



CHSS Online Teaching Initiative Newsletter

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IMPROVING ONLINE TEACHING EXPERIENCE

IN THIS ISSUE:

The Results of the CHSS Student Survey: Comparing Fall 2018 with Fall 2020

To improve teaching in the college, in the fall of 2018, we collected data about student perceptions of different teaching modalities and challenges they were facing when taking online classes in the college. We repeated that same survey in the fall of 2020 when 90% of courses were taught virtually or in some other modified format.

The comparison data is interesting in many respects. In 2018, 202 students took the survey, while in 2020 that number increased to 269 students. The survey collected information about the students' departments, status, preferred teaching modalities, and five challenges with online courses. See the tables below that present the demographic information about the participants and their responses.

The Results of the CHSS Student Survey

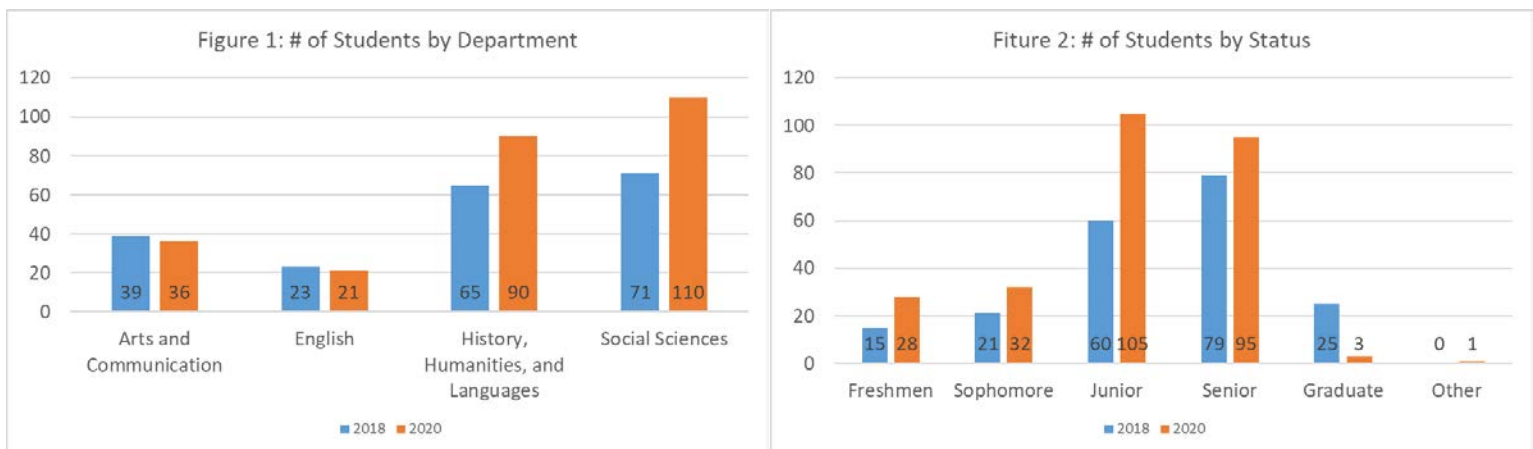
This overview presents a comparison of the results of the student survey administered in the fall of 2018 and the fall of 2020.

