



FACULTY SENATE

Minutes
November 10, 2014

Senators in Attendance: 50

Absent: Adams (Surgery), Ambaye (Pathology), Braas (Neuroscience), Esselstom (History), Forbes (Theatre), Franklin (Classics), Green (Radiology), Hehir (Neuroscience), Knodell (Economics), Perry (Extension), Prue (SAC), Schapiro (Anesthesiology), Rodgers (PSC), Stokes (Libraries), Stratton (Plant Biology), Vacant (Nutrition & Food Sciences), Vanden Bergh (BSAD), Weiss (Medicine), Wemple (Geography), Wilcox (Pathology), Witkin (Social Work), Wittpenn (Pediatrics), Wu (Rehab & Movement Science), Yang (Physics)

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- 1. Approval of the Minutes.** The minutes of October 13, 2014 were approved.
 - 2. Senate President's Remarks.** President Roberts didn't make remarks in the effort of saving time for the very busy meeting agenda.
 - 3. UVM President & Provost's Remarks.** President Sullivan & Provost Rosowsky also refrained from giving remarks at this time.
 - 4. Standing Committee Report.** Larry Kost, Chair of the Educational & Research Technologies Committee gave a report out of what the committee is working on this academic year. Items included consulting with the Technology Innovation Fund Committee, who evaluate proposals on how to utilize the Technology Innovation Fund that comes as a result of the student tech fee. He noted that in the past, call for proposals have been quite broad and this has allowed for much creativity. There is discussion of narrowing the proposal guidelines to make applications more specific to particular campus needs, and ERT is actively engaged in this.

The ERTC is also working in conjunction with the IT Align Committee to investigate the current state of IT support on campus and come up with a solution to standardize how IT decisions are made across campus. Kost did reassure the Senate that there will be appropriate faculty representation on the decision making body.

The ERTC has been actively engaged in the transition to the new email and calendar client. They are working with ETS to look ahead to prevent major issues when the transition occurs. One benefit of the new calendar client is that it has the possibility for default settings that would teaching schedules to automatically entered onto an individual

faculty member's calendar.

Finally, the ERTC is researching the current policies across campus that govern how faculty are supplied with laptops or desktop computers for teaching and research. Policies vary widely across campus and there is a need for equity among faculty in this respect.

Committee representatives for any Faculty Senate Standing Committee may be found on the [Faculty Senate website](http://www.uvm.edu/~facsen): www.uvm.edu/~facsen

5. Academic Rigor Feedback from Small Group Discussions. President Roberts spoke briefly on the notes circulated from the discussions on rigor held at the October Senate meeting. There were overriding themes that came out when the notes were compiled and they included:

- A need for agreement and consistency in definitions when it comes to academic rigor;
- What are the goals for increasing rigor & how will they be measured;
- Conflicts between the concept of increased rigor and teaching evaluations, retention, and GPA;
- The need for resources to provide professional development on high impact activities.

It was suggested that an ongoing committee be staffed and charged to investigate these concerns further.

6. STEM Construction & Meeting Patterns. Registrar, Keith Williams, presented the Faculty Senate with a change that will be taking place beginning next fall that affects course meeting patterns. In fall 2015 UVM will be moving to a 20 minute break between class periods to accommodate travel around the STEM construction project. Implications of this change include losing the last meeting slot of the day, and changes in available times for lab classes. The construction project itself will be an issue for other reasons including, the loss of large lecture halls in Angel Hall as it will be demolished, and increased noise for classrooms adjacent to the construction zone. One concern brought up by the faculty had to do with safety while walking across campus near construction, most importantly at intersections where pedestrian traffic and construction vehicles will be traveling. Williams responded to this concern by confirming that he will work with Bob Vaughn (Director of Capital Planning & Management) who has experience with campus construction projects. There will be a communication strategy employed to ensure students are aware of the safest ways to get across campus during this period.

