

Listening to the Students' Voices



This document summarizes the feedback gathered from the Listening to the Students' Voices event on March 4th, 2021 4:30pm until approximately 7:00 pm @ Zoom, organized by the FAS TTF and FAS student associations. This document is written collaboratively by Diana Cukierman (FAS FTF) and Alice Yue (CSGSA representative).

We ran the first "Listening to the Students' Voices" informal conversation on March 4th, 2021. The event was announced by the FAS FTF, as a TTT (The Teaching Talks) session, the different FAS student associations, and FAS newsweek. All FAS faculty and FAS graduate and undergraduate students were invited. FAS advisors were invited as well. The session environment was highly collaborative and respectful. There were 27 people in total, including 9 faculty/instructors, 8 undergraduates, 8 graduates and 2 staff members. The general feedback for the event was that it was highly positive to hear from instructors and peers and that it was a great way to give students a voice. It unanimously emerged from the conversations that we would like to repeat this experience. So, we plan to deliver **semesterly Students' Voices events** to encourage dialogue and test out suggestions.

Below is a peek into the **feedback/suggestions** we got and their associated recommendations.

Efforts of instructors were recognized, acknowledging that there are differences among instructors on how they have adapted to online classes. Numerous aspects of both synchronous and asynchronous classes were acknowledged to be working well. Constructive ideas and suggestions were also provided to further improve.

- What has been working well -- some examples
 - Weekly quizzes help with keeping up with the courses (although sometimes there are too many).
 - Skeleton notes and filling them during the lecture are helpful.
 - Chat works well as part of lectures, questions easier to ask in online classes because students were less shy.
 - Asynchronously review lectures are useful
 - Breakout rooms help collaboration
 - In person office hours for questions
 - Online classes offer opportunity for bonus demos/guest speakers

Summary report for the Listening to the students' voices event (March 4th, 2021).
Diana Cukierman (FAS FTF) and Alice Yue (for the CSGSA).

- Action items suggested:
 - **Administration:** The school to create different sections for a/synchronous class modes. If some of the classes are planned in advance to be partly asynchronous (e.g. one of three in a week or other format), then define the course to have a blended style and so that those time blocks don't interfere with selection of other courses.

- Long-term action items suggested:
 - **A/synchronous lectures:** The feedback was overall mixed and even contradictory about preference of synchronous vs. asynchronous classes in online learning . However, a mixed model was most preferred by students e.g. lectures are synchronous but they should be recorded for students to reference at a later time. The a/synchronous recorded lecture videos would preferably be short in length (e.g. cut up into 10min videos, one for each concept).
 - **Quality control:** Schools to implement regulations to ensure consistent quality education across all courses (e.g. back-up plan in case of technical difficulty, cancelled lectures are communicated to students before-hand).
 - **Offering options:** After returning to on campus classes, schools to create different sections for on/offline for each class so that students can choose the modality that best suits them.

- Course-based suggested action items:
 - **Resources:** Instructors to ensure there are enough resources for students (e.g. frequent a/synchronous review sessions, more practice problems with solutions, and provide marking rubrics so that expectations for projects and assignments are clear).
 - **Group work:** Instructors to consider the different times zones when creating group work, provide flexibility to allow groups with different number of members.
 - **Evaluation:** Instructors to consider open book exams; ensure exam questions test comprehension over fact memorization for applicable classes so that less extreme anti-cheating measures need to be placed for online exams.
 - **Discussions:** Schools to develop (e.g. on Canvas and CourSys) or find more effective tools for peer-to-peer online discussions and instructors to allocate more in class time to discussion-based activities.