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The quest for tenure-track faculty positions by community college adjunct faculty

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The University of San Francisco

The Quest for Tenure-Track Faculty Positions by Community
College Adjunct Faculty

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

Department of Leadership Studies

Organization and Leadership Program

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Leandra Powell Martin

San Francisco, California

May 2007

This dissertation, written under the direction of the candidate's dissertation committee and approved by the members of the committee, had been presented to and accepted by the Faculty of the School of Education in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education. The content and research methodologies presented in this work represent the work of the candidate alone.

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CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

Sudhi came to my office and slowly closed the door. His eyes were filled with tears and his voice was husky as he said, "I am so sorry, I do not want to do this, but I have to resign" (personal communication, October 6, 2005, p. 379). Sudhi was an adjunct faculty member at a California community college. He had just learned that his wife was pregnant. As an adjunct math instructor making his living by teaching at three different colleges, Sudhi received no medical benefits for his wife. Although he saw adjunct teaching as a way to achieve his goal of becoming a full-time community college math instructor, Sudhi felt he must abandon his dream and take a full-time position in industry that would provide him more job security and provide medical benefits for his family. Sudhi is an excellent math instructor who consistently receives exemplary supervisory, peer and student teaching evaluations. He went to a well-respected college and graduate school where he earned top grades. He received an award for being the best teacher among the teaching assistants at his graduate school. He faced intense competition when he had previously applied for tenure-track

community college teaching positions. In his most recent unsuccessful application for a tenure-track community college teaching position, he was in an application pool with over a hundred other qualified individuals (Solorzano, personal communication, April 2005). As Sudhi started to leave my office, he paused and looked at me and asked, "Is there anything I could have done, is there anything I can do now, that would help me get a full-time teaching job?"

Sudhi's story exemplifies the problem being explored in this study. The number of community college adjunct faculty members who want tenure-track faculty positions is much greater than the number of available positions each year. Making matters worse is the heavy competition current community college adjunct faculty members face when they apply for open community college tenure-track positions from individuals currently employed in four year colleges, private industries, government positions or from individuals who recently completed their graduate degrees. This study will explore the behaviors and experiences of eight former adjunct faculty members who were successful in obtaining a tenure-track community college faculty position. If similar experiences, traits, or behaviors are identified in the career paths of former adjunct faculty

who were successful in obtaining a tenure-track position at a community college, then current adjunct faculty members who desire tenure-track positions may be able to learn from the experiences of others. Current adjunct faculty may be able to adapt and evolve, if they choose, and develop the experiences, traits, and behaviors that would allow them to increase their fitness level and increase their chances of success in obtaining a tenure-track position.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the behaviors and experiences of community college adjunct faculty members who have obtained tenure-track positions. Specifically this study explored the following behaviors or experiences the faculty members had when they were adjunct faculty members and how these behaviors or experiences related to the faculty members' eventual success in obtaining a tenure-track faculty position at a community college: (a) how they adapted themselves to their particular community college, (b) how they engaged with other people professionally, (c) how they were influenced by their other work or school experiences, and (d) how they allowed themselves to be open to chance events or small changes.

The methodology was a qualitative case study approach. The study participants were current tenure-track faculty members who were previously adjunct faculty members at that same institution. Eight faculty members were interviewed for this study.

Background and Need for the Study

Public two-year colleges employed 240,400 adjunct instructional faculty as compared to 138,300 full-time instructional faculty in 2003 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). Although 50% of adjunct faculty prefer part-time work, the other 50% would prefer a full-time position based on data obtained during a national quantitative study on postsecondary part-time faculty (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). In the same study, 47% of part-time public two-year college faculty reported that they taught part-time because full-time positions were unavailable (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002).

The competition for new openings for community college faculty members can be fierce. Current adjunct faculty members face more than just competition from other adjunct faculty members. A study by Gahn and Twombly (2001), utilizing the restricted data from the 1993 National Survey

of Post-Secondary Faculty, found that only 33.2% of newly hired faculty at community colleges listed community colleges as their last main job. The other successful candidates came from four-year colleges or universities, secondary or elementary education, hospital/health care, business or were hired directly out of graduate programs.

A report generated from the restricted database of the 2004 National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that 8,295 full-time faculty were hired in public community colleges in 2001, a year in which 222,259 adjunct faculty were employed at public community colleges (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). Given that 50% of adjunct community college faculty members would prefer a full-time position (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002) and the high competition from individuals outside of the community college system for open full-time positions (Gahn & Twombly, 2001), these numbers illustrate why it is so difficult for current adjunct community college instructors to receive tenure-track positions. However despite these odds, each year some community college faculty members are successful in achieving this goal.

Very little is known about the hiring decisions for tenure-track community college faculty (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004). Community colleges have a relatively

standard application process and set of hiring criteria. However, it is not clear how the hiring committees, hiring manager, and college president decide the best candidate for any particular position when they have an overabundance of qualified candidates. This is a particular mystery to current adjunct community college faculty who are often not selected for these positions although they work alongside tenured faculty daily, teaching the same classes and working with the same students.

It is very difficult to obtain data on hiring decisions from hiring committees, hiring managers or college presidents because of the highly confidential, and possible litigious, nature of the information (Davidson, February 14, 2005; Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004). A different approach was to obtain information on the hiring process by examining the people who were hired. This study focused on the particular sub-section of tenure-track hires who were former adjunct faculty members at the same college where they received their tenure-track position.

Theoretical Foundations

Overview

The theoretical foundation used in this study was complexity science applied to individual careers. A brief

overview of the background and the key concepts involved in complexity science will be given in this section. This will be followed by a discussion of the use of complexity theory in career counseling and an overview of the ways that the key concepts in complexity science were used in this study.

Science has used mathematical modeling as a tool to gain both understanding and predictability of the natural and physical world. The use of mathematical modeling, along with the scientific method, has resulted in great scientific advances and created a world where scientists generally believe that all science could be reduced to mathematical equations (Gleick, 1987; Goerner, 1999).

That perception started to change when scientists discovered that although simple systems can be reduced to mathematical equations, complex systems cannot. Henri Poincare, a French mathematician, showed in 1892, that a three-body problem, a classic physics problem, could not be solved with traditional mathematics (Goerner, 1999). Slowly more scientists and mathematicians discovered that complex systems could not be reduced to mathematical equations. A new theoretical approach, commonly known as chaos theory, complexity science or nonlinear dynamics, has been increasingly used in the natural and physical sciences to understand complex systems and their interactions.

One of the central concepts in complexity science is that a complex system, with a multitude of variables that interact with each other, yields a system that cannot be reduced to a traditional mathematical model. In other words, a complex system cannot be reduced to the sum of its individual parts and must be examined as a total system. In the same way, a system cannot be treated as being isolated from the environment surrounding the system. The influences and interactions of the surrounding environment must be considered for every system.

Another important difference between traditional mathematical modeling and complexity science is the treatment of small influences on the system. Traditional mathematical modeling focused on the main variables and disregarded small influences, commonly called noise, as unimportant. Complexity science, however, pays particular attention to small influences because they may have a large, nonlinear effect on the total system (Gleick, 1987; Goerner, 1999; Kauffman, 1995; Stewart, 2002).

Complexity science was initially designed to help understand complex systems in the natural and physical sciences. However, social scientists discovered that the same basic principles applied to complex social systems as well and can be applied to such diverse fields as

organizations and businesses (Hock, 1999; Lewin & Regine, 2001). Chui (2000), after interviewing Stephen Hawking, quoted him pronouncing that "the next century will be the century of complexity."

Recently, a complexity science approach has been applied to career counseling (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; McKay, Bright, & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003). The traditional theories on career development "tend to focus on a small range of variables believed to be relevant to career decision-making as a rational and controlled process of logical deduction" (Pryor & Bright, 2003, p. 123). A complexity approach recognizes that an individual's career is unique based on his or her particular situation, and the particular environment in which he or she lives, and can only be understood in terms of each individual's entire life history. A complexity approach acknowledges the large influence that random events or small changes might have on each individual's career. Careers are highly interdependent with their environment including the local, regional and global economies, government regulations, and the particular industries and needs of the surrounding community. Because of this interdependence, careers may adapt in response to their environment. A complexity approach for careers allows each career to be looked at in

terms of the multiplicity of variables and influences from the individual's particular environment (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003).

A recent study by McKay, Bright and Pryor (2005) validated the concept of using complexity science in career counseling applications. "Chaos career counseling involves qualitative assessment procedures as opposed to the objective assessment procedures used in trait matching career counseling" (p. 100). They compared the effectiveness of chaos career counseling and trait matching counseling using sixty volunteers who were randomly assigned to either a chaos career counseling group, a trait matching group, or a control group. The researchers found that while both chaos career counseling and trait matching counseling were better than no counseling, chaos career counseling had a longer lasting impact on their subjects than trait matching counseling.

Complexity science provides the theoretical foundation needed to understand and analyze an individual's career. This particular study focused on the careers of tenure-track or tenured community college faculty who were previously employed as adjunct faculty at the same college where they received their tenure-track position. The particular topics within complexity science that were used

in this study were complex adaptive entities, sensitive dependence, fitness peaks and patches, and networks.

Key Concepts in Complexity Science

Complex Adaptive Entities

Complex systems have a multitude of variables that interact with each other and their environment. Complex adaptive entities are discrete components of a larger system that "have the ability to maintain themselves, although their components and even their shapes may change. In this sense, they have life. Life is the ability of the entity to maintain itself, or autopoiesis" (Bloch, 2005, p. 197). Complex adaptive entities adapt and change as they interact with the world around them.

Complex adaptive entities can be biological systems such as ecosystems and the biosphere (S. A. Levin, 2005; Proctor & Larson, 2005). They may be social systems, such as organizations, businesses, or even careers, that have the ability to maintain themselves as they evolve and change in response to their environment (Bloch, 2005; Losada & Heaphy, 2004). "The most striking feature of an autopoietic [*sic*] system is that it pulls itself up by its bootstraps and becomes distinct from its environment through its own dynamics, in such a way that both things are inseparable" (Maturana & Varela, 1987, pp. 46, 47).

In career counseling using complexity science, careers are seen as complex adaptive entities. A career is a discrete component of an individual's life and is influenced by a large number of different variables. Careers adapt and change over time in response to interactions with their environment. An individual's career may radically change shape during a person's lifetime yet it still maintains its individual identity as that particular individual's career (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003).

The careers of the participants in this study were viewed as complex adaptive entities. The way the participants adapted their behavior to their particular environment at the colleges where they worked, and how these adaptations influenced the participant's career were analyzed as part of this study.

Sensitive Dependence

Sensitive dependence, the concept that a small initial difference can result in very large differences, is the principle developed by Edward Lorenz (1963) as he studied meteorology. Lorenz questioned the feasibility of predicting the long term weather when he found that "Slightly differing initial states can evolve into considerably different states" (p. 130).

Careers have sensitive dependence when a small event may result in a large change. A chance meeting, for example, may change the trajectory of an entire career. A large change, such as a new degree, does not always result in a substantial change in a career. Bright and Pryor (2005) pointed out how chaos theory addressed the "Neglected realities of career decision making, such as chance, unpredictability, the limits of knowledge at the point of decision making, the limitations of goals, and the nonlinearity of change" (p. 10).

Bloch (2005) suggested that career counselors could apply the concept of sensitive dependence to their practice if they "help clients understand the power of small changes and help them identify those they might attempt" (p. 204). If clients understand that small changes might result in a large effect, they might be more open to recognizing and capitalizing on chance events or making small changes in behavior or attitude or be open to elements that could be leveraged.

Sensitive dependence was used in this study to help understand and analyze how chance events and small changes might have influenced the career paths of the study participants.

Fitness Peaks and Patches

Kauffman (1995) used the concept of fitness peaks to gauge how an entity is adapting to its environment. As complex adaptive entities make significant changes, their fitness with their environment can increase, decrease or remain unchanged. A high fitness peak is an indication of a particularly good fit between the entity and its environment whereas low fitness peak can indicate a poor match between the entity and its environment. Stewart (2002) used the concept of fitness landscapes to model the possible paths that a complex adaptive entity could take and how these different paths could influence how the organism evolves and changes, as the entity adapts to its environment. A high fitness peak in a landscape signifies a good fit between the entity and their environment. A high fitness peak in a career could mean that the individual is very well suited for that particular career.

Patches can be used to model the behaviors of coevolving species and the search for optimal fitness in both biological and social systems (Kauffman, 1995; Watts, 2003). The premise is that the optimal fitness in a larger system can be obtained by creating patches, subgroups of a larger system, and letting these patches seek their

individual fitness peaks, thus maximizing the fitness of the system as a whole.

Patches, in terms of career theory, might be individual job situations within a person's career. A high fitness peak might be a particularly good work situation within the particular job situation or patch whereas a low fitness peak may indicate a mismatch between an individual's skills and the skills required for that particular job. A high fitness peak in one patch tends to promote a higher level of fitness in an adjacent patch (Bloch, 2005; Kauffman, 1995; Watts, 2003). This may also apply to careers.

Networks

Stanley Milgram, in 1967, tested the concept that any person on earth is connected to any other person on earth through a series of acquaintances. He gave randomly selected people from Boston and Omaha letters to mail to a specific person who lived in Sharon, Massachusetts. The catch was that they could only mail the letter to someone they knew on a first name basis. In turn, that person would mail it to someone they knew on a first name basis until the letter eventually made it to the intended recipient. The goal was to record the typical number of mailings required for the final recipient to receive the letter.

Milgram found that the letters typically reached the person in six steps or less (Watts, 2003).

The network in Milgram's experiment works because each person is a part of a cluster of acquaintances. The clusters are connected by a few well-connected people who are in both groups. Other examples of networks include electrical grids, epidemics of disease, internet viruses, and crowd behavior (Watts, 2003).

Networks play an important role in career development. Granovetter (1974) was exploring the relationship between jobs and social contacts when he wrote "careers are not made up of random jumps from one job to another, but rather that individuals rely on contacts acquired at various stages of their work-life, and before" (p. 85). People form networks at their workplaces with their coworkers, their clients, suppliers and even their counterparts at competing companies.

Many networks follow a power law distribution where a few nodes in a network have a high number of connections and a large number of nodes have a much lower number of connections. In these networks, if a person is one of the highly connected nodes in a workplace, meaning that he or she has many connections both with members of his or her own affiliation group and also with members of different

affiliation groups, he or she might have a great deal of influence and control within this workplace. The ability to form a large number of connections or particularly strong connections in a work situation may increase a person's fitness peak within a particular job. A highly connected node with many connections outside their particular affiliation group or a node with particularly strong individual connections, may find that these contacts may result in new job opportunities within their workplace or in a different workplace.

A different way to look at the power that a few highly connected or influential people can have in a network is found using the concept of centrality. According to Watts, "the intuitive appeal of centrality is ... even a large complex network will reveal itself to hinge on some small subset of influential players, information brokers, and critical resources" (2003, p. 52).

It is impossible to predict which connections might prove to be critical in facilitating new job opportunities in the future. Granovetter (1974), in an application of sensitive dependence, found that strong ties were not necessarily the most important in a person's career. He noted that a weaker tie might be the tie that proved to be critical in an individual's career.

There are two distinct categories of personal work networks (Ibarra, 1993). One category is called an instrumental network which includes exchange of work resources, professional expertise, and other job-related information. The other category is called expressive networks which includes friendship and social support. This category includes a higher level of closeness between individuals. Some networks are a combination of both types and are called overlapping networks (Stackman & Pinder, 1995).

Each individual has his or her own unique network based on his or her own circumstances and behaviors. The particular networks formed by each participant at their college and in other work related situations and the way these particular networks influences the participant's career were examined during this study.

Summary

Each individual has a unique career path that is constantly changing based on such diverse factors as the credentials earned, life and work experiences, work relationships, work related behaviors and attitudes and external factors such as the local, national and global economy. Complexity science, particularly complex adaptive entities, sensitive dependence, fitness peaks and patches,

and networks was used to understand and analyze the career development of the subgroup of community college adjunct instructors who were successful in obtaining a tenure track position.

Careers can be thought of as complex adaptive entities (Bloch, 2005). Careers seldom unfold in the way they were originally planned. Factors completely outside of the control of an individual, such as the local economy or when his or her boss decides to retire, may make a tremendous difference to an individual career. Careers change shape and evolve over time as they adapt to both internal changes and in response to the unique environment surrounding them.

Sometimes careers can be radically changed by random events or small influences. Sensitive dependence provides a framework to understand how chance events or small influences might have influence the career paths of the participants in this study. Variables or events that could not be explained might be dismissed as noise and considered unimportant in traditional approaches. Sensitive dependence explains why sometimes these variables or events are not noise and may make a big difference in career path.

A career can be thought of as a quilt of individual patches, or jobs. The career, however, is much more than the sum of the individual patches. To understand a career,

the entire quilt must be examined as a whole, in addition to examining the individual patches and the interactions between the different patches. Within each patch, an individual will have a fitness peak. A particularly high fitness peak indicates a high correlation between the individual abilities and desires and that particular job. Although each patch is separate from the other patches, one patch might greatly influence a different patch.

Networks, an important dimension of complexity science, are very applicable to career counseling. Networks can help individuals find new jobs, obtain job references, or perform better in their current job by increasing their fitness levels. Well-connected nodes or nodes with particularly strong ties within a group, organization, or company may be particularly valuable within their workplace and may also be better able to find new career options outside their current workplace. In other instances, a weak link may become instrumental in an individual achieving a major career change.

Complexity science has been shown to be an effective approach to use with careers. This study examined the careers of a particular segment of individuals, tenure-track or tenured community college faculty who were previously adjunct faculty at the same college where they

were tenured. The particular concepts from complexity science that were used to help analyze the data collected in this study were complex adaptive entities, sensitive dependence, fitness peaks and patches, and networks.

Research Questions

The particular research questions in this study are:

1. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants show adaptability to their particular environment?

2. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate networking between other faculty members, their academic departments within their colleges, college staff outside their department and professional organizations and contacts outside of their college?

3. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at the college where they received their tenure-track position was influenced by their other work or school experiences?

4. To what extent were the careers of the participants influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors such as chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment?

Definition of Terms

Adjunct faculty

Adjunct faculty members are college instructors who teach 60% or less of what is defined as a full-time teaching assignment by a tenure-track faculty member at their particular institution. They are employed on a semester-by-semester contract. "Part-time instructor" is used by some of the authors in the literature as an equivalent term to adjunct faculty.

Community College

The term "community college" refers to public, private, proprietary and technical two-year colleges (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). The community colleges used in this study are all public two-year institutions that are members of the California Community College System governed by the California Community College Chancellor's Office (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2006).

Complex Adaptive Entities

Complex adaptive entities evolve and change, yet still maintain their individual identity, in response to interactions with their interior or exterior environment. In this study, evidence of complex adaptive entity behavior at their college by the participants included examples where they give extra service or support to the students,

faculty, or staff at that college as an adjunct faculty member.

Fitness Peaks

Fitness peaks occur within any particular area or "patch" when the most optimal conditions for any particular system or entity are achieved. Each individual college where a participant taught is considered a separate patch in this study. In this study, evidence of high levels of fitness included a high degree of job satisfaction by the participants, reports of good evaluations received by the participants, or strong personal support from college personnel for the participants.

Hiring Community College

The hiring college refers to the community college where the study participants eventually received their tenure-track faculty position.

Networks

Every complex adaptive entity must interact with their environment, so each is networked. However, the number and strength of these connections can vary greatly. In this study, evidence of strong networks for this study included interview data describing the different interactions between the participant and other college faculty and staff, faculty and staff at other colleges and professional

contacts outside of their college.

Non-Hiring Community College

The non-hiring community college refers to any community college where the study participants worked before they received their tenure-track position at their hiring community college.