7. At Risk Behavior Presentation. Annie Stevens, John Porter, Patience Whitworth, Brian Reed, and Aya Al-Namee presented on behalf of the President's Committee on Alcohol and Other Drugs. The group presented how UVM compares to the national averages in self-reported alcohol, marijuana, and other drug use as well as a calendar that identifies high risk weekends on campus. The goal of this committee's work is to come up with high level recommendations on what the next steps for UVM should be and what that could potentially mean for faculty & senior leadership. The keys to addressing this problem within the UVM community included:

- Faculty & Staff engagement in the process including providing them with education, policies, tools (such as the early warning system, attendance tracking, advising, etc.);
- Provide curricular offerings that teach and support healthy decision making and wellness;
- Communicate expectations of students as related to their academic excellence;
- Make revisions to the academic calendar to increase student engagement in academics;
- Utilize high-impact educational practices;
- Eliminate the Naked Bike Ride and 4/20 gatherings;
- Be clear about the adverse impacts of substance abuse on overall health and engagement;
- Communicate progress (or setbacks) transparently.

Aya Al-Namee, SGA President, provided the Senate with information on what students are prepared to do to contribute to student engagement including creating meaningful social experiences without the use of alcohol or other drugs (such as through alternative programming on high risk weekends), and supporting all students in their quest to be healthy and engaged students.

President Sullivan closed the presentation out by thanking the group for all of their hard work on this subject. The key word in all of the discussions happening on campus is engagement. He noted that we should all want our students to be as engaged in academic and cultural life as possible during their time at UVM. As educators, he urged all University members to work on modifying behaviors that break the cycle of student engagement, as well as assist our students in every possible way. This may be through advising, teaching, or general support throughout their time spent with us. President Sullivan closed by informing the Faculty Senate that work on this issue will continue and that as a community, we should work together to make sure our students are safe.

8. New Business. There was no new business at this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

Academic Rigor Feedback

1 SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS: FACULTY SENATE MEETING 10/13/2014

1.1 GROUP 1

- There are tensions between retention and increasing rigor
- There are different definitions of rigor at work in this discussion
- Interest in what's happening on upper levels vs. 1st year, but we would like more details
- Grade inflation issues seem related
- Concern about weakening of traditional disciplines reducing rigor, ie. academic engagement
- Concern about student evaluations and pressures for higher enrollments conflicting with drive with rigor
- Outcomes high impact are similar, but maybe not identical to rigor
- Concerns about resources necessary to increase challenge, impact, etc.
- Could we go to four courses to make things better>
- Can we get more data about the 1st year experience? Student engagement?
- Should this be at College or Senate level?

1.2 GROUP 2

Integrative Education?

- Systems to translation into practice
- Easier to define for professional programs
- Relevance of content is key
- Grad level easier to define "integrative"
- Does class size affect integration?

Academic Challenge / Rigor / etc.

- How do we define rigor?
- Can students define rigor / impact?
- Rigor ≠ Volume
- Rank affects / incentivizes choices on rigor etc.

Can rigor define class size?

1.3 GROUP 3

How can we enhance the integration of these dimensions of academic challenge in our courses & programs?

- Distinguish between what Senate can do and what we do at the department level
- Results don't seem to reflect our feedback from students; do students really feel rigorous?
- * Lets pick one term rigor, excellence, or engagement – these mean so many different things

Worried about...

