

A PROFILE OF PART-TIME FACULTY IN CANADIAN UNIVERSITY NURSING PROGRAMMES

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Part-time workers in Canada are predominantly women. In 1988, 70% of part-time workers and 43% of all workers in Canada were female (Statistics Canada, 1988). Within Canadian university environments women are more likely than men to become and remain part-time academics (Lundy & Warne, 1990). To date, few Canadian studies have evaluated the status of faculty members. Ahmed (1989) reported on a McMaster University survey of the part-time faculty there. He also refers to two studies in his article, conducted in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Lundy and Warne (1990) reported on studies of part-time faculty at York University in 1983 and again in 1988. The author knows of no study which focused solely on female part-time academics.

A significant proportion of faculty members in Canadian university nursing programmes are part-time, and the majority are employed on a permanent or occasional basis (CAUSN Faculty Profile, 1987). It would seem reasonable to expect the employment of part-time faculty to continue, and perhaps increase, as university nursing programmes face fiscal restraints and women increasingly seek work arrangements that are more conducive to combining family and career.

The issue of part-time employment of nurse educators has not been extensively reported on in the literature. Bower, Fairchild, Hawkins, and Koundakjian (1980) addressed the responsibilities, opportunities, and employment terms of part-time nursing faculty. Hawkins, Bower, Fairchild, Koundakjian, and Simon (1987) conducted a study of role perceptions of part-time BSN faculty. Feldman and Keidel (1987) reported on the satisfactions and dissatisfactions, concluding that although part-time teaching allowed time for other pursuits, it lacked the compensation and benefits of full-time employment. Jackson (1988) suggested policies to accommodate this growing sub-group in nursing education. To the author's knowledge, these four American references comprise the most

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extensive reporting on part-time nursing faculty members. The author's own experience as a part-time nursing faculty member and the apparent lack of Canadian reports on this subject prompted the current study.

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to develop a profile of part-time faculty in Canadian university nursing programmes, focusing primarily on individuals' perceptions of their part-time role.

Research Questions

The specific questions addressed were as follows:

What are the characteristics of part-time nursing faculty?

What perceptions do part-time faculty have of their job responsibilities, security, and benefits?

What job satisfactions and/or dissatisfactions do part-time faculty have?

Method

This study is a replication of that conducted by Hawkins et al. (1987). The author wrote to all deans and directors of the 27 Canadian university nursing programmes to describe the study and invite them to participate. As these deans/directors responded, appropriate numbers of questionnaires were sent to the participating institutions for distribution to their part-time faculty. Data were collected in the spring of 1989. To ensure anonymity, questionnaires were not coded nor was the responder identifiable in any way.

All part-time faculty members from nursing programmes who agreed to participate in the study were included in the sample. The author classified as "part-time" those individuals who the school or faculty in question regarded as part-time, a definition consistent with that of the Canadian Association of University Schools of Nursing.

The questionnaire used in this study was the same as that used by Hawkins et al. (1987), and was comprised of four parts. Section A was designed to determine the reasons for faculty choosing part-time employment. Section B consisted of 16 statements on job responsibilities, security, and benefits. Respondents were asked to complete a Likert-type scale indicating their degree of agreement on each of these statements. Section C was composed of 20 items describing different kinds of opportunities a part-time position might offer.

Respondents were again asked to complete a Likert-type scale indicating their degree of satisfaction with these job characteristics. Section D included 16 items designed to provide demographic information.

The reliability of this research tool was as follows: Cronbach's alpha 0.86; standardized alpha 0.86 for the satisfaction scale. A panel of experts (part-time faculty not included in the sample) was used to determine face and content validity of the tool.

Results

Of the 27 deans/directors approached, 18 agreed to participate in the study (67%). A total of 221 questionnaires were mailed to the participating institutions; 60 were completed and returned by part-time faculty (27%).

