

**Department of Chemistry
Faculty Meeting
February 13, 2025**

AGENDA

	Topic	Presenter
a.	(Executive Session)	
b.	Discussion of Faculty Senate approved legislation	Munira Khalil
c.	Working Group on TA Assignments	Forrest Michael

MINUTES

- I. Faculty Senate approved legislation (sent to Chemistry faculty ahead of meeting) that would amend Faculty Code related to Defining Core Elements of Effective Teaching. The following comments were made during the discussion:**
 - Concerns over use of the word “must” – leaves core elements open to interpretation
 - Faculty Senate saw opportunity to implement tenets to standardize support across departments; good teachers now have a way to represent their work that aligns with Faculty Code
 - While spirit of legislation is good, the word “must” connotes judgment and introduces bureaucracy to teaching. Is there a better way to get to same result?
 - How would faculty achieve required compliance with every tenet?
 - Due to variability of class structures, may not be possible to achieve positive outcomes on every single tenet
 - Noted in legislation that there is no language on expected outcomes of effective teaching

- II. Working Group on TA Assignments (outline sent to faculty ahead of meeting)**
 - Working group tasked with reviewing current TA usage in all courses / levels, identifying opportunities for increased efficiency

- A. Improving efficiency in large 100/200 level combined lab/lecture courses – offered suggestions for future discussion changes:**
 - Automated grading of lab reports (LabRight)
 - Increasing section sizes
 - Increasing number of sections/TA
 - Decoupling lab/discussion section/grading duties
 - Rethinking discussion sections

- Rescheduling labs to make more efficient use of lab space/TAs
- B. Improving efficiency in large 100/200 level lecture-only courses – offered suggestions for future discussion**
- Increasing section sizes
 - Decoupling grading from discussion section duties
 - Increased number of sections
- C. Improving efficiency in large 100/200 level lab-only courses – offered suggestions for future discussion**
- Increased number of sections
 - Decoupling grading from lab supervision
 - Increasing lab section sizes
 - Reorganizing labs to rearrange and/or reduce contact hours
- D. Improving efficiency at the 3xx/4xx/5xx level – offered suggestions for future discussion:**
- (Separated advanced lab courses from advanced lecture courses due to large differences in need for TA support)
 - 3xx/4xx Lab courses: Since enrollment varies, inefficiency hard to avoid. May be minor opportunities for improved efficiency by altering section sizes and/or restructuring offerings
 - 3xx/4xx lecture courses: Considerable flexibility regarding assignment of graders/TAs to upper division courses
 - 5xx lecture courses: Workgroup recommends 500-level courses are treated the same as 400-level offerings
 - Prioritizing assignments of TAs to 500-level courses: suggest taking into account class size
- E. Other general recommendations:**
- Grading efficiencies: Instructors should take advantage of grading tools (like Gradescope)
 - Managing registration to ensure sections are filled: Expected to have a minor impact, but worth doing
 - More effective TA training in efficiency: A review and evaluation of current TA training practices
 - (Additional suggestion): Use recordings of class discussions to better prepare students for office hours and other situations