- What are the “applied outcomes”
- How do academic excellence goals relate
- We need support to teach writing:
 - We need smaller classes and/or teaching assistants to help teach writing (for feedback & revision process) – AND – TA training to supervise writing, more teacher to professional development around writing
- Required courses that are “difficult” (rigorous) are given negative student feedback
- Students drop classes that they can't get B's in
 - This leads to students then needing additional semesters
 - Is a “B” level appropriate for students to keep scholarships
 - What is the median grade (B+) should we discuss
 - Should we have a university limit on withdraws?
- Senior capstone vs. senior thesis vs. internships – Role of risk in rigor
 - Students are scared of thesis / internship so they do the “safe” grade option
 - How can we reduce their anxiety about rigorous senior experiences
 - How does student perception of risk or “need for job” impact rigor.
- Electronic readings hurt reading & attention level
 - Competition for student attention
- “Whiplash” high school to college transition of rigor
 - “Expectation gap” – we need to set an expectation
- Critical thinking on exams
 - Students have difficulty reading test questions – where are the keywords in an application question
 - We need a culture of readers to produce better authors
 - Need to use textbooks as “easy” readers to give structure to support any “higher level” readings
- Peer evaluation of teaching reduces pressure to satisfy students

Where does IBB fit – students are happy in easy courses? How will we support?

- How do we maintain or increase rigor with increasing numbers of ELL students in our classes?

- We don't feel support in helping ELL students or helping English speakers when ELL students are in the classroom?

1.4 GROUP 4

- Survey focused on impact
- How do you maintain rigor in contrast when students are scared off by it
- How do we faculty learn to balance our classes
- What we brought from our student experiences
- Rigor is not necessarily hard grading, it is challenging, pushing students, a progressive structure
- Rigor = Academic maturity, self confidence
- High impact – experiential learning – independent applied – which may or may not relate to rigor
- What is rigor? Not just a set of skills acquired
- What do students who love rigor mean?

1.5 GROUP 5

- Lower student grades not correlated with student evaluations
 - Critical thinking skills
 - Analytical reflection
- Reinforcement over the entire course
- How do we know? How do we assess?
 - NESSE is better than most student surveys
 - Can this evaluation be tied to learning outcomes?
 - Peer review?
- Some ability of student teaching evaluations to address learning outcomes, but not as nuanced
- Mid-term exam as an impediment to learning in HS, students are used to weekly evaluations
 - This would increase student participation & engagement
- Learning outcomes are not necessarily well defined in syllabi
 - When they are present, they are helpful
 - Students feel like they can assess their ability to gauge their progress relative to the learning objectives (from a student in natural sciences)
 - Student more on the social sciences / humanities felt a little less ability to gauge their progress until they began to review for exams. This creates anxiety about grades.

Activities that promote academic challenge

- Discussion & reflection
 - But tradeoff with students hogging airtime (faculty need to constrain the discussion)
 - This could be with guided homework, assignments for outside the class, peer-learning
- “Don't worry about your grade” – actually helpful for student learning