The questionnaire completed by deans/directors established that all schools and faculties participating in the study employed part-time faculty members, with the possible exception of one, which stated it "occasionally" did so. The mean number of full-time faculty per school was 21; and part-time, 13.

The sample of 60 part-time respondents had spent a mean number of 4.6 years in their current positions, with a range of 0-23 years. They had been practicing for an average of 13 years (range 0-35), with a mean of 1.8 years of stop-out time for family. Eighty-three percent were employed part-time by choice. The reasons for working part-time are in Table 1. "Family obligations" headed the list (53%). As one respondent stated, "I enjoy my part-time appointment immensely. It allows me to be at home with my young children 2 1/2 days a week." Another person echoed this sentiment: "The university has offered me the flexibility to meet family and personal work/development needs." Both of these respondents voiced a common theme that saw part-time employment as a temporary arrangement while their children were young.

Of the 60 faculty respondents, 85% were married. The mean number of children living at home per respondent was 1.4 with a range of 0-5; 65% of parents had 0-2 children in the preschool age range. Thirty-two percent reported no children living at home. The average age of the part-time faculty members was 39 years, with a range of 25-56. Fifty-seven percent listed a baccalaureate in nursing as their highest degree; 41% had master's degrees in either nursing or education; 2% had doctoral degrees. Sixty-five percent were at the level of lecturer or clinical instructor, and 93% were not in tenure track positions.

Three-quarters of the part-time faculty in the sample were responsible for 50% or more of a full-time workload (Table 2). The majority (68%) worked as part of a team. Their specific responsibilities are in Table 3. The mean salary for respondents (n = 54) was \$20,719 with a range of \$700 to \$58,000. Seventy

Table 1

Reasons for Accepting Part-time Faculty Employment (n = 60)

Reason	Percentage
Family obligations	53
Interest in part-time career only	40
Need for supplemental income	28
Involvement in another professional position	25
Interest in trying out teaching without a major career commitment	25
Involvement in clinical practice	20
Full-time position not available	17
Insufficient educational preparation for full-time position	12
Pursuit of advanced degree	12
Need for teaching experience as a prerequisite for a full-time position	3
Postponement of probation period toward tenure	2
Other	8

Table 2

Percentage of Full-time Work Load Reported by Part-time Faculty (n = 57)

% of Full-time Work Load	Part-time Faculty (%)
0 - 24	0
25 - 49	25
50 - 74	46
75 - 99	23

percent of individuals received 0-24% of full-time fringe benefits; 17% obtained 25-49%; 6% received 50-99%; and 7% received full benefits (n = 54).

Faculty members' opinions about their part-time teaching experiences are in Table 4. Items examined were perceptions of salary, job security, opportunities to learn and advance, freedom, and workload. Over 75% of respondents stated they should have similar responsibilities and benefits to full-time faculty, with respect to teaching and scholarly work (items 1, 2, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16 in

Table 3

Responsibilities of Part-time Faculty (n = 60)

Responsibility	Percent
Clinical Supervision	87
Student Advisement	77
Attend Faculty/School Meetings	75
Classroom Teaching	65
Attend Professional Meetings	33
Own Clinical Practice	17
Publishing	13
Community Service	13
Research	10

Table 4). Fifty-eight percent believed they should serve on committees in their school or faculty. One respondent commented that she "...would like to become more involved on committees and decision-making...but I am the exception — many of my co-workers (part-time) expect or demand remuneration for attending meetings." Several respondents commented on the difficulties of trying to attend committee meetings scheduled on their non-working days. Eighty-four percent agreed there was little job security; seven respondents expressed frustration with this. Although 75% of respondents felt that part of their job satisfaction came from working with colleagues (item 8 in Table 4), 25% felt "looked down on," "unappreciated," "exploited," or "abused" by their colleagues. However, 85% felt that part-time faculty have a positive effect on the quality of education. This tension between perceived response from the faculty and pride in their work was illustrated in such comments as: "I love clinical nursing and patient contact and interaction...I feel my job as a clinical instructor is not highly recognized although it remains the basis of the nursing pyramid"; "I feel that people who *choose* part-time work make as good if not better employees, because they are giving their all on the days they work and really enjoying it...I do feel part-time faculty are looked down on (by full-time faculty)..."; "I feel part-time faculty are used and not appreciated or acknowledged for their contribution to student education"; "At times, full-time staff give the impression that clinical experience is less significant than the hours spent in the lecture halls. However, students feel they are truly 'nursing' through their hands-on work...teaching [of this nature] is very rewarding and challenging."

