty share the same experiences, and research must account for nuances exclusive to the institution.

**Disadvantages**

It is difficult to define what interpretation is, how the interpretation process works, and how to assess the validity of interpretation within qualitative research (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009). There is not a reasonable amount of research on contingent faculty experiences at a private, liberal arts college that may be used to examine common features and variations across samples. Therefore, while this research may prove groundbreaking, it will also be demanding and incapable of making wider claims on the phenomenology of contingent faculty (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

**Research Tradition**

IPA has a theoretical obligation to the participant by connecting people’s talk and their thinking and their emotional state through the understanding of the participant as a cognitive, linguistic, affective, and physical being (Smith & Osborn, 2007). An interpretative phenomenological approach (IPA) helped the researcher explore the experiences of individual contingent faculty participants in their own terms while also being able to connect their understandings to mainstream psychology (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The approach
utilized a smaller sample size to be able to understand the essential qualities of the institutional experiences for each contingent faculty participant through their own inward awareness of conscious storytelling (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, an IPA approach values a small study of contingent faculty at one institution because the detail of the individual brings us closer to meaningful qualities of the general (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009, p. 32). Stories of reflectivity help us explore deeper into the individual which can take us closer to the universal through similar experiences one may not otherwise have known on the surface (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Smith, Flowers, Larkin, 2009).

A interpretative phenomenological approach examines the reflections of significance in the individual contingent faculty’s experiences and the essence, as Husserl believes, of how contingent faculty interpret their own endeavors through a lens of subjective perception (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, Husserl, who was critical of science’s privileged claims, argued for a series of reductions that aim at getting at the essence of the participants own perceptions versus the distractions of assumptions and preconceptions of the researcher (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Unlike Husserl, who believed one needed to disengage from the world and activity in order to experience consciousness of something, Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty believed one need to engage and communicate with the world in order for one to contextualize a perspective on a particular area of the world (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Heidegger doesn’t question the existence of world as Husserl, but instead the significance of the world to the individual (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Similarly, Merleau-Ponty emphasizes both the physical and perceptual relationships of the body with the world in shaping one’s wholeness and uniqueness of knowing (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, he argues each individual’s experiences are unique to that individual and can never be shared with another (Smith, Flowers,
& Larkin, 2009). Relatedly, Sartre, further develops Heidegger’s and Merleau-Ponty’s theories of existential phenomenology that one must exist first before meaning-making can happen (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). An IPA approach developed in response to a need for research to go beyond philosophical reflection (Dowling, 2007). The approach emphasizes reflexivity and considers a “human science perspective of inter-subjectivity methodologically, as well as philosophy” (Dowling, 2007, p. 137).

The process of interpreting one’s experiences, hermeneutics, happens both by the participant and the researcher (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). As discussed above, all theorists further developed the idea of meaning-making and all of their ideas can be applied to the research being conducted. Both Schleiermacher and Heidegger understand the ability of the researcher’s writing in influencing the interpretation of how one comes to understand a participant’s experience (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Like Heidegger, Schleiermacher notes the impossibility of complete bracketing, and something that can only partially be achieved, however, Schleiermacher also notes how the principles and outlooks of one’s own linguistic community can manipulate the appearance of participant’s language (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 22). Such philosophies take on the social constructivist strand of qualitative research (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

**Participants**

The population interviewed included four contingent faculty members who are currently employed at a private, liberal arts college in the northeastern United States. The participants all currently teach undergraduate students, with two participants teaching both undergraduate and graduate students face-to-face at the specific institution being studied. All have taught for at least one, consecutive academic year in a face-to-face setting at the specific institution being studied.
They may teach at other institutions which employ traditional, hybrid, and/or online courses, and they may hold another job. The participants came from varied disciplines. Contingent faculty were purposefully selected by the researcher through referral or a general email (see Appendix A) to contingent faculty at the institution being studied (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). This small sample size allowed for expressive points of similarity and difference between participants, but not so much that one is overwhelmed (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 51).

**Recruitment and Access**

Participants were recruited by referral and/or an email from the researcher through the college listserv (see Appendix A). The researcher has access to the site via it is her organization in which she is employed. The researcher followed the institution's proper protocol for conducting research at the institution by meeting with all personnel that handle the overseeing of the research process. She also submitted her IRB proposal to her institution’s campus committee review board to ensure that she followed proper protocol in protecting her participants. Participants signed a consent form to participate in the study and to protect their names through use of a pseudonym, and for the researcher to use verbatim extracts, as well as oral consent when emerging sensitive voices arise (see Appendix B) (Smith & Osborn, 2007).

**Data Collection**

After the selection of four contingent faculty participants was made through purposeful sampling, the researcher began conducting one-on-one open-ended, semi-structured interviews at a setting the participants chose (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Open-ended, semi-structured interviews endorsed the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussion that empowered concealed meanings in narrative which aided in the sense-making process of individual contingent faculty experiences (Maggs-Rapport, 2000.) Interviewing at least four contingent faculty members
opened the possibility to understanding their communicative action and “essence of the phenomena” of being a contingent faculty member at their specific institution (Creswell, 2013; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The researcher employed interview questions that were open-ended (see Appendix C) based on the flow of the conversation, allowing contingent faculty sample participants to reflect on their individual institutional experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Further, interview structures and schedules were used flexibly, which aided in the individual experiences of the participants to guide where the interview went instead of having interview questions dictate the researcher’s ability to give a detailed narrative through analytic interpretation of participant meaning (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The researcher gained knowledge through “first-hand” information and focused on conveying the participants’ meanings through engaging discussion and emerging themes, while recognizing how her own background as a former contingent faculty member influenced the interpretation of data (Creswell, 2013, p. 20; Dowling, 2007).

First, data was collected from the one-on-one interviews through the researcher’s own spontaneous note-taking, as well as recording the interview via a tape recorder upon participant agreement (Creswell, 2013; Smith & Osborn, 2008). The researcher’s own handwritten field notes and a tape recorder provided descriptive and reflection of individual contingent faculty participant experiences (Creswell, 2013).

The researcher started with the broadest interview question to engage the participant in the subject (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Moving from general to specific questions helped the interviewer establish rapport with the participant, and gently ease the participant in to more specific experiences (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Interview questions were based on the direction of each participant’s own stories. The researcher acted as a facilitator during the interview process
and was able to adapt her questions according to how the interview was taking shape (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The interviewer used minimal probes and closely monitored the nonverbal body language of each participant to minimize any uncomfortableness (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Each participant had one interview over the course of one month, each interview lasted up to two hours long (120 minutes). However, one participant had two interviews as he wanted to clarify and give more detail about his experiences after his first interview was concluded. Despite my individual experiences, I strove to check my bias by asking open-ended interview questions that did not lead the participants to my own conclusions, but their own. I do realize that as a former contingent faculty member, I had both similar and dissimilar contingent faculty experiences from the participants.

**Data Management & Storage**

First, data was managed by creating a master list of the types of information gathered during the research study (Creswell, 2013). Second, a visual chart helped group specific information together in order to make it easier for the researcher to locate and identify the information (Creswell, 2013). The participants were made aware of confidentiality agreements verbally and in the consent form (see Appendix B). To assure confidentiality, all data has been kept in personal files (USB drive) and on a personal computer that requires a password known only to the researcher, (Butin, 2010). Further, all hand-written, paper-formatted and audio data has been secured in a locked file cabinet off-site from where the research was conducted. The researcher is the only person to have access to the file cabinet. However, a transcriptionist was also used to transcribe the data. Only the researcher and the transcriptionist have access to the data in their own separate secure files. The transcriptionist signed a confidentiality agreement to protect the confidentiality of the participants (see Appendix D). Anonymity of participants' is
critical to participant confidentiality and participation by using pseudonyms during any written and recorded material (Butin, 2010). The researcher followed "observation protocol" in recording information and consciously being aware of the role of "reflexivity" and reflectivity the participants brought to the research (Creswell, 2013, p. 169). Information will only be disclosed by request/permission of the participant. Data and documents, both electronic and written will be kept for an unspecified time in a locked file cabinet, and on password protected electronic mediums only available to the researcher. Data will not be destroyed at a specific time as the researcher will use it for further research, journal articles, lectures, conferences, and books.

**Data Analysis Process Overview**

“At the stage of data analysis the researcher looks for some sort of order in the organization of the topics under study. To analyze data, the researcher moves back and forth” (Maggs-Rapport, 2000, p. 220). First, the researcher checked the data for validity. Validity will was marked, as Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Maggs-Rapport, 2000) believe, by “prolonged engagement…” (p. 220). The researcher did not negate the data by forcing all data to match-up, but instead exhibited a critical approach when interpreting various literature and studies (Butin, 2010). The researcher sought to eliminate any potential threats to internal validity such as convenience sampling, forced interactions, and other biases that may exist with “backyard research” (Butin, 2010) by addressing such limitations in the methodology, and by following IRB protocol and the researcher’s institution’s protocol (p. 107).

Data was analyzed through a step-by-step approach (Smith & Osborn, 2008). First, the researcher read and engaged with the transcript a number of times. The left-hand margin of the transcript served as a place to make associations, connections, and paraphrase any text that is striking (Smith & Osborn, 2008). A free-text analysis helped to amplify what the participants
were saying (Smith & Osborn, 2008). After the text was re-read a number of times, the researcher then used the right-hand margin of the transcript to look at emerging themes closely. The themes were then listed chronologically and similar themes are clustered together and the clusters were given a name. Clustering helped assure the researcher was checking her own sense-making of what the participant said versus what the participant actually said (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Identifiers were then added to help easily locate key themes in the transcript (Smith & Osborn, 2008). Transcripts of each participant were treated separately, but concise phrases in each transcript were used to mark theoretical connections and differences across each participant’s experiences, while still focusing on the specificity of each individual’s response (Smith & Osborn, 2008). A final table of superordinate themes highlighted the themes by their richness and illumination of contingent faculty experiences, not by their occurrence (Smith & Osborn, 2008). The table served as the basis for an expansive narrative argument intertwined with verbatim extracts that will were separated in to a findings and discussion section (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

As Caelli (as cited in Maggs-Rapport, 2000) notes, an IPA approach offers researchers the opportunity to paint thoughtful, reflective, and previously interpreted descriptions of experiences on a broader canvas than traditional phenomenology provides. Benner (as cited in Maggs-Rapport, 2000) furthers such reflection by noting the constant moving back-and-forth of the research between the foreground and background, situations, and the practical world of the participants and researcher. The IPA process develops through fore-understanding, interrogation and reflection (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). The researcher begins with some knowledge and interest on their topic, analyzes texts for similarities and differences in themes, and interprets the text while still providing as much detail as possible (Maggs-Rapport, 2000).
Trustworthiness

The researcher built trust by working for extended periods of time with the participants through interviews (Maggs-Rapport, 2000). Trustworthiness and validity of a study stemmed from the researcher compiling “bits and pieces of evidence to formulate a compelling whole” (Creswell, 2013, p. 246). It was important for the researcher to focus both on ethical and substantive validation. Not only understanding the ethical implications of a study, but also, understanding one’s own topic, self-reflecting on the purpose of the work, was critical (Creswell, 2013). As Thomas (2006) believes, peer debriefings, and stakeholder and member checks will provide consistency and confirmation of the dependability and credibility of the study.

Central to building trust with contingent faculty was the researcher’s own experiences as a former contingent faculty member, which she shared with current contingent faculty participants for the study. Such past experiences led the researcher to clarify any researcher bias by noting her past experience as a contingent faculty member in the limitations section of her study (Creswell, 2013). Her exposure to working conditions during her tenure as a contingent faculty member had the potential to impact the interpretation of data if she did not recognize the influences of her past.

The researcher extracted feedback on her research from her peers, and through member checking, once the data was analyzed. Rich, thick description provided details of contingent faculty sense-making of their experiences at their institution of employment through prolonged discussions and observation. One-on-one interviews created the possibility of such description to emerge through inspirational story-telling. Credibility and trustworthiness was heightened by the large amounts of data collected from in-depth interviews (Saldana, 2013).
Chapter IV: Research Findings

Overview

The purpose of this research was to explore contingent faculty experiences at a single four-year, private, liberal arts college. The hope was to understand the experiences of contingent faculty and their perceptions of institutional support and interpersonal relationships within their institutional community. Four contingent faculty members, three female, one male, were interviewed. All participants had to have currently been teaching at the institution studied, and for at least two consecutive semesters. Two participants are members of the communication department, one is both a member of the communication and business management departments, and one is a member of the management department. All participants’ names will remain anonymous to protect their confidentiality, and instead will be identified by pseudonyms. All participants teach face-to-face in the undergraduate program, while two teach in both the undergraduate and graduate program through online, hybrid, and face-to-face courses. Three out of four participants were interviewed one time, up to 120-minutes, while one participant was interviewed twice for a total of 137-minutes for additional questions and further descriptive clarification to responses. Interviews were conducted at all different locations throughout the greater Boston area at the participant’s location of choice. All interviews started with the same protocol, however, interview questions were used flexibly, and the questions and order of questions were based on participant responses.