Sensitive Dependence

In a linear model, small changes yield a small effect and large changes yield a large effect. In sensitive dependence situations, a small change may yield a large effect. In this study, examples of sensitive dependent situations for this study included (a) chance or random events that made a large impact on the participant's career, (b) small changes in behavior or attitude or the environment that the participants believed made a significant impact on their career, (c) a willingness demonstrated by the participants to be open to chance events or to make small changes.

Tenure-Track Faculty

Tenure-track faculty are full-time college instructors who will receive permanent positions assuming that they receive good evaluations during a probationary three-year evaluation period.

Tenured Faculty

Tenured faculty are full-time faculty who have successfully completed their probationary three-year evaluation period.

Limitations

One major limitation of this study is that because this is a qualitative study, the results from this study cannot be generalized to the general population of adjunct faculty in community colleges. These results presented were only true for the particular case studies presented in this study.

Another major limitation of this study is that the data gathered was entirely from the prospective of the study participants. The prospective of the people on the hiring committee, the administrator conducting the final interview and the hiring manager was not included in this study.

The final limitation for this study was the bias of the researcher. Although every effort was made to keep this study as objective and fair as possible, the researcher's biases may have influenced the study.

Significance

Each individual has a unique career path that is constantly changing based on such diverse factors as the credentials earned, life and work experiences, work relationships, work related behaviors and attitudes. If similar experiences, traits, or behaviors were identified in former adjunct faculty who were successful in obtaining a tenure-track position at a community college, then current adjunct faculty who desire tenure-track positions can learn from the experiences of others. Current adjunct faculty may be able to adapt and evolve, if they choose, and develop the experiences, traits, and behaviors that would allow them to increase their fitness peaks and maximize their chances of success in obtaining a tenure-track position.

A second implication of this study is for community college hiring managers and hiring committees. Current hiring practices at community colleges generally include ad-hoc committees with little or no training for the participants (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004). This study on the hiring experiences of tenure-track faculty should improve the awareness of the community college hiring managers and hiring committees on traits and behaviors of previously successful job applicants. This

awareness could lead to increasing reflection and dialogue at the college level on what hiring managers really want or need as they interview for new faculty positions. An increase in the awareness of the experiences, traits and behaviors of adjunct faculty who have eventually secured a tenure-track position might increase the probability that current adjunct faculty members will be considered as serious candidates by community college hiring managers and hiring committees.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

The literature that has shaped and helped guide this study will be reviewed in this section. The first theme in the review of the literature will be on literature about community college adjunct faculty. The focus will be on literature relating to adjunct faculty advancing to tenure-track positions. The second theme will be on literature on community college tenure-track faculty hiring practices. The third and final theme will be on the labor market for community college tenure-track faculty. The purpose of this section is to determine if the number or demand for community college faculty positions is expected to change greatly in the near future.

Community College Adjunct Faculty

Literature on adjunct community college faculty, as it applies to this study, includes studies on the use of adjunct faculty by community colleges, classification of adjunct faculty, the desire for tenure-track positions by adjunct faculty, competition for tenure-track positions faced by adjunct faculty, the career development for community college adjunct faculty, and the plight of

adjunct instructors.

The Use of Adjunct Faculty

Gappa and Leslie (1993) conducted interviews of 467 community college staff including adjunct faculty, chief faculty personnel officers, and college administrators, conducted site visits at eighteen colleges and universities and reviewed written documentation collected at each of these sites. They conducted this research to explore the reasons that different individuals choose to be adjunct faculty, the advantages to the college for using adjunct faculty and the working conditions and compensation of adjunct faculty.

Leslie and Gappa classified adjunct faculty into four different categories. Their first category, "Career Enders" (1993, p. 49), described adjunct faculty who were retired from full-time positions and are teaching part-time as a way to phase into retirement. The second group are "specialists, experts, and professionals" (1993, p. 50) who have full-time positions in their specialty and teach part-time because they derive personal satisfaction from their teaching. Third, "freelancers" (1993, p. 60) are adjunct faculty who choose part-time employment as a lifestyle choice. They may be parents, homemakers, artists, or have other part-time career interests. The last category is

"aspiring academics" (1993, p. 54). These are adjunct faculty who would prefer a tenure-track position (Gappa & Leslie, 1993). These instructors may work at other jobs as they attempt to secure a tenure-track position or they may teach part-time at multiple colleges to support themselves because they do not have the tenure-track position they would prefer.

A subgroup of "aspiring academics" are adjunct faculty who support themselves by teaching at more than one college and are commonly called "freeway fliers" (Board of Governors, September 10-11, 2001; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). These instructors support themselves by cobbling together a full-time teaching lifestyle by driving from one college to another, teaching part-time at each college. This is necessary because most states have a policy limiting the load adjunct faculty can teach at any community college district. According to Leslie and Gappa, the number is between 15% - 17% (2002). In California, section 87482.5 of the Education Code limits adjunct faculty to a 60% load within one community college district (State Teacher's Retirement System, 2001). A survey conducted by the California Postsecondary Education Commission indicated that the percent of adjunct faculty who are freeway flyers is between 16% - 18% (Board of Governors, September 10-11,

2001).

Leslie and Gappa raised the question: "are aspiring academics being developed as a legitimate future pool for tenure-bearing appointments?" (p. 64). They concluded that this question was not addressed by their institutions because adjunct faculty were seen as "an invisible, indistinguishable mass and dealt with arbitrarily" (p. 64). They did not delve any further into any of the issues surrounding adjunct faculty obtaining tenure-track positions.

A later study by these same authors, Leslie and Gappa (2002), using data from a national survey conducted by the Council for the Study of Community Colleges, concluded that their classifications were still valid and put the number of aspiring academics at 49% of all adjunct faculty members.

Cohen and Brawer (1996) present a broad study of community colleges based on a comprehensive literature review, interviews with personnel at hundreds of community colleges, site visits to hundreds of community colleges and discussions with experts in the field. They found that most students regarded adjunct faculty the same way they did full-time faculty. They also found that the community colleges used adjunct faculty because they cost less and

could be "employed, dismissed, and reemployed as needed" (p. 85).

Roueche, Roueche and Milliron (1995), conducted surveys, interviews and a comprehensive literature review in their study on adjunct community college faculty. They stated that there was no empirical data to show a difference in student ratings, student achievement in subsequent classes or student retention between full-time and adjunct instructors. Although they addressed the hiring of adjunct faculty by the college in depth, they did not address the hiring of adjunct faculty into tenure-track positions other than stating that adjunct instructors who did not receive full-time positions when they do occur were more apt to be dissatisfied with their work or file lawsuits. Wallin (2005b) proposed that goal-setting theory indicated that adjunct faculty would be more motivated to do an excellent job in the classroom if they thought their effort might help them obtain a full-time position.

The literature on adjunct faculty generally addresses the major issues that affect current adjunct faculty and often mention the lack of full-time positions. None of the literature, however, addresses the factors involved in hiring current adjunct faculty into open tenure-track positions.

The Desire for Tenure-Track Positions

The number of adjunct faculty at individual colleges who would prefer a tenure-track position might vary based on the demographics and characteristics of each college and the particular subjects taught at that college. One study at a single community college in Washington indicated that 55% of adjunct faculty would prefer full-time employment (Jacoby, 2005), while a survey at a different community college in Kansas indicated that 43% of adjunct instructors desired a full-time position at their college (Gadberry & Burnstad, 2005).

The literature is reasonably consistent on the percent of adjunct faculty who would prefer a tenure-track position on a larger scale. The 1993 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty indicated that 50% of adjuncts in community colleges prefer part-time instruction and that 47% of adjunct faculty have a part-time position because full-time positions were unavailable (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2002). This implies that 50% of the adjunct instructors would prefer full-time instruction. Data from the 1999 National Center for Education Statistics found that one half of all part-time instructors reported an interest in accepting a full-time position (California Postsecondary Education Commission, April 2001).

Although the literature cited above indicates that approximately 50% of all adjunct faculty would prefer full-time employment, a lower number than that actually apply for tenure-track positions. Jacoby's research indicated that although 55% of adjunct faculty at the college he researched preferred a tenure-track position, only 16% would actually seek a tenure-track position and of those only 11% actually expected to actually obtain a tenure-track position. He attributed discouragement as the reason why adjunct faculty who wanted a tenure-track failed to apply for tenure-track position. His data suggested that this discouragement increased with the respondent's age and experience as an adjunct faculty member (2005). As Villadsen and Anderson note, "Many adjunct assume that their prospects for full-time employment at the college of their choice are dim" (2005, p. 110). Gappa and Leslie state that adjunct faculty who desire tenure-track positions may "feel stuck" (1993, p. 57).

Competition for Tenure-Track Positions

Current adjunct faculty members are not the only people who desire tenure-track community college faculty positions. Current tenure-track community college faculty might decide to change colleges. In one study, 33% of current tenured community college faculty indicated that

they were either somewhat likely or very likely to seek a different position in post-secondary education (Gahn & Twombly, 2001). Individuals from the private sector with current knowledge in specialized fields also may apply for community college teaching positions in that area.

Current teachers in the elementary, secondary system or four-year college/university system might also apply for community college faculty positions. Community Colleges are increasingly seen as a possible career path for individuals with doctorates who had previously tended to go into 4-year colleges or universities if they decided to pursue a career in post-secondary education (Adams, 2002; Brudney, 2001; Haworth, 1999). Twenty percent of community college faculty employed in 1998-1999 had a doctorate degree (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). This is an increase from the 6%-10% of faculty who had doctorates in the 1950's (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). A study by Gahn and Twombly (2001) using the restricted database from the 1993 National Survey of Post-Secondary Faculty, however found that when they looked at faculty who had been in the job three years or less, the number of community college faculty holding a doctorate had not increased substantially from past years. They concluded that although there was an increase in the total number of faculty holding a doctorate, this was due to an increasing

number of current full-time faculty members who have earned their doctorate after taking their job at the community college.

The study by Gahn and Twombly examined the prior jobs held by community college faculty using the restricted data from the 1993 National Survey of Post-Secondary Faculty. Of the respondents, 35.2% did not list a prior main job. Although the authors did not have any data relating directly to this answer, they speculated that these new faculty may have come directly from their college or graduate schools. Of the faculty who reported a prior main job, 33.2% came from two-year colleges, 18.4 came from four-year colleges and 13.9% came from secondary or elementary education. Hospital/health or business accounted for 20.5% of the prior jobs (Gahn & Twombly, 2001).

Career Development for Community College Faculty

Career development for adjunct community college faculty or community college faculty has not been studied in much detail. A search of ERIC, all years, InfoTrac OneFile, all years, ProQuest multiple databases, all years, using the search terms career path academic, career development & faculty, careers networking and college yielded no articles that focused on the career development of adjunct community college faculty or community college

faculty. There were a few articles on the development of community college faculty into college administrators. A search of Ignacio library database and Amazon.com yielded several career guides for academic careers, but these books all focused on four-year college tenure-track positions rather than community college tenure-track positions.

The Plight of Adjunct Faculty

Much of the literature on adjunct community college faculty specifically focuses on the plight of adjunct faculty. One subcategory of this literature is first-hand accounts and perspectives on the lives of adjunct instructors based on interview data (Abrams, 2003; Dubson, 2001; Gale, 2001; Knox, 2004; Musser, 1998; Straw, 2002; Swift, 2001). The stories are compelling and further document the difficulty in obtaining tenure-track positions and the despair and disillusionment adjunct faculty feel when they are unsuccessful in the pursuit of these positions. However, they do not provide any insights into how or why individual adjunct faculty might obtain a tenure-track position.

A second subcategory of this literature focuses on advocacy for better working conditions for adjunct faculty. This literature is generally based on survey data and literature reviews and focuses on the state or national

issues, including state and national funding models and legislative initiatives, involved in changing the dependence on adjunct faculty in higher education or on improving working conditions of current adjunct faculty. This literature does not address the issues involved in individual adjunct faculty members obtaining a full-time position (American Association of University Professors, 2003; American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Fulton, 2000; Kelly, 2005; Leatherman, 1997; Schell & Stock, 2001; Smith, 2003; Wallin, 2005a).

A third subcategory of this literature advocates specific strategies designed to help current adjunct faculty succeed in what the authors feel is their current, less than ideal, situations (Carroll, 2001, 2004; Kelly, 2005; Lyons, Kysilka, & Pawlas, 1999). This category of the literature is generally based on personal experience and literature reviews. While some of the literature may give valuable insights into effective teaching strategies and other coping techniques for adjunct faculty teaching at multiple colleges, it does not address any strategies or techniques that could be used to help current adjunct faculty obtain tenure-track positions.

Summary

It is clear from the literature that adjunct faculty

members are an integral part of the community college system. It is also clear that many adjunct faculty desire tenure-track positions and that there is a great deal of competition for any open positions. Although much has been written about the community college and the use, and misuse, of adjunct faculty, the topics that have been neglected are the career development of adjunct faculty and the topic of how and why certain adjuncts are successful in their quest for a tenure-track position while others are unsuccessful. The assumption, inherent in the literature, seems to be that the odds of a current adjunct faculty member securing a tenure-track position is so low that the topic is not worth discussing. It is also implied that there is nothing that individual faculty members can do to improve their odds of obtaining a tenure-track position. The other assumption is that the only way that this situation will change is by legislation at a state or national level.

Research on Faculty Hiring

The literature on faculty hiring at the community college level falls into three main categories. The first category is the literature that deals with the general hiring procedures for tenure-track faculty at community

colleges. This literature establishes that tenure-track faculty hiring procedures are fairly consistent at different institutions and include a national search, college-wide ad hoc selection committees, an interview format using traditional interview questions following a paper screening process, reference checks, and sometimes a teaching demonstration (Committee, Fall 2000; Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004; Marti, 2005). Cohen and Brawer (1996) stated that these procedures were not expected to change.

The second main category is the literature that involves specific faculty qualifications for the faculty position to be hired. Some of this is aimed at particular specialties such as library faculty or economics faculty (Benson & Petrowsky, 1999; The Counseling and Library Faculty Issues Sub-Committee, 1996). Some of the literature specifies faculty qualifications aimed at hiring faculty who meet internal faculty hiring goals such as improving minority hiring or who have an interest in specific learning initiatives such as service learning (Fowler-Hall, 2002; Wilson, 1994). None of these specific faculty qualifications focused on increasing the hiring of adjunct faculty members into tenure-track positions.

The third main type of literature involves factual data on new hires such as sex, race and ethnicity and last main job prior to the hire (Gahn & Twombly, 2001; Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005).

No literature was found that focused on the decision process or decisions made by hiring committees or hiring manager during faculty hiring. No studies were found that focused on the hiring of adjunct faculty to tenure-track positions, although several authors speculated on the advantages and disadvantages involved in hiring adjunct faculty who apply for tenure-track positions. Eduardo J. Marti (2005), president of Queensborough Community College, wrote in an opinion piece that one advantage in favor of hiring adjunct faculty is "the individual has a proven track record in the department, with the students, with the institution. The individual has established friendships among the department's faculty and is familiar with the institution" (pp. 50-51). He also noted that a disadvantage of hiring internal candidates is "a lack of progress in affirmative action efforts if the part-time pool is not sufficiently diverse" (p. 51).

Desna Wallin (2004), a past community college president, conducted a comprehensive literature review and relied on personal knowledge when she wrote, "Ironically,

excellent work as an adjunct may not lead to full-time status" (p. 379). Wallin further speculated that administration might want to keep valuable adjunct faculty in that capacity rather than hiring them into a full-time slot. Also, she felt that long-term adjunct faculty might need to overcome the prejudice that "if this person is so good, why has he or she not been able to land a full-time job? There must be something not right" (p. 379).

The personal experiences of successful tenure-track job seekers were found in the literature; however, these individuals did not come from the ranks of the adjunct faculty (Bremen, 2001; Douglas, 2002; Zimbleman, 2004). No literature was found on the individual experiences, traits, behaviors or teaching styles of former adjunct faculty who had been hired as tenure-track faculty. According to Flannigan, Jones and Moore Jr., who conducted a study on faculty hiring practices using an interpretive approach based on personal experiences augmented by data from community college web pages, e-mail correspondence, and a literature review, the lack of data is because there is "difficulty in gathering information regarding hiring practices from community college administrators" (2004, p. 827). According to a community college director of human resources, much of the difficulty is that human resource

directors and community college administrators fear that releasing such information might open themselves up to litigation from candidates who were unsuccessful in obtaining the position (C. Davidson, personal communication, February 14, 2006).

The literature on faculty hiring establishes that the hiring procedures at different community colleges are fairly uniform. There is no literature that gives any real insight into the hiring of former adjunct faculty into tenure-track positions.

Labor Market for Tenure-Track Faculty

The literature search for this section is focused on answering the following two questions: (a) Is there likely to be an increase or decrease in the number of community college tenure-track job openings?; and (b) Will there be a change in the number of people applying for community college tenure-track positions?

The Number of Tenure-Track Openings

Gahn and Twombly (2001) conducted a literature review and used the restricted data from the 1993 National Survey of Post-Secondary Faculty to explore the labor market for community college faculty. They commented that there was very little data on the labor market for community college

faculty, and past efforts to predict the number of faculty openings had been unsuccessful. They concluded that there were many questions remaining to be answered about this labor market, including the skills and attributes that were most valued for job applicants.

Three factors that are involved in estimating the number of potential community college faculty openings in coming years are (a) any changes in the number of total community college faculty jobs, (b) the number of anticipated faculty retirements, and (c) the number of current community college faculty who anticipate leaving their current jobs to seek different careers.

The Number of Full-Time Faculty

The number of full-time faculty employed in higher education has not changed quickly in recent years. According to the National Education Association analysis of the restricted data from the 1999 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty, in the eight years between 1993-2000, there was only a 14% increase in the number of faculty employed in higher education or a 1.75% change per year (NEA Higher Education Research Center, 2003).

The U.S. Department of Labor Statistics indicated that they expected the number of postsecondary tenure-track positions to decline as educational institutions increased

their use of adjunct or limited term contract faculty. This report did not break out community colleges specifically (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006).

The Number of Planned Retirements

A different report by the National Education Association that was also based on the restricted database from the 1999 National Survey of Postsecondary Faculty analyzed the number of public two-year college full-time faculty members who anticipated retiring in the next three years. In 1999, 11.9% of full-time two-year college faculty were 60 years or older. Of these faculty members, 44.5% stated they were very likely to retire in the next three years while 25.8% stated they were somewhat likely to retire in the next three years. Assuming that these numbers continue to be representative of the years past 1999, and that all faculty who stated that they were very likely or somewhat likely to retire actually do retire, this would result in approximately 2.8% open positions each year (NEA Higher Education Research Center, 2001).

Job Stability

The study by Gahn and Twombly explored the job stability of community college faculty using data from the restricted database from the 1993 National Survey of Post-Secondary Faculty. Current community college full-time

faculty members are likely to stay in their current positions. Eighty-eight percent of community college faculty stated that they were not at all likely to look for a position outside of post-secondary education. Sixty-seven percent of this same group stated that they were not at all likely to look for a different position in post-secondary education (Gahn & Twombly, 2001). This report did not state the number of faculty who reported that they were somewhat likely, rather than very likely, to seek other positions or the number who marked either somewhat likely or very likely on both seeking a position outside post-secondary education and on seeking a different position in post-secondary education. Common sense indicates that some individuals who are unhappy in their current position might seek positions both outside their current field and inside their current field. Lastly, this study did not provide any data on the number or percent of individuals that were likely to be successful in obtaining a different position. Current adjunct faculty who desire a tenure-track position will need to compete with current tenure-track or tenured faculty who want to change jobs in addition to other adjunct faculty and individuals not currently in the community college system for open positions.

