

**STATEMENT of the Council of CUNY Faculty Governance Leaders**

Based on these considerations that:

* the University and its constituent units are dedicated to student success in their studies; and
* student success is inextricably linked to the effectiveness of instruction by faculty; and
* faculty student interaction in a fully online class is an important feature for successful outcomes [1]; and
* there is research showing that smaller classes lead to significant improvements in student performance and retention and decreases in loss of instructional staff [2]; and
* for effective instruction the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes is a pedagogical matter best left to faculty; and
* the optimal size of both online and on-campus classes will vary with due consideration for student needs and faculty concerns and the interests of the College; and
* different academic disciplines hold different expectations for class sizes, and, in some disciplines, disciplinary professional organizations recommend optimal class sizes for different levels of instruction; and
* research recommends online class sizes that are much smaller than current CUNY practices,[3] and stipulates a cap of 28 for most online classes, and lower caps for classes designated as writing intensive, developmental, capstone, and honors; and
* the nationally recognized and CUNY celebrated online courses at the School of Professional Studies operate with a limit of 25; and
* the CUNY BOT has not established guidelines on this matter and it is thus a matter for faculty academic judgment under CUNY BOT Bylaws 8.5 and 8.6 that states: “Each college shall have a faculty or academic council, which shall be the primary body responsible for formulating policy on academic matters” ;

the Council of Faculty Governance Leaders propose that each CUNY unit adopt as academic policy that:

each academic department and program have the right and authority to set minimum and maximum class-size limits for best pedagogical practice with its own course offerings, both online and on-campus, in accordance with all applicable city, state, and federal statutes.

[1] “There is consensus that the single greatest predictor of positive self-reported student learning is instructor-student interaction. Teacher immediacy (timely and personal responsiveness) is one of the key drivers of student satisfaction (Bonnel, Ludwig, & Smith, 2008; Keeton, 2004; Schutt, Allen, & Laumakis, 2009). Citing student-to-student interactions/activities are also predictive of reported learning, but at a level half that of instructor-student interaction (Bernar et al., 2004; Keeton, 2004; Marks, Sibley, & Arbaugh, 2005). A third driver of student learning and satisfaction is ease of use of technology.” *(Taft,***Susan H.,** et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, vol. 12, no. 3,*2011.)

[2] “The online literature consistently indicates that online education benefits student access but is not more efficient; that is, the workload and intensity of effort for faculty are in general heavier for online education than for classroom-based education. (Ascough, 2002; Drago & Peltier, 2004; Fjermestad, Hiltz, & Zhang, 2005; Parry, 2009).”*(Taft,***Susan H.,** et al. “A Framework for Evaluating Class Size in Online Education.” *Quarterly Review of Distance Education, vol. 12, no. 3,*2011.)

[3] See, for example, Tomei, Lawrence A, and Douglas Nelson, “The Impact of Online Teaching on Faculty Load—Revisited: Computing the Ideal Class Size for Traditional, Online, and Hybrid Courses.” *International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2019.