All four of the contingent faculty interviewed came from different backgrounds and had earned various degrees. They had different motivations for becoming involved as contingent faculty members. Further, two out of four contingent faculty interviewed teach as their only source of income. Contingent faculty participants’ current employment, background, motivations
for teaching, length of time teaching, courses taught, self-perception of teaching style, and the role they play in a student’s learning experience are as follows:

**James:** Male, 62 years-old: MBA and Master of Science in Library and Information Science. He was laid off after over twenty-five years in the advertising sector, mostly project management-creative services. After being laid-off, he went back for his Master of Science degree, and began looking at library jobs which were few and far between because the economy was spiraling downward. A friend recommended he reach out for informational interviews with department chairs in higher education which ultimately earned him a job. He states laughingly, “I’m here, but I don’t know if I chose this.” He has taught at four institutions as a contingent faculty member, but is currently only teaching at one institution for the past four years. Contingent faculty work is his only source of income even though he considers himself an artist, a photographer. Although, his “photography is not a money-maker right now.” Courses taught include various face-to-face, hybrid, and online communication and operations management courses for both undergraduates and graduates out of the communication and business management departments. His course load varies based on department needs, but he strives to teach the maximum 3 course allowance per semester. He considers himself a “jack of all trades,” but project and operations management are where most of his experience lies. He self-describes his teaching style as one who tends to play devil’s advocate through asking students questions. He considers himself a perfectionist, and states he is not “a down-to-earth, aw shucks type of guy,” and mockingly provides his mantra, “one doesn’t have fun, they teach.” He is a facilitator in the classroom who sometimes successfully and unsuccessfully tries to engage student interest through their own thinking by asking questions and providing material that may earn students’ attention. Further, he tries to impart his own experience and opinion to try to get students to
He concludes that “if they can think then they’ll be successful; think as in question, as in get out of the fact that they think they know everything and think, look at things from a new or a different or a sophisticated point-of-view.” He grades easily because he looks at effort as much as content and gives students the benefit of the doubt. However, he comments to the difficulty in engaging students when you don’t see them more than once or twice a week.

Marianne: Female, 51 years old: Earned a Master of Science in Communication, and worked as a full-time associate producer for a children’s television show for seventeen years at a major television broadcast network. Currently, she is a free-lance script-writer, and is only employed at one higher education institution, which she has been for the past five years. She didn’t end up in teaching on purpose, but instead, received an email blast from the communication department chair (unbeknownst to her how her email ended up in circulation) about needing a contingent faculty member to teach two classes two weeks before the start of the semester. She was the first to reply so she was granted the job. She states, “I was, it was like I cannot believe my dumb luck that they were screwed, they needed somebody within two weeks, and I was like hey! Professor, teaching, that just seemed really, really fun and a really, really big deal.” Courses she has taught and/or currently teaches face-to-face are Understanding Mass Media, Research Methods, and Human Communication, to undergraduates out of the Communication Department. Her course load typically remains constant with the maximum allowance of three course per semester. She tries to have fun when she teaches by incorporating interactive activities and by using “really dramatic examples and case studies, and things that like really make you go wow, really!” She self prescribes herself as being a little “irreverent,” and prone to using “dweeby, dorky things” like cats to personify concepts. She feels “it’s my job to find ways of relations that material to them and finding alternate ways to get that material in to them so they’ll remember it.” She
recognizes that students learn in all different ways. “There’s visual learners, there’s activity learners, there’s all kinds of learners and my job is take whatever it is that they need to know and find all these different ways to show it to them, and then to somehow come up with a number at the end of the semester that says how well they’ve learned it.” She further asserts that she needs to be able to entertain students to hold their attention to what she is covering because there are so many other distractions that could grab their attention. She describes that she is, “the entertainer and the translator because whatever the concept is, you can just read about it, but if someone can translate that into an activity into a game, into some other experience, if there are more experiences someone could use to get that concept towards you,” then you’ll understand the material better and be more apt to remember such material.

**Lauren:** Female, 28 years old: Earned a Master of Arts in Public Relations, and is employed at a large-tech company in Boston as a public relations manager. She has been a contingent faculty member for two years at a single institution. She earned her Master’s degree at the same institution where she teaches. As such, she served as a guest speaker for one of her professors during her Master’s program, who is now her mentor, and they recommended she should try contingent teaching since she enjoyed guest speaking. “It was a great program so I felt like I was able to make some great connections and like I sort-of was making a transition at that point from go-like broadcast background and then working into PR, so I was really transitioning.” Courses she has taught and/or currently teaches face-to-face are *Internship Seminar, Internship Field Experience*, and *Media Literacy* capstone course in the undergraduate program for the Communication Department and has taught both face-to-face and online. Her course-load varies each semester depending on her full-time job responsibilities and department need for her courses. Her teaching is influenced by using “examples or by doing or by having outside
influences come in to share experiences so that you know, they see what I mean and it’s not just me up there because sometimes [inaudible].” She creates an interactive environment of collaboration through sharing of experiences. Further, she views her role in the student’s learning experience as the provider of resources, avenue, or help they need to get to a certain place. She views herself as both a facilitator and mentor and measures her student’s growth and experience by whether they are ready for the professional world.

Janice: Female, 55 years old: Currently holds an Education Doctorate in Organizational Leadership and Communication and is employed as a contingent faculty member at two institutions, and teaching is her only source of income. Her background is in organizational learning and leadership communication studies where she previously trained sales people and created training materials for mid-to larger size corporations. She made the career switch from management roles within the business sector to academic because at the time she was “missing” the acknowledgment of her academic background and credentials of having an MBA. “It was just somewhere always within me that I really wanted to just be in an environment, an academic environment, so I slowly transitioned from one class at another institution to multiple classes.” The prestige of earning a doctorate degree in her future was the catalyst for her beginnings in teaching. By choice, she has since remained a contingent faculty member and has no plans to look for full-time work as she the responsibilities and flexibility fit-in with her personal scheduling needs for her family. She has been a contingent faculty member at various institutions for over 11 ½ years, and has currently been employed at the institution being studied for five years in the business department. She teaches the maximum three courses allowed for contingent faculty per semester at her institution. Courses taught focus on organizational behavior and theory, and she teaches face-to-face, hybrid, and online in both the undergraduate and graduate
programs. Her style is to build on her student’s learning development through interactive collaboration with her and other students in the class through group work. She is “always there kind-of to guide them to direct them reiterate, re-emphasize, you know direct them to what they need to elaborate on. She states that she “doesn’t want to live in a textbook,” therefore, she teaches the foundation concepts from the chapters in her book and based on her experiences, but also puts those concept into motion by using other sources such as social media. Her classes focus heavily on social responsibility within organizations and implements her idea of “institutional intervention-so that basically the students are given tools, they’re given information prior to class, but then they’re asked to come into the class and from a practical standpoint engage with one another in various types of activities, whether its group assignment, team assignments you know just in class, the use of social media, to engage their learning.” For example, she uses case study analyses to engage students in collaboration and she believes case studies, “forces the student to reflect back on the information that they’ve captured in class and their text, outside sources, and then be able to apply that when they analyze various cases that are applicable to the course, and so they’re not just emphasizing or focusing on memorization and/or how well they’ve retained certain data.”

While the contingent faculty interviewed have had unique and separate professional and social experiences both within and outside of contingent teaching, nine overarching themes emerged through the descriptive, lengthy discussions: defining contingent faculty by contingent faculty, contingent faculty perceptions of differences between full-time and contingent faculty, contingent faculty’s assessment of the institutional community’s lens, institutional investment in contingent faculty, institutional culture surrounding contingent faculty relationships and belongingness, evaluation/feedback, reliability of employment, contingent faculty definition of
job satisfaction and perception of job reward, and predating the future and institutional recommendations by contingent faculty. Interestingly, three out of the four contingent faculty had similar experiences and perceptions of institutional support, when associated as a whole group. However, Janice seemed to differ greatly in her experiences and perceptions of institutional support, and interpersonal relationships with her institutional community members compared to the other three contingent faculty members.

**Defining Contingent Faculty by Contingent Faculty**

**Self Definition**

The contingent faculty participants were asked to self-define contingent faculty. All participants were brief in their definitions which could partly indicate their distaste for how they are viewed and treated. Further, such terse definitions may account not only for how they define contingent faculty, but how institutional communities define contingent faculty, without much regard and detail to what they really do. James had a discouraging and dark definition of contingent faculty compared to Marianne, Lauren, and Janice who offered more generalized, overarching definitions that didn’t illustrate any specific detail of contingent faculty members. James bitterly defined contingent faculty as “invisibles who do the work.” However, when probed to expand his definition, he said, “a strict definition would be part-time, full, part-time contract faculty member without a contract, and that’s you know another thing, maybe back to security that there is no contract.” He followed his statement with the idea that if he were to walk out after a week on the job, he could do so legally, because there is no binding contract. He maintained he simply gets a letter in the mail when and what he is going to teach, and how much he is going to be paid. In turn, the other participants didn’t offer much insight in to what they do, and answered the question undistinguishably. Lauren felt that contingent faculty could best be
defined as those who have expertise in a specific background. On the other hand, Marianne defined contingent faculty as, “instructor, nothing more,” like Janice who saw contingent faculty as part-time instructors needed to teach where there is student overflow, etc.

**Contingent Faculty Perceptions of Differences between Full-time and Contingent Faculty**

Participants expressed differences, not including teaching, between full-time and contingent faculty. All of the participants willingly commented that full-time faculty have heavier workloads and more required institutional commitment, outside of teaching, that make-up their procedural responsibilities such as advising and participation in department meetings. Both James and Lauren found it difficult to describe any differences in detail because they felt they aren’t full-time faculty. However, after taking a few moments to contemplate their thoughts, they both agreeably, felt that full-time faculty may not offer as much professional experience and expertise as contingent faculty members. James believes, “I can impart to the student what it’s, what it’s really like out there, and yeah, then it’s people have been in the academic sector their whole careers, they’re [sic] obviously don’t have the experience and can’t do that.” Likewise, Janice felt some of the contingent faculty are more trained than full-time faculty who may just have Master’s degrees or those that haven’t been exposed to the field for a while. She judges, “I think the adjuncts are just as fully trained, if not more trained than some of the full time faculty members. There’s some faculty members here that are very gifted that have a Master’s degree, but over time they just understand the philosophy of the school and you know. There’s so much value to just practical experience.” Lauren took her opinion a step further by actually asking her own thought-provoking question, “I mean communication in general, all the field is constantly changing, so if I’m not immersed in it every day, like how do you keep up with it? I don’t know how a full-time person does, is it through, do they learn from other resources?” She then
answered her own question by stating conferences may be one way, but wasn’t certain.
Moreover, James and Lauren both concluded that full-time faculty members have more
pedagogical-teaching and research experience, and therefore, may be more well-rounded and
adept in their teaching instruction because they have access to such professional development
resources such as conferences. James calls attention to the fact he’s only been teaching for four
years in higher education. He also notes the possibility that lies in the dichotomy of full-time
faculty knowing they have a full-time job which gives some the comfort to do less, and some to
feel the responsibility to do more. He believes some full-time faculty may “coast,” some may
not, and that some full-time faculty may not be as “hungry” as a contract worker like himself.
James declares, “I do know that I think I’ve done things as, I’ve done things myself that I don’t
their full-time people normally do with students, meeting one-on-one , having Skype calls,
especially with students who are not American or from out of the country and they need extra
help. I don’t think any adjuncts do that; I don’t think may full-time people do that either.”
Moreover, he challenges that most contingent faculty are not as involved in institutional politics
as full-time faculty.

Marianne was the most passionate out of all the participants in her detail of differences
between full and contingent faculty. She did mention pay as a difference between full-time and
continent faculty, but more provocatively, brings issue to two concerns: her credentials, and a
full-time faculty member’s relationship to the college and students. First, she magnifies the
significance of the question and the intensity of her response by her disappointment in not ever
being able to become a full-time faculty member without a Ph.D. She shares how she had hoped
when she first got hired, and three years thereafter, that she could earn the opportunity to teach
full-time. However, once she realized that dream couldn’t come true without the Ph.D.
credential, it became her biggest frustration. “I’d have to say my biggest frustration with my statues as contingent faculty is that there is no way it will ever change.” She focuses on how she doesn’t place as much value on the Ph.D. and has heavy complaint that institutions make the Ph.D. the “relevant issue and not my success in the classroom.” She criticizes and disapproves of “overreliance on big data,” further explaining, “the percentage of faculty with Ph.D.’s is very easy to measure and compare across institutions. Learning is much harder to quantify and compare.” Second, she states her unwillingness to have and make as many relationships with the institution for such reasons as compensation and Ph.D. frustration, but also her unwillingness to do extra work for students such as writing recommendation letters because again, lack of compensation.