Summary

The number of new tenure-track faculty positions depends on many factors including a change in the number of tenure-track faculty positions at community colleges, the number of retirees, the number of faculty resigning their positions for reasons other than retirement, and the number of current tenure-track faculty seeking a tenure-track position at a different college. It has been difficult historically to correctly predict the number of open tenure-track positions each year (Gahn & Twombly, 2001), however the data indicates that the growth in the total number of tenure-track faculty jobs is very slow and demand for additional faculty members will be handled by hiring additional adjunct faculty rather than increasing the number of tenure-track positions. The faculty members holding tenured positions have a high level of job stability and intend to stay in those positions. The largest source of open positions seems to be in the area of faculty retirements. This number may increase slightly in the future since 12% of current tenured faculty are 60 years or older.

It is difficult to predict the actual number of new tenure-track positions that will occur in the coming years, however, the information seems to indicate that the number

will not change greatly unless there is a substantial change in the way that community colleges are funded by their state governments. The high demand for tenure-track positions should continue.

Conclusion

Although a great deal is known about the use of community college faculty and the desire and competition for tenure-track positions, little is known about the career development of adjunct faculty to tenure-track positions. There are multiple reasons why adjunct community college faculty members do not receive tenure-track positions, however not much is known about why some do. The prior research on adjunct faculty in the community college system and the research on faculty hiring do not shed any light on this subject.

The literature review also indicates that the number of tenure-track openings is not expected to change much in the near future and the trend of using adjunct faculty to meet the staffing needs for community colleges is expected to continue. The demand for tenure-track positions at the community college should continue to be very high.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to examine the behaviors and experiences of community college adjunct faculty members who have obtained tenure-track positions. Specifically, this study explored the following behaviors or experiences the faculty members had when they were adjunct faculty members and how these behaviors or experiences related to the faculty members' eventual success in obtaining a tenure-track faculty position at a community college: (a) how they adapted themselves to their particular community college, (b) how they engaged with other people professionally, (c) how they were influenced by their other work or school experiences, and (d) how they allowed themselves to be open to chance events or small changes.

Research Design

The research design utilized a qualitative case study approach. There were three parts involved in gathering the data for each of the eight case studies. The first part was a short informational questionnaire. This short informational questionnaire was used to gather demographic

information about each participant and also to gather information about the participant's work history as an adjunct faculty member. This short informational questionnaire was also used to confirm that the eight study participants met the guidelines established for this study.

The second part of the data collection was a one-on-one interview with the participant. This interview employed open-ended questions and lasted approximately an hour and a half.

The third and final part of the data collection process involved a follow-up interview with each participant conducted after all eight of the one-on-one interviews with the participants had been completed. The follow up interview lasted approximately forty-five minutes and was used to clarify information obtained during the first interview and to verify the common themes that emerged from the one-on-one interviews.

Sample

Guidelines for Selection of the Sample

The population for this study was current tenure-track faculty at community colleges who were former adjunct faculty members at the same college where they are presently employed. This college is referred to as their

hiring college. Because this study explored the behaviors of the participants as adjunct faculty members, the participants were limited to individuals who had at least three years experience as adjunct faculty members. This study also explored the influence of other work or school experiences on the participants' careers as adjunct faculty members. To ensure that all study participants had at least one similar work experience, the study participants were required to have worked at more than one community college. Any other community college where the study participants worked, other than the hiring college, are referred to as a non-hiring college. The requirement that the study participants have experience teaching at more than one community college was not difficult to require since between 15% to 18% of adjunct faculty work at more than one community college (Board of Governors, September 10-11, 2001; Leslie & Gappa, 2002). Also, because vocational fields may require different educational degrees and job qualifications than traditional academic fields (Human Resources Division, 2003), this study only included faculty from traditional academic areas.

The following guidelines for qualifying potential participants were used:

1. Participants must be tenure-track or tenured faculty

at a community college.

2. Participants must have been adjunct faculty for at least three years, at more than one community college, prior to receiving their tenure-track positions.

3. Participants must have obtained their tenure-track positions at a college where they had previously worked as adjunct faculty members.

4. Participants must be teaching in a traditional academic field rather than in a vocational or certificate program.

Community College Pool

Institutional permission was sought from thirteen of the fourteen community colleges located in my geographical area. The fourteenth community college, where I am currently employed, was excluded as a research site.

An e-mail was sent to the human resources director at each of the thirteen colleges that included a short statement about this project and requested institutional permission to use their college as a research site. The e-mail was followed by multiple telephone calls. Two positive responses were received using this approach.

At colleges where no response was received from the human resources department, the contact list was expanded to include two other individuals who were in a position to

grant institutional permission, the vice president of instruction and the college president. Institutional permission was eventually received from five community colleges. The permissions were granted by one college president, one vice-president of instruction, one college interim human resource director and one district interim human resource director for a two-college district. The research was limited to those five community colleges.

Networks

There were two plans to identify potential study participants. One was to use a formal community college network, the network of faculty associations, to identify potential participants. This network has an active list-serve. The second plan was to use the informal network of community college administrators and faculty members to identify potential participants.

The first contact was made to the network of community college faculty association presidents. No responses were received using this approach. The second plan utilizing the informal network of community college administrators and faculty proved to be more effective.

One way the informal network of community college administrators or faculty was used was by contacting the deans or department chairpersons for different academic

departments at the five identified community colleges. The deans or department chairpersons were contacted by e-mail and by follow-up phone calls and informed about the purpose for the study and the criteria needed by the participants. They were then asked to supply the names of faculty who might qualify for this study. The rate of response was very poor for e-mail messages or phone messages. The response rate improved considerably if personal contact was made with the dean or department chairperson. About forty names were eventually received using this process.

The second approach that was used to tap into the informal network of community college administrators and faculty was to use other community college contacts I had at the identified colleges. These contacts were informed about the purpose for the study and the criteria needed by the participants and asked to supply the names of faculty who might qualify for this study. This provided a list of about ten additional names of potential participants.

Study Participants

In this study, the goal was both to identify any unique aspects of the individual case studies and to also document any commonalities between the individual cases. To meet these goals, purposeful sampling, specifically maximum variation sampling, was used. Patton, referring to maximum

variation sampling, stated:

This strategy for purposeful sampling aims at capturing and describing the central themes that cut across a great deal of variation....Any common patterns that emerge from great variation are of particular interest and value in capturing the core experiences and central, shared dimensions of a setting or phenomenon. (2002, pp. 234-235)

The goal in picking the study participants from the list of potential participants identified using the informal network was twofold. First, individuals were selected who (a) were current tenured or tenure-track faculty who had previously been an adjunct faculty member at that same school, (b) who had worked for at least three years as an adjunct faculty member, (c) worked at more than one community college, and (d) taught in a traditional academic field. The second goal was to select eight candidates who were diverse in terms of sex, age at the time they received their tenure-track position, ethnicity, academic discipline and college.

Potential participants were contacted by phone and with a follow-up e-mail using the script listed in Appendix A. Several potential participants who did not respond to the phone call or e-mail were contacted in person at their office or at a professional conference. If they agreed to be interviewed, all the potential participants were given the Consent Form Cover Letter (Appendix B), the Informed

Consent Form (Appendix C), Short Informational Questionnaire (Appendix D) and the Research Subjects Bill of Rights.

The participants were selected using a process of rolling identification. When the first set of names was obtained from the informal networks, all the individuals listed were contacted by phone and follow-up e-mail. The first interview was scheduled with the first individual who agreed to participate and who met the study guidelines. Subsequent participants were selected to maximize the diversity of the study in terms of sex, age, ethnicity, discipline, and college. The demographics of the participants were listed in a table after each interview. If one aspect of the demographics was overrepresented, potential participants with that demographic were not contacted in favor of other potential participants with lower represented demographics. For example, a large number of potential participants who were identified using the informal networks were math faculty members. After three math faculty members were selected for this study, no other potential participants who were from the math area were contacted to participate in this study. Very few potential participants were identified who taught in subject areas classified as the humanities so all potential participants

in those areas were contacted resulting in two art faculty members being selected for this study. The final participant pool is shown in Table 1. The participant pool included three females and five males, five different ethnicities, four different academic areas, and three different community colleges. The age when they were hired as a tenure-track faculty member ranged between 38 years old to 56 years old for seven of the eight participants. The eighth participant declined to answer this question.

Table 1
Participant Pool

Participant	College	Subject Taught	Sex	Ethnicity	Age when Hired for Tenure-Track Position
Beth	B	Math	F	Caucasian	56
Betty	C	Chemistry	F	African American	Declined to answer
Gary	B	Math	M	Caucasian	48
Jeff	A	Math	M	Asian	46
Joe	C	Art	M	Portuguese	53
Rod	B	Chemistry	M	Caucasian	51
Rose	C	Art	F	Hispanic/ Middle Eastern	38
Tom	C	English	M	Caucasian	42

Instrumentation

Introduction

The instruments that were used in this study were a short informational questionnaire, a one-on-one interview, a follow up interview and the researcher.

The short informational questionnaire was used to verify that the participants met the study guidelines. The short informational questionnaire was also used to collect other key data on the work histories of the participants when they were community college adjunct faculty members.

The one-on-one interviews gave the participants the opportunity to tell their stories of how and why they felt they were selected for their tenure-track positions. These interviews were used to collect data on the participants' patterns of adaptation, networking, fitness peaks at other colleges or workplaces and the impact of sensitive dependence on their particular career path.

The follow-up interviews were used to clarify any responses from the first interview and also to give the participants the opportunity to comment on the themes that emerged after the one-on-one interviews from all eight participants had been examined.

The last instrument was the researcher. My experience as an adjunct faculty member who received a tenure-track

position, as a supervisor of approximately sixty adjunct faculty members and as the hiring manager for six tenure-track positions was critical in this study.

Short Informational Questionnaire

The first instrument that was used in this study was a short informational questionnaire. The data gathered were (a) sex, (b) age at the time they received their tenure-track position, (c) ethnicity, (d) discipline, (e) degrees, (f) college of employment, (g) the number of years they worked as an adjunct at their hiring community college, (h) the total number of years they had worked as an adjunct, (i) the total number of colleges where they worked as an adjunct and (j) the number of times they applied for a tenure-track community college faculty position.

This short informational questionnaire was designed to ensure that the participants met the qualification guidelines and also to gather demographic information on the study participants. It was also used to gain pertinent information of the related work histories of the study participants. The short informational questionnaire is shown in appendix D.

Table 2 shows the data collected using the short informational questionnaire. The number of years the participants taught at a community college ranged from 7 to

Table 2
Participant Information

Participant	College	Subject	Degree	Sex	Ethnicity	Age when Hired for Tenure-Track Position	Years as Adjunct Faculty Total	Years as Adjunct Faculty At Hiring College	Number of Community Colleges	Number of Times Applied For Position
Beth	B	Math	MS	F	Caucasian	56	25	8	5	5 - 7
Betty	C	Chemistry	MS	F	African American	Declined to answer	13	10	2	1
Gary	B	Math	MS	M	Caucasian	48	15	2	8	40
Jeff	A	Math	MS	M	Asian	46	10	10	6	4
Joe	C	Art	MFA	M	Portuguese	53	19	1/2	5	4
Rod	B	Chemistry	PhD	M	Caucasian	51	16	3	7	20
Rose	C	Art	MFA	F	Hispanic/ Middle Eastern	38	7	4	6	10
Tom	C	English	MS	M	Caucasian	42	15	15	4	2

25. The number of community colleges where the study participants worked as an adjunct faculty member ranged from 2 to 8. The longest time a participant worked at his hiring college prior to obtaining a tenure-track position was 15 years. The shortest time was one semester. The number of times that the study participants applied for a tenure-track position varied widely ranging from 1 to 40.

One-on-One Interview

The second instrument used was a conversational one-on-one interview using open-ended questions. If the participant was overly brief, a follow-up prompt was asked. The interview questions are listed in Appendix E.

The interview questions were designed to answer the research questions posed earlier. Several are very general and are designed to let the participants tell their story in their own words. The other questions were more specifically targeted to the specific research areas of adaptability, networking, fitness peaks and patches, and sensitive dependence. Table 3 shows the relation between the theoretical foundations, the research questions and the data. Any interview questions that were specifically designed to answer a particular research question are indicated on Table 3.

Table 3

Relationship between the Theoretical Foundation, Research Questions and Data

Theoretical Foundation	Research question	Data
Complex Adaptive Entities	1. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants show adaptability to their particular environment?	Interview data describing examples where the participants adapted to their college as an adjunct faculty member. Interview questions 2 & 3.
Network	2. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate networking between other faculty members, their academic departments within their colleges, college staff outside their department and professional organizations and contacts outside of their college?	Interview data describing the different interactions between the participant and other college faculty and staff, faculty and staff at other colleges and professional contacts outside of their college. Interview question 5.
Fitness Peaks and Patches	3. To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at the college where they received their tenure-track position was influenced by their other work or school experiences.	Interview data describing the influence their experiences at other workplaces or schools had on the participants' fitness at the college where they received their tenure-track position. Interview question 4.
Sensitive Dependence	4. To what extent were the careers of the participants influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors such as chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment?	Interview data describing experiences where the participants' careers were influenced by chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment. Interview question 6.

Follow-up Interview

The third instrument used was the follow-up interview. This was scheduled after the one-on-one interviews with all eight participants were completed and the data from these interviews had been analyzed. The follow-up interviews also followed an informal conversational format. The follow-up interview gave the researcher an opportunity to ask for clarification on any answers given during the first interview. The follow-up interview also gave the researcher the opportunity to validate the study findings by asking the study participants to comment on the themes that emerged during the study. This also gave the participants a chance to add anything that they may have thought about after the initial interview. The follow-up interview questions are listed in Appendix F.

Role of the Researcher

"In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument, the credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skills, competence, and rigor of the person doing fieldwork" (Patton, 2002, p. 14). In this section, "Role of the Researcher", the skills, competence and rigor of the researcher will be discussed.

I worked as an adjunct instructor at six different

community colleges over a 10-year period prior to obtaining a tenure-track position. As an adjunct instructor, I personally experienced the frustrations and challenges experienced by many adjunct instructors as they struggle to find a tenure-track position. I made a conscious decision at one point during my employment as an adjunct faculty member that I wanted to transition into a tenure-track position. At that point, my dean told me that I had better odds of winning the California State Lottery than in getting a tenure-track position at my college. Four years later, I was granted a tenure-track position under that dean.

I observed the frustration that many of my adjunct faculty peers experienced as they slowly realized that they would never receive a tenure-track position. I saw their disappointment as they either switched professions or eventually settled for a life as a permanent adjunct faculty member working at multiple colleges to support themselves and their families.

My view of adjunct faculty employment has evolved and changed as I have transitioned into a position where I am now the one making the hiring decisions. I am currently the Dean of Mathematics and Science at a California Community College where I supervise twenty-two tenured or tenure-

track faculty and approximately sixty adjunct instructors each semester, about half of whom desire a tenure-track position. I have been the hiring manager for four tenure-track positions and am currently in the process of hiring two additional tenure-track positions. Looking at hiring from the vantage point of the institution has given me a different prospective than I had as an interviewee.

An additional experience that also helped guide this study is a pilot study that I conducted as part of the course requirements for a class in qualitative research at the University of San Francisco. As part of that study, I interviewed and observed four individuals who had previously worked as adjunct faculty at the same college where they were hired as tenure track faculty members. The four participants were diverse in subject taught, age, sex and ethnicity. However, they exhibited common behaviors that they felt contributed to their success in obtaining a tenure track position. Each participant was very involved at their college outside of the classroom. Their behaviors made these individuals very valuable to their college. Each of the participants was an excellent instructor who continuously strove to improve his or her teaching to increase the success of his or her students. Each of the participants was very well connected at his or her college.

All the participants made a point to know both the people in their department and people in their college outside of their department.

As a result of the pilot study, I concluded that interviews with tenure track faculty members, who were former adjunct faculty at the same colleges where they received their tenure-track positions, were an excellent way to study the career behaviors and influences of this population. I also concluded that complexity science was an effective theoretical foundation to analyze the data obtained by the interviews. This view has been further validated during the course of this study.

My particular background and experiences gives me a great deal of insight into the different career patterns of adjunct faculty. I have the background needed to understand the personal narratives and identify both typical and unusual patterns of career development of the faculty members interviewed during this study.

Data Collection

Short Informational Questionnaire

The short informational questionnaire was collected from the participants before the one-on-one interview to confirm that the study participants met the established

study guidelines, and also to collect relevant work history of the participants. A problem emerged when the short informational questionnaire was used to confirm that the participants met the study guidelines that the participants (a) had at least three years experience as an adjunct faculty member, (b) worked at more than one community college, (c) worked as an adjunct faculty member at the same community college where they eventually received their tenure-track position, and (d) taught in a traditional academic area. In three cases, although the participant seemed to qualify according to the answers on his or her short informational questionnaire, during the course of the one-on-one interview, it became clear that the individual did not qualify. In one case, the problem was because the form listed *college* rather than *community college*. In the other two cases, the participants did not accurately answer the questions on the form.

The data collected from the three subjects that did not meet the study guidelines was not included in the final dissertation results. The three disqualified participants were the only participants from two of the five approved colleges so, in the final results, only three different colleges are represented. It is interesting to note that the interviews with the three disqualified participants

revealed that they had very similar experiences as the eight study participants, and that if their data was included, their data would have further supported the study findings.

Each participant and college was given a pseudonym that will be used in all written material about the study including this dissertation. The participant's real names, pseudonym, contact information, consent form and short informational questionnaire are being kept in a secure location.

One-On-One Interview

The one-on-one interviews went very smoothly. In most cases, the participants were eager to talk about their experiences and had clearly spent some time thinking about their particular path to a tenure-track position prior to the interview. Each interview lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour and a half. In one case, the participant followed up the interview with an e-mail where she expanded on her answers. This was included in her interview data.

Each interview was recorded using a digital recorder and the interview was later transcribed and checked for accuracy by the researcher.

Follow-up Interview

Table 4 lists the themes and behaviors that were

Table 4
Themes used in Follow-Up Interviews

Themes	Behaviors	Examples
Adaptive behaviors	(a) Provided extra value	Extra work at the college
	(b) Provided extra service	Taught hard to staff classes
	(c) Practiced helpful behaviors	Attended college functions, not complaining
	(d) Learned to teach students	Used trial and error approach to teaching
	(e) Adjusted to college environment	Adjusted to college practices and students
	(f) Learned to navigate application process	Learned how to write a cover letter and application Improved interview techniques
	(g) Persisted in application process	Did not give up, believed they deserved position
Networking behaviors	(a) Formed informational networks	Between adjunct faculty, tenure-track or tenured faculty or other college staff
	(b) Formed support networks	Between adjunct faculty, tenure-track or tenured faculty, college staff, outside contacts
Patches and Fitness Peaks	(a) Experience gained at other community colleges improved fitness	Gained experience in teaching different classes
	(b) Experience gained at other work places improved fitness	Gained experience that aided hiring college
Sensitive Dependence (listed as Nonlinear Dynamics During the follow-up interviews)	(a) Demonstrated being open to chance events	Decided to apply when timing was right
	(b) Demonstrated small personal changes	Changed interview techniques
	(c) Adapted to small environmental changes	Persisted when only female candidates were chosen

developed after all the first interviews were completed and the preliminary analysis of the data was completed. The participants were asked to comment on these themes and behaviors during the follow-up interviews. To make this process easier for the participants, they were also shown a list of themes and behaviors at the same time that the researcher was explaining the themes and behaviors. The exact list shown to the participants during the follow-up interviews is shown in Appendix G. After the participants saw and heard the list of common themes and behaviors, they were given an opportunity to request further explanation or examples. If a participant asked for more explanation or examples, then the examples listed in Table 4 were cited verbally. After all the participants' questions were answered, they were asked to comment on their impressions of these themes and behaviors.

