

Reflections on the Results of the Faculty Survey on Class Cancellation Guidelines

General Reflections

- There were 298 faculty who completed at least part of the survey. This is nearly one-third of total faculty across the District.

Questions 1 and 2 about greater standardization of the cancellation process:

- Eck reflections: there is very broad support among faculty respondents for greater standardization of the class cancellation process.
 - Nearly 80% of faculty agreed with the statement that there should be greater standardization. Support was evenly split among “agree” and “strongly agree.”
 - Faculty broadly supported greater standardization despite 45% of faculty agreeing that greater standardization would negatively limit a Dean’s ability to “plan a class schedule that offers a wide range of courses.” (But only 17% of faculty strongly agreed with this statement.)

Question 3: Any course that involves a specific meeting time (modalities: face-to-face, hybrid, or synchronous zoom) should have a lower minimum enrollment number than asynchronous courses.

- Eck reflections: there is very broad support among faculty respondents for there being some mechanism that provides additional support for classes that have specific meeting times.
 - Seventy-six percent (76%) of faculty expressed support for the statement that classes with a specific meeting time should have a lower minimum enrollment number. There was a slightly longer portion of faculty (41%) who expressed strong agreement with the statement.
 - There were 14% of faculty who disagreed with the statement. Of these 41 respondents who disagreed, seven of them wrote open-ended feedback explaining the reason for their disagreement. (The second comment listed in this section of feedback focuses on the second question rather than the third.)
 - There were four comments that disagreed with the difference in support because the “amount of work” being the same for asynchronous courses as other modalities (pages 21-22 of the complete survey results pdf).
 - –Eck: from my perspective, there is a crucial difference about the class minimum number and the class maximum number. The class maximum number is about the amount of work, as it should be based on pedagogical considerations. But the class minimum number is about budgetary constraints and trying to best spread our resources to ensure we have as wide a range of classes as possible that best meets our students learning and scheduling needs.
 - Response to one comment about student preference for synchronous/in-person classes offsetting the greater scheduling difficulty of classes with specific meeting times (page 21 of the complete survey results pdf).
 - I don’t think there is a single modality preference among all of our students. The most recent data that I’m familiar with was from [a Cañada student survey of modality preference in Spring 2023](#). There were 849 students who responded to this survey. Of these respondents, there was a pretty even breakdown of students who preferred online classes (31%) versus students who preferred face-to-face classes (28%). And 42% of respondents said they prefer a combination of modalities.
 - While there is variety of learning and scheduling preferences among students, there is an asymmetry in which modalities students register. Across our District, it is more likely that a student who would prefer to take a class as face-to-face, hybrid, or synchronous zoom will end up taking an asynchronous section of the course than the reverse occurring. This asymmetry is most apparent when there are a significant number of class cancellations. Due to inherent logistical constraints, asynchronous sections are favored at least slightly regardless of student preference. For example, if I was in a cancelled section of a class

at Cañada, I could just as easily register for an asynchronous version of the class at any of the three colleges, so long as they exist. But it is less likely that I could enroll in a class with a specific meeting time, even if they exist: does the other section's meeting time match my schedule? If it's on another campus, does my schedule and transportation options allow for the added commute time? – Cañada's enrollment trends from approximately 2014-2020 show a feedback loop as asynchronous sections cannibalized specific meeting time courses. And it becomes increasingly more difficult to offer any on-campus courses when there are fewer on-campus courses being offered, since it becomes less likely that a student will already be on the campus to take another course.

Question 4: Rank Proposed Minimum Enrollment Number Options

- Eck reflections:
 - Among the options listed, there was a plurality of support for the “two fixed numbers” option. This option received the most first-place votes (36%) and most second-place votes (40%).
 - The “other” option received the second most number of first-place votes (28%). The number of people who selected this option and a number of the comments submitted for “other” show, I think, general lack of enthusiasm for the listed options.
 - I think a large majority of faculty would prefer keeping the ten student class minimum number. Ten faculty submitted comments specifically calling for keeping the ten minimum and another nine faculty submitted comments calling for a number lower than 20 (such as 15).
 - Based on the responses to this question and question 3, I think the two fixed number option has the most support of the options among faculty aside from keeping the 10 student minimum. I think the support would be increased if the numbers were lower than what was presented as an option last year—last year’s proposed listed 17 for specific meeting time courses versus 22 for asynchronous courses.
 - Overall, I interpret the survey feedback to show broad support among faculty for lowering any class minimum number to as low as possible. And doing this is the most direct way to make class cancellations as rare as possible, which everyone wants to achieve.