Strikingly, none of the participants saw a difference in their commitment to go above and beyond in their teaching effectiveness when compared to other competent, strong, and valued full-time faculty members. Janice stated, “I don’t see a difference between part-time and full-time faculty members who have similar degree credentials…just a matter of title and job opportunity.” It’s valuable to emphasize how she uses the word part-time even though when interviewed she was asked differences of full-time and contingent faculty. Earlier in the interview Janice drew attention to fact that she feels like more than an adjunct because of her investment in the institution and her chairperson’s respect of what she does. “Over time you almost feel like you’re just a part-time faculty member, that you’re not just an adjunct.” However, she later does reference procedural differences such as department meetings and advising which comparatively Lauren perceives as full-time faculty having more institutional commitment to be present.
Contingent Faculty’s Assessment of Institutional Community’s Lens

Full-time Faculty and Administration

James perceives himself as an “invisible” to full-time faculty and administration. He states that management “have their blinders on and see adjuncts as second-class.” He comments how he is not a “household name” and that administration only value full-time faculty. He receives very little effort to be included, and believes management lack vision to understand how contingent faculty have strength in numbers to make a positive difference in student experiences, to enrollment, etc. He divulges in the question by citing an advantage in flying under the radar and not being involved in the day-to-day operations and crazy organizational behavior. However, not having job security as a contingent faculty member means there’s the potential to not work, so he begins to question the difference in having such advantage. He further remarks to the possibility of competition between contingent faculty members and how that competition “keeps things close to the vest.” He thinks the institution has an expectation, or the perception, that he will do an “adequate job as an instructor because they’ve hired him.” He comments that he doesn’t get a lot of support, “other than the kind of support, which is providing work.”

Marianne, Lauren, and Janice all understand their expertise is being bought at a cheaper price. Lauren mockingly laughs, “I think there’s a fine line where we’re in a separate category and we’re thought of as you know, we’re thought of as you know, this is not very good to say, but we’re a cheaper commodity that they can use,” even though they are willing to make the time and commitment to delivering a similar product to that of full-time faculty. Janice, states that those who teach have graduate degrees so the institution is getting premier instructors for a “pretty low price,” and she begs the question, “why not?” Moreover, Marianne underlines how she is more self-conscious of the negative perceptions her institutional community may have of
her because contingent faculty has been such a pressing topic in recent higher education news, and also, that she doesn’t have a PhD. “I am way more self-conscious of this difference than I was when I stated teaching.” First, she feels the attention in the news has been good because an entire class of people has been taken advantage of, but it also draws more negative attention to the contingent faculty population. Second, her Ph.D. is the relevant issue to any negative perceptions, not her success in the classroom. She is vehemently upset when the topic of her credentials and not having her Ph.D. is explored. She tells the researcher, “do not to go there, do not piss me off by going there. I only have an MS and I will never, ever be full-time faculty.” She openly expresses her desire to have been a full-time faculty member because she really likes what she does, but denies that she will carry any hope of being such without her Ph.D.. She suspects that full-time faculty and administration see her simply as logistical in nature, she shows up, teaches, and leaves.

Janice observes that most institutional members are working toward common goals, but there are divides between departments and “who knows who” which is how she believes friendships and relationships are formed. However, in her day-to-day experiences she doesn’t feel any type of divide or disconnect from full-time faculty. “I’ve never been identified as the adjunct, and so, I feel like I’m part of the faculty.” Her background in business and academics has been welcomed as an asset in her department and she feels respected. Her chair, “especially emphasized the fact that I had an MBA, which would be a valuable tool and would allow me to teach. As a matter of fact, I started here teaching at the graduate level, but then asked if I could also teach in the undergraduate level and that was definitely not a problem and welcomes, and so that was it, I was basically hired soon after.”
Students

James, Lauren, and Marianne all comment that students have no idea to any of the differences that exists between full-time and contingent faculty. Contingent faculty are simply seen as the same as full-faculty in students’ eyes. As such, James feels “that’s how it should be and it shouldn’t be any different to them.” Marianne replies, “it’s a huge gulf on this side of the desk, and on the other side of the desk, completely useless.” She is describing here the differences between full-time and contingent faculty. She specifically names credentials and workload as differences that both full-time and contingent faculty are aware of. However, she expresses that when it comes down to the student’s perception they don’t even notice the difference in titles or job roles, it doesn’t even matter, they view full-time and contingent faculty as the same.

Institutional Investment in Contingent Faculty

All four participants extensively discussed the institution’s investment in contingent faculty. Four areas of importance to all the participants were professional development, resources for teaching, workspace, and financial compensation. Compellingly, all four participants agreed that some lack of institutional investment is also partly their responsibility for not asking for or actively seeking support in the area of professional development. As such, James and Marianne had more sarcastic, mocking, negative perceptions, and in their tone when speaking about institutional investment in contingent faculty compared to Lauren and Janice.

Professional Development and Resources

James felt that the institution does not invest in their contingent faculty. “The only way that I’m supported is I’m rehired. It’s not a lot of support other than that kind of support, which is providing work.” While he recognizes that he is “half-in and “half-out,” like most contingent
faculty, he has felt a sense of dissatisfaction with not being professionally supported. He states, “it’s a buyer’s market,” and institutions don’t have to invest because there are plenty of candidates out their competing for the same contingent faculty positions. He recognizes that persistence may pay-off for contingent faculty to be supported in some professional manner, but it will come with the price of being bounced around before one gets it. As a professional photographer, he individually sought an opportunity to showcase an exhibition of his photography work at one of the college’s art galleries. Yet, he felt the exhibition came at a poor time during the holidays, and that the staff for the gallery were not organized or helpful. However, he admits that he too doesn’t necessarily make the effort to get to know who he should contact regarding such possibilities of opportunity. Further, he finds the resources he needs to teach, such as technology, severely lacking compared to other higher education institutions he has been employed at. “I think you have an under-staffed type learning management technology group, basically two people whereas other schools which are obviously larger, but have you know scores and scores of people in that role assigned to you know, will have a learning technology specialist assigned to you as an adjunct and you work with them as long as you’re there with questions and you know they monitor you, so you know they have an organizational structure that allows them to set-up to do that and ultimately that’s to drive the students satisfaction, right?”

Although, their criticisms are different, both James and Marianne had negative perceptions of institutional investment in professional development and resources. James observes full-time faculty as the in-group just by being associated with a group and being in-touch. He believes full-time faculty are supported and invested in because they are very important to the departments. As noted, James felt that there wasn’t any institutional investment
for professional development and/or resources, while Marianne feels there may be some investment opportunity, and the college can be good at trying to offer opportunities, but it comes at a price that doesn’t compensate contingent faculty sufficiently, and takes advantage of contingent faculty’s time and energy. Marianne explains that she started out her contingent faculty career participating in separate initiatives, some paid, some not, such as a faculty ambassador for the college-wide online learning platform, assessing papers in the Communication Department and going to faculty meetings, but she felt like an “outsider.” She explains that much of the department wide initiatives don’t apply to her or relate to what she is doing. She states. “I’m just showing up and teaching a class.” Further, she explains that hardly any other contingent faculty attend such meetings, so she feels like a “little play professor in the context.” On the other hand, she does offer praise for the institution trying to offer professional development opportunities to contingent faculty. She’s appreciative there isn’t a distinction between who get to apply for such professional development opportunities, like grants. She does give credit to the value in attending professional development workshops after her first semester, which helped inspire her to become a more effective and engaging teacher.

Lauren recognizes that there may be some professional development opportunities for contingent faculty, but most of the communication for such opportunities comes through her email which she feels is already inundated with other emails from the college. Therefore, there may be times she deletes or simply can’t recognize such opportunities because of the email overload and lack of specificity to who the email is applicable to. “Sometimes there are so many emails that are not like applicable to me that I would be lying if I say I probably don’t miss some.” James also brings attention to the email overload and how he may miss certain opportunities for professional development. Lauren notes the lack of specificity in not solely
addressing adjuncts through email about professional development opportunities which makes it hard for her to sift such opportunities. However, Marianne emphasizes the positivity in not making a distinction in emails between full-time and contingent faculty who can apply for such development opportunities such as grants. Further, most of Lauren’s resources come from within her own network, and therefore, her outlook differs compared to James because she is not disappointed because her expectations aren’t “super high,” for professional development investment from the institution. She sees the institution as helping her because “they’re allowing me to do something that I enjoy and I’m able to do it and make some money and you know, teach along the way.” Similarly to James, she sates she could be more “proactive” in seeking out resources, but also believes resources aren’t in her face either.

Financial Compensation

Pay Per Course

James figures that his salary amounts to around fifty cents an hour based on a 3-course load whether teaching face-to-face or online. He feels he does very similar kinds of planning for a one student directed study graduate course, which he is paid $150, than he would for twenty students in a standard graduate course at $3,200 per course. Despite the fact he may do less grading for that one student, “thinking, and thinking about what the student needs to read and discuss and see in their assignments takes a good amount of time.” He has earned double-the pay of his current institution at former institutions as a contingent faculty member.

Marianne mentions that she has not taught at any other higher education institutions so, she feels the pay is not terrible compared to what she knows of other institutions. “Contingent teaching is a good adjunct to my other work.” She feels like what a contingent faculty member is supposed to be because of her work in the field and ability to contribute her knowledge by
teaching “a little bit to help out.” She works an average of 30 hours a week for a 3-course load, and requests teaching the same three classes each semester. She averages 20% of her time reinventing and updating for courses she may have already taught in a previous semester. She empathizes it takes her “a long time to prepare for lecture, to grade thoughtfully, and give thoughtful feedback.” Similarly, Janice believes she’s not necessarily underpaid at her current institution, but feels it is how it is across the board. For the size of school, she thinks the institution is within the average if not higher, and feels “pretty satisfied with that.” However, Lauren feels the pay is not great, but she has a full-time job to support her financially, and the contingent faculty pay is more supplemental income. She comments that if contingent teaching were her only job, “I think it’s fairly, really, it would be really, really difficult if not next to impossible,” to be able to survive financially. Her standard teaching week consists of an average of ten hours total of planning and grading for one course at $3,000 per course.

Janice declares she’s entitled to part of the institution’s retirement plan, and some insurance, which the other contingent faculty acknowledged they were not. However, she doesn’t take advantage of those incentives because her partner has better packages through his job. However, her biggest concern is that the 3-course limit for contingent faculty per semester. If she could teach 6 or 7 classes per semester at the current pay rate, “that would be fabulous,” and she would not see the pay as an issue. Teaching 6 or 7 classes per semester would give her the opportunity to earn closer to the salary of a full-time faculty member without having all of the other responsibilities. She argues that contingent faculty “should make more money given the level of education we bring to the table,” such as being a doctor. Further, she testifies that her job requires her to constantly stay abreast of all current events, trends, and latest social media. Aside from the teaching, she is consistently reading case studies, researching class topics, using such
platforms as YouTube or outside articles to advise students, meeting with students outside of class, working with students to collaborate, uploading assignments to the institution’s online platform, using appropriate learning activities in class, and assessing and grading assignments. Her average work week is 60 hours, and she takes her job “very seriously.” She also comments to the importance of teaching graduate students and the graduate program’s mission to meet certain accreditation standards. While she wishes she made more money for all the work she puts into it, she states she won’t “find that at any institution.” Therefore, unlike James, Marianne, and Lauren, Janice does not fault the institution for lack of pay, but instead, the culture of contingent faculty pay as a whole. She finds education as an important piece in today’s society, and believes the industry pay averages for contingent faculty don’t add up to that importance. Yet, she concludes, “all institutions work around the industry average, that’s just the way it goes, and so [name] doesn’t underpay. It’s just I wish overall in the industry, that across the board, given that your education is such an important piece, you know we’re educators and yet you know, you have other professions that are making more than a doctor who has a background, you know Ph.D. or Ed.D. and many years of experience. All that research and all that time you put into your course, because it’s not just teaching.”