Pages 1-3

The Results of the CHSS Faculty Survey

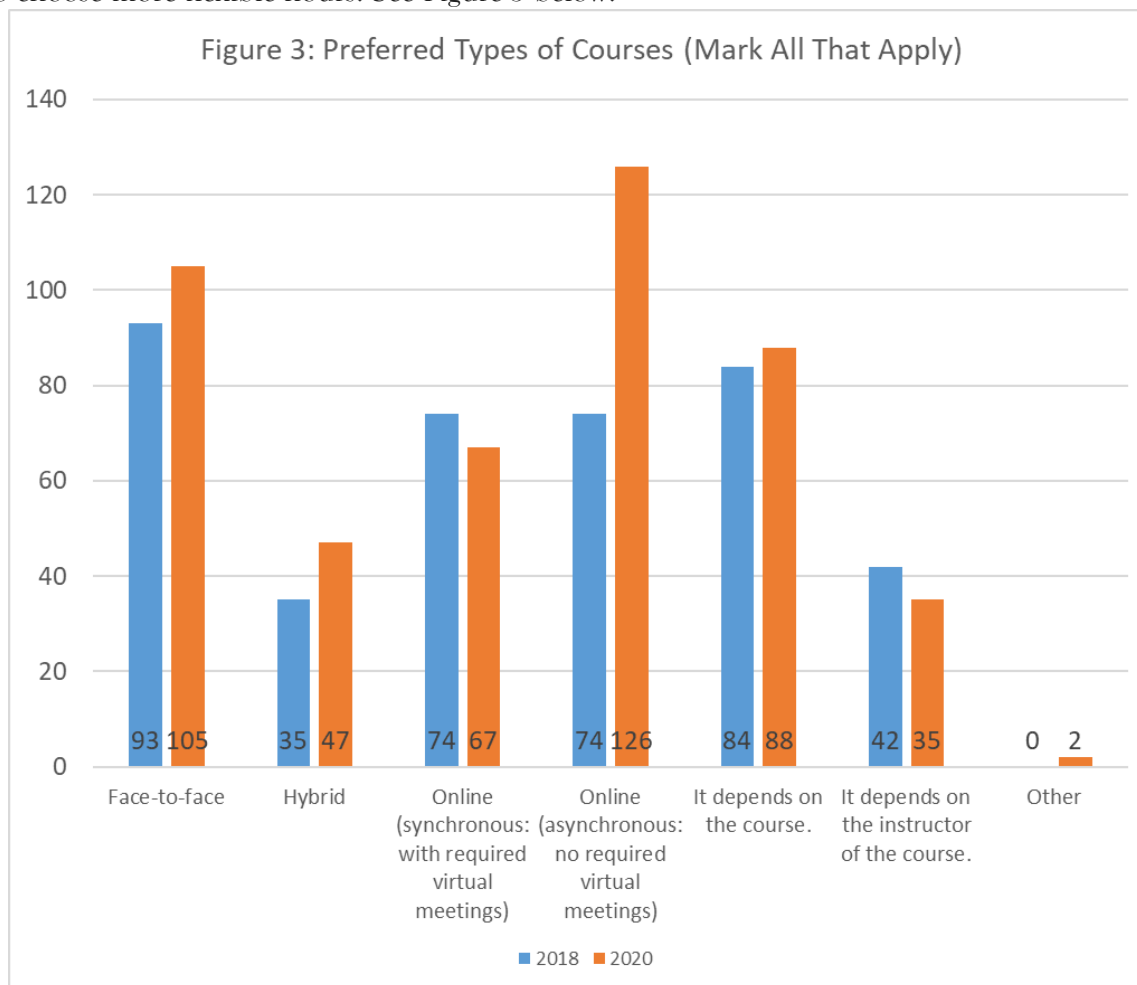
The section discusses the results of the pre- and post-surveys that aimed to explore the CHSS faculty members' satisfaction with teaching in the fall 2020.

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The most interesting result of the surveys showcases the students' **changing modality preferences** over the past two years. In the 2018 survey, 46% (vs. 39% in 2020) of participating students chose face-to-face as their top preferred modality. In contrast, in 2020, **asynchronous online** came as a top choice. 47% of students preferred

that modality to other choices. Another interesting data point is **the lower number (25% in 2020) of students who preferred synchronous online compared to asynchronous**. These changes in preferences can be explained by a variety of factors including students' unpredictable work schedules and family obligations during the pandemic that forced them to choose more flexible hours. See Figure 3 below:



Note: In the 2020 survey instrument, the category “Online” was separate into two: online synchronous and online asynchronous. We repeat the results of the 2018 data collection in the two corresponding columns. Note that it is likely that most online courses in 2018 were asynchronous.

When asked about top five challenges that the students faced while taking online courses, the following changes have emerged:

