Every Learner Everywhere Network Releases New Survey Aimed at Identifying Online Adjunct Faculty Needs, Challenges
Timely survey can help institutional leaders enhance equity, access for students

Boulder, CO (February 17, 2022) – Following a decade of rising online enrollments nationwide, the Every Learner Everywhere network has released a new survey of online adjunct faculty across 119 institutions to help leaders better understand the practices that impact adjuncts' instruction and the equity, access, and quality of their delivery to students.

Online Adjunct Faculty: A Survey of Institutional Policies and Practices explores the policies and procedures that institutions use to support online adjunct faculty. The data and resulting recommendations are meant to be a resource that informs and guides institutions in developing promising practices in orienting, supporting, and evaluating online adjunct faculty.

The survey is a follow-up to one conducted in 2015 of more than 200 deans, directors, and provosts familiar with the online practices of adjunct faculty at their respective two- and four-year higher education institutions. Report findings are based upon a limited sample size and survey findings should be understood as within those bounds rather than a universal assessment of policies and practices for adjunct faculty.

Among the survey's key findings:

- Common policies are still lacking: When compared to 2015, more institutions are developing email response and time to grade policies; however, large numbers of schools still lack these policies. This also holds true for written policies on online office hours.
- Mandatory training and instructional design support is decreasing: In a number of cases, institutions require less mandatory training prior to teaching online than in 2015. This is especially the case for online orientation to student services and online technologies as well as training in effective teaching methods.
- Culturally relevant pedagogical training may not be required but is still prevalent: While not quite 17 percent of respondents indicated that training on digital learning, diversity, equity, and inclusion was required of online adjunct faculty prior to teaching, over a third of respondents indicated that all of their online adjunct faculty had access to training on culturally relevant pedagogical practices.
- The pandemic did not significantly change professional development requirements for faculty: Over 54 percent of respondents indicated that the pandemic has not changed the amount of professional development required of online adjunct faculty.

- The most effective online pedagogical practices are often those identified as the most challenging to implement: Some of the same practices associated with the most effective online adjunct faculty are also identified as some of the most challenging practices to implement. Many of these practices also correspond with evidence-based teaching practices known to be particularly beneficial to students.

"Understanding the role that adjunct instructors play in online education is critical as the amount of students engaged in online education continues to rise. This study provides insight into the current campus policies and practices associated with online adjunct instructors, especially regarding professional development," said contributing author Van L. Davis, Ph.D., Chief Strategy Officer, WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET). "Equally important, the study helps us understand the primary challenges such instructors face as well as the promising practices they employ. We believe this information can help campuses create effective policies and practices that will benefit both instructors and students alike."

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To download the free resource or learn more about Every Learner Everywhere and its collaborative approach to equitize higher education through digital learning, visit everylearnereverywhere.org. To contact Every Learner Everywhere, email everylearner@wiche.edu, or call (303) 541-0206. Follow Every Learner on Twitter @EveryLearnerNet.

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Every Learner Everywhere (Every Learner) is a network of twelve partner organizations with expertise in evaluating, implementing, scaling, and measuring the efficacy of education technologies, curriculum and course design strategies, teaching practices, and support services that personalize instruction for students in blended and online learning environments. Our mission is to help institutions use new technology to innovate teaching and learning, with the ultimate goal of improving learning outcomes for Black, Latinx, and Indigenous students, poverty-affected students, and first-generation students. Our collaborative work aims to advance equity in higher education centers on the transformation of postsecondary teaching and learning. We build capacity in colleges and universities to improve student outcomes with digital learning through direct technical assistance, timely resources and toolkits, and ongoing analysis of institution practices and market trends. For more information about Every Learner Everywhere and its collaborative approach to equitize higher education through digital learning, visit everylearnereverywhere.org.

The Online Learning Consortium (OLC) is a collaborative community of education leaders and innovators dedicated to advancing quality digital teaching and learning experiences designed to reach and engage the modern learner — anyone, anywhere, anytime. OLC inspires innovation and quality through an extensive set of resources, including best-practice publications, quality benchmarking, leading-edge instruction, community-driven conferences, practitioner-based and empirical research, and expert guidance. The growing OLC community includes faculty members, administrators, trainers, instructional designers, and other learning professionals, as well as educational institutions, professional societies, and corporate enterprises. Learn more at onlinelearningconsortium.org.

WICHE Cooperative for Educational Technologies (WCET)
WCET is the leader in the practice, policy, and advocacy of digital learning in higher education. WCET is a member-driven non-profit which brings together colleges, universities, higher education organizations, and companies to collectively improve the quality and reach of technology-enhanced learning programs. Learn more at wcet.wiche.edu.