Compensation for Participation in Institutional Initiatives

Marianne views her financial compensation per course not as alarmingly as her financial compensation to participate in other institutional initiatives. She believes that she is being taken advantage of for the $100 compensation to participate in such initiatives. The “little pittance” she might receive represents a “big gulf” between compensation of full-time and contingent faculty. Taking time to assess five paper thoughtfully, and/or go to department meetings is worth more time than $100. Contingent faculty are “being relied on for so much and their rate of
compensation is not comparable in any way…I feel like a prostitute.” She states, “I could be spending that time writing and getting paid more.” She reads many headlines of starving contingent faculty and it fuels her paranoia of asking herself am I one them-causing her to not want to show up at an event and “pretend” she’s faculty. Additionally, Lauren does not see the average $50 stipend of attending professional development opportunities worth her time and commitment if there is a chance she may not even get paid based on her previous experiences of missing compensation for participating in other institutional initiatives. Contrastingly, Janice reports the institution always has opportunities available for professional development, and contingent faculty are always included to participate or join. She tries to participate when offered, however, she often doesn’t seize the opportunities because she doesn’t have the time. “The stipends are usually not gigantic in terms of you know, what you receive and so, but that’s not the reason why I don’t attend. It’s more a time issue.” Though, she does participate in the yearly end-of-the-year training camps hosted by the Teaching and Learning Center which houses most of the technology workshops and the campus-wide online platform trainings for all faculty. However, she has never received a monetary incentive for attending such trainings. Yet, she has been asked to share her experiences with her colleagues on how she teaches and what has given her success in teaching within her classroom, which makes her feel valued, that her knowledge is important and matters, and outweighs receiving a stipend. She follows-up her response with it would “be nice if there was a stipend, but I don’t expect one.” Janice started and completed her doctoral studies as a contingent faculty member at the current institution being studied. She didn’t receive and financial support for her doctoral work nor did she “expect any.” “She wasn’t aware if there was any available, and she never sought after it.”
Missing Pay

All four agreed that there wasn’t any one person or body of governance they knew of that they could go to raise questions of concern, opportunity, or operational protocol. For example, James described how he is often bounced around from person-to-person, which takes up large amounts of time when trying to find the right person to speak with concerning missing pay. Both James and Lauren have had issues with receiving the correct amount of pay they’ve been owed for teaching. James notes there have been many times he was supposed to get a stipend for a directed study and wasn’t paid. He feels the institution is “particularly disorganized when it comes to operational stuff,” and “pay stubs are indecipherable.” He notes with so little face-to-face contact with, “the communication in general to the faculty from the administration from operations stinks.” He believes things don’t move as quickly in academia and it’s not as financially competitive as far as the bottom-line. Further, Lauren has been insufficiently paid for her courses as well. She was even told she wasn’t going to receive a stipend for a contingent faculty discussion she participated in because there was no record of her attendance, despite her signing an attendance sheet. She notes the back and forth and that the “administrative positions are just very disorganized.” “A lot of the practices are out of date,” and “you get answers, but they’re not always top-notch or top-tier.”

Workspace

James can get to campus within five minutes from his home so he doesn’t see a need to use the adjunct office or any other campus work space because it doesn’t offer him anything he doesn’t already have at home on his computer. Similarly, Lauren doesn’t really rely on the institution’s resources to aid in her teaching, other than a classroom to teach. She wasn’t even aware of where the contingent faculty office was located. She says she’d rather do her work, “on
her own time.” Unlike James and Lauren who seem comfortable using their own personal workspace, Marianne doesn’t not feel supported with having adequate workspace. “It feels really unprofessional and embarrassing,” because the contingent faculty space is “like a walk-in closet.” It has two desks and two computers on the third floor of the Communication Department, which is better than where it used to be in the basement of the library across from the bathrooms. However, there is no privacy if another contingent faculty members is using the space. Marianne shares, “if I need to have a meeting with a student who’s really upset about something, what if there’s somebody else there? It’s like, let’s go for a walk and like try to find a space in the library or something.”

Janice seems to weigh both sides around workspace. One of the reasons she chooses to be an adjunct is because of the flexibility, she can do a many work-related tasks from home, which she terms “telecommute.” She states, “I need the flexibility of being able to work on my assignments and on my research and creating and preparing my classes from my own home.” However, when she has shared office space with other contingent faculty she recounts times that it has been hard because often the space is small and they are sitting on top of one another. “That could sometimes be an issue, you know in close quarters, but I made the best use of it.” She gives students the opportunity to meet with her by phone up until midnight most nights because of privacy laws. She mentions circumstances that have arose when another adjunct may be having an hour-long discussion with a student in the contingent faculty office and it makes it difficult for her to prepare for her classes. Luckily, this past semester the class she taught wasn’t being used an hour before her class start time so she could use the room to prepare. However, some semesters she finds herself vying to find empty space. “I was in a building where there were no offices so I just had to find some empty space to make it my office.”
Institutional Culture Surrounding Contingent Faculty Relationships and Belongingness

Interpersonal Relationships with Full-time and Contingent Faculty and Administration

All participants had some self-awareness in their role in the hands-off approach of the institutional community in forming interpersonal relationships with them. Every contingent faculty participant mentioned that they spend very little time on campus because of their own personality, flexibility, lack of workspace and compensation, and the understanding of what their job role entails in their responsibility to institutional commitment and participation. However, James and Marianne felt bitter by the lack of interpersonal relationships with their colleagues. Conversely, Lauren felt they could be stronger, but wasn’t bothered they weren’t. Yet, Janice felt that she has some strong relationships, but mentioned her responsibility in controlling her interpersonal relationships, as well as the trademark of institutions to lack such relationships between contingent faculty and their institutional communities.

All participants admitted to their partial responsibility in not having as many interpersonal relationships with institutional community members as they’d like. James disclosed that his introvert personality and tendency to do things alone to escape the organizational dysfunction as part of the reason. However, he has reached out to some institutional members such as student advisors and not gotten a response. Similarly, Lauren divulged her disappointment in not hearing back from student advisors when she has had questions or problems concerning certain students in her classes. Not only does this point to the difficulty in forming any degree of relationship with their colleagues, James believes the institution is “particularly disorganized from an operations standpoint.” He upsettingly concludes that communication to the faculty from other areas of the institution such as administration and operations, “stinks.” He further communicates that because contingent faculty are not involved
in committees there is a “hands-off” approach in anyone getting to know contingent faculty.
Comparatively, Marianne admits that part of her feelings of being “colleague-less” is on her.
“I’m welcomed to go, I’m welcome to attend and participate and I get that message from other
full-time faculty and from the department chair, that I am welcome. And in fact, it would be nice
if I were there, and I don’t go because the times I’ve been there I did feel a little, and this again is
totally on me, if there weren’t a lot of other adjuncts there then I just don’t feel comfortable. I
don’t see these people at all except for the maximum three times a year opportunities. So, then
when I do go, there’s not really a whole lot to talk about.” Also, her frustration in not having any
opportunity to get hired full-time without a Ph.D. deliberately has her not pursuing any
relationships within her institutional community. “I didn’t know at first, because a lot of people
were there who are teaching, full-time faculty without Ph.D.’s, so I thought, oh that can happen. I
really enjoy this, I want that, that would be really, really awesome. But then it became clear that
this is never going to happen without a Ph.D. So, that was the moment I stopped doing
everything. So, I’m not doing anything extra which sounds really bitter.” She has very little
relationships with her Communication department faculty, and has no idea who anyone is both in
her department and within the administration. She states, “I wouldn’t know an administrator if I
bumped in to them on the street.” She does correlate relationships with happiness and she accepts
it is a missing component to her job. However, she references her relationships with the
instructional technology group, which consists of two full-time technology instructors, who help
all faculty learn and build their classes online through the college-wide online learning platform.
“There are other staff that I feel like I’ve gotten to know and have good working relationships
with, more so than the people in the Communication Department, like in the teaching and
learning center.” Although she distinguishes her participation in her lack of relationships, she
indicates that she is on “the fringes of the community,” and “it’s not changing.” She tried in the 
beginning of her tenure to be involved, but she suggests her naivety in not really knowing what it 
meant to be a contingent faculty member, often left her as the only contingent faculty member in 
the room at meetings, department dinners, etc. She quickly realized that most contingent faculty 
are not as invested in such opportunities, and it made her feel uncomfortable to be the only 
contingent faculty member showing up. She felt like the Communication Department’s “little 
play professor in the context.”

Janice conveyed that she didn’t think there was a certain “culture” or “attitude” toward 
contingent faculty. In her experiences, most of the full-time faculty has attempted at getting 
along with contingent faculty, and she has found any full-time faculty she has approached as 
helpful. She attaches further detail to the response by stating, “I do not feel any animosity from 
the full-time staff nor any type of divide or disconnect from them.” She details her experience in 
working near the Math department one semester. “I have to say the math group was not familiar 
with me. But became extremely familiar with me, very, very, very inclusive to include me in 
departmental birthdays and/or things they were doing that made me feel welcome in their 
department. They got to know me by first name and to look for me and to ask for me. So, I have 
to commend that group, that I felt like there was an open door, come in, you know that said, it 
was very valuable.” However, she has more of a connection with other contingent faculty over 
full-time faculty, but claims it is even difficult to have those relationships because contingent 
faculty aren’t always on campus. She stays in touch through email and social media such as 
Facebook the best she can. She believes it’s “the nature of the beast” to their jobs as contingents. 
Janice presents some similar feelings of discontent to Marianne in her description, “sometimes as 
an adjunct, I don’t feel as connected to the faculty. Sometimes I feel a little funny, like I don’t
really know anyone other than the other adjuncts, and a lot of times the other adjuncts are not attending these get-togethers, and so the I kind-of feel like, like, sort-of like I’m not, you know connected to the faculty members as much. Like if I go to a get-together, they’re all talking to those people that are part of the full-time faculty. And, so I kind-of feel like I’m off in the corner, and I don’t think anyone’s trying to slight me, I just think it’s human nature to kind-of deviate towards those people that you’re with on a daily basis.” However, she also takes some responsibility, like the other participants, in not forming interpersonal relationships with other members of her institutional community. She believes there’s no need is getting “close” to other faculty members because the instructional technology group, which consists of two full-time technology instructors, who help all faculty learn and build their classes online through the college-wide online learning platform, go out of their way to help and give her everything she needs to perform well in her classes. She states, “I’ve been here long enough to have gained respect from full-time faculty. The full-time faculty acknowledge me, wave to me and answer my questions, and respect that I give decent learning environments. They can only do so much for me if they don’t see me.”

**Interpersonal Relationships with Students**

Both James and Marianne seem disillusioned and uninspired with the idea of meeting students outside of class whether to advise or help them with letters of recommendations. James asserts, “it is just hard.” Marianne regularly teaches three classes and is on campus only to teach those classes unless there is dire need that she meet with a student before or after class. She uses her lack of compensation as an excuse not to build relationships with students and will often direct students to contact full-time faculty members for any requests such as letters of recommendation. She suggests that if she doesn’t feel like it she’ll say, “you know I think that
will be better coming from full-time faculty, I’m just an adjunct. So, I don’t think it would carry much weight coming…I’m just using it as an excuse.” Further, both participants do all of their prep work and grading outside of the institution’s walls. They see no need to be on campus other than to teach their classes. If James is teaching a face-to-face course he is only on campus for the duration of the course, but if he is teaching online he can do everything from his home computer.

In contrast, both Lauren and Janice mentor and advise their students, and look to build lasting interpersonal relationships with their students. While Lauren is only on campus three hours a week to teach her classes and reports that she is mostly only exposed to her classroom, she welcomes requests by students to work with her outside the classroom. “I’ll stay you know, after class or I’ll book a separate time and do like increments for them to meet. So, I’m available if they, you know, need me to be, I just don’t have a set office time.” Similarly, Janice spends an hour before her classes prepping, but usually leaves campus ten minutes after her classes end. She is open to making time for her students any way she can. Although her schedule does not permit her to be on campus more than an hour before her classes, she gives students the opportunity to call her any night of the week until midnight. She also spends a lot of time advising students from her home computer. She believes in walking in her students shoes and gets on their level by humanizing herself and her courses. She show empathy by being available even if not physically on campus. “As an adjunct, it’s never been an issue that the student could not find me. I’ve always been available, willing to meet them specifically somewhere on campus if that’s what they wanted. I always went by what the student needed to be accommodated, but if it worked for them and worked for me that we could do it over the phone, that works out really well.”
**Belongingness within the Institutional Community**

James is the only one to negatively express that as a contingent faculty member there “has been very little effort to be included” in the institution. He feels that he is invisible and that contingent faculty don’t receive credit for what they are doing. While the other participants vary in how they have been included, they do perceive different degrees of inclusion. Marianne states, there is an “outward official respect of inclusion.” She feels it has to be that way given the high number of courses taught by contingent faculty. However, she grapples with such inclusion because, “given that there is a small elite tier of faculty at the top of the pile, outward expressions of respect and inclusion don’t mean much to me compared to compensation since I don’t mingle with contingent colleagues.” Adversely, Janice feels she has “always been welcome to join in all of the parties.” She doesn’t identify with being an adjunct because no one has ever addressed her as such. Everyone is open and nice and she understands it is human nature to divide. Her department knows what she has to offer because she has talked to them at length about what she is interested in. “I’ve always been encouraged to provide my input.” She is confident in her relationships, but also knows she has the flexibility to come and go when she pleases which can contribute to some divide by not being around as much as full-time faculty.

**Evaluation/Feedback**

**Explanation of College-wide Teaching Philosophy**

James, Marianne, and Lauren all described concerns with lack of mandatory evaluation and feedback from their department chairs or any full-time faculty members. Specifically, with regard to their teaching and understanding of how to carry out the institution’s mission’s philosophy. However, Janice, had a far different view of evaluation and feedback. Yet, all participants did recognize the impact student evaluations have on their teaching, and rehiring
James stated, “I’m disconnected from connected pretty much,” which highlights the idea behind the college’s mission. His chairs have never spoken to him about what the college’s mission is and how to carry out its philosophy of connectedness in his teaching. Comparably, Marianne and Lauren mentioned that no one explained how to carry out the college’s mission in their teaching, but all felt, as James said, “it’s a no-brainer.” All felt confident in their ability to carry out the college’s mission because of their professional employment and work in other sectors beyond academia that have implemented theories of connectedness. They all concluded the mission’s philosophy is not a new idea in academia or anywhere else, and, that it happens inadvertently in learning without having to have someone explain it to them. Further, as a Master’s student, Lauren understands the mission’s philosophy very well. Contrastingly, when Janice was first hired, her program chair explained the college’s mission’s philosophy and directed her to those that have experiences with the philosophy to help her understand it more fully. Janice credits her chair in easily directing her to people who are always willing to help her and she has never had an instance when there wasn’t someone willing to work with her if needed.

