

## Examining the Role of Part-Time Faculty on Student Success

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### Research Questions

The current study investigated the following research questions:

- (1) Are SJVC students less likely to graduate with more exposure to part-time instruction?
- (2) Does taking a course with a part-time instructor during the first module affect the likelihood of graduating?
- (3) What are other factors influencing the probability of a student graduating from SJVC?
- (4) What are factors influencing the probability of a student successfully landing a job after graduation?

### Design and Procedure

Two separate **logistic regression analyses** were used to answer these research questions.

The first analysis included certificate-seeking students who started at SJVC between 2013 and 2016, and investigated the influence of multiple demographic and college variables on the likelihood of students graduating from SJVC.

The second analysis included students from the same time frame but only included those who went on to successfully graduated. This analysis investigated the influence of multiple demographic and college variables on the likelihood of successful job placement after graduation.

### Predictor Variables

The following predictor variables were used for both analyses:

| Variables                         | Coding   |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Gender                            | Male = 1, Female = 0   |
| Ethnicity                         | Latino, White, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaska Native, Other  |
| First-Generation Student          | Yes = 1, No = 0  |
| First Module Grade Point Average  | Below 2.0   2.0 – 2.49   2.50 – 2.99   3.0 and Above   |
| Modality                          | Online = 1, Ground = 0   |
| Previous College Experience       | Attended college elsewhere before attending SJVC = 1<br>Did not attend college elsewhere before SJVC = 0   |
| First Module Part-Time Instructor | Student had at least one part-time instructor during 1 <sup>st</sup> module = 1<br>Student did not have a part-time instructor during 1 <sup>st</sup> module = 0 |
| Exposure to Part-Time Faculty     | % of coursework taught by part-time instructors during entire time at SJVC<br>Below 25%   25% - 49.9%   50% - 74.9%   75% - 100%                                 |

## Outcome Variables

There were two outcome variables being examined in this study:

- (1) Successful graduation from SJVC (Yes/No). This outcome was not restricted to students who graduated on time.
- (2) The outcome for the second analysis was successful job placement (Yes/No)

## Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The sample in this study only included certificate-seeking students enrolled in core programs (n =7,202) and was made up of 72% women and 27% men. The ethnic breakdown was as follows: 45% Latino, 25% White, 15% Black, 3% Asian, <1% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, <1% American Indian or Alaska Native. The majority of students were categorized as a first-generation college student (70%), and 48% of all students had prior college experience. Fifty-three percent of students took at least one course taught by a part-time instructor during their first module. 61% of the students in the study went on the graduate from SJVC. Of all students who graduated, 62% were able to obtain a job.

### Inferential Statistics

#### Factors Influencing Graduation

An institutional-wide analysis indicated that Latino students had an increased probability of successfully graduating from SJVC. Students with prior college experience were slightly more likely to graduate than those with no experience. Students with at least a 3.0 first module grade point average had greater odds of graduating compared to students below a 3.0 (see Table 1).

Table 1

Relationship Between Probability of Graduating and First Module GPA

| First Module GPA | Probability of Graduating |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| 3.0 and Above    | 72%                       |
| 2.5 – 2.99       | 55%                       |
| 2.0 – 2.49       | 37%                       |
| 2.0 and Below    | 8%                        |

### Factors Influencing Attrition

African-American students are less likely to graduate compared to their peers. When compared to their White peers, they were 14% less likely to graduate. Results also indicated that students enrolled in an online program were 22% less likely to graduate than those enrolled in ground programs. Students who had a higher percentage of their coursework taught by part-time instructors were slightly less likely to graduate. As shown in Table 2, students who had 75% or more of their coursework taught by part-time faculty were about 3% less likely to graduate than those who didn't. (all programs).

### Variations by Program

Individual regression analyses were run for five of SJVC's larger programs: Medical Assisting, Business Administration, Medical Office Administration, Pharmacy Technician, and Criminal Justice. The negative impact of part-time exposure was not seen unless a student had 75% of their coursework taught by part-time faculty. Students in the Medical Assisting program had a 5% reduction in the probability of graduating when 75% of their coursework was taught by part-time faculty. Students in the Pharmacy Tech program had about a 14% reduction.

Table 2

Relationship Between Part-Time Exposure and the Probability of Graduating

| Percentage of Coursework Taught by Part-Time Faculty | Institution/Programs Impacted |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 75% or More  | Institution-Wide (-3%)        |
|  | Medical Assisting (-5%)       |
|  | Pharmacy Tech (-14%)          |
| 50% - 74.9%  | None                          |
| 25% - 49.9%  | None                          |
| 0% - 24.9%   | None                          |

### Factors Influencing Job Placement After Graduation

In an analysis examining only certificate-seeking students who successfully graduated from SJVC between 2013 and 2016 (n = 2,825), online students and African-American students had significantly reduced odds of successful job placement. A student's probability of landing a job drops about 20% if they were enrolled in an online program. A student's probability of landing a job drops about 14% if they are African-American.

When the same analysis was performed for ground programs only, African-Americans maintained significantly reduced odds of successful job placements. In this analysis, a student's probability of landing a job drops about 8% if they are African-American.

Part-time exposure did not influence on the probability of successful job placement.

### Other Factors with No Influence

Gender and first-generation status did not appear to have a significant influence on the likelihood of graduating. White, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and American Indian/Alaska Native students also did not appear to be more or less likely to graduate than their peers. Taking a course with at least one part-time instructor during one's first module did not appear to hinder a student's likelihood of graduating.

## Discussion and Implications

The main objective of this study was to examine the association between exposure to part-time faculty instruction and SJVC students' likelihood of graduating. Regression analyses indicate that the more a student was exposed to part-time instruction, the less likely they were to graduate. However, taking a course taught by a part-time instructor during the first module did not impact a student's chance of graduating. Because of this, it is possible that the effect of exposure to part-time faculty becomes more pronounced as students spend more time in the classroom with part-time instructors. African-American students are less likely to graduate compared to their peers. African-American *graduates* are less likely to obtain a job after graduation. The struggles of this group is consistent with both large-scale research and previous research done at SJVC. Intervention services aimed at improving outcomes for these students should be considered. Students enrolled in an online program are less likely to graduate. Online graduates are significantly less likely to land a job after graduation compared to students graduating from face-to-face programs. Future research should aim at uncovering factors contributing to poor outcomes in online programs.

Students achieving at least a 3.0 grade point average after their first module are significantly more likely to graduate than those achieving less than a 3.0. Of all predictor variables included in this analysis, first-module success was revealed to be the strongest predictor of graduation. Student success in the first module may be critical to how they view the prospect of later graduating from SJVC.

## Limitations

This study has important limitations. First, as with any secondary analysis, this study is restricted by the variables included in SJVC's databases. There are almost always other variables that we are missing that contribute to why students graduate or don't graduate. Our data does not take into account other important variables such as students' out-of-class experiences and other psychosocial factors. Results from this study should be used as a guide to inform discussions, but never as a standalone decision-maker.