Table 4

Faculty Opinions (%) of the Part-time Teaching Role (n = 60)

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE
1. I should be involved in test construction.	25	47	3	15	2	8
2. I should be involved in determining course content for the courses I am teaching.	43	38	5	10	0	3
3. I am more vulnerable to administrative direction and decisions than my full-time colleagues.	20	24	19	27	9	2
4. I am less able than my full-time colleagues to make demands in terms of size of class or clinical groups.	17	35	7	35	3	3
5. My present position offers little job security.	59	25	5	9	0	2
6. I have had little orientation or in-service preparation for my position.	30	32	0	25	10	3
7. I am interested in participating in governance on a faculty/ school of nursing and/or university level.	14	12	36	29	3	7
8. Part of my job satisfaction comes from association with faculty colleagues.	22	53	2	18	5	0
9. Part-time faculty have a positive effect on the quality of education.	32	53	12	3	0	0
10. As a part-time faculty person, I carry a comparatively heavy teaching load with regard to contact hours.	27	37	5	30	2	0
11. My part-time faculty salary should be at the same rate as that of full-time faculty.	40	38	13	7	2	0
12. I feel that I should get fringe benefits along with my other pay.	42	46	3	5	2	2
13. As a part-time faculty person, I feel that part of my job description should be to serve on faculty/school of nursing committees.	15	43	20	18	3	0
14. I should have a vote in faculty/ school of nursing committees and meetings.	23	55	12	8	2	0
15. I should accrue time toward tenure.	25	50	10	13	2	0
16. I should be allowed to advance in rank.	32	57	7	3	0	2

Faculty were also asked to indicate their degree of satisfaction with various job characteristics in their current position, using a Likert-type scale (Table 5). Respondents appeared to be most satisfied with their collegial relationships, the opportunity to fully use their knowledge and skills, the ability to build a professional reputation, and with the freedom/flexibility in their role. They seemed least satisfied with job benefits (items 2, 4, 16, 17) and opportunities for professional growth. One faculty member wrote, "It was my choice to transfer to part-time work (family responsibilities) — this certainly put a 'cap' on my progress through the academic ranks." Another said, "Part-time allows for little or no career planning. It appears to suit the needs of the university but short-changes it as well because part-time faculty tend to do their work and do not have time for the scholarly activities which would add to the faculty as a whole." Still another respondent commented: "My main frustration is that I cannot advance...as a part-time faculty member I am not eligible for tenure."

Comparison to Original Study

In the study conducted by Hawkins et al. (1987) on part-time faculty in the United States, 193 of the possible 380 baccalaureate nursing programmes in that country agreed to participate in the study. From a sample of 800 part-time faculty, 526 returned questionnaires (66% response rate). In the present study, 18 of the 27 university nursing programmes in Canada agreed to participate. From a sample of 221 part-time faculty, 60 returned questionnaires (27% response rate).

With the above disparity in response rates in mind, some highlights of the comparison between the two studies can be made. In both studies, respondents were similar in age, marital status, mean number of children, average number of years nursing practice, mean stop-out time from career for family reasons, and the percentage of full-time workload for which they were responsible. The American respondents had been in their current positions longer than the Canadians had (mean of 4.6 years compared to 2.9), and had a lower average yearly salary (\$8,962 compared to \$20,710). For both groups, the percentage of full-time fringe benefits was similar at both ends of the scale (100% and less than 25% of full-time benefits), but more Canadian respondents received 25-49% of full-time fringe benefits.