**Chair Supervision and Evaluation**

Both James and Marianne recognized the duality of conflicting interests in not being supervised. James felt the hands-off approach suited his introvert personality, while Marianne acknowledged that it’s nice to be on her own. However, both also established areas of concern with lack of supervision. James doesn’t know if he’s trusted, ignored, or if his chairs simply don’t have the “bandwidth” to deal with contingent faculty supervision. Marianne expects that a department should ensure that all faculty’s definition and implementation of classes meet certain
standards and students are actually learning. She states, “I would love to know if, if my teaching is having any effect. I would love to know, but I mean I think my classes are fun and I think students like my classes, but is it just fun and we’re not learning anything?” Both James’ chairs, and Marianne and Lauren’s chairs have never seen them teach. None have received any feedback on suggestions that could better their teaching. Similarly, Marianne feels there is no supervision, and that she could be teaching an entire class on profanity (which she does) and no one would know about it. She says the lack of supervision in her job is “one of the best things about it, but that is not right.” She further expresses, “I’m not sure I would welcome supervision because it’s nice to be totally on your own out there, but I acknowledge that shouldn’t be.” However, Marianne did have one experience of support, when she was mandated last-minute one semester by another college-wide program to add a particular learning component to her class which would have created a huge burden and additional work without compensation. Luckily, Marianne’s chair got involved and agreed with her that the additional component was not doable nor fair, and she wasn’t required to do it.

James recommends that the institution should study analytics, specifically for online courses, that employ data to answer questions such as the amount of engagement faculty have with their online courses. Like Marianne and Lauren, he feels being evaluated could help the student experience, and all three think supervision for faculty should be required. Lauren has sought out the chair on certain logistics of teaching such as structure of class, however, she would value more direct feedback of what’s working and not working in her classes, what obstacles do other faculty members teaching the same or a different class face. James reasons the institution doesn’t have the vision and resources to monitor contingent faculty online. He states I’ve never been observed in four years, for Marianne it’s been five years. “I’ve survived the cut
so to speak by being rehired, but I would value feedback through my classes being observed.”

The only feedback he’s gotten has been negative when a student complains about his teaching or timeliness in returning grades. He further senses the institution doesn’t think feedback is important because they haven’t implemented the resources to do to observe contingent faculty. He calls it a “combination of laissez faire,” attitude.-I know this contingent faculty member, he/she is okay, they can do it, so just let them do it. He supposes, “I don’t think chairs think at all about evaluating adjuncts, they get a feeling, off-cuff, perhaps word-of mouth,” and hire and rehire contingent faculty. Dissimilarly, Janice explains that both she and her chair have a mutual understanding of what she brings to the table, and therefore, if she doesn’t hear from her chair she knows things are going well. “I’ve been at other institutions where you feel like you’re being micromanaged, especially if you’re an adjunct, and so, the respect that I get from the chairperson here is extraordinary. And I, you know, she’s always there to support me and direct me, but she gives me a lot of freedom to create my own classroom environment and do what I think is going to be the most successful and useful way to of making students develop their backgrounds.”

However, her teaching has been evaluated and she has received outstanding evaluation and feedback from her chairperson. In her experience, she has been evaluated every other year by a senior level full-time faculty member.

**Student Evaluations**

All Participants felt that student evaluations hold equal if not more weight to any other feedback or evaluation possibility. Interestingly, all participants weren’t aware of who views their student evaluations other than themselves. James identifies them as a “lever” to have faculty perform well, and drive both the contingent faculty member and student satisfaction. He expresses how receiving a poor evaluation that is harsh can be demotivation. Equally, Lauren
and Janice view student evaluations as serious feedback to improve in their teaching. Both agreed that student evaluations don’t influence their grading as much as their teaching style, and are used more as a tool to adapt their style. Janice states, she doesn’t “give out grades that students don’t deserve” to create a curve. Lauren finds the most important element to the evaluation is whether her students are getting substance from the class, “not that they like me the most.” On the contrary, Marianne thinks they are morale boosters, but they don’t tell her if her students are learning anything. She admits to wanting to be liked and so, there is a possibility for her to make things easier or go out of her way to help students for good evaluations. She reports that if students were failing her class, it would cause someone to investigate what she is doing, and therefore, making things easier for students could potentially have to do with her temporary job status. “Yeah because I want good evaluations even if, I mean I have no idea who is looking at them, sometimes I think I’m the only one who’s looking at them, but I want to be liked.”

Reliability of Employment

Job Security and the Rehiring Process

All four participants had some degree of uncertainty in the feelings about reliability of employment and their rehiring process. James articulated the most uncertainty in his outlook on reliability of being rehired, and more doubt and frustration with job security than any other participant. James feels he needs to be very proactive in finding out a semester ahead what is being offered. He has a close relationship with another member of the institution that may be able to help him figure out ahead of time what is going to be offered. He feels whether or not he gets hired is also reliant on him contacting the chair himself, even though he considers the courses contingent faculty get offered as the “left-overs” to what full-time faculty don’t want. He openly shows his dejected attitude in his words, “it’s not an ideal way to make a living.” “If
you’re not working and you don’t have security then what’s the difference, you can say all you want, but you’re not making any money, you’re not going to have the jobs.” As Marianne stated, “there was a time when my department chair would ask for my preferences, that doesn’t happen anymore.” All participants mentioned, they receive a mass email to all faculty within the department, full-time and contingent, with a spreadsheet with what courses and days/times are being offered, and if he hasn’t already asked for courses, he will reply to what courses he may be suited to teach. However, it is not ultimately up to him if he gets hired. “There really isn’t any security beyond next semester.” Marianne feels rehiring is random, and the class day/times offered are not always practical. She too feels a need to be first to respond to the mass email, so there is some reliability to be aware the email is coming, but she can’t rely on courses so she feels no guarantee. Even though she is contacted on the email, she may or may not be offered the all of the courses she requests. She tells a story of how she was teaching a course for three years, and had developed some strong relationships with outside partners to work with the class, and a new fulltime faculty member was fired and he asked to teach that course, and she was no longer offered that course. It left her with a sense of “anyone can teach what I teach, so I am replaceable.” The only shot she has at getting rehired is making sure she is one of the first to respond to the mass email. Likewise, Lauren comments everyone is replaceable in any job, so there is no reliability, but as time has progressed her name has become associated with specific courses she has taught in the past. She senses seniority gets you courses, but “you’re shit out of luck” if you miss the mass email. Such seniority is evident in Janice’s discussion of openly stating “I’ve got that seniority level” so my chair opens courses up to me first before looking for other contingent faculty members.

In the past, James had suggested and created a research writing course that would have
been advantageous for students, but the chair couldn’t make it a requirement because it would have changed the whole curriculum. The class was canceled, and he wasn’t compensated for all of his work that he put in to designing the course. “I have had a lot of courses cancelled on me because of low enrollment, and when I say a lot, maybe four or five over the course of ten semesters. And, never been compensated for that, for loss of and that kind of, shall I say loss of security.” His classes have been canceled as late as two weeks prior with no compensation.

Likewise, Lauren has had some classes dropped for low enrollment.

Interestingly, Janice, offers a different picture of her rehiring process, although, it’s important to reference that she does display as small sense of job insecurity in her response, “I can expect to be here next semester, let’s hope or “I think we’re all replaceable to some extent. I mean medical doctors are replaceable these days.” However, she confidently knows her chair is aware she wants additional classes, so she is offered every semester, including summer if there is an opportunity. Her chair gives her the maximum three courses allowed, and will give her back-to-back classes so she doesn’t have to wait around in-between classes. She states, “she knows I want to work here, she knows that I like it here, she likes me, so it’s a matter of just having the classes when she does the schedule. She lets me know, I tell her yes, and we’re off and running.” She explains that she’s on the ball, she doesn’t lose sleepless nights worrying about her job. As long as she continues to improve by staying current and educating herself she is provided consistency which makes her feel like she more than an adjunct, and instead, a part-time faculty member. In her dialogue she continuously reiterates her chairperson’s respect for who she is and what she is doing.
Contingent Faculty Definition of Job Satisfaction and Perception of Job Reward

All participants were asked to give a general definition of job satisfaction, and describe the specific rewards in being a contingent faculty member at the institution being studied. James sees job satisfaction as an employee’s feeling they are “doing the right thing.” He believes understanding what they company’s goals are and then feeling as if they are part of the effort to reach those goals through feedback, and being trained properly, as well as being respected as most important to overall job satisfaction. James had the bleakest outlook to the possibility of one having job satisfaction and rewards to the job. He stated, “ninety percent of anyone with a job is not satisfied.” He concluded that most of his graduate students are unhappy with their work for such reason as abuse to favoritism, and that it’s “an ugly scene out there.” His viewpoint sheds light on his lack of interest in being a contingent faculty member. Throughout the interview he continuously references that he wants to be doing something else, but the market is in decline and so it’s difficult for him to get hired. However, he does see some reward in being a contingent faculty member because he doesn’t have to physically be on campus much. He can be in his cave under his rock, solo, doing his work on his own time. He often doesn’t need a lot of help because he’s had organizational experience in his other careers and knows how navigate various systems.

Marianne defined job satisfaction as enjoying what one does, enjoying the people enjoying it effects on her, and compensation is fair. As a contingent faculty members she views two of the four categories as satisfying. She states, “I really, really like what I do.” She finds teaching stimulating because she is constantly keeping current by learning about new media which has a positive effect on her. However, enjoying the people “is a big zero because I feel colleague less.” While she notes the compensation is fair only when accompanies by her other
contingent work she outwardly blurs that she would not doing this job if it were her only source of income. She says, “it works for me, but I’m probably one of the few that fits that category.” She explains that she accepts the compensation, but if this were her only job, “then I would be really, really, really unhappy. I would be very unhappy. I would feel screwed, taken advantage of, really unhappy. But because it is what it is, and I know that and accept that and I don’t need it, I don’t need it, I do it because I really, really like it.” She finds the biggest reward is the complement she receives from her students saying “nice things” in her student evaluation. On the contrary, the least rewarding is when she thoughtfully plans and prepares lessons, and students ignore how much time, work, and energy she has spent in trying to engage and teach them. Moreover, Lauren expresses the same thought as her classes not being taken seriously as the least rewarding.

Lauren feels value is key in her definition of job satisfaction. She has to see value in what she is able to offer, time commitment, and learning compared to the salary that’s associated. She has to be able to have access to learn and collaborate with others. Her biggest rewards are helping students through her own her experiences in her teaching and students who keep in touch after they’ve finished her class. “The most rewarding is definitely that I’ve kept in-touch with some of my students and you know, I’ve seen some of them, you know, we’ll meet up for coffee at a later date, and for just, just for career advice.”

Janice used the definition of job satisfaction to also paint a picture of her rewards to the job. Her own personal self-esteem and prestige in earning her doctorate is how she view job satisfaction. Being respected and others seeing prestige in her academic backgrounds are most rewarding. “I feel like my chairperson respected the fact that I have those degrees, that I have had experiences that I’ve had outside, professional experiences, as well, combined with my
academic background, and I think it’s highly respected here.” Other rewards include flexibility in her schedule because her time is limited and commitment in having to be at physical location, positive feedback from students that they learned and enjoyed her course, and the opportunity to engage with the students. For example, she feels significance in being able to share her personal experiences from the business world, such as political obligations in an organization, with her students. She confidently says, “it’s not a question of whether or not I’m capable to be a full-time professor, it’s more of you know being able to take care of my mom and being able to take care of my mother-in-law and being there for them and having the flexibility of an adjunct schedule. And, even though it takes a lot of work to teach five or six courses, or even three, I can do that from my desktop at home. “

**Predicting the Future and Institutional Recommendations by Contingent Faculty**

All participants were asked to comment on the future for contingent faculty. Throughout discussing their experiences and predictions for the future, each participant named one or more specific recommendations for the institution that would better contingent faculty experiences in their teaching and interpersonal relationships.

Again, James had the most pessimistic response in his belief that the future for contingent faculty was grim, “in the future things aren’t going to change.” However, his willingness to offer suggestions for the future shows his admission to the possibility of policies and practices to change for the better for contingent faculty. He states there needs to be, “bodies that are responsible within an institution,” to evaluate contingent faculty. Further, he argues continent faculty shouldn’t necessarily be on standing committees making policies, but they should be sought for their experiences both in the professional and academic world. He believes the institution could benefit by hearing from contingent faculty who teach at other institution. “The
management team needs vision. I think they have their blinders on and they tend to see adjuncts as sort-of second class faculty.” Improvements need to happen in areas of “pay, training, monitoring, and development, all those of things.” “There should be mentoring along with monitoring more close, more closely I think. But, you know, that comes with vision and the understanding that adjuncts are here to make a difference to the student experience, to enrollment and all that stuff. And, right now, I think nobody has the vision, the management team doesn’t have the vision that allows them to see that.”