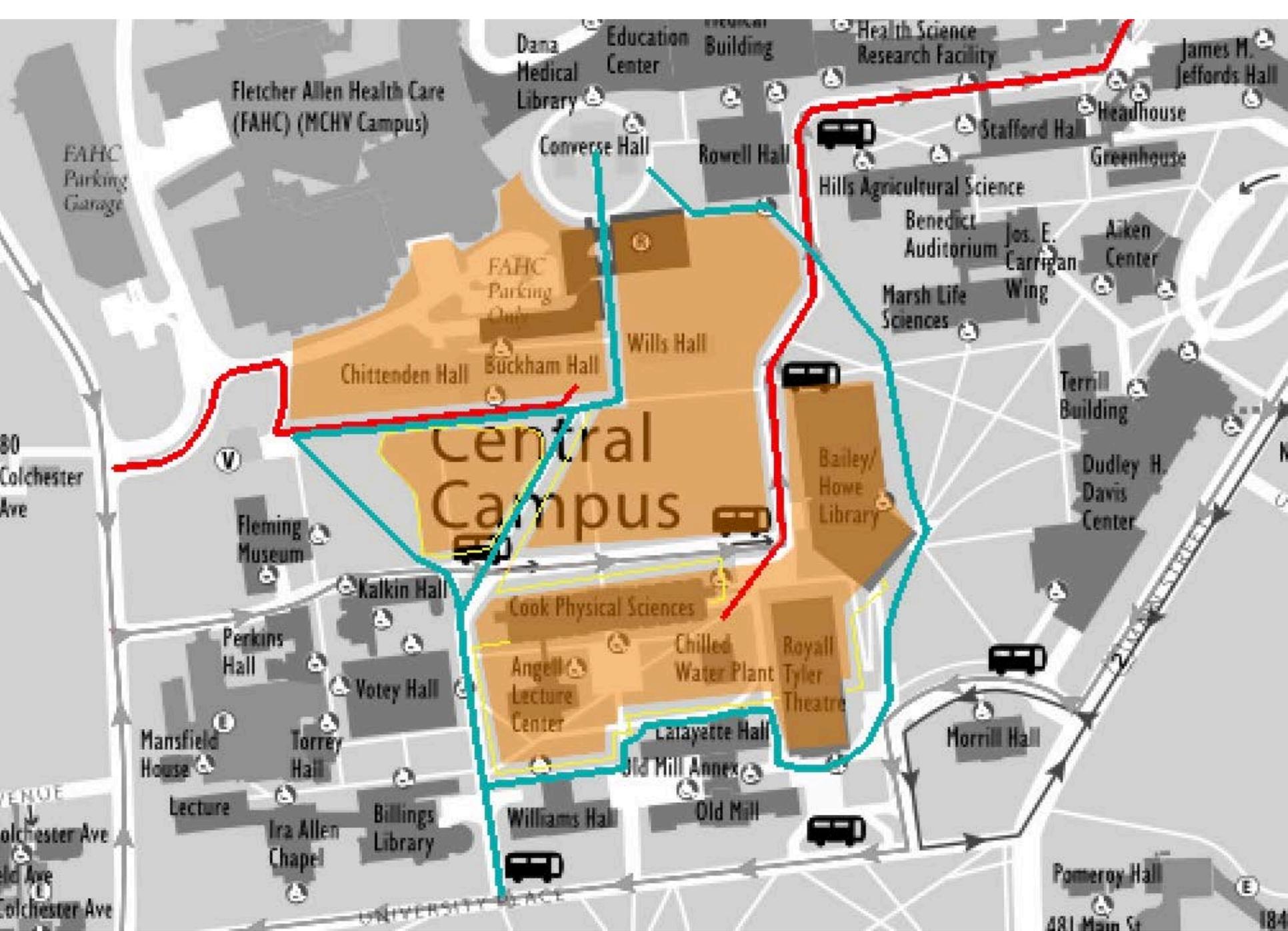
- Group learning; faculty in it with students