The follow-up interviews were recorded using a digital recorder and the interviews were later transcribed and checked for accuracy by the researcher. One technical problem occurred during one second interview when the digital tape recorder did not record the interview. This problem was discovered at the end of the interview. The participant was very cooperative and repeated her main thoughts and comments so they could be captured on tape.

The researcher did not repeat the interview questions because the participant did not feel that that was necessary but the participant was again shown the list of common themes and behaviors.

Data Analysis

Procedure

The one-on-one interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy. The interviews were then coded and analyzed using the methodology described by Patton (2002). Five copies of each of the one-on-one interview transcripts were collected and placed in a large notebook. The first four sets were used for the four research questions. The fifth set was used for any findings that did not initially fit into the four research questions. For each research question, all pertinent interview comments were highlighted in the appropriate section. Any interesting examples that were not initially categorized under the research questions were highlighted in the fifth set of transcripts. Later, after further analysis, all the highlighted comments from the fifth set were included in one of the four research question sets.

After each set of transcripts was highlighted, some common themes began to emerge for each research question.

In some cases, notes were made in the margins of the transcripts or post-it strips were used to mark data for particular themes. Tables were a useful way to tabulate the data obtained in this study. The tables were examined to see if similar responses were given by more than one of the participants. The tables are shown in the appropriate findings sections of this dissertation.

Validity and Reliability

All the questions asked during the one-on-one interviews and the follow-up interviews were open-ended, however some of these questions were more general and some of the questions were targeted more toward one of the research questions. Data collected from both the primary questions and the more general questions were used to answer each of the research questions. Having multiple data points increased the reliability of the findings for that particular participant. During the follow-up interview, the participant was asked to clarify or elaborate on any answers from the one-on-one interview that the researcher found confusing. This data also served to increase the reliability of the data for each individual.

During the follow-up interviews, the participants were also asked to comment on the themes and behaviors that emerged when the data from the eight individual one-on-one

interviews was analyzed. This question allowed the participants to give their feedback on these themes increasing both the reliability and validity of the findings for this study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS: ADAPTABILITY

Introduction

The first research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants show adaptability to their particular environment?" The research revealed that each participant adapted to their college in their own unique way. A case study illustrating the adaptive behaviors of each participant to their particular college environment will be presented in this chapter. This will be followed by a discussion of common adaptive themes and by a discussion of common concerns that emerged when the case studies are looked at collectively.

A second type of adaptive behavior emerged from this study when the participants described adaptive behaviors that were specifically aimed at the actual process of applying for a community college tenure-track position. These behaviors are also examined in this chapter.

Adaptive Behaviors to the College Environment

*Participants' Adaptive Behaviors**Beth*

Beth had a history of teaching math at a middle school and twenty-five years of experience at four other community

colleges before she started teaching at her hiring community college. Beth credited much of her success on getting this particular position with her "fit" at her hiring community college. "I don't know that I'm doing anything differently here or if it's just a matter of personalities, but yeah, somehow I felt I was more appreciated by math faculty here than at Mountain Top College" (October 9, 2006). She had a good relationship with the tenure-track instructors at her hiring community college and was encouraged to apply for the tenure-track position by these instructors. She attended Friday afternoon teaching discussions with the other faculty in her department and worked hard to do a good job in her classroom.

Beth also talked about fitting in with the culture at her hiring community college:

I guess I tried some things and I guess that's why they weren't hiring me over there. I don't know. So I guess you try things ...but I think a part, a big part in getting a job is, sort of, you have to know the culture in the place you're applying. (October 9, 2006)

Beth described how she developed her teaching skill over time:

It's a matter of experience and you try things and some things work and some things don't work....I've been through a lot of different students at the various colleges I've been at...the first place I

taught at was more of an inter-city ...so I think I've sort of learned to mold my style of teaching to the style of students I have....As an adjunct, you don't go to all these workshops and I didn't really go to that kind of stuff. I would say that I developed my own style of teaching pretty much on my own. I didn't have a lot of guidance. I just tried things and what worked, I stayed with". (October 9, 2006)

Beth was worried that she looked too old to be hired for a tenure-track position after twenty-five years of community college teaching experience:

I figured out like about four years ago that if I was going to get a job I was going to need to dye my gray hair. You know, and there's stuff like that, that you've just gotta realize, whether I want to or not, that's what it takes. And I mean, without totally being untrue to yourself. Actually I left a little grey. (October 9, 2006)

Beth also thought that some of her success in being hired was due to the other people who were hired at the same time. "They hired three people; they hired me and two young men, twenty-eight and thirty. I think they were seeking balance. I know that they hire a lot of young people here...So I think, partly, I was hired for balance" (October 9, 2007). She also thought that one tenured faculty member was pushing for at least one hire to come from the adjunct faculty ranks, saying "whoever came out strongest among the adjuncts, she wanted hired" (October 9, 2006).

Beth also credited a large part of her success in

getting the job on finally understanding how to navigate the application and interview process at a community college. This will be addressed further in the section on the adaptation to the college application process.

Betty

Betty, an African American, came to her college because there was an opening to teach a chemistry course for a special program that was designed to increase the success rate of African American students. In addition to teaching the chemistry class, she spent many volunteer hours advising and tutoring the students in that program. Betty felt that her program was under-utilized because she discovered that there was not a large African American population at her school. She looked around her college and saw other minority groups, particularly Vietnamese students, that she felt could also use additional support. Her original program "kinda developed and expanded to other types of things" and became her "little diversity project" (November 1, 2006).

Betty was passionate about the quality of the chemistry classes that she taught. Although she realized that most of her students came into her class under prepared for the rigor of the class, she was not content to have them leave her class under prepared:

I want them to feel that when they leave my class they can stand anywhere in this country. That they have the exposure and the course material presented to them, if they took advantage of it, and I gave it to them, that they feel they have an equivalent course for anywhere. And that's usually why I work myself to death.
(November 1, 2006)

Betty described how she tried to see the course through the eyes of her students and adjust her teaching so it worked better for them. She said "you have to put yourself in the student's position and at the same time maintain a certain standard that you're going to give them the required information that they need" (November 1, 2006).

Betty felt a real connection to the chemistry department at her college and participated in division and department meetings. She worked hard to get along with everybody at her college. She emphasized how important it was, as adjunct instructor, to adapt to the policies and common practices at that college, as long as they were in the best interests of her students. As Betty said, "When you're in Rome, you do as the Romans do" (November 1, 2006).

Betty believed in always doing her best and felt it was very important to keep learning and improving:

You learn every year from something new and when you stop learning, it's over for you....When you're not willing to do something different or to make it better

or to try to improve, it's pretty much over, and so you're always learning (November 1, 2006).

Although Betty wanted a tenure-track position, she was reluctant to apply for one. One reason was that she did not have a PhD and she thought that the hiring committees would always pick a candidate with a PhD over one without a PhD:

I didn't see no sense in putting myself through some of that pain, and, because it wasn't going to happen. I mean, I may have been high on the list and it was nice that I was going to be included in the package ...You know it's not going to happen (November 1, 2006)

Although Betty was reluctant to apply for a tenure-track she also believed that she would eventually get one:

If you've done a good job, and you know what you're doing, and you're always trying to improve yourself and trying to improve the students, it will happen, when there is a job opening. Even if you are a little bit old. (November 6, 2006)

Gary

Gary worked for seven years as an adjunct community college math instructor before completing his master's degree in math. When he first started teaching, the master's degree in the subject matter was not required to teach at a community college, however, the rules changed and a master's degree was required five years later. After he got married, he decided to "start behaving", completed his master's degree and started in earnest to try to get a full-time position. This task would take him eight

additional years to complete, while working at eight different community colleges and completing approximately forty job applications.

Gary worked hard to adapt to each school where he taught classes. He stressed the importance of teaching whatever classes his department needed:

I always made a point of taking classes of any range. I remember one semester where Flint College had hired a leave replacement for a semester, and her assignment included an analytical geometry [class], and she said I can't teach that class ...so they gave it to me. That was the kind of things they would do...So I would always take a class even if it meant more prep.
(December 2, 2006)

Gary talked about his transition as a teacher. He went from focusing on the material to focusing on the students. "I started paying more attention to, not so much the concepts I was teaching, but how I was presenting them and I also started paying attention to ...figuring out what seemed to work best for them [the students]" (December 2, 2006).

Gary also talked about the difficult time he had in connecting with his students. He had a habit of looking past his students rather than making eye contact with them:

Corny humor seems to work with students and so I used more of that as well. What I learned is that it made more of a connection. So even though I was looking above their head, they knew I was a nice guy. I had, you know, a sense of humor and it wasn't all business, and I think that was a threshold. I mean it was a

point where I started becoming more comfortable with the students themselves and I wasn't just trying to teach and come up with the best way to teach them, but also to make a connection. (December 2, 2006)

Gary talked about his "fit" with his hiring community college. He said, "It had a kind of relaxed kind of feel to it" (December 2, 2006). He made an immediate connection with the faculty and staff at his hiring community college but he struggled with the students at that college. He had a feeling that the students at his hiring community college felt privileged and he thought that they felt that the faculty members were there to serve them. He found that "I had to adjust to that culture" (December 2, 2006).

Gary started to focus on the different cultures he experienced at the different community colleges where he worked as an adjunct instructor. Gary first realized that he was more comfortable with the culture at his hiring community college than at his non-hiring community colleges when he was named as a finalist for a tenure-track position at one of his non-hiring community colleges. He found, much to his surprise, that he was actually hoping that he was not the finalist chosen for the position. He did not want to end up at the non-hiring community college; he wanted to be at his hiring community college where the "fit" was better. He said that when he "was originally hiring, I

thought I'd have a better chance getting into a larger department and so just melt in, but it turns out that the smaller department ...has better options" (December 2, 2006).

Gary thought his sex initially had a negative impact on his ability to be hired. Gary taught math, a field that historically had tended to be male dominated. All the colleges where he applied had a disproportionate number of tenured or tenure-track male faculty members. He ended up being a finalist several times but found himself being consistently passed over and, each time, a female candidate was selected instead. Eventually, after being previously passed over for a position at his hiring community college, he was a finalist at a time when the department was hiring two candidates, instead of just one, as was usually the case. This time, the committee chose a male and female candidate and he finally was offered a position. He thought the fact they hired two candidates, instead of one, made a big difference in his case.

The fact that he could understand why the female candidate was selected was comforting to Gary. He said that because he understood why the females were selected, he could continue to pursue his dream. If he consistently kept losing to candidates with the same demographic profile as

he had, he said he might have given up and pursued a different career.

Gary also worried that he might not be taken seriously as a candidate because it took him so long to get a position:

This person's been out there for five years and nobody's picked him up. What's going on? You know so even though I was an adjunct for fifteen, it was for eight years that I was applying with the master's degree. And I think that even eight years doesn't look great on your resume for the past when you're trying to find a job. (December 2, 2007)

Gary also felt that one of the reasons that he was eventually chosen was that he learned how to navigate the difficult application process traditionally used by community colleges. This will be further addressed later in the section on adaptation to the college application process.

Jeff

Jeff did not initially plan to be a community college math instructor. He also did not initially think he was very good at teaching:

I wasn't really good, I thought, teaching. So I had to work on that, I thought. And, so I was honing my skills, I believe, just trying to improve my teaching. So I thought I could get a full-time job or something. Actually I was looking for an actuary job at that time. So, you know, teaching I figured, I'd just do until I get something else. And then after, you know, after a couple of years, you kinda like forget everything, you know, all the other stuff and you just

teach. (September 29, 2006)

Jeff described how he kept working on his teaching skills. He would try presenting materials in a different way. As he said, "your beginning years are kinda, your, maybe your students suffer, then once you get better, you know, in your later years, your students benefit"

(September 29, 2006).

When Jeff first started at his college, he was assigned to work in their math computer lab once a week. He was good at technology and was able to demonstrate that skill during his weekly hour in the lab. This led to his being asked to teach a particular pilot class using a new computer software package. He was the only adjunct faculty member to teach in that program so he thought that gave him an advantage over some other job applicants. This led to his being asked to teach on-line classes, another unusual class assignment for an adjunct teacher. He also stressed that he was willing to teach any class, anytime. Once, he taught a contract education course for his college at 3:00 a.m. in the morning. He was happy to teach statistics, another hard to staff course. "Whenever they wanted someone to teach their class ... I said sure...you need to kinda like stand out....You just can't just teach your classes ...you have like twenty, thirty adjunct faculty and you

don't stand out" (September 29, 2006).

Jeff described how "every semester I just try something new. Or I change something...and if it works, Great! If it doesn't, you know, I find something different" (September 29, 2006). He said that he gets bored easily and is always looking for new challenges.

Jeff compared his teaching experiences at the different community colleges. He talked about being at a non-hiring community college where he could be lost in the crowd and not be noticed. He compared that with his experience at his hiring community college where he knew all the faculty members. "You just feel at home. You know where to go if you need it, if you have questions and what not." One reason Jeff felt so at home at his hiring community college was that he spent hours there as an adjunct faculty member. He did not have a computer at home so he picked the college where he was most comfortable, and he stayed at that college and did his work late into the night. That behavior caused him to meet faculty members outside his department and other college staff including the vice president of instruction, who had an office close to the adjunct faculty area.

Jeff also thought the "Asian Factor" (September 29, 2006) might have given him an advantage. He was Asian and

taught at a school with a large Asian student population. He said that when he was hired there were no other Asians teaching at the hiring community college, so perhaps his ethnicity was a positive factor in his case. He also said that since his hire, the demographics of the faculty and staff had shifted to such a degree that he felt that being Asian would not be advantage to future applicants.

Jeff felt that his changing his interview techniques also made a big difference in his being offered a tenure-track position. He had difficulty in interviewing and applying in the past and had learned to adapt to the application process. This will be discussed further in the section on adaptation to the college application process.

Joe

Joe was an active, local artist. He had an impressive show record in art and he was well established in his field. He also had nineteen years experience as an adjunct faculty member. Most of this experience was at non-hiring community colleges. He only taught at his hiring community college for one semester as a sabbatical leave replacement, a few years before being offered the tenure-track position.

While he was at his hiring community college, Joe helped with the student exhibitions and worked on course development. He also worked closely with two tenured art

faculty members during that time.

Joe stressed how important it was to be noticed as an adjunct faculty member when he discussed his interactions at a non-hiring community college where he worked for a long time as an adjunct faculty member:

I realized that, if there was any opportunity for me to be hired on full-time there, then I would have to maintain my presence as an individual, because we never really interfaced very much because everyone's schedules are so different. So I got a lot more inside into the structure, budgeting, how decisions are made in various ways, and all during this, the nineteen years that I was doing adjunct work, that also includes ten year on nonprofit boards...that really helped me understand grant writing processes, how to read a budget, and various other things that as an adjunct, you just don't get. (November 29, 2006)

Since Joe was well-known as an artist and had an impressive show record, just having his name on the class schedule gave his department extra prestige and, in effect, became a marketing tool for the department. He was active in art professional organizations and made a point to encourage his students to participate in these events. Joe also developed and taught a community-based summer art workshop that he ran for seven years while he was also working as an adjunct faculty member.

Joe first decided to be a teacher when he was six years old and his younger sister was born. Joe decided that he would be her teacher. He said that he has been a teacher

ever since that day. He honed his teaching skills over the years in many different ways. He taught for two years as an artist-in-residence:

On any given day, I would have to explain the same information to an administrator one hour, and the next hour a fifth grader, the next hour a kindergartener, the next hour a high school teacher and the next hour a high school student. (November 29, 2006)

Joe also worked as an art teacher in Korea, a job that proved challenging because he did not speak Korean and the students did not speak English. Joe described how he learned to measure student learning because the most important aspect of teaching was not the words coming out of his mouth but whether his students understood what he was saying:

I've known a number of people over the years that it seems that when the words come out of their mouth they feel their job is done. But one of the things I picked up in Korea is that my words are coming out but are they really understanding what I'm saying? (November 29, 2006)

Joe talked about how he has had to adjust, over the years, to students who come to class less prepared than they did in the past:

People were so unable to use rulers that now I, after doing this for a while, now I brought exercises that I used to do at the end of the class to the very beginning of the class. And I force them, well, I put them in a context where they don't have a lot of choice, but to learn how to use a ruler. (January 26, 2007)

Joe, after he was hired, heard that his hiring committee was worried about his age. He was 53 years old when he received the tenure-track position. He was relieved that his committee decided that if experience was very important to them, they had to accept that a candidate with that much experience would be older. He recalled his experience at a non-hiring community college when he shared a common reference with a different, younger, candidate who was chosen over him. The common reference had recommended him hands down over the other candidate but the younger candidate received the position.

Joe also worried that his vast experience and success as an artist may have actually worked against him getting a tenure-track position in the past. "Fulltime people see this as threatening" (January 26, 2007).

Joe thought that both persistence and being open to change helped him achieve his goals:

We know what happened to the dinosaurs, I'm trying to sprout wings. You know, I'm trying to take what I've learned and apply whatever's applicable, but also dump whatever baggage is not helping me out anymore, and learn new things that will help me move on and help me survive. (January 29, 2007)

Rod

Rod originally thought that he was too much of an introvert to ever be a teacher. However, after working in

industry and obtaining his PhD he decided that he really enjoyed teaching. He spent the next sixteen years working on getting a tenure-track position. He put out hundreds of resumes and applied at least twenty times for open positions.

Rod focused most of his efforts, at the seven community colleges where he taught, on being the best teacher he could be. As he said, "I put in a lot of hours and a lot of effort in" (October 9, 2007). "I found that the students really liked the way I present things and I think it kinda helps them understand the subject matter of chemistry, which can be daunting to a lot of people" (October 9, 2006). Rod described how he focused on where his students needed to be at the end of the class. He tried to let his students know why and where they were going during his classes.

Rod also worked to conform to the program at his hiring community college rather than coming in wanting to change the program. "I tried to make them feel like I would be a good team player, willing to do things and fit into the program" (November 9, 2006). Rod also stressed the importance of being willing to teach whatever courses the college needed to have taught. He stated:

Some schools will prefer that you teach the same class over and over again. Others will prefer that you're willing to switch and teach different classes. So, if I was at a college that wanted someone to teach general chemistry, and nothing else, then I was more than willing to teach general chemistry and nothing else. I always try to be the switch hitter to fit what whatever position they needed. (November 6, 2007)

Rod stressed how important it was for adjunct faculty to get to know the college lab technicians in chemistry so they would show him where things were so he could better cope with any emergencies that might occur. At his hiring community college, this proved to be an advantage because the opinion of the chemistry lab technician was very valued by the tenured faculty at that college. Rod also felt like the faculty members at his hiring community college were friendlier than at other non-hiring community colleges where he had worked in the past. He also had a good relationship with his division dean.

Rod felt that his PhD had been a disadvantage to him during the hiring process:

I think that they kinda resented, if they felt you had a PhD and they didn't, although I tried to not necessarily stress the fact, but sometimes I felt that people were kind of, put off by the fact that it made them look less, less right for the position they had, that they've been in for twenty years (October 9, 2006).

Rod also worried about the perception some tenured faculty had toward their adjunct faculty peers. "Some

faculty prefer not to hire their adjuncts, they view them as less than equal" (October 9, 2006). He talked about his frustration when he found that after having more experience he sometimes lost ground in his quest for a position:

I applied for a lot of positions and some schools I would end up in the top three, five, or six times in a row and never get the job. I would refer to myself as the bridesmaid, never the bride. And then, some of the people that they hired, when they became the committee looking for someone, I found that I never even made it into the top three. And since it was the same school and the same position, it's kinda hard to wonder why you ended up lower after more years of experience than when you started. (October 9, 2006)

Rod also talked about the importance of finding a school where he "fit". "If I ever felt like I was fighting a losing battle, it was always easier to find another campus, to try to find another school, where I might eventually get my foot in the door and it might help" (October 9, 2006). He also used this approach if a college had recently hired a tenure-track chemist and he did not think there were any openings on the horizon. "If I felt that there was no chance of getting the position until twenty years, I would try to find another school" (October 9, 2006).

