

Size does matter: The role of class size in curriculum and pedagogy

The Curriculum Policies Committee, as well as its Subcommittee for Curriculum and its Reading and Writing Subcommittee, has been interested in the relatively unexplored relationship between class size on the CSUS campus and the Curriculum/Pedagogy in our classes. As such, the CPC devoted significant time last year to a dialogue concerning this matter. Currently, there is no official policy or avenue for discussion regarding class size at CSUS.

While the impetus of this discussion is the current and upcoming budget situation and the potential affect that this situation may have on class size, the CPC feels that a discussion of class size and curriculum on this campus is long overdue. Regardless of the current budget difficulties, it is important to understand that:

- With limited resources, choices need to be made regarding the sizes and modality of instruction in the various classes at CSUS.
- These choices should be made with a focus on what will provide the best curriculum and curricular delivery for our students in terms of access, retention, graduation, and quality of education.

Questions:

1. What are the challenges and/or benefits to larger class sizes from the perspective of our pedagogy and the curriculum? How would you change the manner in which you teach your class if your class size doubled? What if it were cut in half? Would you change the curriculum as well or merely the modality of instruction?
2. Is there a relationship between the courses and programs offered in your department and class size?
3. Are there some courses or types of courses that you feel need some manner of limited class size due to its affect on the pedagogy and curriculum? If so, how would you suggest that this should happen given the necessary tradeoffs that would occur in the other courses where class size is not limited in this fashion?