Marianne anticipates that fewer and fewer full-time faculty will be hired in the future. She judges that “tenure needs to be a thing of the past and every faculty just be more or less the same.” She predicts that in the future departments will consist only of a department chair and assistant vice-chair and everyone else, either full-or part-time will be the same. Marianne feels that given how much schools rely on contingent faculty, contingent faculty should be involved in committees because of how much they are teaching. However, she notes she wouldn’t want to be involved unless the pay structure changed. She expects that if she is being paid by course, then she doesn’t “want to do anything outside my course for these little token payments, it feels weird.” As such, she suggests changing the pay structure so all faculty are either hired as full-time or part-time, not adjunct, and that part-time faculty would get ¾ the wage of the full-time faculty salary, but would be held responsible to other duties such a governance, advising, and being more committed to their departments. She believes, “there shouldn’t be a divide between full-time and part-time faulty,” if, “we’re all working for the college and part of this big team.” She maintains that changing the pay structure is simple in idea, and may cost the college more money, but they would be getting more in return. Further, she asserts that the department meetings and campus-wide student assessment initiatives don’t pertain to her, and instead, would
value the opportunity to share ideas with other faculty, relevant to what she is doing, in an official way.

Lauren felt that some contingent faculty may feel they are making a lot of investment with little return. Her only suggestion was the idea to be able to have more formal gatherings with other contingent and/or full-time faculty in general, and/or more specifically those teaching the same course, to be able to bounce ideas off one another and understand what may be working or may not be working in the course. However, she noted that she could probably do some of her own investigating to who was teaching the same course, or contact other continent faculty, but that she doesn’t do much outside of her classroom. “I would say I’m kind-of you know focused in on what I’m teaching and my courses and my small segment.” She desires a wider understanding of what is going on outside the classroom.

Janice views there are many opportunities for contingent faculty in the future as she certifies that tenure positions are fewer that they’ve ever been before, and that age is a factor. “If you’re past thirty-five I think you’re already walking uphill,” and the possibility for tenure becomes less relevant. She likens it to any other organization that is outsourcing. “If you’re an adjunct like myself, where you need to be adjunct because that’s what you choose to be, then you take it for what it’s worth. You understand, you know, that this is what I choose to be.” As such, the only recommendation is that contingent faculty be able to teach more than three courses at one institution, but she notes that’s a law, and institutions can’t change that right now.

**Unionizing**

All participants, except for Lauren, felt compelled to express their feelings on the topic of unionizing. Dually, they all noted how the topic of unionizing has been the major buzz-word surrounding the area of contingent faculty. James feels there is both pluses and minuses to
unions. He feels, “unionizing could lead to fairer, more ability-based hiring as opposed to someone who knows somebody” hiring. If union could create some standard on hiring, similar to that of full-time faculty, then he thinks the contingent faculty group would be a strong group. He criticizes his institution by saying, “right now they just pull it out of their pockets.” He thinks, “somebody could get in there, not me, but somebody could,” in reference to unionizing his institution. There’s not requirements to the hiring process or standards other than a chair saying if the person has a Master’s degree, they are hired. Similarly, Janice conveys the need to have fair pay and contingent faculty heard. She states, “I suppose it’s a good. I mean I can’t see that’s it’s going to be a bad thing.” On the other hand, Marianne worries about unionizing without a Ph.D. because she feels it wouldn’t be good for her because she would be at the bottom of the pile in getting hired.

**Reciprocity**

Similar to what Blau (1960) argued in his social exchange theory, all participants moved beyond the economic reciprocities of exchange into the existential. Participants were and are willing to forgive low compensation (economic) if they feel the institution can expand reciprocity to include other value systems such as making a commitment to invest in creating a community of belonging through contingent faculty voice, and by creating support systems that look at such areas as gratitude (Blau, 1964). Currently, participants recognized an internal struggle for who is at fault with such lack of reciprocity, themselves, or the institution and those in power such as full-time faculty and administration. However, in the end, they noted that much of the types of exchange and reciprocity given, like Blau (1960) believes, is governed by those with more power, in this case being full-time faculty and administration. Participants admitted that reaching goals of more belonging which creates greater commitment to the organization
isn’t necessarily dictated by them, but instead by those in power who can provide more resources and support by aiding in bringing contingent faculty voice to the forefront of social interactions within the institutional community (Homan, 1982).
Chapter V: Implications

Overview

The purpose of this research was to deeply explore contingent faculty experiences at a single institution, and their perceptions of institutional support from both the institution and through interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members. By focusing on a single institution, experiences are not simplified. Instead, experiences are focused and comprehensive on the particular institutional support systems and relationships most important to contingent faculty at their individual institution. Exploration of an individual, private institution’s contingent faculty will provide the chance to better understand contingent faculty experiences, and how contingent faculty perceive their role and support systems within their own institutional community (Smith, 2007). Such research provides an opportunity for an institution to build strong relationships with their contingent faculty which may also offer the chance to provide students with a more valuable education (Modarelli, 2006). Much of the research classifies faculty as a generalizable, homogenous group, and most institutions treat all contingent faculty alike (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2012; Gappa, 1993; Umbach, 2007). As such, research suggests institutions often fall short in supporting their contingent faculty by assuming all contingent faculty identify and connect with their institutions in the same way (Arsdale, 1978; Hoyt, 2012). Literature suggests that department and institutional work environments of contingent faculty tend to be negative because of outdated policies and practices that do not support contingent faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2013).

The participants were able to provide an increased understanding of their experiences and institutional support specific to their institution’s unique cultural fabric. Their willingness to give rich, detailed descriptions through stories and examples of what they have experienced
showcases their openness and comfort in sharing their voice. It also underlines their need to feel valued by their institutional communities. Their discussions call for institutions to rethink, reorganize, and restructure antiquated contingent faculty-institutional relationships, policies, and practices that remain unexplored, undisputed, and unchanged (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Feldman & Turnley, 2004; Kezar & Sam, 2013). Further, understanding contingent faculty experiences could lead to the possibility to further explore what is needed for contingent faculty to feel valued through institutional support (Meixner et al., 2010; Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009).

Much of the research on contingent faculty contradicts contingent faculty experiences (Meixner et. al, 2010). Such contradiction advances demand for more robust studies that limit such discrepancies in areas such as contingent faculty institutional commitment, satisfaction, and teacher preparation (Meixner et. al, 2010). An interpretative phenomenological approach allowed for contingent faculty to express their feelings and perceptions fully by allowing room for their own stories to emerge through flexible interview questions. The contingent faculty interviewed expressed a need for better economic equity, but also stronger interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members which influenced how much they feel supported and rewarded (Blau, 1964). Relationships flourish when employers “take care of employees” (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 882; Umbach, 2007). The contingent faculty disclosed feelings of embracement, obligation, and gratitude as benefits of feeling rewarded. Individuals who feel supported will have greater commitment to an organization (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005, p. 882; Umbach, 2007). As admitted by the contingent faculty, they each questioned their own willingness to be fully committed to their institution because they do not feel the return on investment. Areas that contingent faculty felt a lack of institutional investment and commitment
were professional development, pay, workspace, evaluation/feedback from their supervisors, interpersonal relationships with institutional community members, and reliability of employment. Instead, those areas have merely served as a check-and-balance system for the institution to follow group norms so their contingent faculty will behave in accordance with their assigned roles and what they are expected to do (Blau, 1964).

**Discussion of Research Findings**

*Research Question 1*

*What are the experiences of contingent faculty at a private, liberal arts college?*

Contingent faculty confirmed that there are times that they feel disenfranchised within their institution. However, all contingent faculty participants expressed that they have partial responsibility for how much they are invested in by their institution and how strong their interpersonal relationships are with institutional community members. All contingent faculty interviewed confirmed research that they have either a lower voice or not the same kind of voice as full-time faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). However, they partially accept some responsibility in choosing such voice. The flexibility of the job doesn’t require them to be invested beyond showing up to teach their classes. They admitted they like the flexibility in being able to come and go as they please and not having to communicate with either their supervisors or other members of the faculty if they don’t wish to. However, each contingent faculty member grappled with the idea of having freedom and flexibility versus being more invested in their institution and with their institutional community members. They saw their own investment as a reflection of how much the institution may be inclined to support them. Such reflection indicates the potential of both parties, the contingent faculty member and the institution, to play on each other as a means of growing stronger support systems through each
other’s investment. While contingent faculty appreciate the avenue of being able to do what they want, they question whether that is truly an advantageous and ethical feature of their job. In fact, they question whether such a hands-off approach manifests their separation from other full-time faculty by not being as invested. The contingent faculty note that it may be more beneficial if they had relationships with other faculty so they could take advantage of opportunities such as brainstorming about effective teaching practices.

Commitment

Higher education institutions that include, reward, and value contingent faculty contribution are more likely to have contingent faculty who will increasingly develop strong emotional ties to the organization (Merriam, 2010). Further, contingent faculty will be more likely to take on tasks that are relative to institutional goals rather than individual interests (Merriam, 2010). If contingent faculty identify with their institution, their sense of belonging increases (Merriam, 2010). When contingent faculty feel like they belong, they are able to identify with their institution more (Merriam, 2010). It was evident that all of the contingent faculty interviewed felt there was some surface-level outreach by the institution to include them in professional development or other institutional initiatives. However, participants noted that they often felt out-of-place when attending such opportunities because often other contingent faculty don’t attend, and/or full-time faculty and other institutional community members don’t make a concerted effort to engage them. As noted by one contingent faculty member, she has been left in a corner by herself during an event. Comparatively, two contingent faculty did not feel a desire to have to commit to the institution beyond their teaching. The two contingent faculty specifically called to attention their lack of institutional investment because they did not feel the monetary reward to participate in extracurricular initiatives was worth it. They
questioned investing their time and energy in doing anything beyond teaching because they either felt their job description doesn’t warrant it, and/or the institution doesn’t take any steps to value the contingent faculty. On the other hand, the other two contingent faculty did not feel as committed to attending professional development initiatives for such little compensation, but they were committed in meeting with students outside of class if need be.

**Compensation & Job Reliability**

The contingent faculty members interviewed were dissatisfied with compensation, but were satisfied with other aspects of their job. All contingent faculty noted that they do not feel the compensations represents what they do in terms of their work. Three contingent faculty admitted to working more than the average 40-hour work week, and felt they deserved greater compensation. Further, three contingent faculty criticized job security. Interestingly, one of those three contingent faculty members, who works full-time outside of teaching, noted the same insecurities said by two other contingent faculty members in being rehired. Although all three contingent faculty are at different career stages, they believed that an email blast was an unfair and insufficient way to guarantee whether they are rehired or not. They described that if they missed the email then the opportunity for them to teach is lost because it works on a first-come, first-serve basis. Such methods prove daunting in determining the predictability of being rehired at their institution. However, all four contingent faculty members were satisfied with the nature of their work in capacities such as scheduling flexibility, job autonomy, and challenge (Feldman & Turnley, 200; Waltman et. al, 2012). All of the contingent faculty made a case for what they do because of their passion and love of teaching students. The opportunity and challenge in sharing knowledge and ideas for learning and advancement through opening students’ and their own minds is inspiring to the contingent faculty. Despite studies that have revealed a lack of
academic support and recognition at universities, all of the contingent faculty felt that the challenge of teaching and learning new material themselves is thrilling (Hoyt et al., 2008). As such, all considered the low compensation and lack of job reliability as manageable because of other positives such as a love of teaching (Hoyt et al., 2008).

**Institutional Support**

Professional development is defined as “those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students…” (Wallin, 2004, p. 383). Contingent faculty confirmed other research that their needs do not differ greatly in areas of professional development when compared to full-time faculty (Wallin, 2004). Similar to other research, the contingent faculty interviewed felt their most desired resource is an increase in pay (Pearch & Martuz, 2005). However, like other research suggests, the contingent faculty interviewed proposed mentoring, orientation programs, and contingent faculty recognition as ways to build and foster contingent faculty communities that are important to valuable institutional practices of teaching, learning, and productivity (Feldman & Turnley, 2001; Morton, 2012). They specifically called for systems that would rework current socialization, compensation, inclusion in faculty governance, professional development, information sharing, and administrative and technical support processes (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006; Kezar & Sam, 2013). Focus on such matters could help influence improved practices for contingent faculty which could help overall morale (Fagen-Wilen et al., 2006; Kezar & Sam, 2013).