Rod was very grateful that he finally found a college where the fit was right:

I'm very thankful that I ended up with a position. I thought about giving up a few times and doing something else but I really enjoy teaching, and I was just looking for a place that really wanted someone to teach and I think I found a good home here." (October 9, 2006).

Rose

Rose never planned to be a teacher until she was talked into being a teaching assistant one semester by one of her professors in graduate school. She "started to fall in love with it" (November 29, 2006). She felt that one of the reasons she was hired at her college was that she was a "really good teacher" (November 29, 2006). She put a lot of time and energy into her teaching and worked at meeting the needs of the community college students. Rose described how she had to rethink how she taught and adapt her style when she transitioned from teaching at a four-year university to teaching at a community college. She used a lot of trial and error as she learned how to work with these students:

I had to break things down into smaller steps at the community college. And I still wanted them to end up with the same result. I still want them to have the same learning outcomes and the same thinking skills, but I have to provide more steps to get there. I just can't jump right into the concept" (October 29, 2006).

Rose also described how she had to spend time developing the critical thinking skills her students would need to be successful at their transfer schools.

Rose also worked hard at developing her skills as an

artist. She felt that she was still "emerging" as an artist. She wanted a "steady gig" teaching and she wanted to pursue her art in her spare time.

Rose said she was known by her dean for "saving the day" (March 2, 2007) because she often accepted teaching assignments for classes that were hard to staff or took classes at the last minute when her dean needed her to. She had experience teaching all the different classes that were taught in the department at her hiring community college. She listed other ways she had provided extra value to her hiring community college when she advised that adjunct faculty members, who wanted to get a tenure-track position, should "volunteer to help organize the student art show, present awards to students, help out with the clean up of a storage area or organize the slide library" (November 29, 2006).

Rose talked about her "fit" with the college when she said, "I started to like this area and....I wanted to teach here....I could picture myself here" (November 29, 2006). She started to build relationships with the students and faculty at the hiring community college. "I know a lot of times, adjunct faculty just go in, they teach their class and then they leave. And so I'm glad I sort of sought out the other faculty" (November 29, 2006).

Rose thought of teaching as an evolving process:

I read a lot about teaching. I read a lot about art, I really think about it all the time, you know, how can I be a better teacher? I'm always asking myself that question. So, everything I do, its like how can I use it in my teaching, you know? Everything! I'm obsessed with it. (November 29, 2006)

Tom

Tom worked as a teamster while he was in graduate school. He saw teaching English at a community college as a way to get out of his "well-paying but sort of soul-sucking circumstances" (October 12, 2006).

Tom attended the same community college where he eventually ended up receiving his tenure-track position. He credits that experience with part of the reason that he had such a strong bond with his hiring community college. He also had an easy time relating to the students and teaching at the community college level:

I found the classes challenging but not problematic. I immediately was able to make a connection. And I don't find the level or the students difficult. Sometimes the lower division students are a little difficult, especially if they come right out of high school, under prepared, without student skills as well as scholarly skills. (October 12, 2006)

Tom thought that his biggest strength when he applied for the position was that he knew the hiring community college well. "I know the students and that's one of the problems ... when you hire outside of the area....I'm not a

frustrated Shakespeare scholar, my degree's in writing, I knew exactly what I was going to be asked to do" (October 12, 2006).

Tom did a lot of extra work for his department. He was an integral part of the common final exam program for the English department at his hiring community college. He helped create and grade these tests every semester for twelve years as an adjunct faculty member. He also was asked by his dean to mentor new adjunct faculty and served as an "elder statesman" (October 12, 2006) for other adjunct faculty members at his school.

Tom also talked about how he was willing to teach any class that they needed him to teach. He got along with everyone. "I always made sure I'm on the right side of admissions and records with [anyone] having to do with the job of teaching or turning in grades" (October 12, 2006).

Tom described how he approached teaching at his college when he said, "If I've found something that worked, then I adapted it" (October 12, 2007). He also discussed how he had to continuously change his teaching in response to the environment outside his hiring community college. He gave one example of how he had to adjust his course and teaching methodology in response to a change in the emphasis on traditional grammar on the English entrance

exam given by California State Universities, a common transfer college for his students.

Tom felt embraced by his faculty at his school. He spent a lot of time at his school and knew the English department very well. He was in the unusual position that he liked the freedom that came with working three part-time positions, without any full-time commitment. He had only applied one other time, unsuccessfully, for a tenure-track position at a school where he also had strong ties. He felt that the rejection changed his relationship with that non-hiring community college in a negative way. He was less willing to perform extra tasks or put in extra hours working at that non-hiring community college after he was not selected for the tenure-track position. He was somewhat reluctant to apply at his hiring community college, but "in fact, they started to get angry because I was not applying for jobs...it's finally, I had to do it or, I think, they would quit asking" (October 12, 2006).

Tom thought about what advice he would give to an adjunct faculty member who wanted a tenure-track position. He said:

You have to ask yourself, 'are you the sort of cooperative person that, you know, I would want as a long-term colleague?' That doesn't mean to be meek or anything, but so realize that, you know, that you're that position, your function in the department and

that specifically is your value in the classroom.
(October 12, 2006)

Common Adaptive Behaviors

All of the participants demonstrated adaptive behaviors toward their particular hiring community colleges. Although each participant demonstrated these behaviors in their own unique ways, four common themes emerged from the participants' stories.

One theme that emerged is that all the participants adapted to teaching community college students. They were all sincerely interested in their students and saw teaching as a process of continuous adaptation to their students' needs.

A second theme that emerged is that all of the participants worked to adapt to their hiring community college. They tried hard to get along with the other college faculty and staff. They were careful not to complain or do anything that would cause them to be perceived as being difficult to work with. They attended optional department or college events. Several participants were particularly sensitive to their role as an adjunct faculty member and were careful not to overstep their role and possibly offend the full-time staff.

All the participants worked to "fit" into their

department at their school. They were open to accepting a variety of courses and worked to adapt to their hiring community colleges rather than expecting their hiring community colleges to adapt to them.

A third theme that emerged is that all of the participants, with the exception of Beth and Rod, went to impressive lengths to provide extra service or value to their hiring community college. This was accomplished by going "above and beyond" the normal job description of an adjunct faculty member and included various activities such as creating and grading a common final for English, supervising student art shows, teaching hard-to-staff classes such as computer-aided courses or on-line courses, accepting last minute staffing requests, teaching courses offered at 3:00 a.m., running a college-wide diversity program and by being an accomplished local artist.

A fourth theme that emerged is that most of the participants found a particularly good match between themselves and their hiring community college compared to the other non-hiring community colleges where they had also taught as an adjunct faculty member. Several participants used the word *culture*, while other participants commented that they felt "at home", or "more appreciated", or felt more "embraced" when they described their particular "fit"

at their hiring community college compared to their non-hiring community colleges.

Table 5 gives a listing of the common themes that emerged from looking at the adaptive behaviors of all 8 participants as a group and a list of the participants who displayed the different types of behaviors. This table illustrates the similarities of the behaviors demonstrated by the different study participants.

Table 5
Examples of Adaptive Behaviors

Participant	Adaptation to Community College Teaching	Adaptive Behaviors at College	Adaptive Behaviors "Above and Beyond"	Fitness Peak between Participant and College
Beth	X	X		X
Betty	X	X	X	X
Gary	X	X	X	X
Jeff	X	X	X	X
Joe	X	X	X	X
Rod	X	X		X
Rose	X	X	X	X
Tom	X	X	X	X

Common Concerns

The participants also shared some common concerns. Beth, Rod and Gary worried that as they gained experience

as an adjunct instructor, they actually lost credibility as being a viable candidate for the position. Beth, Betty and Joe worried about their age; they were concerned that their odds of being hired went down as they became older. Betty and Rod both worried about the PhD factor. Ironically, both concerned participants were chemists and while one thought that having the PhD hurt his hiring prospects, the other candidate thought that the lack of a PhD hurt her hiring prospects.

All of the participants shared a common belief that they had the ability to be effective community college instructors but all of the candidates understood the odds against receiving a tenure-track position and, as adjunct faculty members, shared a concern that they would not be the "chosen one" (Beth, October 9, 2006).

Adaptation to College Application Process

Introduction

The application process at a community college can be very daunting for community college adjunct faculty according to the majority of the study participants. One unexpected adaptation that emerged from the data was that the study participants felt that learning to navigate the application process was a major factor in their receiving

the tenure-track positions. Beth summed up the feelings of several participants when she stated, "I figured out, sort of, what it takes to get through the process" (October 9, 2006).

The application process in a community college typically has three distinct steps, the written application and the cover letter, an interview with an ad-hock college committee that generally includes a teaching demonstration, and the final interview, often with the college president (Committee, Fall 2000; Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004; Marti, 2005). Each of these steps required a different set of skills and the different participants developed a variety of ways to adapt to these steps. Gary, Rose, Rod and Tom learned to navigate the system based upon personal experience with the process, Beth and Jeff learned by talking to others about their unsuccessful experiences while Betty relied on information she obtained from other faculty members.

Written Application and Cover Letter

The first step, the written application with a cover letter, was difficult for several of the participants. One difficulty was the common practice by community colleges that no prior knowledge of applicants could be discussed or considered by the screening committee other than the

information provided in the application package and cover letter. Several participants assumed that the committee would advance them to the second level, the interview, because committee members knew them and understood the value they would bring to the college:

I did apply here once before and at that time sort of thought 'oh, they're going to give me a free ride' or something, so I guess you need to know that you're not going to get a free ride because they like you, you still have to perform. (Beth, October 9, 2006)

Instead, because the participants did not document their value on the written application, they found that they were not being asked to interview. "You've got to get to the first interview. So you've got to learn how to present yourself, at that, and how to get everything on paper" (Beth, October 9, 2006). Gary described one of his first experiences applying, "One year I didn't do the full paperwork. I figure, they know me, so they will have me in, but they couldn't even interview me that year because I didn't submit all the paperwork" (December 2, 2006). Joe stressed how important it was to read the application carefully, "You really, really, really need to pay attention. And not think it through for them, but really read it" (January 26, 2007). Joe made multiple copies of the application form and practiced filling in the form being careful to address every "desired qualification"

listed on the sheet.

Gary and Beth described their difficulty in writing a good cover letter. Gary stated, "I had my generic cover letter. I tried to hit every point that I thought every college would like to hear. And it was clear, if you read my cover letter, while it had a lot of good stuff in it, it didn't necessarily address what was on the application" (December 2, 2006). Beth described what not to put in a cover letter when she described an unsuccessful previous application. "One of my applications, I wrote a letter, I lambasted them for not having enough women. And so I figured out that I probably shouldn't do that before I applied here" (November 9, 2006).

Interview and Teaching Demonstration

The interview was also very daunting for some of the participants. They found it hard to talk about what they did, particularly when they were in a room of people who knew them and were familiar with their work. Jeff said that after a bad interview, he was approached by a tenured faculty member who told him, confidentially, that he had to "talk during the interview" (March 2, 2007). Before his next interview, Jeff contacted a friend who had recently received a tenure-track position and asked him to write down all the questions that he had been asked during his

interview. Jeff then practiced answering the questions before his next, successful interview. Beth had a similar story. While talking to her daughter's friend, Beth mentioned that she was not good at interviews. The acquaintance suggested that she write down all the questions she might be asked and practice them over and over. Beth took the advice and sailed through her next interview. Beth also discussed her problem with knowing the language to use during her interview:

I realized that as adjunct, you don't do a lot of talking about your teaching, so you get to the interview and they ask you 'how do you do this and that', and, well I just do it, I don't know the language! (October 9, 2006)

Rose was surprised by the structured nature of the interview. She left an interview frustrated because she felt she had not said what she wanted to say. She learned that she needed to take any opportunity to get her message across in future interviews rather than answering each question as succinctly as possible and waiting for the perfect opportunity to convince the hiring committee to hire her.

The teaching demonstration was perceived as a critical part of the interview by Beth, Gary and Jeff. Beth heard from committee members, off the record and after the process was completed, that her teaching demonstration was

pivotal to her being offered the job.

Gary described a lesson he learned about the teaching demonstration:

Keep it simple. I found that the more simple I made my presentations; the more likely I would be called in for a second interview. The fancy, the fancy ones, you know they may have thought that's cool, maybe I'll try that for my class, but I'm not going to call them back for an interview. (December 2, 2006)

Jeff described how important it was to practice and prepare for this part of the process. He described hiring committees where, as a member of the hiring committee as a tenured faculty member, he witnessed strong applicants who sabotaged their own application attempt by coming into this part of the process and "winging it" (March 2, 2007) rather than practicing and giving a polished presentation.

Finalist Interview

The last part of the interview process at community colleges is the finalist interview. Generally, three candidates are invited to interview with one or two administrators at the college, often the college president and the division dean. (Committee, Fall 2000). The participants had less information about this part of the interview process, prior to their own personal experience. Since only three applicants are generally granted a final interview, there is less antidotal information from other

adjunct faculty members about the final interview. Also since generally only the college president and the division dean are present at this interview, the other main source of antidotal information for adjunct faculty, tenured faculty, cannot help.

Gary, who had been a finalist, at least ten times without being offered the final position, stressed the importance of the candidate really understanding the culture of the college where he was interviewing. He described how, early in his teaching career as an adjunct faculty member, he taught his classes, did not really get involved in the campus activities and did not pay attention to the culture at each college. He realized, after several failed experiences at a final interview, that the purpose of the final interview was to discover if the applicant fit into the culture at his or her college. He reflected on his behavior and analyze why he was always a bridesmaid and never the bride. He decided that he needed to convince the college president that he would fit into the culture at the college. He also realized that he could not "fake" this part of the interview:

I had a feeling that everything shows up in the interview... I mean, you know, why is it you want to work at Mountain Top College? What is it that you really like? And if you don't really like it, that's really hard to say. (December 2, 2006)

To convince the college president that he fit into the culture of the college, Gary really needed to understand and fit into the culture of the college. He started noticing the culture at the different colleges where he was teaching and focused his employment efforts on the college where he really did fit in best. The next time he was a finalist he knew why he wanted to be at his hiring community college and convinced the president that he was the right man for that job.

Beth described her final interview with her college president and her challenge in convincing her president that she would fit into her department. Her president was concerned that she appeared dour when she ran into her on campus. Beth needed to convince the president that she was a cheerful person and that she would be a positive influence at the college.

Persistence

An additional way that the participants showed adaptability to the application process was in their ability to keep persevering with this process. Despite the odds against obtaining a tenure-track position, the study participants kept persisting and kept believing that they would eventually be hired. This is evidenced by the fact

that each participant worked as an adjunct faculty member between seven to twenty-five years before he or she received a tenure track position, and still, he or she applied for his or her current position.

Gary was rejected approximately forty times before he obtained his tenure-track position. He discussed how hard it was to keep positive and to keep believing in himself in the face of multiple rejections. He felt fortunate that his wife expressed her anger at the system, and that, somehow, freed him to stay positive and pursue his dream. He thought it was important that adjunct faculty who wanted a tenure track position needed to go into each interview with an open mind and not have the attitude that that interview was their last chance. He had witnessed many adjunct faculty members who gave up, stopped applying for tenure-track positions and just accepted that they would always stay as an adjunct faculty member.

Rod, who made approximately twenty attempts during his sixteen years as an adjunct faculty member, stressed that it was very important to stay positive, particularly after being rejected for a tenure-track position at a school where he intend to apply again in the future. He stated, "Accepting not getting the position the first time or the second time, I think helped when I ended up getting it the

third time" (November 9, 2007).

One general sentiment that emerged from the participants in this study was that although they could not count on being hired at any particular time, or at any particular college, the participants felt that if they kept persisting and kept doing a good job, their efforts would pay off and they would eventually receive a tenure-track position. In addition to their words, this sentiment was demonstrated by the persistence demonstrated by the participants. Betty expressed this sentiment when she stated "If you've done a good job, and you know what you are doing, and you're always trying to improve yourself and trying to improve the students, it will happen when there is a job opening" (November 1, 2006). Joe stated, "It's just a matter of how serious are you" (November 29, 2006). Rod summed up his feeling about luck and controlling his own destiny when he said, "Sometimes the luck is being in the right place with the right faculty that feels the right way. So I spent some time working on things like that" (November 9, 2006).

Summary of Adaptations to Hiring Process

Not only did the study participants demonstrate that they adapted to their community college, as might have been expected, but they also demonstrated that they adapted to

the actual process of applying for community college tenure-track positions. The adaptive behaviors manifested themselves in different ways. For example, Joe learned to address all of the desired qualifications listed on the application in his written application. Beth and Jeff improved their interview techniques by writing down possible interview questions and practicing answering those questions. Rose learned that she needed to "sell herself" during the interview at every opportunity rather than waiting for the committee to ask her the perfect question. Gary learned to improve his teaching demonstration by simplifying and focusing on what he wanted the students to learn during the presentation rather than dazzling the committee with fancy technology. Tom and Betty demonstrated their adaptability to the process because they were both able to recognize when the opportunity was right and capitalize on that opportunity. Rod might have shown the most adaptation to the application process because he switched colleges seven times so he would always be teaching in departments that planned to hire in the near future. He continued this behavior until he found a college that valued what he had to offer. In each of these different ways, the participants demonstrated their ability to adapt to the application process.

Summary

The answer to the first research question "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants show adaptability to their particular environment?" is that each participant acted as a complex adaptive entity and demonstrated his or her adaptability to their environment in a variety of ways. The participants demonstrated adaptive behaviors toward both their particular community college and to the actual process of applying for community college tenure-track positions.

A more detailed summary of the findings for the first research question on adaptability is given in Chapter VIII. The next chapter discusses the findings for the second research question focusing on networking.

CHAPTER V

FINDINGS: NETWORKS

Introduction

The second research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate networking between other faculty members, their academic departments within their colleges, college staff outside their department and professional organizations and contacts outside of their college?" The study participants all described examples of personal work networks. These networks could be classified as being between other adjunct faculty members, tenure-track faculty, other college staff and contacts outside of their college. Some of these networks that primarily served as a source of job-related information or resources were classified as instrumental. Other networks that served mainly as a source of support for the participants and were characterized by a deeper connection, or friendship, were classified as expressive networks. Networks with a combination of both job-related information and support were classified as overlapping (Ibarra, 1993; Stackman & Pinder, 1995).

Networks Between Adjunct Faculty Members

Several of the participants specifically referred to

the isolation that often comes with being an adjunct faculty member. Jeff captured the sentiment of some of the other participants when he said "when you're an adjunct you really don't talk to anyone" (September 29, 2006). Joe echoed the same frustration, "it was very, kinda lonely in a way, it's almost like you don't even exist, and that was very frustrating" (November 29, 2006).

Jeff explained why he "hung around" the adjunct center at his hiring community college:

If you don't hang around the school, you don't meet anyone. You don't meet the adjunct people and you don't meet the full-time people. You just deal with the textbook person and mostly the department chair if you have questions. And then maybe the person who evaluates you but you only see them maybe like twice a year. (September 29, 2006)

Rose also made a point to meet other adjunct faculty members, "I know a lot of times adjuncts just go in, they teach their class and then they leave. And, I'm really glad that I sort of sought out the other faculty" (November 29, 2006). When she met with her fellow adjunct faculty members, Rose elaborated, "We would talk about teaching and we would talk about art, and that type of communication" (November 29, 2006).

