RIT | Office of the Provost

September 2020 Faculty Pulse Survey – Course Modalities

Overview: The first "pulse" survey was sent to both faculty and students to gain a better understanding as to how they were experiencing the new course modalities. The survey went out early in the fall semester to help inform spring planning. The survey was sent to all faculty (n=1891) and 606 (32%) responded. All faculty include adjunct faculty, staff who are teaching adjunct, visiting faculty, and other faculty currently being added to the list.

Below is a question summary from the faculty that responded to the Course Modalities survey.

Number of Courses Faculty are Teaching by Course Modality

Fully In Person: Approximately one third of RIT fall courses are offered fully In Person. The majority of the faculty respondents (71%) indicated they are not teaching any courses fully in Person.
- 15% are teaching 1 course (9% offered Flex Option)
- 8% are teaching 2 courses (3% offered Flex Option)
- 4% are teaching 3 courses (less than 1% offered Flex Option)
- 0 -<1% are teaching 4, 5, or more than 5 (<1% offered Flex Option)

Blended: Approximately one third of the fall courses are offered in the Blended or Blended A/B modality so the majority of faculty responded they are not teaching in either of these modalities. Below is a chart summarizing the number of courses faculty are teaching for the two Blended modalities as well as the number of courses designated as offering the Flex Option. See Table 1: Blended Courses and Flex Option for full results.

Table 1: Blended Courses and Flex Option

Modality	Not Teaching in this Modality	Teaching 1 Course	Teaching 2 Courses	Teaching 3 Courses	Teaching 4 Courses	Teaching 5 Courses	Teaching 5 or more Courses
Blended	78%	13%	6%	2%	1%	0%	<1%
Offered the Flex Option		9%	4%	1%	<1%	<1%	<1%
Blended A/B	67%	16%	11%	3%	3%	<1%	<1%
Offered the Flex Option		12%	7%	2%	2%	0%	<1%

Online: Approximately one third of fall courses are offered in the Online modality so the majority of the faculty responded they are not teaching in either Online Asynchronous or Online Synchronous. For those faculty that are teaching in an Online modality, the majority are teaching 1-2 courses. See Table 2: Online Modality Course Numbers.

Table 2: Online Modality Course Numbers

Online Modality	Not Teaching in this Modality	Teaching 1 Course	Teaching 2 Courses	Teaching 3 Courses	Teaching 4 Course	Teaching 5 or more Courses	Teaching 5 or more Courses
Asynchronous	78%	15%	3%	2%	1%	<1 %	<1 %
Synchronous	55%	21%	16%	5%	2%	<1 %	1 %

To what extent does the Flex Option impact your course workload?

Of the faculty who responded to the survey, two-thirds (66%) indicated it somewhat or significantly increases their workload and one-third (33%) did not see an increase or decrease and less that 2% said it significantly decreases their workload.   See Table 3: Flex Impact to Workload for results.

Table 3: Flex Impact to Workload

Workload Impact	Faculty Response %
Significantly increases	18.8%
Somewhat increases	46.7%
Neither increases nor decreases	32.8%
Somewhat decreases	0.0%
Significantly decreases	1.5%
Total	100%

If you are teaching any classes that have a Flex Option, how would you rate your satisfaction with the flex portion?

Faculty (38%) indicated they are somewhat or extremely satisfied with the flex portion of their course(s) and 29% indicated somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with the flex portion. It may be too early in the semester for some faculty to determine as 33% indicated neither dissatisfied nor satisfied. See Table 4: Flex Portion of Course Satisfaction for full results.

Table 4: Flex Portion of Course Satisfaction

Flex Portion Satisfaction Level	Faculty Response %
Extremely satisfied	18.1%
Somewhat satisfied	19.7%
Neither dissatisfied nor satisfied	32.5%
Somewhat dissatisfied	22.3%
Extremely dissatisfied	7.2%
Total	100%

Suggestions on how we could improve the ease of use of the Flex Option

Faculty (168) responded to the request for suggestions on how to ease the use of the Flex Option. The responses most frequently cited were themed and are provided below.

Summary: Faculty suggested a more formal system for registering and tracking students who request the Flex option. They indicated students need specific Flex Option course expectations. In teaching Flex courses, the major suggestions were improving the audio and visual so all students can hear and see each other as well as the instructor. Faculty indicated a more "plug and play" approach to systems and technology in classrooms would be helpful as well as more in class IT support (set up, trouble shoot, etc.). There were faculty who suggested eliminating the Flex Option would be an improvement due to workload it reduced the effectiveness for teaching and learning. They suggested adding more TAs or GAs and need for teaching approaches/strategies.

