

4/19/21

## **Class Size Resolution**

Meeting Minutes

4/19/21 10:00-11:00

Present Wendell MX Cooper (Chair), Lynn Rosenberg (recording secretary), Karin Beck, Pamela Mills, Nadine Zerphey, Bella Frankel, Robert Farrell, Jay Jones, Yvette Rosario. Althea Forde, Gladys Santos Maldoon, Elgloria Harrison, Amy White, Carole Weisz

There is no current codified policy written. There is variation across schools. The process of how the decisions are being made vary.

### **Discussion**

The purpose is to think in terms of the original resolution regarding how decisions get made around class sizes. Is it driven by finance etc. What is the process?. Communication is inconsistent across the board for all departments. Union gets complaints regarding changes in class size.

The majority of the large classes are in social sciences and sciences. Pedagogy versus budget versus student success cannot be unlinked. Communication on what we are doing about class sizes is essential. Some understanding of parameters such as budget and space.

Computer science and mathematics reported in regards to budget versus pedagogy previously had 22 student maximum in lab class, when we went on line it was raised to 28, this current term the cap was raised to 40. Feels it is all related to budget not pedagogy.

What is the minimum size class concern for Arts and Humanities? Class size should be related to pedagogy not just budget. Need support for larger classes

An individual raised the concern that there was no transparency in the increase in class sizes semester to semester. There is no communication regarding changes to the faculty.

Communication with chairs regarding class sizes especially related to accreditation class size limits. For the non-accreditation programs happens with the chair. Can't determine the class size without considering pedagogy.

Concerns expressed regarding class sizes for the Fall 2021 for in person versus online. How will this be addressed? (not in the scope of this resolution)

Fall 2021 class size related to room occupancy due to 6 feet occupancy.

### **Current resolution**

Draft was presented by Wendell.

Money: Whereas within public higher education in general and Lehman College specific, there is often a tension between pedagogical goals and financial pressures;

Pedagogy

Whereas different disciplines require different relationships to class size, and that Lehman's mission statement of the past 15 years made

clear that the college is “recognized for small classes,” as we as “close interaction between students and faculty” and values this

#### Student experiences

Whereas students need guidance from faculty; small class sizes facilitate attention to students, Such attention allows for students to make new connections and advance their careers

#### Faculty experiences

Whereas large class sizes lead to extremely large volumes of communication between students and overstretched faculty both within and outside the class space

#### Power

Whereas most faculty are not in a positions to say “no” to large class sizes, and students have no direct say in class sizes

Be it resolved that minimum and maximum class size limits will be determined by each academic department and program in consultations with its faculty (full and part-time) student members of departmental/ program P&B or curriculum committees (or students selected in consultations with the Lehman SGA and SLA) and the appropriate dean

Be it further resolved, that pedagogical and human concerns should drive class size, with a transparent process for reconciling budgetary factors.

#### Discussion followed

Using the concept of attributes or different categories in CUNY first might be something to consider for the resolution. Workload compensation has to be considered when increasing class sizes. Adjunct faculty should be included in discussion regarding class size.

Survey-to be developed by Nadine Zerphey. Asked for volunteers to help lead the charge.

Review of jumbo class size policy to be included for next meeting.

## Resources

- “The Definitive Article on Class Size” Alice Horning: <http://associationdatabase.co/archives/31n1-2/31n1-2horning.pdf>

## **Class Size Resolution**

Meeting Minutes

4/26/21 10:00-11:00

Present Wendell MX Cooper (Chair), Robert Farrell, Pamela Mills, Susan Ko, Nadine Zerphey, Hyangmi Kim, Jaye Jones, Elgloria Harrison, Gladys Maldoon, Ramón Belliard, Kevin Sailor, Yvette Rosario, Karin Beck, and Amy White (recording secretary)

Shared drive with notes from last meeting and the draft resolution:

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HUaWAFBTtFtJFbBhn2vPVJ0yOCIZNvyM)

[1HUaWAFBTtFtJFbBhn2vPVJ0yOCIZNvyM](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1HUaWAFBTtFtJFbBhn2vPVJ0yOCIZNvyM)

Discussion of transparency around class size increase. Last week's notes edited to reflect the experience of the faculty who communicated

the concern about a last-minute change. Other faculty shared their experience of meetings to communicate the raised caps.

Question around minimum and maximum class size and who will determine the specific number: This group will avoid numbers and focus on the process for how those numbers are determined. It is in the process that these numbers are determined that makes the experience of class size changes more/less sustainable for faculty.

Question about class size: only the instructor and program director can make the decision to adjust.

Question re: modality being included in our resolution: Not necessarily minimum vs. maximum class size but size relates to sych, asynch, F2F modality too. Departments should be looking at the modality when thinking of strategies for how to manage the class size and being aware of their options. Example of difficulty of teaching Writing Intensive content to large class sizes. Need to provide sufficient opportunities for interaction with students.

Shared webinar: <https://www.lehman.edu/online/teaching-learning-webinar-series/teaching-larger-classes.php> in the chat for background.