Gary also talked about the isolation of being an adjunct and how important it was to talk to other faculty members:

As an adjunct, you just go in, do your class, and leave. You don't have a lot of faculty contact so you don't really get to ask the other faculty members what they do in the classroom, like you would if you were on full-time... I would try to schedule it so I had at least a little bit of time to sit around and talk to other instructors and talk to students...and I think that helped quite a bit. (December 2, 2006)

Tom felt fortunate that at his college he "got to meet my fellow adjuncts, and we got along pretty well... because we come together as a department, you do get to know everyone, and you don't get to do that in other programs" (October 12, 2006).

Although the relationships the participants formed with their fellow adjunct faculty colleagues were important to them, many of these connections seemed to be fairly weak. Beth discussed the transient nature of her relationship with her fellow adjunct faculty members:

There's a few adjuncts that I shared things with. The thing with adjuncts is, one semester you would have a couple people that you'd run into all the time and because schedules change, I wouldn't see those people for a semester or two...we'd talk about classes and we'd have a conversation with someone and then I wouldn't see them for a couple years. (October 9, 2006)

Although many of the adjunct networks described by the participants seemed to have fairly weak ties, the effect of this network on the career paths of the faculty could prove to be substantial. Jeff and Rose reported obtaining adjunct teaching positions through tips from other adjunct faculty

members. Betty, Rose and Gary obtained their adjunct jobs, at their hiring community college, from tips they received from fellow adjunct faculty members.

The networks between the participants and their fellow adjunct faculty members generally fit in the classification of instrumental networks. These networks served as (a) a source of college or department specific information, (b) a source to exchange teaching information, (c) a source of new job opportunity and (d) a source for information on the tenure-track hiring procedures. The participants generally did not mention the gender of their adjunct faculty colleagues during their interviews so this did not seem to be a factor in these networks.

Networks with College Personnel

Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty

All of the study participants had some contact with their tenure-track or tenured colleagues before they were hired. Table 6 lists the comments made by the participants about their tenure-track or tenured faculty colleagues. From Table 6, it is clear that the participants felt that they had good relationships with their tenure-track or tenured colleagues. These contacts were highly valued by the participants as an important source for department and

Table 6

Participant Comments on Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty

Participant	Comments on Tenure-Track or Tenured Faculty at their Hiring College
Beth	There were two or three [tenured faculty] who were particularly friendly to me. And when openings came up, I was asked if I was going to apply, that never happened at other colleges. Um, a part of that is that there were strong women here, I think, although there are a couple of men who also encouraged me to apply. (November 9, 2006)
Betty	I knew the faculty was willing to see my background as equivalent enough as to fit into the school. (October 9, 2006)
Gary	As far as the faculty members, it was a small college, a small number of people so, it was intimate. It just felt like I didn't have to work very hard to get known. (December 2, 2006)
Jeff	I kinda hung around here for a while doing stuff and you get to meet the full-time people and that has an advantage too, I hear. (September 29, 2006)
Joe	In terms of relating with other people, that's again something I felt very good about when I came down here, because almost right from the very start, people just kind of took me under their wing and started to give me advice and guidelines on how to deal with a variety of issues. (November 29, 2006)
Rod	The chemistry faculty, at that point, had offices right near the labs and the lecture rooms so a lot of times they saw you in the lab...[they] kinda had an idea of how you were doing. I just felt [they were] really friendly and they tried to inform me of some of the organizations that the part-time people don't always hear about. (October 9, 2006)
Rose	There was actually a big debate between me and another person and that the hiring committee was really split. Somehow, somebody wanted me bad enough to, to really push for me. So I think having taught here previously helped. (November 29, 2006)
Tom	I just had a very good, informal relationship with probably about half the department. I guess, we have about ten full-time and then, they, they treat me as a colleague. (November 12, 2006)

college information as well as a valuable connection for future job opportunities.

In some cases, however, the differences in job status between the participants and the tenure-track or tenured faculty members were an issue for the participants. Beth and Gary felt more comfortable talking with other adjunct faculty members than they did talking to tenure-track or tenured faculty members at their college. As Gary said, when he described his interactions with tenure-track or tenured faculty members, "it's almost like us versus them" (December 2, 2006). Beth also commented on the power difference between adjunct faculty and tenure-track or tenured faculty when she said:

The full-time people, I would say there were three or four in particular that were...they were supportive of me. At the same time, they were making decisions on whether I was going to have a job next semester, so that sort of makes things a little distant there.
(October 9, 2006)

Rod felt that a relationship with tenured faculty who might either be on the hiring committee or might influence people who were on a hiring committee was so critical that he actively pursued these relationships, however sometimes this proved to be frustrating:

I'd work and try to get to know the faculty member and then they would retire and have nothing to do with the position that was filled, in which case, it was very little effort, or very little benefit for having been

there for six or seven years and working with someone.
(October 6, 2006)

Jeff described the importance of the influence that tenure-track faculty from other departments could also have on someone who wanted a tenure-track position:

I hung around the campus a lot more maybe more than other adjuncts, you know, working on stuff, and just hanging around and maybe other tenure-track people in other divisions might know you and then they might root for you, for example, you know, to the department, you know, from what I've heard, like you know, why don't you hire this guy, you know, blah, blah, blah, or something. (September 29, 2006)

Other College Personnel

Jeff described the powerful connection he made with the vice president of instruction at his school. Jeff spent long hours in the adjunct center because he did not have a computer at home. The vice president's office was next to the adjunct center, so they became acquainted and often had a casual conversation. The vice president observed Jeff tutoring his students well into the evening and spending long hours preparing for his classes long after the other adjunct faculty had gone home. Jeff thought that his connection with his vice president, a person in a position to make or influence the final decision on a tenure-track hire, might have proved critical in his job quest.

Jeff also discussed the power of the student network:

You actually have to do a good job there because you know, the students, you know, like the full-time faculty might ask the students, 'what do you think of this faculty?', and if they say something bad, then you might be in trouble. (September 29, 2006).

Rod formed a work tie with a laboratory technician. He felt that this particular technician's opinion of adjunct faculty members carried a great deal of weight with the tenured faculty and administrators at his college. "I think a lot of people listened to him, and when he said someone did a good job or really was here, and, you know, put in the hours, I think they actually took note of it" (October 9, 2006).

Tom described how he felt "embraced" (October 12, 2006) by his division dean at his hiring community college. Gary also described the strong connection he felt with his dean. Gary said he felt that his dean felt "you're good and it was just a matter of time, and sure enough it was, and within two, years, I was hired there" (December 2, 2006).

Outside Contacts

Rose had a contact, a professor from her graduate program, who she thought was pivotal in her career:

I had a professor ...who really was very supportive and he helped me a lot. He referred me to a couple of schools that were looking for an emergency hire ...So I lucked out that I had a mentor who really advocated for me, and then positions came up (November 29, 2006).

This tie was important to Rose in several different ways. She received career advice, job leads, and moral support from her mentor. He was also a source for a strong letter of recommendation.

Three of the male participants talked about the positive impact their wives had on their job quest. Although wives do not fall into the traditional category of personal work networks, they are included here because the wives each had a significant impact on the success of their spouse in getting the tenure-track position. None of the other participants mentioned any impact their spouses had on their obtaining their tenure-track position during the interview.

Joe's spouse was the chair of the art department at a different college so she was a source of professional information and advice in addition to being an emotional support. Rod's wife, a classified staff person, helped him understand the importance of networking with the classified and faculty at his college. "At least, through my wife, I learned the classified [staff] really well, along with the faculty, and I was on my own with the administration" (October 9, 2006). In Rod's case, he felt the connection he made with the lab technician as a result of his wife's advice, might have changed his career path.

Gary was coached by his wife on how to form better relationships at work. He was initially very "businesslike" and found it difficult to open-up, show his personality and form personal relationships at work. He thought that was part of the reason he was not selected for the final position, although he was often granted an interview. With her help, Gary learned to be more open at work and was ultimately more successful.

Summary

The answer to the second research question "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate networking between other faculty members, their academic departments within their colleges, college staff outside their department and professional organizations and contacts outside of their college?" is that the participants demonstrated networking with other faculty members, college staff and outside contacts. The participants described multiple examples of personal work ties. These ties are listed in Table 7. From the table, is clear that the majority of the networks listed by the participants were described as instrumental personal networks that provided job related resources and information. The composition of these networks generally

Table 7
Personal Work Networks

Participant	Types of Ties		
	Instrumental	Expressive	Overlapping
Beth	Adjunct faculty Adjunct faculty at different college Male tenured faculty		Female tenured faculty
Betty	Tenured faculty College staff	Female staff of special program Female adjunct faculty	
Gary	Adjunct faculty Tenured faculty	Wife (career advisor) Support of male dean	
Jeff	Tenured faculty Adjunct faculty Faculty outside of department VP of Instruction		
Joe	Nonprofit boards Tenured faculty	Wife (in same professional field)	
Rod	Tenured faculty	Wife (classified staff)	Male lab technician in department
Rose	Tenured faculty Adjunct faculty		Male thesis advisor (mentor)
Tom	Adjunct faculty College staff	Female dean	Male & female tenured faculty

included adjunct, tenure-track or tenured faculty and other college staff. The participants also had several examples of expressive and overlapping networks that provided social support in addition to job related resources and information. The networks included deans, tenured faculty, college staff, and outside contacts. Three of the participants also included their wives as part of their expressive networks since they had been a major source of career advice.

A more detailed summary of the findings for the second research question on networking is given in Chapter VIII. The next chapter discusses the findings for the third research question focusing on patches and fitness peaks.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS: PATCHES AND FITNESS PEAKS

Introduction

The third research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at the college where they received their tenure-track position was influenced by their other work or school experiences?" The participants in this study clearly felt that their other college teaching and life experiences had a significant influence in their eventual success in obtaining a tenure track position.

Teaching Experiences

The participants generally described a process of trial and error as they learned how to be good teachers. They found they had to change their teaching methods and make adjustments when needed to meet the changing needs of their students. Their interest in becoming a teacher was a result of successful prior experiences. The participants all come to their hiring community college with teaching skills gained from these prior experiences. The high level of fitness the participants experienced at their other teaching jobs was directly responsible for increasing their fitness at their hiring community college.

The following example illustrated how a prior teaching experience influenced a participant's eventual fitness at his hiring community college. Joe described how his teaching evolved and improved as a result of teaching in a different country, Korea, where he did not speak the language. He felt that this experience taught him how to work with students in a different, non-verbal way, making him a better teacher:

It helped me to realize that there are many different ways people learn and there are many different ways people teach, of course, and how to, on an individual basis in a group setting, be able to gear things to, in ways that they can understand, and in ways I can determine if they understand. (November 29, 2006)

Several participants had an experience where a particular teaching experience from a non-hiring community college influenced their success in obtaining a tenure-track faculty position at their hiring community college. According to Beth and Gary, calculus classes are often considered premiere classes to teach in math departments at community colleges and are often only taught by tenured faculty or by favored adjunct faculty. Both participants felt that their ability to get a tenure-track position was greatly enhanced by having been given the opportunity to teach calculus at a non-hiring community college. In Beth's case, this impact was substantial. Because she had

impressed her supervisor at a non-hiring community college, Beth was given an opportunity to teach a calculus class at that college. During her interview, she was asked to do a teaching demonstration on a topic taught in calculus. Since she was currently teaching that class at a non-hiring community college, Beth was very comfortable in her teaching demonstration and was later told by committee members, in confidence, that her strong teaching demonstration greatly influenced her success.

Gary described how a favorite dean at a non-hiring community college gave him "assignments with calculus or assignments with statistics because he felt that was something that was going to improve my chances of being hired" (December 2, 2006). He also talked about teaching a television course at one non-hiring community college and a distance education course at another non-hiring community college "even if they didn't hire me, they were kind of improving my breadth. And I was aware of that and I took those opportunities" (December 2, 2006). He also explained that he was put in charge of distance education at his hiring community college shortly after he was hired, indicating that his prior experience in distance education was something that the hiring committee was seeking.

Rose had a similar experience when she was offered a

particular art class at a non-hiring community college. A different non-hiring community college wanted to hire her the next semester because she had experience teaching that particular class. The general pattern that emerged from the data was that the different participants felt that an experience teaching a particular class at one college made the participant a better candidate to teach that class at a different college. In turn, having experience teaching more classes made the participant a better candidate for tenured-track faculty positions.

Betty discussed how important her other teaching experiences were to her own personal development when she stated:

I've honed my skills in the sense that I've been exposed to more than one set. Sometimes ...you've been in one place and you get kinda stuck in that one gear and you can't make a change, or you think that's how the whole world is working. So by working at more than one place you can see how it is working at different places. And I've talked to, you know, people come from all places, different places, all places around, other community colleges and you get to see what they bring to the table and how they do things. (November 1, 2006)

Other Work Experiences

Rose had an experience where her fitness for her tenure-track position was enhanced by a prior work experience. Rose was interviewing for a tenure-track

position in a small art department. Because the department was small, Rose was going to have to be in charge of some critical activities such as ordering supplies, monitoring the department budget and scheduling classes in addition to teaching her classes:

I almost did not apply for the job. I almost thought this is too much. I'm not going to, I'm not going to be able to deal with, you know, there is so much more besides teaching that I'm going to have to do...I have to do a lot of coordination and it started me thinking about how, it's weird, when I was a litigation secretary, I was also an office manager. And so there was a real parallel there of me managing that office and being able to be a litigation secretary and then me being faculty here and being the coordinator of the department. And so I said, I can do that. Like it finally, it just dawned on me that it wasn't this big burden but that it was something that I could do...then that made me a bit more optimistic about working here and feeling that I can fit in, and that I had a place, and that kind of thing. (November 29, 2007)

Rose felt that she was very good at her job as a litigation secretary so her high fitness level at her prior job increased her fitness level for the tenure-track position. This realization also gave Rose the confidence she needed to apply for the position. She was able to document her prior skills and experience in her application package.

Joe had a similar experience when he was interviewing as a tenure-track art faculty member. In his case, he felt that a large part of his value as an instructor was his prior experience as a sculptor and his experience working

with a variety of media including stone, metals, and ceramics. He had an impressive show record and participated in several art shows every year. He felt that his fitness as an artist led directly to increasing his success in becoming an art tenure-track faculty member.

Summary

The answer to the third research question "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at the college where they received their tenure-track position was influenced by their other work or school experiences?" is that the participants' fitness levels at their hiring community college was influenced by their other work and school experiences. The participants learned general teaching skills and gained specific teaching experiences at other schools where they had taught that directly increased their fitness at their hiring community college. Several participants also had other work experiences that were beneficial in increasing their fitness level as a community college adjunct faculty member.

A more detailed summary of the findings for the third research question on patches and fitness peaks is given in Chapter VIII. The next chapter discusses the findings for

the fourth research question focusing on sensitive dependence.

CHAPTER VII

FINDINGS: SENSITIVE DEPENDENCE

Introduction

The fourth research question was "To what extent were the careers of the participants influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors such as chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment?" The findings show that all the participant's careers were influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors. These might be chance events, or small changes, either personal or from their environment.

Chance Events

Beth, Jeff, Joe, Rose and Tom each described chance events in their lives that ended up later making a significant impact on the career path.

Beth

Beth described the life changing job advice she received when she happened to talk to one of her daughter's friends. This friend suggested she write down and practice the interview questions before her job interview, something Beth had not done before her past interviews. Beth took this advice to heart, and felt that this chance meeting might have changed the outcome of her job interview.

Jeff

Jeff felt that one chance event that made a difference in his life happened when he happened to be assigned to work for an hour a week in a computer lab at his hiring community college. Because he received this assignment, the people in his department, including his supervisor, learned that he was good with computers and he was current on the latest technology. Jeff was asked to teach a special pilot math class that used computer-aided instruction. That experience, in turn, helped him to obtain a one-year sabbatical replacement position that helped put him in an advantageous position to be selected for his tenure-track position.

Jeff also mentioned a second chance event when the vice president of instruction's office happened to be near the adjunct faculty center at his hiring community college. Since he spent long hours at the center, the vice president had ample opportunity to observe him at work and they developed a casual friendship. Jeff thought this friendship might have had a great effect on his being chosen for his position.

Joe

Joe felt his life was almost totally altered by a small chance event that happened when he was much younger

and he was planning to take a trip to investigate graduate schools. On the day he was set to leave on his trip, his car broke down because of the chance event of a bad radiator cap and he decided he could not go on his trip. Instead, he decided that he would stay home and fix his car. At the last minute, he changed his mind and rushed to catch a bus, a decision he felt changed his life:

What kinda is bizarre about that is, I never would have married the woman I came to marry... I never would have gone to Chicago University...I never would have gotten the job in Korea...we just never know what the next step is going to be". (November 29, 2006)

Rose

Rose was talked into taking a teaching assistant position by a professor one semester when she was in graduate school, "It wasn't something I planned or sought after, it just, an opportunity arose and I just took it" (November 29, 2006). This small event changed the trajectory of her life.

Tom

Tom described a small chance event that may have made a nonlinear difference in his career. He told the story of how a highly-educated individual from a prestigious university, who had been hired by their department, left in the middle of the tenure process:

Here there was an instructor who was a professor, hired tenure-track, and stayed at the school for just two years and left in the middle of the tenure process. Mainly because she was disappointed with our students, [they] were not what she expected. And, I think, that made an effect in the department...Because here you go through this whole process and then the person leaves, and so the fact that, if anything, that played in my favor because I absolutely know the conditions and the environment of the students.
(October 12, 2006)

Tom felt that this illustrated to the hiring committee at his hiring community college that the individual most qualified for the position was not necessarily the person with the highest degree from the most prestigious college, but the individual who would be the most effective in teaching the typical community college student found at their college.

Being Open to Chance Events

Chance events can change a career but sometimes a person needs to be aware enough to take advantage of these events when they happen. Tom and Betty both capitalized on chance events when they decided to apply for their tenure-track positions.

Tom was not entirely sure he would apply for the job he eventually received. He had previously applied unsuccessfully for a tenure-track position at a non-hiring community college where he also had a close relationship

with many of the tenured faculty. "I applied there and I didn't get it, it affected me, it really did ... they didn't value me.... It didn't affect my work but it affected the way I interacted with them" (March 1, 2007). Tom clearly did not want to have a similar experience at his hiring community college. He also was in the unusual position that he was not entirely sure if he was ready to commit to the demands of a full-time job. He happened to run into his dean on campus one day and she encouraged him to apply. After this chance encounter, he realized that everything in his work environment was perfect and although, he was in a really good position to be chosen for this particular position, if he did not act on this opportunity, he might not ever have this same opportunity in the future. He allowed himself to be open to a chance event, and applied for the position.

Betty also showed that she was open to taking advantage of chance events when she overcame her fear of rejection and finally applied for a tenure-track position after thirteen years of working as an adjunct faculty member. Betty described why she finally applied for her position:

I don't think it was luck, I just knew the timing was right, and I knew that the position was right, and that I had been here, and I think I knew the faculty

was willing to see my background as equivalent enough as to fit into the school, and I think that's what it came down to. (November 1, 2006)

Beth, Rose, and Rod also commented on the importance of chance events and seizing an opportunity when it presented itself during a job hunt. Beth said, "You gotta work at it but there is a certain element of luck...and if they want certain people and if certain kinds...some of it is out of your control...Some of it's luck". Rose commented on the importance of being "in the right place at the right time" (November 29, 2006). Rod also commented on the importance of being open to chance events when they occur. He said, "Sometimes the luck is being in the right place, at the right time, with the right faculty, that feels the right way. So I spent time working on things like that".

