

Question Time

Although the new brand book for our campus boasts small class sizes, Purdue Fort Wayne deans have been asked to identify courses that will be used to pilot an (up to) 300-seat course to be offered in fall 2019. The course will involve recorded lectures and will be primarily machine graded. Faculty designing the course will have no interaction with students but will be expected to interact with course facilitators. The rationale being given for this course is to assure “consistency in quality and rigor for all online students.”

It is difficult to imagine how a large-enrolled, recorded-lecture, machine-graded, faculty-absent course can assure quality and rigor for students. Even in smaller online classes where one faculty member is responsible for designing and teaching the course, DFW rates tend to be higher than in face-to-face classes. What about this plan is going to avoid the pitfalls evident in the way we currently teach online courses? And how does this pilot square with our supposed commitment to small class size as stated in the brand book?

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