Comment to add to resolution: recommendations around minimum and maximum (i.e., a range) based upon type of courses yet without getting into the weeds of telling programs and departments what to do.

Registrar's office has language for attributes of classes to give further guidelines. CUNYFirst gives very few options for how to categorize a class. Example if a class has an element of a seminar or grouping, the categorization can be changed. The Registrar looks at the course structure and sees what fits best for class limits; but this is done on the back end and done course-by-course. Everything is coded as Lecture

but there could be a lecture/lab or lecture/recitation. Schedule is done by course and then by section within the class.

Discussion point again to not put a number (class size) on anything. There is a budgetary ecosystem for filling classes and over-tallying. Faculty are asked about over-tallying and whether they're willing to go over their course limits – faculty have the ability to say no – but best practice around over-tally would be to not restrict class size and get into numbers in this committee.

Discussion to not have a class size number in this committee but going forward, recommend class sizes by category with the example of a discussion seminar being approx. 12 – 18. Or ask the college to articulate this and put numbers to courses so that faculty know what to expect. Maybe change classes from seminar to lecture to know what will happen to the class size.

Interest in transparency and for faculty to see sizes of classes in a reasonably descriptive way. If faculty see an issue then they can raise it.

What happens for faculty whose course modality is changed at the last minute, for example, from synchronous to asynch resulting in a panicked faculty member with the last minute course adjustment.

Class size and modality is almost contractual and minimal changes are made and not without letting the faculty know.

Need to think about what we have done in the past, currently, and moving past the pandemic. THE conversation of the past year was modality adjustment. Deans/Chairs would never change modality on a faculty at the last minute without talking to them there needs to be a process around this.

Changes to course modality, faculty, etc can only be made through [ecsp?] to keep a paper trail to prevent faculty from being surprised.

Issue of communication: difference between being told a change is being made vs. being asked. Perception impacts the information, but there is a difference in how the information is being received. Difference between there was no communication vs. insufficient information.

Discussion on Class Size Draft Resolution: changes made directly to the document based upon the conversation. Using the “whereas” statements for the context and the resolutions to say that the departments are making decisions. Goal of making the process visible.

The last two weeks before classes start is a nightmare for everyone with enrollment, financial aid. This is a problem for everyone (students, faculty, program directors, and chairs). We do not have best practices for dealing with this: we can't tell students no, we can't tell faculty to raise caps far; there are budgetary constraints limiting course offerings.

For next meeting: faculty handbook re: class size.

Two documents shared in the chat: <https://lehman.edu/academic-personnel/faculty-handbook.php> and <https://lehman.edu/academic-personnel/faculty-handbook.php>

Sub-group worked on a five-question survey to faculty communication on this process. [.pdf shared in the drive couldn't copy/paste into notes.]

Anecdote shared of new faculty appreciative of class sizes of 30 compared to other teaching experiences.

Next discussion will be about:

- documenting the process of how class size changes happen in each program and department;
- remaining question of the known/unknown emergency of what happens at the end of the semester;
- who will be responsible for implementing the policy – question of accountability without over-burdening faculty and staff.
- Goal of consistency of a known process for class size.

5/3/21

## **Class Size Resolution**

Meeting Minutes

5/3/21 10:00-11:00

Present Wendell MX Cooper (Chair), Pamela Mills, Nadine Zerphey, Hyangmi Kim, Jaye Jones, Elgloria Harrison, Gladys Maldoon, Kevin Sailor, Karin Beck, and Committee, Robert Farrell (recording secretary).

The Committee undertook a brief meditation to start the meeting.

MX began to provide an overview of the current draft of the resolution that incorporated suggestions from a draft put together by Pam Mills, Karin Beck and Kevin Sailor.

It was suggested that we hold off on bringing the resolution to the Senate at the May meeting.

We will continue the work of the Committee through the end of the semester with a goal presenting the resolution to Senate at the first fall

meeting. MX will give a report about the work of the committee and will share the current draft of the resolution.

Discussion continued about the Senate timeline. Feedback will be gathered at May Senate.

It was reported that junior faculty face pressure to teach jumbo classes. Problems arise when the full jumbo size is not filled and faculty end up with more than the average of 30 but receive no additional compensation or assistance. Problem of 40-50 size -- failing to meet the "jumbo" number leaves faculty with more students and no compensation.

The point was raised that compensation falls more to the Labor/Management process and can be addressed at the upcoming meeting in the Fall to discuss this issue..

We turned to the resolution and to a discussion of the "resolveds" related to Categories. A discussion was had about what level of specificity should be in the resolution. An investigation into what attributes should be included.

Resolves on categories: do we need the current list of CUNYFirst? Change to "as they relate to class size".

Transparency/Communication:

Discussion about the need for "guidelines" for communication. It is decided to replace "guidelines" with "best practices", also to allow for flexibility for departmental needs and challenges.

Committee discusses the difference in perception of processes by the different stakeholders and the goal to achieve transparency.

Discussion of term of "pedagogy" and need of professional development.

Committee ready for report in next senate meeting and re-convene at beginning of September.

Discussion of the need for a broader approach to professional development (TLC?).