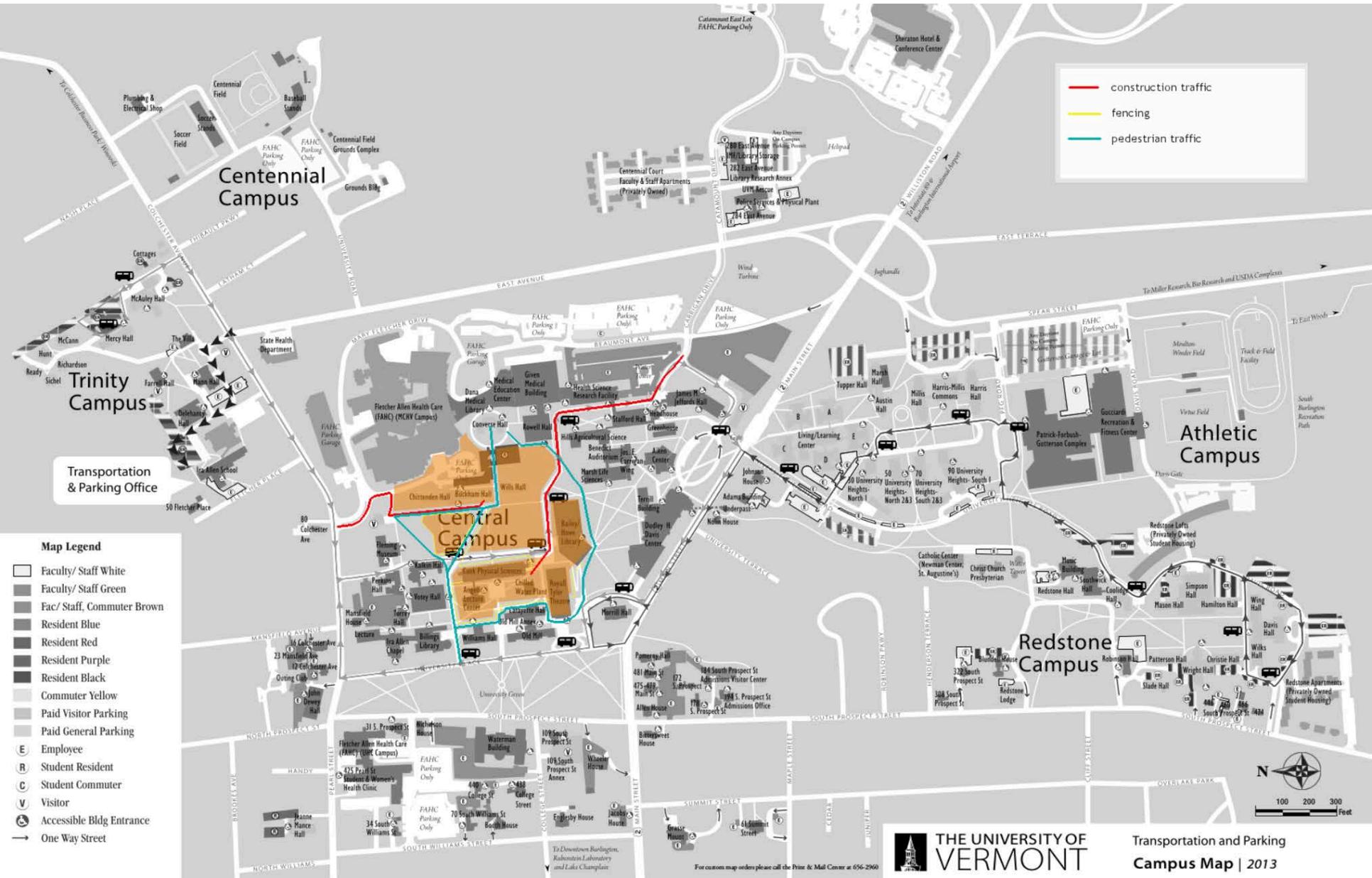
What are the attributes that make for the worst classes?

- 220 students; 2 days a week; 1.25 hours for classes
- Uncaring faculty
 - Called students “stupid” (for non-science majors)
 - Not engaged – faculty doesn’t care about student learning
 - ~100 students: 5 exams all multi-choice
 - Also disorganized syllabi
 - Faculty doesn’t talk to TA
 - Extra credit as Band-Aid for poorly designed exams

So how do we assess student learning?

- We can’t?
- Triangulations over multiple years, well-organized syllabi, engaged faculty
- Formative component – feedback to faculty; summative is helpful, but not more important than formative





— construction traffic
— fencing
— pedestrian traffic

Transportation & Parking Office

- Map Legend**
- Faculty/ Staff White
 - Faculty/ Staff Green
 - Fac/ Staff, Commuter Brown
 - Resident Blue
 - Resident Red
 - Resident Purple
 - Resident Black
 - Commuter Yellow
 - Paid Visitor Parking
 - Paid General Parking
 - Employee
 - Student Resident
 - Student Commuter
 - Visitor
 - Accessible Bldg Entrance
 - One Way Street



Transportation and Parking
Campus Map | 2013

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