With respect to faculty opinions about their part-time teaching experiences, both groups felt that they should have teaching and scholarly work responsibilities and benefits similar to full-time faculty. However, a larger number of Canadian respondents felt strongly about having equality with full-time faculty salary scales and fringe benefits. Fewer American faculty stated that they should serve on committees in their school or faculty, (49% compared to 58%), and fewer agreed that they had little job security (70% compared to 84%). Although both groups strongly agreed that part of their job satisfaction came from working

Table 5

Faculty Perceptions (%) of Job Satisfaction Criteria (n = 60)

	VERY SATISFIED	SATISFIED	UNDECIDED/NEUTRAL	DISSATISFIED	VERY DISSATISFIED	NOT APPLICABLE
1. To advance myself in my chosen career.	2	53	7	25	12	2
2. To earn the salary I feel I deserve	3	33	10	35	15	3
3. To work with colleagues who share my goals and beliefs.	10	65	7	17	2	0
4. To feel secure from layoffs.	0	12	20	27	37	5
5. To grow and gain new knowledge and skills through faculty development programs.	8	33	10	42	7	0
6. To have an opportunity for further education.	3	28	20	32	10	7
7. To work no harder than is comfortable for my life style.	3	39	30	10	10	7
8. To have a position with status.	2	52	23	0	17	7
9. To be able to deal with important social issues in nursing.	3	45	23	27	0	2
10. To enhance my professional growth and development.	8	55	7	28	2	0
11. To make full use of my present knowledge and skills.	15	56	7	19	3	0
12. To have freedom to carry out my own ideas.	5	60	8	25	2	0
13. To build up my professional reputation.	8	63	8	18	2	0
14. To work for people whose professional judgment and ability I respect.	12	60	15	12	2	0
15. To have a ranked faculty position.	3	22	18	28	15	13
16. To accrue time toward promotion in rank and/or tenure.	0	5	12	42	25	17
17. To receive fringe benefits.	2	14	9	48	20	9
18. To be appreciated for the contributions I make to the nursing program.	10	38	15	23	12	2
19. To publish and do research.	0	22	21	33	9	16
20. To work the number of hours I work each week.	11	56	7	9	12	5

with colleagues, more American faculty agreed with this statement (89% compared to 75%). Similar proportions of Canadians and Americans felt that part-time faculty have a positive effect on the quality of education. More Canadians felt that they had less power than their full-time colleagues to control the size of classes or clinical groups (52% compared to 41%); but significantly fewer were interested in participating in faculty or school governance (25% compared to 41%), a potential avenue for increasing their power base.

According to job satisfaction criteria, American faculty expressed overall higher levels of satisfaction with their current positions. Job characteristics giving highest satisfaction were the same for both groups (collegial relationships, using knowledge and skill, enhancing professional reputation, and flexibility). Both groups were least satisfied with their job benefits. Canadian faculty felt more dissatisfied with opportunities for professional growth.

Discussion

This is a preliminary study and, as with any survey design, it has accompanying limitations. Obtaining the data via a written questionnaire did not allow for intensive probing and analysis, both of which would have been desirable.

It is interesting to note that 83% of individuals in this study voluntarily chose part-time work, probably in part due to family obligations. "Family obligations" was the most commonly cited reason (53%) for accepting to work part-time. One can predict that this will become an increasingly important reason for choosing a part-time career, not only to allow for the care of children, but also aging parents. However, between 12 and 25% of respondents were also committed to other professional activities (clinical practice, other job, pursuing an advanced degree). Seventeen percent indicated that at least one reason they were working part-time was because there were no full-time positions available. Given that the funds for Canadian universities are currently dwindling, it can be expected that this percentage will increase. This raises the issue of voluntary versus involuntary part-time employment. Lundy and Warne (1990) reported that whether or not one is voluntarily a part-time faculty member has a strong impact on job satisfaction.