Small Personal Changes

Gary, Jeff and Beth shared examples of small personal changes that may have had a large impact on their lives. Gary described the change he made based on his wife's advice, "My wife told me that I should be personal, show more personality and stuff, I was too business like, too stiff, and that was something that I really had to learn" (December 2, 2006). Jeff described the personal change he made when he was told by a tenured faculty member that he

needed to "talk" (March 2, 2007) during his interview. Beth took advantage of a chance event and made a personal change when she decided to take her daughter's friends advice and practice before her job interview. Dyeing her hair was also a small personal change that Beth made that also symbolized the internal change she made when she decided to really wanted to pursue a tenure-track position.

Small Environmental Changes

Small changes in the environment around the colleges can also make a large impact on a career search. One environmental influence was mentioned by Gary. He was convinced that he had lost out on prior tenure-track positions because he was male. The political correctness surrounding community colleges had influenced hiring committees who, in the past, had tended to hire male math faculty members. This influenced the hiring practices when he was applying for positions. "They didn't do a lot of hiring, but when they did hire, they hired for obvious reasons because women were not well represented" (December 2, 2006). He could understand why female candidates were hired and that seemed to be a comfort to him. He felt fortunate that two positions were hired when he applied for his tenure-track position. Gary thought that because a woman was hired by his college department in the recent

past, and because a woman was offered a position at the same time as he was, the college was able to extend a job offer to a male candidate.

One other environmental concern that was expressed by Rod, Tom and Beth was the attitude that the college or department had about hiring its adjunct faculty members. In Rod's opinion, "some faculty prefer not to hire their adjuncts, they view them as less than equal, and other schools always hire their adjunct faculty" (October 9, 2006). In some cases, the participants thought that attitude kept them from being hired. However, Tom and Beth felt that the attitude helped them obtain their tenure-track positions. Tom said, "I had a pretty good chance of being hired here [his hiring community college], at Livermore College, they've just, they never hire their part-timers, Mountain Top isn't known for that [either]" (October 12, 2006). In Beth's case she also felt that this attitude was an advantage to her being hired:

A full-time math person who was on the final committee, who was a woman who, I think, she wanted one of the adjuncts hired. And, as of my understanding, only two adjuncts made it into the final interview and so whoever came out strongest among the adjuncts, she wanted hired. (October 9, 2006)

Summary

The fourth research question was "To what extent were the careers of the participants influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors such as chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment?" The data obtained in this study indicates that the careers of several of the participants in this study were influenced by chance events. The participants allowed themselves to be open to these chance events. Several participants also made small personal changes or leveraged changes in their environment that they felt influenced their success in obtaining a tenure-track position. Understanding the impact that sensitive dependent behaviors could have on a career also helped the participants persevere in their quest for a tenure-track position.

A more detailed summary of the findings for the fourth research question on sensitive dependence is given in the next chapter, Chapter VIII. Chapter VIII also includes a summary of the entire study, and a discussion about the results, recommendations and implications from this study.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine community college adjunct faculty members who have obtained tenure-track positions. The literature establishes that approximately 50% of the 222,259 adjunct community college faculty members employed in 2001 would have preferred a tenure-track faculty position (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). In that same year, only 8,295 full-time faculty were hired in public community colleges (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). Of the 8,295 new positions, research also shows that only about 33.2% or approximately 2,754 hires went to individuals who had previously worked in the community college system. The rest were individuals who had previously worked at either four-year colleges or universities, the government or in private industry, or individuals straight out of graduate schools (Gahn & Twombly, 2001). The approximately 2,754 hires with previous community college experience includes individuals who currently have community college tenure-track positions and decide to change colleges and individuals working in staff or management positions at a community college who

chose to go into a full-time faculty position.

These numbers illustrate why it is so difficult for current adjunct community college instructors to receive tenure-track positions even though they currently teach the same classes to the same students as their tenured colleagues. Despite these odds, however, each year, some community college faculty members are successful in achieving tenure-track positions. This study examined the behaviors of adjunct faculty who were successful in their quest for a tenure-track position. Their actions and behaviors may give some insights into why they were able to achieve their goal.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation used to frame this study was complexity science. Prior work illustrated the insights that could be gained by applying complexity theory to the field of career development (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003). Specifically, this study focused on the concepts of adaptability, networks, patches and fitness peaks and sensitive dependence.

The concept of adaptability was natural to apply to careers since a career changes shape and evolves over time. A career will adapt to both changes in the individual and in response to the unique environment surrounding the

individual. In this way, a career can be thought of as a complex adaptive entity (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003).

Networks are an essential component of any job. Individuals form ties with their co-workers, customers, suppliers and even their competitors. The number, strength and quality of work ties can relate to an individual's fitness at a job. Work ties may also be pivotal as individuals change jobs and are an essential part of any career path (Granovetter, 1974).

Patches, used to model behaviors in biological and social systems (Kauffman, 1995; Watts, 2003), also prove to be very applicable to career development. The premise of patches is that a fitness peak, a point of optimal fitness, in a larger system can be obtained by creating patches, subgroups of the larger system, and letting these patches seek their individual fitness peaks. Maximizing the fitness of each patch will maximize the fitness of the system as a whole (Bloch, 2005; Kauffman, 1995; Watts, 2003).

Sensitive dependence is the concept that small changes may have a large, non-linear effect on a system. This concept originated when Edward Lorenz found, when he was studying meteorology, that a small initial difference could make a significant nonlinear difference in a system (1963).

Bloch, Bright and Pryor have successfully used the concept of sensitive dependence to better understand career paths (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003).

Methodology

This qualitative study explored the behaviors and experiences of eight tenure-track or tenured community college faculty members. These tenure-track or tenured faculty members were former adjunct faculty at the same college where they eventually received their tenure-track position. They had been an adjunct faculty member for at least three years, had taught at more than one community college and taught in a traditional academic field rather than in a vocational field. The study participants were diverse in terms of ethnicity, subject taught, hiring community college and age at the time they received their tenure-track position. The participants included three females and five males.

The study participants completed a short informational questionnaire and participated in both a one-on-one interview and a follow-up interview. The informational questionnaire was used to verify that the participants met the study guidelines. It was also used to gather demographical information about the participants. The one-on-one interviews explored the experiences and behaviors of

the participants during the time where they worked as an adjunct faculty member and pursued a tenure-track faculty position. The follow-up interviews were used to clarify the data gathered on each participant and to verify the themes that were identified after analyzing the data collected during the one-on-one interviews.

Research Findings

Adaptation

The first research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants show adaptability to their particular environment?" The research data showed that the careers of the study participants behaved as complex adaptive entities. Their careers changed and evolved as the study participants demonstrated their adaptations to their college environment in multiple ways including teaching at their hiring college, adapting to the needs of their hiring college and adapting to the hiring processes at community colleges.

The participants explained how they had learned to effectively teach the students at their hiring community colleges. This was generally done by a process of trial and error as the participants adapted their teaching to meet the needs of the students at their community college.

Each of the participants demonstrated the ability to

adapt to their hiring community college by adopting behaviors such as being willing to teach a variety of classes, getting along with other college faculty and staff and by being perceived by their colleagues as being easy to work with. All of the participants demonstrated a particularly good fit between themselves and their particular hiring community college. They did that by explaining how they adapted to the college culture or described how they "fit in" with the hiring community college better than they had with non-hiring community colleges. In complexity terms, they found a fitness peak at their hiring community college.

An additional way that most of the participants demonstrated their adaptability to their college was by demonstrating behaviors that were above and beyond the normal behaviors demonstrated by adjunct community college faculty members. These behaviors included running a college diversity program, teaching unusual or difficult classes, running student art shows and writing and grading common final exams. These behaviors increased the fitness of the entire college and demonstrated an unusual amount of adaptation to the college environment.

Another arena in which participants demonstrated adaptive behaviors was in their adaptation to the actual

process of applying for a tenure-track position. This process has three main steps and the different participants made a concerted effort to learn about this process and adapt their behaviors so they would be successful in their pursuit of a tenure-track position. These behaviors included learning to tailor each application to address all the desired qualifications listed on the job announcement, practicing possible interview questions, keeping the teaching demonstration simple and student-focused and understanding the college environment to better convince the college president that they would fit into that environment. The participants also demonstrated their adaptability by continuing to persevere and work toward their goal of a tenure-track position, sometimes after multiple rejections, rather than abandoning their quest.

Networks

The second research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate networking between other faculty members, their academic departments within their colleges, college staff outside their department and professional organizations and contacts outside of their college?" This study found many examples of networks that significantly impacted the career paths of the study participants. These networks were with

other adjunct faculty members, tenure-track or tenured faculty, other college staff or outside contacts.

The participants generally had work networks with other adjunct faculty members. The ties with their fellow adjunct faculty members provided information on college teaching methodology, individual college or department policies, open adjunct faculty teaching positions and community college hiring procedures. Most of the participants felt somewhat isolated as an adjunct instructor and found ties with other adjunct faculty members provided a source of social support.

The participants also formed relationships with the tenure-track or tenured faculty at their colleges. These ties were perceived by the participants as being very valuable to them during their job quest. Particular participants, for example, formed links with other college staff including a chemistry lab technician and a college vice president that might have been pivotal in the participants being chosen for their positions. Several other participants described a deep level of support from a college dean or department chairperson. In some cases, the supervisor was at a non-hiring college and this support led to teaching assignments that increased the participants' fitness level at his or her hiring college. In other cases

the support from the supervisor at the hiring college was considered pivotal by the participants.

One participant had a mentor outside her college that helped her develop her fitness as a community college faculty member. Three participants included their wives in their list of outside work networks because they felt that their wives' insights and advice greatly influenced their success in obtaining a tenure-track position.

The participants formed both strong ties and weak ties with different individuals at work. Both proved pivotal for the study participants.

Patches and Fitness Peaks

The third research question was "To what extent do the patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at the college where they received their tenure-track position was influenced by their other work or school experiences?" The participants all had different patches that made up the quilt of their work lives. They all had different patches that represented the non-hiring community colleges where the participants worked. The experiences at their non-hiring community colleges increased their fitness at their hiring community college. All the participants gained valuable teaching experience and knowledge of California community colleges

from their experience at their non-hiring community colleges. In several cases, the participants gained experience teaching specific courses at their non-hiring community colleges that substantially increased their fitness at their hiring community college.

Some participants had additional work patches that directly increased their fitness at their hiring community college, and, ultimately, to their career as a whole. One example of this was that a participant's prior successful experiences as an artist increased his fitness as an art instructor at his hiring college.

The patterns of behavior of the participants demonstrate that their fitness levels at their hiring community college were strongly influenced by their other work or school experiences.

Sensitive Dependence

The fourth and final research question was "To what extent were the careers of the participants influenced by sensitive dependent behaviors such as chance events or by small changes, either personal or from their environment?" Chance events and small changes, either personal or environmental, were shown to sometimes have a large, nonlinear effect on the trajectory of the participants' careers.

Chance events and small changes both personal and from their environment influenced the careers of the participants in this study. The chance events described by the participants were unique for each individual and included a chance meeting with their supervisor, a tenure-track faculty resignation and the location of a Vice President's office. Examples of small personal changes include a participant learning to "open up" at work, a participant dyeing her hair to appear younger and a participant seeking, and accepting, advice on interview techniques. Examples of small environmental changes included the attitudes held by college staff and faculty toward hiring their own adjunct faculty and the political correctness of favoring the hiring of female candidates in a traditionally male-dominated area.

Overall Findings

Table 8 lists a summary of the major factors listed by the participants as to what they thought had the biggest influence on their receiving a tenure-track position. It is clear from this table that there were several different factors that each participant felt contributed to his or her success in obtaining a tenure-track position. Although every participant had a unique experience, there were some commonalities between their different experiences.

Table 8

Participants' Perceptions of Greatest Factors in Obtaining their Position

Participant	Perceptions of Greatest Factors in Obtaining their Tenure-track Position
Beth	(a) Learned how to navigate college application process (b) Garnered support of tenured faculty at hiring community college (c) Prior experience in teaching calculus at a non-hiring community college
Betty	(a) Organized college-wide diversity program (b) Did an exceptional job of teaching her students (c) Took opportunity when timing was right and she had a good relationship with the tenured faculty at her hiring community college
Gary	(a) Taught any class, including on-line, television and distant education (b) Learned how to navigate the application process including understanding the college culture and learning to "open up" at work (c) Developed good relationship with college dean
Jeff	(a) Taught any class, any time including computer mediated and on-line courses (b) Improved his interview - learned how to "talk" during interview (c) "Hung out" at college - developed relationship with faculty & Vice President
Joe	(a) Well established as local artist (b) Developed curriculum and organized student art shows at hiring college (c) Developed good relationship with tenured faculty members at hiring college
Rod	(a) Put in extra hours at hiring community college working in chemistry lab (b) Developed good relationship with chemistry lab technician (c) Changed jobs multiple times to college where an open position might occur (d) Support of tenured faculty
Rose	(a) Learned to be a "really good teacher" and was very organized (b) Prior experience as an office manager - parallel to coordinating department (c) Organized student art exhibit and other volunteer activities at college
Tom	(a) Developed and graded department final exam and acted as an elder statesman (b) Prior tenure-track faculty member in department resigned from college (c) Had strong support of tenured faculty and the dean at hiring college (d) Applied when timing and circumstances were right

Discussion

Themes

Although each participant had a unique career path, some similarities in behaviors emerged when the career paths of all eight participants was examined as a whole.

1. All of the participants took their work very seriously and took specific steps to adapt to their particular environment, either at their college or at other colleges or workplaces.

2. All of the participants worked well with other people and formed work networks with their colleagues.

3. Although the participants had worked at different non-hiring community colleges, they seemed to sense a particularly good "fit" and found a fitness peak at their hiring community college.

4. All of the participants understood the influences that chance events and small changes could have on their careers and this understanding helped them persevere, even in some cases, after multiple prior rejections. They realized that obtaining a tenure-track position was a process, and they believed that, under the right conditions they could be successful in this process.

Theme One - Adaptation

All the participants felt they were good teachers and

put forth their best effort to adapt to their particular environment. All the participants had the ability to adapt and change as they interacted with the world around them.

The participant's adaptive behaviors included adapting their teaching techniques to meet the needs of their students. They also adapted to the needs of their hiring college. This sometimes included doing extra tasks for their department at their hiring community college such as organizing student art shows, running college diversity programs, organizing common final exams, pioneering new technology to teach math, or being willing to accept any class offered to them, including classes they had not taught in the past, classes offered at unusual times or classes offered to them at the last minute.

The workplace adaptive behaviors demonstrated by the participants in this study are fairly consistent with behaviors defined by Fath, Zhong, and Organ (2004) as organizational citizenship behaviors. Fath, Zhong and Organ's work was refined from earlier work pioneered by Organ (1988). The work identified behavior that promoted "the effective functioning of an organization" (p. 4). These behaviors included (a) taking initiative, such as voluntarily working extra hours, performing extra duties and sharing work related information; (b) helping coworkers

either with work or non-work issues; (c) making constructive criticism or speaking up to protect the firm's interests; (d) group activity participation such as attending either work sponsored activities or events sponsored by groups from work; (e) promoting company image; (f) self-training; (g) social welfare participation; (h) protecting and saving company resources; (i) keeping the workplace clean; and (j) interpersonal harmony (2004).

The study participants also worked hard to adapt to the other community colleges where they also taught or at other workplaces. Adapting their behaviors to meet the needs of the non-hiring college allowed the participants to achieve fitness peaks at non-hiring colleges or workplaces that also influenced their fitness level at their hiring college. The fitness peaks at a non-hiring college might result in such diverse outcomes as an exceptional letter of recommendation or an experience teaching a new class. The fitness peak at different workplaces included being an accomplished artist and being a good office manager while working as a litigation secretary.

The last way that the participants showed their adaptive behavior was toward the actual process of applying for a community college tenure-track position. Examples of adaptive behaviors that were made by study participants and

were designed to increase their success during the hiring process included practicing for an interview, simplifying a teaching demonstration and learning the college culture so the participant could have a better final interview with the college president. One study participant, after receiving advice from a colleague after an unsuccessful interview, decided that he needed to make a change in his behavior and talk more about himself during the interview. One participant demonstrated a remarkable amount of adaptation toward the process of applying for a tenure-track position by remaining dedicated to his job quest by focusing on improving his resume and hiring techniques even after working as an adjunct faculty member for fifteen years and submitting approximately forty unsuccessful applications for tenure-track positions.

Theme Two - Networks

All the participants demonstrated that they worked well with other people. They understood that they were coming into their college as adjunct faculty members and needed to be tactful and adapt to both their college and their colleagues. They used tact when they made suggestions to their full-time colleagues. They made a point to meet and form work networks with other adjunct faculty members, tenure-track or tenured faculty and other college staff.

Several participants spent extra time at their hiring college in an effort to form work networks. This time might be spent in the adjunct faculty center, a chemistry lab, attending department meetings, or working on projects with other college staff members. Most of these work networks were primarily instrumental where information was exchanged, but some of the networks developed into expressive networks where the participants received support from tenured faculty or college staff (Ibarra, 1993; Stackman & Pinder, 1995).

Some of the links formed by the participants were strong, while others were weak. Granovetter showed that sometimes weak links might prove to be pivotal in a job search (1974). One of the participants formed a weak link with a vice president at his hiring college that might have been pivotal in his job search. In this particular case, the vice president had a high degree of centrality, a measure of the power that a few highly connected or influential people can have in a network (Watts, 2003). In other cases, strong ties were pivotal when the tie was with a person with a high degree of centrality such as an influential lab technician, a tenured faculty member, or a college dean.

Theme Three - Fitness Peak

All of the participants felt that there was a good fit between themselves and their hiring community college. Sometimes this fit was immediate. This was the case when the participant attended his hiring community college as an undergraduate. In other cases, the participants adapted to their college and the fitness peak was achieved over time. In one case, a participant moved from college to college searching for a college where he could find a fitness peak. He found this "fit" at his hiring college. In other cases, the participants worked at multiple community colleges at the same time but felt a greater connection, or "fit", at their hiring community college than they did at their non-hiring community colleges.

The participants used different words to describe their fitness peak with their college. One participant described being "embraced" (Tom, October 12, 2006) at his college. A different participant described her "fit" by saying, "I knew the students, I knew the area, I knew the program, pretty much, and I had been working with these students all the time" (Betty, November 1, 2006). In several cases, the participants used the word *culture* to describe their fit with their hiring community college.

The participant's use of the word *culture* is

consistent with Morgan's definition, "Organizations are mini-societies that have their own distinctive patterns of culture and subculture" (1997, p. 129). A study by Levin (2005) confirmed the large variance in culture found at community colleges. He conducting a comprehensive review of community college literature, and determined that there are four cultural types found in each community colleges: traditional culture, service culture, hierarchical culture, and business culture and concluded that because there are multiple cultures in each college, each community college will interpret and integrate these cultures in varying ways leading to wide differences in the organizational cultures found at different community colleges.

Another very similar concept to fitness peaks is found in work adjustment theory, championed by Dawis in 1980. Work adjustment theory focuses on the interaction between an individual and his or her work environment. The individual must be satisfied with the work environment and the work environment must be satisfied with the performance of the individual (Dawis, 1980; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984).

The concepts of organizational culture and work adjustment theory are outside of the scope of this study, but it is interesting to note the similarities between these concepts and the findings of the study that the

strong relationship between the individuals and their hiring community college was a key part of the success the participants had in obtaining their tenure-track positions.

Theme Four - Openness to Chance Events

One of the participants described the effects that chance events and small changes had on his career:

I think sometimes we tend to think that these opportunities are going to be linear. That it's like a staircase. Every step is going to come from a certain interval at a certain height. And a certain configuration that's very predictable. It's not like that at all. (Joe, November 29, 2006)

The participants in this study understood the impact that chance events or small changes could have on their careers and on their quest for a tenure-track position.

Understanding this phenomenon helped the study participants remain focused on their job search instead of becoming discouraged and abandoning their dream.