**Contingent Faculty Impact on the Institution**

Thus far, literature that has examined the teaching practices of contingent faculty has been difficult to interpret because it depicts a complex and contradictory picture of contingent
faculty teaching effectiveness compared to full-time faculty teaching effectiveness (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2011). Instructional quality variables such as active learning, preparing well-rounded citizens, class preparation, and diversity experiences have shown that part-time faculty place less of an emphasis on those four variables compared to full-time faculty (Umbach, 2007). Yet, in this study, all of the contingent faculty interviewed gave rich description of their teaching style and practices. They believed that they do just as good, if not a better job than full-time faculty in teaching. All argued that they often spent countless hours learning and creating new material and grading. Further, two contingent faculty detailed how they go out of their way to meet students outside of class that need extra help, mentoring, and any other types of advice or direction. Although research has indicated that full-time faculty may be more committed to teaching, the contingent faculty interviewed contradicted such research as they considered their main focus and strongest attribute as their ability to prepare and teach well. For example, they highlighted their implementation of interactive and diverse learning environments that foster settings to prepare and promote well-rounded citizens (Umbach, 2007).

Further, some research suggests that contingent faculty rely heavily on student evaluations (Kirk & Spector, 2009). Baldwin and Chronister (2001) found that many non-tenure track faculty had concerns in the student evaluation criteria being used and the placement of too much power in the students’ hands. They found that many contingent faculty craved to be evaluated in the same manner as full-time faculty (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Three of the contingent faculty interviewed confirmed such skepticism regarding the heavy emphasis on student evaluations which drive their teaching effectiveness. They voiced their concerns at length regarding a need for supervisor evaluation and feedback similar to that of full-time faculty. Such feedback would make them feel more valued, give them a sense of belongingness, and provide
constructive feedback to apply to their future course preparation.

*Research Question 2*

_How does contingent faculty at a private liberal arts college perceive their institutional support from both the institution and through interpersonal relationships with their institutional community members?_

**Institutionalization**

Institutionalization refers to the policies and practices that are part of underlying assumptions or norms that become engrained in the culture of an institution (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Faculty members determine the quality of an institution, and therefore, administrators and faculty members must make a commitment to work together in an environment of respect and equity (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005). All of the contingent faculty interviewed acknowledged the status quo of the job which is merely showing up and teaching without having any other responsibilities. They explicitly stated that more support and stronger relationships with other community members could challenge such status quo that creates divisions among faculty (Kezar & Sam, 2013). The contingent faculty’s stories of lack of acknowledgment and relationships highlight the pervasive status differentials among different faculty at the institution (Gappa, 2002). Contingent faculty emphasized the power of their own voice to digress beyond their own job satisfaction and instead, into processes of exchange, which reject underlying norms, values and outdated perceptions at the institution (Blau, 1964; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005; Kezar & Sam, 2013). Instead, their processes of exchange revisit past and present relationships between faculty members and their institutional community members (Blau, 1964; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005; Kezar & Sam, 2013). Such processes of exchange were magnified by contingent faculty’s stories and examples of the dynamic social interactions played out by their individual
experiences (Blau, 1960). Unlike other research that paints a confusing picture of contingent faculty experiences and relationships, individual exploration of their own relationships attributed the particularity of what each individual contingent faculty member has experienced and with whom (Wagoner, 2007). Their individuality allowed for specificity through their own storytelling.

**Implications for the Institution**

Few studies have covered the cultural fabric—the values, norms, and underlying assumptions that contingent faculty experience at their individual institution through their own voice (Kezar & Sam, 2013). Contingent faculty hiring is on the rise making-up 42.7% of all faculty at private institutions (Liu & Zhang, 2007). Higher education institutions need to restructure antiquated contingent faculty-institutional relationships and the policies and practices that influence such relationships (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). A qualitative study of what contingent faculty are experiencing at a single institution specifically illustrates the distinctions of the institution. It also details how to advance an institution’s ability to raise awareness of how to include, manage, evaluate and recognize their own contingent faculty (Waltman, 2012). Experiences are focused and comprehensive on the particular institutional support systems and relationships most important to contingent faculty at their institution. Detailed accounts at a single institution exposes any superficiality and inaccurate efforts in a “one-size-fits-all” model of research that covers multiple institutions (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001; Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005, p. 36).

If the current institution has a better understanding of their contingent faculty, they would be able to provide resources that help contingent faculty feel more supported and rewarded (Umbach, 2007). If the institution knows more about their contingent faculty, then they would
not waste time, energy, or money on programs and resources that may be useless in aiding their contingent faculty. As such, contingent faculty may have a greater commitment to their institutional community (Umbach, 2007). If the institution can adapt their employment practices and policies, and explicitly define contingent faculty job roles, then they can better serve that population. As the institution has evolved, they have not evolved their understanding of contingent faculty experiences. They cannot continue to classify them as a separate group when they have such a large stake in the success of the institution. As an over 100-year old higher education institution, there is a demand to not only change structurally, but internally.

Further, full-time faculty may be able to develop relationships with the contingent faculty’s external communities which could also help the institution with funding for future growth (Gappa, Austin, & Trice, 2005).

**Implications for Chairpersons**

All contingent faculty discussed the importance of requiring supervisor evaluation. If chairs were required to evaluate their contingent faculty it could give them insight to the value the contingent faculty member is bringing to the student. It could also help develop and foster relationships with their contingent faculty by understanding their contingent faculty’s strengths and how those may be best suited for teaching certain courses, and utilized in department initiatives. Further, it would help strengthen contingent faculty’s morale because contingent faculty would feel as valued as full-time faculty. Currently, the contingent faculty solely rely on student evaluations as a measure for their effectiveness in the classroom. This poses as a problem because student evaluations may not be as accurate a measure of teaching effectiveness because students lack the maturity and pedagogical knowledge to evaluate contingent faculty. Further, one contingent faculty member questioned her own integrity and whether she is not as rigorous
in the classroom, and in fact, grades leniently because she is aware of the relationship between student satisfaction and her job. If contingent faculty could be guaranteed supervisor evaluation they would not need to rely on the word of the student or implicate their own teaching practices. Instead, they would feel more valued by having the support and feedback from their supervisor as to whether they are doing a good job or not. As the college moves toward assessing more student work and department performance, it is imperative that contingent faculty are given feedback by academic professionals such as their Chair. Contingent faculty are responsible for student outcomes, as well as teaching effectiveness, but if they are not observed then both they and the students are being served injustice.

**Implications for Students**

The institution’s ability to understand their contingent faculty provides a more valuable student education because the institution can provide the appropriate resources and support systems that would help their contingent faculty to improve and carry-out the most effective teaching practices. (Modarelli, 2006). For example, improving opportunities for professional development can improve instructional quality (Zeigler & Reiff, 2006). The institution in this study relies heavily on their contingent faculty.

**Implications for Full-time faculty**

As referenced by the contingent faculty participants, they feel there is opportunity for full-time faculty to learn just as much from the contingent faculty’s experiences and knowledge as they could learn from the full-time faculty’s pedagogical experiences. Contingent faculty members felt that their experiences and relevancy can often be as strong if not stronger than full-time faculty because full-time faculty may not have been out in the industry for some time. Therefore, if full-time faculty look to build and continuously strengthen their relationships with
contingent faculty, they too could gain new insight into growing practices in the field which they could then implement in their teaching and curriculum. One contingent faculty participant mentioned how important social media is to organizations today and that not all full-time faculty understand how to use such important forms of communication. Contingent faculty have connections to the community and are aware of new technologies, ideas, and practices within their respective fields (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). If both contingent and full-time faculty found more time for collaboration new knowledge could be shared. Also, currently the institution is carrying out a new core curriculum that would require more multidisciplinary courses taught by two professors in two different disciplines. Such growth in the multidisciplinary area could benefit from contingent faculty knowing other full-time faculty for these team teaching purposes.

**Implications for Contingent Faculty**

Contingent faculty who feel valued through institutional support will view themselves as contributors to their institution which creates a sense of belonging within their institutional community (Morton, 2012). Higher education institutions that include, reward, and value contingent faculty contributions are more likely to have contingent faculty who will increasingly develop strong emotional ties to the institution, and, therefore, will be more committed to the institution (Merriam, 2010; Umbach, 2007). Three of the contingent faculty have been employed for over 5 years which is not short-lived, and shows their investment to the field of teaching. Also, although one contingent faculty member has only taught for one year, she is invested because she is an former alumna as well. Therefore, each contingent faculty member knows they drive the quality of education (Gappa et al.; Mazurek, 2012). For example, one contingent faculty member even spoke about the institution needing continent faculty to survive. If the institution invests in areas the contingent faculty feel are needed and areas they value, contingent
faculty can continue their employment for the long term which could aid in contingent faculty becoming part of and more immersed in the institutional community.

**Implications for Future Research**

As contingent faculty numbers continue to rise with 42.7% of faculty at a private institution comprised of contingent faculty, a key implication of this study is the need for additional research on contingent faculty experiences (Liu & Zhang, 2007; Maldonado & Riman, 2009). There were similar topics of discussion and feelings such as marginalization and lack of fair compensation among all the contingent faculty interviewed. However, there were some contradictions between the contingent faculty participants’ experiences. For example, internal contradictions of contingent faculty among their individual experiences were revealed as the interviews evolved and the discussions grew deeper. The study indicated that while some contingent faculty experience similar situations and feelings, not all contingent faculty can be categorized as a generalizable, homogenous group, and institutions shouldn’t classify them in that way (Baldwin & Wawrzynski, 2012; Gappa, 1993, Umbach, 2007). The contingent faculty presented both internal and external factors that have indicated a need for reform in higher education and its contingent faculty employment practices and policies. Such also includes the building and strengthening of interpersonal relationships among contingent faculty and their colleagues (Baldwin & Chronister, 2001). Various institutions act as unique “labor markets” and yet, if stakeholders in higher education could distinguish the differences in experiences and perceptions between contingent faculty at different institutions, much more could be learned in order to improve contingent faculty’s connection to their specific institution (Conley & Leslie, 2002).

The interviews suggested that contingent faculty have a voice that can provide incredible
substance in understanding experiences of an undervalued population at various institutions. Their stories were specific and impressive. Each contingent faculty member considered themselves important to an institution’s overall success whether it be providing a valuable education for students, or being a lower financial risk for the institution. However, their detail also articulated a disconnect between the importance of what they provide in value and how their institutional support systems back their value. How they identify with their organization addresses a need for change, and they willingly propose some recommendations to make change. Yet, there needs to be further research that explains such proposed recommendations, and how to implement them.

It is important to continue research that allows for contingent faculty’s voice to shine through rich storytelling. It is not about meeting a set agenda, but really helping those contingent faculty who are interviewed feel welcomed and valued which will come through in their ability to openly share their discourse. It is up to me to respect their voice and thoughtful description by creating an environment of trust and comfortability. Further, I have a continued obligation to thoughtfully go through their discourse and take the time to continually code the data fully.

I will use this research to continue interviewing contingent faculty at my own institution. I would like to interview contingent faculty across various departments to see if there are common experiences or if they are isolated by department. Next, I think it would be valuable to form focus groups that specifically target recommendations contingent faculty may have to strengthen institutional policies and practices. After that, I would like to pilot a few of the recommendations with the focus groups to see whether or not they helped contingent faculty feel more valued.
Limitations

The study had three limitations: researcher’s background, timing of the study, and research design.

Researcher’s Background

The researcher’s background as a former contingent faculty member, and now a full-time faculty member at the same institution as the contingent faculty participants are employed, presents bias. First, because of the researcher’s vested interest in the topic and her own experiences as both a contingent and full-time faculty member. Second, phrasing of the interview questions could have presented some bias based on the researcher’s first-hand knowledge of the institution’s policies and practices toward contingent faculty. Third, despite the researcher following proper IRB protocol the contingent faculty interviewed may have had knowledge of the researcher’s background. Consequently, they may have been more inclined to feel obligated to participate in the research, and to share more detail of their experiences than they would have wanted to because of faculty status. The contingent faculty may have felt the researcher had an upper-hand during the interview because of the researcher’s position.

Timing of the Study

The interviews were conducted during a time when the topic of contingent faculty and perimeters of unionizing are on the forefront of discussion in media forums concerning higher education. Such forums have underlined negative perceptions surrounding contingent faculty employment and how contingent faculty are treated by universities and colleges across the country. Therefore, responses could have been influenced by such negative press and perceptions.
Research Design

The study was further limited by research design. It is difficult to define what interpretation is, how the interpretation process works, and how to assess the validity of interpretation within qualitative research (Smith, Flowers, and Larkin 2009). There is not a reasonable amount of research on contingent faculty experiences at a private, liberal arts college that may be used to examine common features and variations across samples. Therefore, while this research may prove groundbreaking, it will also be demanding and incapable of making wider claims on the phenomenology of contingent faculty, and misinterpretation could occur (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

Further, participants were purposefully selected which allowed the researcher to disproportionally select participants from two disciplines rather than various disciplines. As such, the homogeneity of the sample size could encourage similar expressive discussions (Smith, Flower, and Larkin, 2009).

Recommendations for Future Research

Recommendation 1

The first recommendation for research is to continue to move away from both quantitative and qualitative studies that have focused on job satisfaction levels using Frederick Herzberg’s 1960’s motivator-hygiene model. Herzberg’s motivator-hygiene theory has revealed a need for a modified theory on job satisfaction to be created for non-tenure-track faculty (Hoyt et al., 2008; Waltman, 2012). Both methods proved to be significant in studying contingent faculty job satisfaction, but qualitative research offers a deeper, richer understanding of lived experiences of contingent faculty.
Recommendation 2

The study should include more contingent faculty participants from various disciplines across the institution. Such diversity would be useful in determining if the contingent faculty participant experiences are department and/or discipline or institution specific or transferable across many colleges and universities.