Part-time faculty contribute significantly to the education of nurses in Canadian university programmes. Three-quarters of the part-time faculty in this study were responsible for 50% or more of the workload of a full-time faculty member. Most part-time faculty were in unranked positions, indicated that a baccalaureate was their highest degree, had clinical supervision as their major responsibility (although the majority did some classroom teaching), and received a lower salary proportionate to the workload with virtually no fringe benefits. Few conducted research or published. Many respondents were dissatisfied with several aspects of their positions, notably: an insufficient salary, and

the lack of job security, opportunities to grow and advance in their careers, fringe benefits, and opportunities to publish and do research.

There are sure to be both short- and long-term effects of having much of the teaching of future nurses done by dissatisfied faculty who have insufficient academic qualifications (in terms of what is normally expected in a university setting). Franklin (1988) described part-time employment in academic settings as "a short-sighted management practice." Hartleb and Vilter (1986) supported this view. On the other hand, Leslie (1989) argued that in some cases a program is strengthened by having part-time faculty. Respondents in the study by Lundy and Warne (1990) felt that part-time faculty injected "new blood" and good teachers into the program. Students were seen to gain by contact with those who were out there in "the real world," and this contact strengthened ties between the university and the community. Munsey (1986) wrote that some hiring of part-time faculty could potentially strengthen a program by increasing the scope of course offerings. It can be argued that part-time, baccalaureate level faculty who are close to the real world of nursing in a clinical sense can actually contribute more to a student's knowledge of clinical nursing than an academically well-accredited faculty member who has not been clinically active. Lundy and Warne (1989) found that students were indifferent to the official status of their professors. McGaughey (1985) maintains that knowledge base, communication ability, and commitment to and motivation for teaching are the key issues in having quality instruction, not whether a faculty member is full-time or part-time. McGaughey's findings raise the issue of faculty evaluation: full-time, tenure-track faculty undergo vigorous evaluation when they apply for tenure and promotion, but part-time faculty do not.

Perhaps the key to dealing with many of the above issues is in team work. Given that most part-time faculty work as part of a team, their particular strengths can be merged with those of full-time faculty (e.g. in research) to provide a quality "package" of instruction for future nurses.

A further issue raised by this study is the exploitation of part-time faculty. Many commented that they receive negative feedback from their full-time colleagues, and most were grappling with inequities in many job areas. Abuse of part-time faculty has been discussed by several authors (Ahmed, 1989; Franklin, 1988; Gordon, 1987). Lundy and Warne (1990) stated that part-time faculty are on the periphery of the professorate, as witnessed by the lack of discussion about them in a major 1984 report on Canadian Universities, *To Know Ourselves: The Report of the Commission on Canadian Studies*. Breslauer (1985) maintains it is difficult to prove that part-time faculty, who are mostly women, are indeed disadvantaged because there are insufficient data on female academics. Despite the fact that part-time hiring is on the increase (Ahmed, 1989), universities do not submit such data to Statistics Canada regarding the relevant numbers, location, rank, or fields (Lundy & Warne, 1990). As long as

there is no profile of part-time faculty, it will be difficult to develop policies, conditions, or standards to deal with their exploitation and abuse. Vaughan (1986) maintains that part-time faculty tend to be more subservient to the whims of administrators; the impetus for change may therefore not come from them. However, in 1987 the Canadian Union of Educational Workers sponsored the first Canadian conference on part-time teaching in the university. At the conference much frustration was expressed by part-time faculty and it was made clear that there is a need to grapple more forcefully with issues such as pay equity, fair procedures, and academic freedom (Gordon, 1987).