The chance events related by study participants that they felt influenced their career paths included the resignation of a current tenured-track faculty member, a chance encounter a participant had with a friend of her daughter that resulted in the participant's learning a new interview technique and the location of a vice president's office which resulted in a participant developing a casual friendship with the college vice president. The small

personal changes made by study participants included making an effort to be more personable at work and dyeing grey hair to appear younger. Small environmental changes cited by study participants included awareness by community college staff of past discriminating attitudes and the college-wide attitude held by college staff concerning hiring their adjunct faculty members into tenure-track positions.

The participants demonstrated that they understood the importance of being open to chance events or small changes. They were in touch with their college environment and understood that they needed to leverage chance events and make small changes when appropriate. "Sometimes the luck is being in the right place, at the right time, with the right faculty, that feel the right way" (Rod, October 9, 2006). When doors open, the participants understood that they needed to walk through them.

Themes - Summary

Four common themes emerged from when the career paths of the eight participants were examined as a whole. The study participants were very good at adapting to their particular environment. They were also good at networking and worked well with students and other college faculty and staff. The participants found a particularly good fit with

their hiring community college. They understood the impact of sensitive dependence and this understanding helped them to leverage chance events or attempt small changes. This understanding also helped the participants to persist in their job quest because they understood that even if they had multiple rejections in past job interviews, with small changes in their behavior, experience, or in their environment, they might be successful in future job applications.

Complex Adaptive Entities

Although common themes emerged when the experiences of all the study participants was looked at collectively, each participant had a distinct career path. They each adapted to their particular environment in their own way both at their hiring community college and also at their non-hiring community college or workplaces. They each developed work networks based on their particular personality and circumstances. They each had experience working at different community colleges and each participant found a community college where they found a good "fit". They each had different instances where their career path was influenced by chance events or small changes. They each had distinct career paths based on their individual personalities and circumstances. In this way, the career

paths of the study participants can be described as complex adaptive entities (Bloch, 2005).

One characteristic of complex adaptive entities is that they change shape and adapt based on both internal changes and their interchanges with the environment surrounding them (Bloch, 2005; Maturana & Varela, 1987). The study participant's careers changed shapes and evolved over time. Bloch (2005) wrote, "the original idea that career development is a natural, internal process is borne out by the acceptance of career as a complex adaptive entity" (p. 199).

Complex adaptive entities are networked with the world around them (Bloch, 2005). The study participants were networked to other adjunct faculty, tenure-track or tenured faculty, other college staff at their hiring community college. They were also networked with their non-hiring community colleges, other work sites and professional organizations.

Another characteristic of complex adaptive entities, described by Bloch (2005), was their dynamic nature. The participant's careers were dynamic and moved between order and chaos. In this study, this was particularly true of three of the participants who were teaching at several different community colleges simultaneously. They described

the chaotic times they experienced as they worked to adjust their schedules and pick up enough teaching assignments to survive each semester. Kauffman (1995) stated that "life evolves toward a regime that is poised between order and chaos" (p. 26). Complex adaptive entities want to survive and seek fitness peaks, particularly during transitions between order and chaos. According to Bloch (2005), these transitions may yield an "opportunity for creativity and the emergence of new forms" (p. 197). This was particularly true for the study participants when a tenure-track position was opened in their department at their hiring college. They were forced to decide if they would apply for the position. Also a new tenure-track faculty member might assume the teaching load previously taught by two or three adjunct faculty members so their livelihood as an adjunct instructor at that college might be compromised if they were not the candidate selected for the position. For the study participants, the new position forced them into chaos and, at the same time, gave them an opportunity to find a new fitness peak as a tenured-track faculty member.

Conclusion

Beth said "It's a very complex thing, getting to be 'the chosen one'" (November 9, 2006). Many different

factors, behaviors and chance events played a part in each participant's success in obtaining a tenure-track position at a community college. Although each participant had a unique career path that unfolded in its own particular way, the different participants also shared many common experiences and behaviors. Four themes emerged when the experiences of all the participants were examined collectively. The participants adapted well to their environment, worked well with others and networked with their colleagues at work, found a good 'fit' with their hiring college and, by understanding sensitive dependence, were able to leverage chance events, make small personal changes or were able to capitalize on small changes in the environment.

The careers of the study participants adapted and evolved over time and in response to both internal changes by the participants and to external changes in the environment surrounding them. Each career was connected, or networked, to others both within their hiring community college and to other non-hiring community colleges, work places and professional organizations. The careers were dynamic, constant changing as they transitioned between order and chaos as the study participants sought fitness peaks. When the career paths of the study participants are

examined as a whole, a pattern of behaviors emerges that describes complex adaptive entities.

Recommendations

Additional Research

Hiring of Tenure-Track Faculty

The literature search for this study revealed that not much is known about why certain individuals are selected for tenure-track community college positions and why other individuals are not. This particular study focused on a small subset, former adjunct faculty members, of the larger population of individuals who receive tenure-track community college positions. Additional research on the traits, behaviors or experiences of newly hired tenure-track faculty as well as on the traits, behaviors or experiences of individuals who applied, but were not selected, is needed. Also additional research on specific populations of individuals seeking tenure-track positions such as individuals who have applied multiple times is also needed.

The data collected during this study was from the prospective of former adjunct faculty members. It would be enlightening to also get the perspective of the hiring committee, the hiring manager and the college president.

The hiring process viewed from the vantage point of all the key participants would give a more complete picture of the traits, behaviors and experiences of adjunct faculty that contributed to their receiving a tenure-track position.

Discouragement Factor

A different aspect of adjunct faculty employment that could be explored would be the discouragement factor experienced by many adjunct faculty members who desire tenure-track positions. Jacoby (2005) found that for community college adjunct faculty, "desire alone does not translate into job search" (p. 142). Further research is needed in this area to determine why some adjunct faculty become discouraged and do not continue their job search while other adjunct faculty, sometimes after multiple rejections, continue to pursue tenure-track positions.

Attractors

The concept of attractors, an integral aspect of complexity science, was not addressed in this study. Attractors were defined by Bright and Pryor as "descriptors of the constraints on the functioning of a system. They are called attractors because they influence behavior by drawing it in particular directions or constraining the behavior in some way" (2005, p. 299). The use of attractors

has been successfully applied to career counseling (Bloch, 2005; Bright & Pryor, 2005; Pryor & Bright, 2003).

Attractors could be used to better understand the behaviors of adjunct faculty who desire a tenure-track position. Attractors could be used to gain a better understanding of the discouragement factor that causes some adjunct faculty who desire a tenure-track position to stop applying for open positions. Attractors could also be used to understand why some adjunct faculty members continue to apply for tenure-track positions, even after multiple rejections. Factors that cause an adjunct faculty member to be drawn to a particular college would be another area of research that could be studied using attractors.

Professional Associations

Professional faculty associations represent adjunct faculty in addition to tenure-track and tenured faculty. Currently these organizations advocate for a higher percentage of tenure-track faculty positions compared to adjunct faculty positions at community colleges and for better working conditions for current adjunct faculty members (American Association of University Professors, 2003; American Federation of Teachers, 2001; Kelly, 2005). Although these are worthy causes, the professional organizations also need to focus on improving the hiring

opportunities for current adjunct faculty. Two possible ways that that could be accomplished are working to improve the perception of current adjunct faculty by other college staff, particularly college faculty and staff who may be members of future tenure-track hiring committees and training for current adjunct faculty that is designed to help adjunct faculty to transition into tenure-track positions.

One avenue to promote hiring of current adjunct faculty is to change the perception that current tenure-track or tenured faculty and other college staff have toward their own adjunct faculty. Wallin (2004) and Marti (2005) wrote about the prejudice that current adjunct faculty often face when they apply for tenure-track positions. Wallin (2004) noted that some "may see extended part-time work as a 'red-flag'; if this person is so good, why has he or she not been able to land a full-time job? There must be something not quite right" (p. 379). Several study participants also commented on the prejudice they felt they experienced when applying for tenure-track positions as current adjunct faculty members. Professional organizations could work to alleviate this prejudice. One possible way is to include profiles of successful tenure-

track faculty who were former adjunct faculty in their newsletters or other publications.

A second avenue that professional organizations should pursue to increase the hiring potential of their adjunct members is training specifically aimed at current adjunct faculty. Leslie and Gappa (2002) concluded that current adjunct faculty are not being trained by their institutions to transition into open tenure-track positions.

Professional organizations should advocate for training designed for adjunct faculty who desire tenure-track positions. Part of this training should include workshops on the community college hiring procedure. The data collected in this study highlighted the difficulty of the current hiring process. The experiences of the study participants illustrated that understanding the process and acquiring specific skills to improve their application, interviews and teaching demonstration made a difference in the career paths of study participants.

Lessons for Higher Education Leadership

Current hiring practices at community colleges generally include ad hoc committees with little or no training for participants (Flannigan, Jones, & Moore Jr., 2004). Educating current tenure-track faculty and other college staff who might serve on community college hiring

committees on both the difficulty current adjunct faculty face when they apply for tenure-track positions and on the value and experience that current adjunct faculty have brought to other colleges and could potentially bring to their college might help alleviate prejudice against adjunct faculty and increase the number of adjunct faculty who transition into tenure-track positions.

Postscript

Public community colleges serve more students per year than both public and private colleges and universities combined (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). They offer access to higher education for millions of Americans at a fraction of the cost of public or private colleges and universities. Unfortunately, one of the ways that tuitions have been kept low is that community colleges rely on a two-tiered faculty system. In 2003, 64% of faculty members employed at community colleges were adjunct faculty members (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2005). These adjunct faculty members were paid approximately 55% of the amount that their tenured colleagues were paid. In addition, the vast majority of adjunct faculty received no health benefits unlike the tenured faculty members (California Postsecondary Education Commission, April 2001).

Although employment of adjunct faculty can have many positive benefits in higher education, such as offering students an opportunity to learn from professionals in their field, the main motivation to hire adjunct faculty is financial (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005).

This study may provide some information that may help a small number of current adjunct faculty members obtain a tenure-track position, but it does not address the larger issue that the state funding to community colleges is woefully inadequate. Although there will always be a place for a small number of adjunct faculty members in the community college system, the vast majority of courses should be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members. This would improve the education for community college students because students would have more access to their instructors and because their instructors could focus more on their classes. It is also unconscionable that adjunct community college faculty members, who teach the majority of community college classes, are currently treated like second-class citizens.

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APPENDIX A

Telephone Script for Contacting Potential Participants

Hi _____,

I am calling you because I obtained your name from _____ . My name is Leandra Martin and I am working on my doctorate at the University of San Francisco where I am doing research on tenure track community college faculty who were former adjunct faculty at the same college. I was an adjunct faculty member at a community college for ten years before I received my tenure track position. I understand how difficult it is for adjunct faculty to obtain tenure track positions, yet still some individuals, such as you, succeed. I would love the chance to talk to you and hear your story and get your perspective on your path to a tenure track position.

What I am asking for is a chance to interview you for about one and a half hours so I can hear your story and ask you some questions about your career path. I would also like to have second, shorter, follow up interview with you at a later time. I am also asking that you fill out a questionnaire with some demographic information.

All information I collect on the questionnaire and during the interviews will be kept confidential. I will use pseudonyms for both you and your college in my dissertation

and any talks, articles or writing that is generated as a result of this dissertation. I have permission from IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco to do this project. The IRBPHS is concerned with the protection of volunteers on research projects.

If the participant seems interested:

When would it be convenient for me to come to interview you?

If the participant does not seem interested:

Thank you for your time.

Leandra Martin

APPENDIX B

Consent Form Cover Letter

Date

*Community College
Address*

Dear *name of potential subject*,

My name is Leandra Martin and I am a graduate student in the College of Education at the University of San Francisco. I am working on my doctoral dissertation on former adjunct faculty who obtained tenure-track faculty positions.

The purpose of my study is to examine the experiences, traits, and behaviors of former adjunct faculty and how these experiences, traits, and behaviors relate to the faculty members' eventual success in obtaining tenure-track positions at a community college.

I am requesting your help in four ways: 1) complete a short information questionnaire giving basic demographic information on sex, age, ethnicity, academic discipline and degrees, college of employment, years as an adjunct faculty member, the total number of colleges where you were employed as an adjunct faculty member, and the number of times you applied for a tenure track position; 2) permission to conduct an interview with you that will last approximately an hour and a half; and 3) permission to conduct a follow-up interview with you. The interviews will be audio-taped using a digital recorder. The audio files will be transferred to a computer. The computer and the audio-tapes will be kept in a secure locked location. The interviews will be scheduled at a time that is convenient for you.

If any questions make you feel uncomfortable in any way, you are free to decline to answer them or stop participation in this study at any time.

I will use pseudonyms for both you and your college in my dissertation and in any articles, conference presentations, oral or written reports or any other communications that occur as a result of this research.

While there is no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of the factors involved in adjunct faculty securing tenure-track positions.

There will be no cost to you as a result of taking part in this study, nor will you be reimbursed for your participation.

If you have any questions, feel free to call me at 408-298-2181x3681. If you have further questions about the study, you may contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers on research projects. You may reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, Ca 94117-1080.

Participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it at any time.

Thank you for your time. Please sign the attached form and return it to me in the enclosed pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope if you agree to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Leandra Powell Martin
Graduate Student
University of San Francisco

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form
University of San Francisco
Consent to be a Research Subject

Purpose and Background

Leandra Powell Martin, a graduate student in the School of Education at the University of San Francisco, is doing a study on former adjunct faculty members who have obtained a tenure-track faculty position at the school where they were formerly employed. The researcher is interested in examine the experiences, traits, and behaviors of former adjunct faculty and how these experiences, traits, and behaviors relate to the faculty members' eventual success in obtaining a tenure-track position at a community college.

I am being asked to be a participant in this study because I am a tenured or tenured-track faculty member at a community college where I was formerly an adjunct faculty member. I was an adjunct faculty member for at least three years at more than one community college and I teach in an academic, rather than a vocational field.

Procedure

If I agree to be a participant in this study, the following will happen:

- 1) I will complete a short information questionnaire giving basic demographic information on sex, age, ethnicity, academic discipline and degrees, college of employment, years as an adjunct faculty member, the total number of colleges where I was employed as an adjunct faculty member, and the number of times you applied for a tenure track position.
- 2) I will participate in an interview where I will be asked about my experiences and behaviors at my college as an adjunct faculty member.
- 3) I will participate in a follow-up interview where I may be asked follow-up questions from the first

interview or asked to comment on any trends that emerged after conducting the first interviews with all the study participants.

The interviews will be audio-taped using a digital recorder. The audio files will be transferred to a computer. The computer and the audio-tapes will be kept in a secure locked location. The interviews will be scheduled at a time and place that is convenient for me.

Risks and/or Discomforts

- 1) It is possible that some of the questions may make me uncomfortable, but I am free to decline to answer any questions I do not want to answer or stop participation at any time.
- 2) Participation in research may mean a loss of confidentiality. Pseudonyms will be used for both my college and myself in all material regarding this study.

Benefits

While there is no direct benefit to me from participating in this study, the anticipated benefit of this study is a better understanding of the factors involved in adjunct faculty securing tenure-track positions.

Costs/Financial Considerations

There will be no cost to me as a result of taking part in this study, nor will I be reimbursed for my participation in this study.

Questions

If I have any questions, I am free to call Leandra Powell Martin at 408-298-2181x3681 or e-mail her at leandra.martin@sjcc.edu. If I have further questions or do not wish to contact Leandra Powell Martin, I may contact the IRBPHS at the University of San Francisco, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers on research projects. I can reach the IRBPHS office by calling (415) 422-6091 and leaving a voicemail message, by e-mailing IRBPHS@usfca.edu_or by writing to the IRBPHS, Department of Psychology, University of

San Francisco, 2130 Fulton Street, San Francisco, Ca
94117-1080.

Consent

I have been given a copy of the "Researcher Subject's
Bill of Rights" and I have been given a copy of this
consent form to keep.

Participation in this research is voluntary. I am free
to decline to be in this study, or to withdraw from it
at any time.

My signature below indicates that I agree to
participate in this study.

Subject's Signature

Date of Signature

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

Date of Signature

APPENDIX D

Informational Short Questionnaire

Name _____

1. I am: Male Female

2. When I received my tenure-track position, I was _____ years old.

3. My ethnicity is _____.

4. My academic discipline as both an adjunct and tenure-track faculty member is _____.

5. My academic degrees are _____.

6. The college where I received my tenure-track position is _____.

7. Prior to receiving my tenure-track position, I worked for _____ years as an adjunct at the college where I received my tenure-track position.

8. Including all colleges, I work as an adjunct, prior to receiving my tenure-track position for _____ years.

9. The total number of colleges where I worked as an adjunct, prior to receiving my tenure-track position is _____.

10. I applied for a tenure-track position _____ times before I received my current position.

APPENDIX E

Interview Questions

1. I would like to know the path you took that led you to where you are today. Tell me your story starting back when you first became interested in teaching.

(Possible prompt: Tell me more about your experience as an adjunct faculty?)
2. Many adjunct faculty members want tenure-track positions yet few are chosen. Why did they choose you?

(Possible prompt: Tell me the story about how you ended up getting this job.)
3. Teaching at a community college can be quite a challenge. Tell me about your journey as a teacher. How did you develop into the teacher you are today?

(Possible prompt: How did you learn to be the teacher you are today?)
4. You worked as an adjunct faculty member at more than one community college. Tell me about your experiences at the different colleges. (Possible prompt: How would you compare your experiences at the different colleges where you worked as an adjunct faculty member? How did these experiences influence your success in obtaining a tenure-track position?)

5. Tell me about your relationships with the people at your work when you were an adjunct faculty member.
(Possible prompt: Tell me about your relationship with you supervisor, college faculty and college staff as an adjunct faculty member? Do you think any of these relationships played any part in your eventual success in obtaining a tenure-track position?)
6. Sometimes there is a story behind the story. Sometimes luck or something small makes a big difference in getting a job. Do you have any stories behind the story for your particular job search?
7. What advice would you give to a new adjunct instructor who eventually wants a tenure-track position?
8. What do you wish someone had told you when you were just starting out?

APPENDIX F

Follow-Up Interview Protocol

1. When you said _____, I was unsure about your meaning. Could you expand on that now?
2. Can you tell me more about _____?
3. After I interviewed the other participants, a common theme that seemed to emerge was _____. Can you tell me your thoughts on that?
4. Sometimes after I have had a conversation with someone, I will reflect back and I will think of things that did not occur to me at the time. After the last time we talked, did you think of anything that you would like to add?

APPENDIX G

Follow-Up Interview Common Themes

Common themes showed to participants during follow-up interview question #3:

1. Adaptive behaviors:

- a. Extra value - work at the college outside of classroom
- b. Extra service - teaching hard to staff classes or accepting class assignments at the last minute
- c. Good soldier behaviors - helpful behaviors- attending college functions or department meetings- not complaining
- d. Learning to teach community college students - a process of trial and adaptation
- e. Adjusting to the college culture or switching colleges until a college culture is found that "fits"
- f. Learning to navigate the hiring process at community colleges - how to write a cover letter and an application package - how to interview - first and second interviews
- g. Persistence in application process - not giving up - seeing themselves as a person worthy of getting a tenure-track position

2. Networking

- a. Informational - college, teaching, application information
 - i. Adjunct faculty
 - ii. Tenured faculty
 - iii. Other college staff
- b. Support - social support and encouragement
 - i. Adjunct faculty
 - ii. Tenured faculty
 - iii. Other college staff
 - iv. Outside professional contacts

3. Patches and fitness peaks

- a. Fitness in other work experiences increases fitness at current college - teaching a new class at one college increases the fitness at a different college

4. Nonlinear Dynamics - small changes or chance events

make a large effect

- a. Chance events
- b. Small changes - personal
- c. Small changes - environment