

Notes from the Faculty-only Meeting on Dec. 9, 2022

Challenges:

1. ***A wide range of student skills and learning styles*** (e.g. not turning in work; rise in extension requests; demands for flexible deadlines; lack basic writing/math/comprehension/note-taking skills; distractions of laptop and electronic device uses and decreased attention span)
2. ***Mental health challenges*** (e.g. anxiety, avoidance, disappearance, and attrition; their effects on attendance, assignment completion, classroom culture, group activities, mutual accountability, etc.)
3. ***Balancing flexibility and structure/rigor*** (whether to enforce attendance policy; whether to offer flexible deadlines and allow make-up work; whether to offer exams online; flexibility can be abused and disruptive to pedagogy; accommodations make scheduling exams difficult; how to make exams fair and accessible; are we preparing students for the working environment where there may not be such flexibility?)
4. ***Attendance/absences*** (whether to enforce attendance policy; whether to record classes for students who have to miss classes)
5. ***Hybrid teaching*** (complicated to set up and too demanding on teachers; no sufficient technology to support the hybrid format; should Zoom option be only available to students in quarantine? – managing student expectation of “Zooming in”)

Strategies:

1. ***More peer-based work/flip the class*** (e.g. group quizzes; peer evaluation)
2. ***Creative assignments*** (e.g. UnEssay projects)
3. ***Clarifying expectations and being flexible*** (e.g. being more deliberate about exact course expectations for tasks on Day 1; get rid of late assignment penalties but explain consequences; provide a limited number of waivers for late assignments; use flexible deadlines; offer hybrid/virtual make-up options; provide rationale for rules; contract-based grading; use Zoom for office hours, exam reviews, etc.; recognizing different learning styles; “bank account” for assignments)
4. ***Use technology to address absenteeism*** (e.g. Nearpod)

Institutional resources/support:

1. ***More mental health support*** (e.g. counseling workshops for faculty; online counseling sessions; webpage with all student support information; large enrollments but not enough mental health support)
2. ***Student program/coaching*** (e.g. re-designing the 4th credit hour for FYE; note-taking and skill-building courses; more PAC; more SAS resources; inviting alumni to come and talk about the working environment)
3. ***Improving hybrid technologies and classroom infrastructure*** (e.g. more established hybrid spaces – with forward-facing cameras and microphones in at least some of the classrooms in each building; meeting rooms designed for the hybrid format that can be scheduled for one-off sessions or for guest speakers; light, clock, temperature, size, etc.)

4. *More guidelines and college-wide discussions* (e.g. agreed upon classroom norms for the community such as classroom protocol, deadlines, attendance policy, etc.; faculty should not be tasked with making so many decisions; missed opportunities to rethink about student ratings and feedback as we made course evaluations optional for AY2020-2021 and no student ratings were administered in Spring 2020 – how much weight do they carry in tenure or promotion cases?)

Highlight: **Faculty and staff are tired and need support, too!**