Recommendation 3

The study should be replicated at other higher education institutions both similar and different in scope and size to the institution studied. A comparison of findings across institutions would help verify if contingent faculty experiences are institution or geographically specific, similar only among institutions that are the same, or transferable across many colleges and universities.

Recommendation 4

Very few studies have looked at belonging from the viewpoint of the employer (Merriam, 2010). It would be valuable to study the view point of who contingent faculty are, their job role, and how and where contingent faculty fit-in with those who hold full-time faculty and administrative positions within the institution. Comparing the perceptions of full-time faculty and administrative members with contingent faculty perceptions would indicate where the disparities lie. There needs to be an understanding of both similarities and differences of perception among institutional members and contingent faculty. Such could establish a starting point for organizational change toward contingent faculty employment practices and policies, and contingent faculty relationships with other institutional members.
Recommendation 5

More interview time must be given for contingent faculty to further explain their recommendations for institutions to better support their population. It would be valuable to allow contingent faculty the interview time to discuss more comprehensively their plans of action for institutions to enact organizational change. Future research should consider interviewing faculty over longer periods of time, and perhaps even create focus groups of contingent faculty to concentrate on areas such as institutional recommendations.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand contingent faculty experiences at a single institution through their own voice. As contingent faculty populations continue to grow it is important for the institution to know what institutional support systems contingent faculty value, and how to strengthen interpersonal relationships of contingent faculty and other institutional community members. If contingent faculty feel valued through institutional support, whether accessibility to resources or interpersonal relationships, their sense of belonging will increase along with their commitment to the institution. In doing so, contingent faculty would further their opportunities in making a positive impact on the institution and its various populations such as students and full-time faculty.

Although some of the contingent faculty experiences were unique to the individual, there were similar experiences that were echoed by all of the contingent faculty members interviewed. Therefore, similar experiences are transferable across the institution which indicates a call for change in current institutional policies and practices regarding contingent faculty. The findings of the study will help facilitate the institution’s awareness, availability, mobility, and transformation of current organizational practices for contingent faculty to innovative programs
that speak to the voice of contingent faculty members and what they value in support systems. Further, the study highlights the need for future research to continue to allow contingent faculty’s voice to steer institutional platforms that aid in creating positive support systems for contingent faculty. The more invested the institution is in their contingent faculty relies not only current research, but continually conducting research that articulates the evolving and diverse voice of contingent faculty and the complexities and intricacies within such discourse.
References


Appendix A
Email Recruitment Letter for Participants

Hi, All-

Hope all is well. My name is Erin Vicente and I am a current doctoral student at Northeastern University College of Professional Studies. I am conducting a study, *An Exploration of Contingent Faculty Experiences at a Private Liberal Arts College*, which will focus on individual contingent faculty experiences in relation to campus culture, interpersonal relationships, and institutional support. The goal of this research is to understand contingent faculty’s individual experiences, and, how contingent faculty feel they are supported by their institution through their own perspectives.

The growth of contingent faculty nationwide is evident, and institutions rely heavily on contingent faculty teaching to guide students to positive educational experiences. It is important to capture contingent faculty experiences and understand what institutional support systems are in place to help contingent faculty in their job roles.

Your participation through open-ended, semi-structured interviews will allow for the opportunity of rich, thick, descriptive dialogue to emerge through your own storytelling by giving voice to your self-identification processes on campus through prolonged discussions. These discussions will aid in deeper meaning and understanding of your perceptions and help truly explore what you are experiencing. As a former contingent faculty member, I value your contribution to higher education.

I will be conducting open-ended, semi-structured interviews of four contingent faculty members for my dissertation study. Faculty may come from any department, but must currently be teaching at Lasell and have taught for at least one full academic year (two full, consecutive semesters) at Lasell. Participants will be interviewed and recorded via note-taking and audiotape by me, and asked to meet at least once up to 120 minutes (may be shorter) at a location of their choice. There will be an opportunity for one follow-up meeting which will be under the discretion of the participant. The follow-up meeting will allow the participant to view the final study results.

Participation is entirely voluntary. If you do not wish to participate, you do not have to volunteer.
Information will only be disclosed by request/permission of the participant. Pseudonyms will be used when transcribing the data. All data collection will be kept confidential and only be available and accessible via password by the researcher.

Participants will be required to sign a consent form to participate in the study. Each participant will be made of aware of confidentiality agreements verbally and in the consent form at the beginning of the interview.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions, and/or if you wish to volunteer to participate via my Northeastern email provided below. I will not be contacting you again regarding this research.

Kind regards,

Erin D. Vicente
Northeastern University College of Professional Studies Doctoral Student
vicente.e@husky.neu.edu
(P): 617-230-6141
Appendix B
Informed Consent With Agreement to Use Pseudonym

Format for Signed Informed Consent Document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Northern University College of Professional Studies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of Investigator(s): Principal Investigator: Dr. Karen Reiss Medrano; Student Researcher: Erin D. Vicente</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title of Project: An Exploration of Contingent Faculty Experiences at a Private, Liberal Arts College</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study
We are inviting you to take part in a research study. This form will tell you about the study, but the researcher will explain it to you first. You may ask the person any questions that you have. When you are ready to make a decision, you may tell the researcher if you want to participate or not. You do not have to participate if you do not want to. If you decide to participate, the researcher will ask you to sign this statement and will give you a copy to keep.

Why am I being asked to take part in this research study?
I am asking you to participate because you are a current contingent faculty member at [X].

Why is this research study being done?
The purpose of this study is to explore contingent faculty experiences and their perceptions of institutional support at their current institution.

What will I be asked to do?
You will be asked to participate in an open-ended interview.

Per your, the participant’s discretion, there will be an opportunity for a follow-up interview to view study results.

Where will this take place and how much of my time will it take?
The interview will take place at a location of your choosing.

The interview may last up to 120 minutes, but could be shorter.

Per you, the participant’s discretion, there will be an opportunity for a follow-up interview to view study results.

Will there be any risk or discomfort to me?
There are no physical risks to this study. However, there may be a slight chance of social risk for contingent faculty participants. Participants may be embarrassed in sharing their lived experiences or feelings, and/or fear loss of a job if they share too much information. However, the student researcher will ensure confidentiality in the manner in which the data is collected and the findings and the results are written.

Participants will be informed that if they uncomfortable replying to any of the questions that are asked, they are free to decline from answering. They will be told both verbally and in the Consent Form that they are free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences.

Will I benefit by being in this research?
There will be no direct benefit to you for participating in the study. However, the information learned from this study may help better understand contingent faculty experiences, and their institutional support systems.
Who will see the information about me?

Your identity as a participant in this study will not be known to anyone except the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used when transcribing, and writing the research. Your part in this study will be confidential. Only the researcher and transcriptionist on this study will see the information about you. No reports or publications will use information that can identify you in any way or any individual as being of this project.

To assure confidentiality, any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with either an individual or an organization will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with the participant’s request/permission.

All data will be kept in personal files (USB drive) and on a personal computer that requires a password known only to the student researcher, Erin D. Vicente, and in a locked office. Any audio tapes will be locked in a filing cabinet in the student researcher’s locked office. Only the student researcher, Erin D. Vicente, will have access to the data. Anonymity of participants will be critical to participant confidentiality and participation. Any name used to identify a participant will be reflected by a pseudonym, including if a professional transcriptionist is used. A Transcriber Confidentiality Statement will be used if a professional transcriptionist is used. The researcher will follow observation protocol in recording information and consciously be aware of the role of reflexivity she brings to the research. Information will only be disclosed by request/permission of the participant.

Data will be used for the researcher’s dissertation, conferences, future lectures, presentations, journal articles, books, and/or research. Confidentiality of participants’ names will be kept even for these purposes.

Signed Consent Forms will be destroyed after three years. Data and documents, audio, electronic and written will be kept for an unspecified time in a locked file cabinet and on password protected electronic mediums such as a USB drive and computer, only available to the student researcher, Erin D. Vicente. After the thesis is completed, the consent forms from participants will be securely stored in the same location for three years.

In rare instances, authorized people may request to see research information about you and other people in this study. This is done only to be sure that the research is done properly. We would only permit people who are authorized by organizations such as the Northeastern University Institutional Review Board.

What will happen if I suffer any harm from this research?

No special arrangements will be made for compensation or for payment for treatment solely because of my participation in this research.

Can I stop my participation in this study?

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You do not have to participate if you do not want to and you can refuse to answer any question. Even if you begin the study, you may quit at any time. If you do not participate or if you decide to quit, you will not lose any rights, benefits, or services that you would otherwise have as an employee.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Who can I contact if I have questions or problems?</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you have any questions about this study, please feel free to contact Erin D. Vicente at <a href="mailto:vicente.ed@husky.neu.edu">vicente.ed@husky.neu.edu</a>, the person mainly responsible for the research. You can also contact Dr. Karen Reiss Medwed at <a href="mailto:k.reissmedwed@neu.edu">k.reissmedwed@neu.edu</a>, the Principal Investigator.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Who can I contact about my rights as a participant?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>If you have any questions about your rights in the research, you may contact Nan C. Regina, Director, Human Subject Research Protection, 490 Renaissance Park, Northeastern University, Boston, MA 02115. Tel: 617-373-4588, Email: <a href="mailto:n.regina@neu.edu">n.regina@neu.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Will I be paid for my participation?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Will it cost me anything to participate?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Is there anything else I need to know?</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>The student researcher is an Assistant Professor at Lasell College</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>I agree to take part in this research.</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature of participant</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Printed name of participant above</strong></th>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Signature of person who explained the study to the participant above and obtained consent</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Printed name of person above</strong></th>
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Appendix C
Sample Interview Questions for Contingent Faculty Participants
(Flexible Interview Question Guide based on direction of conversation)

Please state gender, age and what department you teach in.

1. What degrees have you earned and in what discipline? What is your professional experience?
2. How long have you been teaching at [X]?
3. Have you taught at any other higher education institutions? Do you currently still teach at those institutions?
4. How does [X] compare to those other institutions in physical size, space, capacity, student population, type of institution-private, public, co-ed, number of undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral programs, etc.?
5. Has [X]’s mission had any influence on why you chose to teach at [X], or how you teach in the classroom?
6. What is your career background?
7. What is your discipline (specialty)?
8. Why did you choose a career in teaching in higher education?
9. How do you define job satisfaction?
10. How would you describe your teaching style? Classroom set-up?
11. Do you teach face-to-face, online, hybrid, undergraduate or graduate courses?
12. Do you teach summer sessions? Have you been offered to teach summer sessions?
13. How many students do you have per class on average?
14. How would you describe the [X] student?
15. How often are you on campus? For how long?
16. How much time do you spend grading and planning?
17. Are you involved in any other institutional development at [X] (clubs, offices, job roles)?
18. What professional organizations are you involved with?
19. How do you define contingent faculty?
20. What resources does you identify as most important in aiding in your job role and positive job satisfaction levels?
21. In what specific ways does your institution invest in their part-time faculty (i.e. pay, benefits, professional development programs, departmental inclusion (meetings, events), other resources available)?
22. Do you go to conferences for your job role? Why or why not? Has [X] funded those conferences?
23. Are there any individual ways [X] has individually supported or not supported you?
24. How has [X] helped you carry out their connected learning mission in the classroom and beyond?
25. What role do you play in your student’s classroom experience? Their learning experience?
26. In your experience, what is rewarding about your job? The least rewarding? The most rewarding?
27. Do you have contact with other full-time faculty and administrators? For what purpose?
28. What are your interpersonal relationships like at [X] with other members of the institutional community (students, faculty, staff, etc.)?
29. Where do you see the future going for contingent faculty?

30. What are the differences you perceive, if any, between full-time and contingent faculty?

31. What is the culture of your institution surrounding contingent faculty?

32. How much does the institution rely on contingent faculty?

33. What is the rehiring process like?

34. Do you see yourself as replaceable? If so, why?

35. Do you have a choice of what days/time and courses you teach?

36. How reliable do you feel your job is as a contingent faculty member? Do you see yourself as replaceable? If so, why?

37. Any thoughts about unionizing?
Appendix D
Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement

Transcriber’s Letter of Confidentiality

I understand that I have been asked to listen to and transcribe the content of interview recordings or videos from research related to a class assignment/dissertation/research/specialized research. I agree to maintain confidentiality regarding the identity of those heard on the audio/video recordings and the contents of those discussions. Additionally, in preparing the transcripts, I will not identify anyone by name. All audio/video files will be permanently deleted following a written request by the researcher(s) to do so, upon completion of the project.

Erin D. Vicente
Researcher (print)

Erin D. Vicente
Researcher (signature)

05/28/15
Date

Stephanie
Transcriptionist (print)

Stephanie
Transcriptionist (signature)

28 Aug 2015
Date