- **Improve Course Scheduling/Registration**
  - Develop method for students to formally request or register or be tagged as Flex in SIS
  - Create separate Flex sections
  - Don't split into A/B sections until Flex option is provided
  - All In Person and Blended sections should be Flex
  - Lower the cap for Flex courses to reduce number of students given workload
  - Communicate earlier to students during registration

- **Enhance Academic Technology**
  - Improve Sound - Microphones
    - Provide wireless microphone in classroom/lab to roam and all students can hear
    - Multidirectional microphone so students can hear each other
    - Improve sound/audio issues - so remote (Zoom) and class students can hear each other
  - Improve Visual - Camera
    - Online attendees appear virtually in classroom
    - Provide web cameras for all remote students
    - Camera set up to see instructor and whiteboard
  - Improve Classrooms
    - Plug and play – provide computers at the podiums that area already set up
    - Multiple projectors and screens
    - IT support/help/practice in the classroom for technology and equipment

- **Eliminate Flex Option**

- **Provide Support for Teaching and Learning Flex Option**
  - Teaching Assistant or Graduate Assistant to support teaching and learning (graders, monitor chat, assist with recording to make videos, lab procedure demos, online content)
  - Workload is at least double to offer Flex, reduce expectations in other areas
  - Best practices for working with online and remote students – equal attention and engagement

- **Clarify Course Expectations**
  - All students need computers- remote and in class – and have connectivity
  - Indicate Flex course is not the equivalent of a fully online designed course
  - Indicate Flex courses are designed for specific temporary access need (ill, quarantine, etc.) vs not want to come to class
  - Clarify student expectations and responsibilities for attendance, work outside of class

If you are teaching any Blended A/B courses with an A/B Split this semester, where the class is split into separate ("A/B") groups due to room capacity constraints, how would you rate your experience with the Blended A/B Split Option?

The majority of faculty (62%) indicated the A/B Split is somewhat difficult or very difficult to manage. About one third (39%) of the respondents indicated that it was somewhat easy or manageable or very easy to manage. See Table 5: Managing the A/B Split for all responses.

Table 5: Managing the A/B Split

Experience with Blended A/B Split	Faculty Response %
Very easy to manage	6.5%
Somewhat easy to manage	10.4%
Manageable - not difficult or easy	21.3%
Somewhat difficult to manage	43.0%
Very difficult to manage	18.7%
Total	100%

Suggestions on how we could improve the ease of use of the A/B Split Option.

Faculty (133) responded to the request for suggestions on how we could improve the A/B split. The responses most frequently cited were themed and provided below.

Summary: The A/B suggestions and categories/themes were generally similar to the Flex suggestions. Faculty provided suggestions to improve teaching, learning, and support for faculty workload in this modality. They had similar comments about academic technologies with some additional suggestions related to A/B set up in myCourses. There were also frequent responses that indicated we should eliminate it or modify how we do the A/B split in some way.

- **Provide Support for Teaching and Learning A/B Split Option**
    - Provide strategies to effectively manage two audiences – online and in person – technology, quality, attention, and engagement
    - Reduce or compensate workload – doubled, TAs, hire adjuncts and reduce course cap/size
    - Avoid having labs in A/B modality: labor and time intensive and time constraints reduce effectiveness (not studios also noted as needing more time)

- **Enhance Academic Technology**
    - Improve sound/audio issues - so remote (Zoom) and class students can hear each other
    - Provide technical support in the classroom
    - Provide wireless microphone in classrooms, camera for the board, tablets
    - Standardize classroom set up and systems
    - Clarity in myCourses: provide A/B splits as section on main course vs separate or merge splits in myCourses, but separate lists

- **Eliminate Flex Option**

- **Course Schedule and Registration**
    - Don't split until the Flex Option is determined
    - Recommended various options to improve the split e.g., "A" meets in person and "B" meets online
    - Students schedules need to see/understand there is more than one class a week
    - Some flexibility with logistics of moving students in and out – reduce need for late/add forms, etc.
    - Cap enrollment in A/B courses

If you could design your spring teaching schedule right now, please identify your preference for each modality.

The majority (57%) of faculty indicated their least preferred modality is Blended A/B. Faculty (44%) indicated they strongly prefer the Online Synchronous modality. In Person teaching is the second highest rated preference (36%) followed by online asynchronous (21%). See Table 6: Spring Course Modality Preference for all modality results

Table 6: Course Modality Preference

Modality	Strongly do not prefer 1	Do Not Prefer 2	Neutral 3	Prefer 4	Strongly prefer 5
Online Synchronous: fully online with scheduled online class meetings with your students	15.2%	10.2%	14.0%	16.5%	43.8%
In Person: fully in the classroom/lab/studio with interaction between the instructor and student	34.8%	6.5%	10.7%	11.8%	36.1%
Online Asynchronous: fully online with no in person or scheduled online meetings	38.8%	12.0%	16.5%	11.3%	21.1%
Blended: a combination of both in person and online instruction	35.3%	12.5%	19.4%	17.9%	14.6%
Blended A/B: same as blended (above) but the in person portion is split into separate ("A/B") groups due to room capacity constraints	56.7%	13.5%	14.8%	10.1%	4.7%

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