Recommendations for Further Study

This survey attempted to construct a profile of part-time faculty in Canadian university nursing programmes. The findings point to the need for further study, including the following:

An in-depth study of part-time faculty in university nursing programmes should be organized on a national level, but carried out independently at each university. This would identify university guidelines or contractual obligations related to the appointment of part-time nursing faculty and issues that part-time faculty share nationally. Students, administrators, unions, and full- and part-time faculty should be included. Such a study would allow for policies, conditions, and standards to be developed for a given university, as each institution would have different goals, needs, and priorities.

Each nursing program should carefully examine how it is strengthened and weakened by part-time faculty. A concerted effort should be made to diminish the factors that weaken the program (e.g. carefully plan team work at the program and course levels).

A study comparing the faculty who work part-time voluntarily and those who do so involuntarily could identify how these two groups impact on the program and the faculty environment in general. Recommendations may not be the same for both groups.

A study examining the workloads of part-time faculty is in order. It would be important to discover whether they have adequate time for course preparation and whether there is a workload inequity between full- and part-time faculty. Excessive workloads could cause them to look elsewhere for more manageable employment, with subsequent loss by the university of their expertise.

CONCLUSION

Canadian universities can no longer ignore the growing presence of part-time faculty, and university nursing programmes must look at the impact of part-time faculty on the quality and outcome of their programmes. Nursing, unlike some university programmes, has a competency-based, outcome-oriented curriculum. It is important to know whether the use of part-time faculty, particularly if they are not permanent, causes major disruption to the program as a whole. How many university nursing programmes appoint part-time or sessional faculty at the last minute, and what are the results? Since part-time faculty members will probably continue to be part of university nursing programmes, there must be a concerted effort to integrate them into the life of the program. Integration is also essential for part-time faculty members themselves, so that they will feel valued, respected, and important to the programme. Part-time faculty members must discuss the issues involved among themselves and with their full-time counterparts. Further study is needed. All of these efforts will help to meet the needs of part-time faculty and their institutions. This important sector of the nursing faculty must be acknowledged and dealt with if we are to maintain and improve the quality of education of future nurses.

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RÉSUMÉ

Portrait du professeur de faculté enseignant à mi-temps dans les programmes en sciences infirmières des universités canadiennes

Cet article fournit des données élémentaires sur les professeurs des facultés en sciences infirmières qui enseignent à mi-temps dans les programmes en sciences infirmières des universités canadiennes. Soixante enseignants de la faculté travaillant à mi-temps ont rempli un questionnaire où ils ont noté leurs responsabilités, les possibilités d'avancement, leurs périodes d'emploi, la perception de leur rôle et leur satisfaction ou leur mécontentement. La plupart d'entre eux étaient employés à mi-temps par choix, surtout pour des raisons familiales. La responsabilité principale de ces enseignants consistait à superviser les étudiants d'un point de vue clinique. Néanmoins, la plupart d'entre eux pensaient qu'ils devraient avoir des responsabilités d'enseignement identiques à celles des enseignants à plein temps. Les personnes interrogées semblaient tout à fait satisfaites de leurs relations collégiales, de leur contribution professionnelle et de la flexibilité dans leur travail. Les avantages sociaux et les possibilités d'avancement étaient les points qui les satisfaisaient le moins.

Cette étude montre que les professeurs de facultés qui enseignent à mi-temps et qui ont été interrogés participent de façon significative à la formation des infirmiers et infirmières dans les programmes universitaires canadiens. Une recherche complémentaire doit s'attacher à l'apport des enseignants des facultés travaillant à mi-temps sur la qualité et les résultats des programmes en sciences infirmières. On doit également prêter attention aux politiques, aux normes et aux conditions qui visent à la satisfaction des besoins des enseignants des facultés travaillant à mi-temps et de leurs institutions. Ces démarches doivent contribuer à garantir le maintien et l'amélioration de la qualité de l'enseignement dispensé aux futurs infirmiers et infirmières.