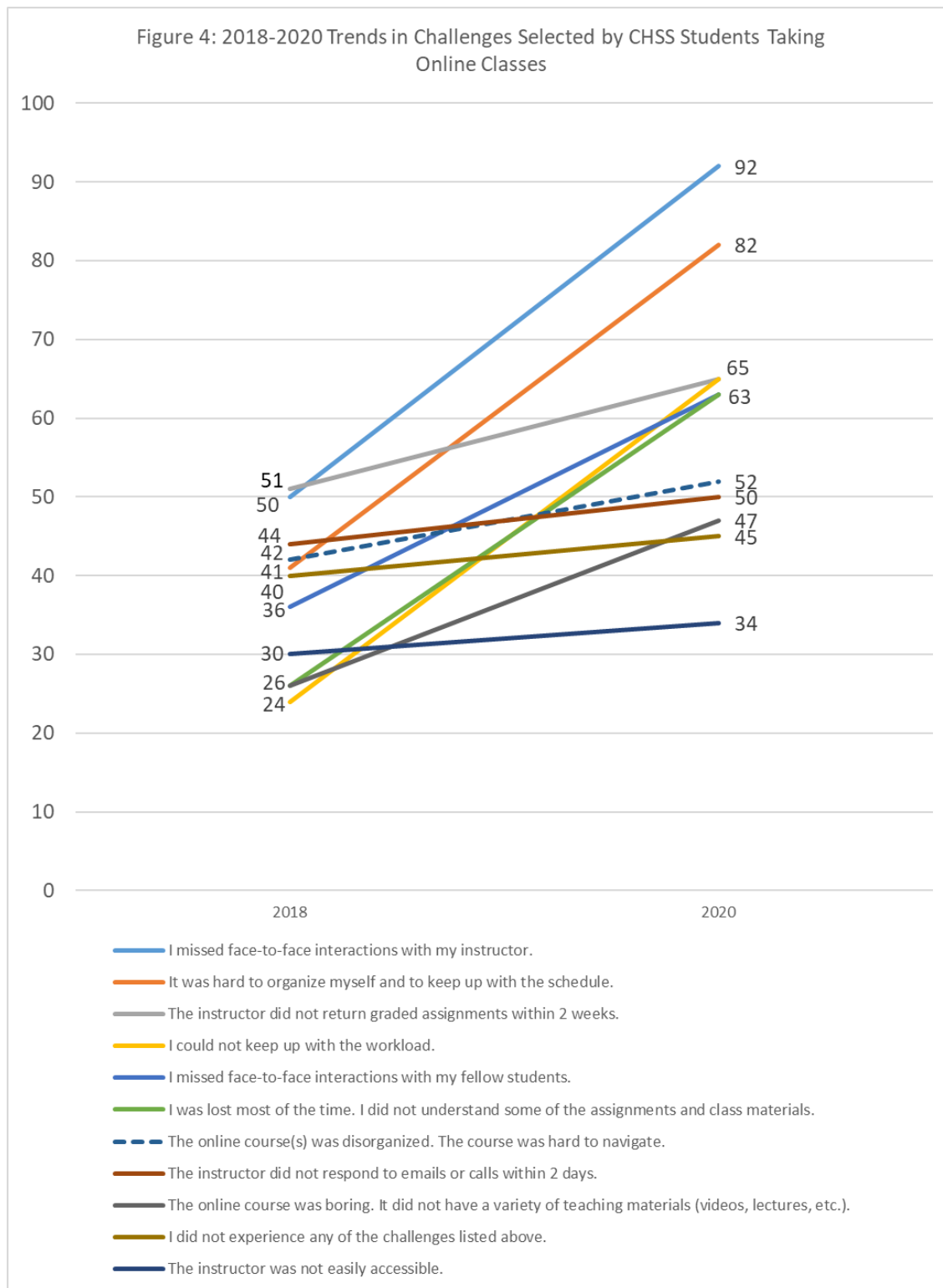
Table 1: A Comparison of Top Five Challenges Indicated by CHSS Students in 2018 and 2020

2018 Top 5 Challenges	% of Students	2020 Top 5 Challenges	% of Students
The instructor did not return graded assignments within 2 weeks.	25	I missed face-to-face interactions with my instructor.	34
I missed face-to-face interactions with my instructor.	25	It was hard to organize myself and to keep up with the schedule.	30
The instructor did not respond to emails or calls within 2 days.	22	The instructor did not return graded assignments within 2 weeks.	24
The online course(s) was disorganized. The course was hard to navigate.	21	I could not keep up with the workload.	24
It was hard to organize myself and to keep up with the schedule.	20	I missed face-to-face interactions with my fellow students. I was lost most of the time. I did not understand some of the assignments and class materials.	23

Although the configuration of the top five challenges has changed, some of the same challenges from 2018 reemerged in 2020:

- The instructor did not return graded assignments within 2 weeks.
- It was hard to organize myself and to keep up with the schedule.
- I missed face-to-face interactions with my instructor.

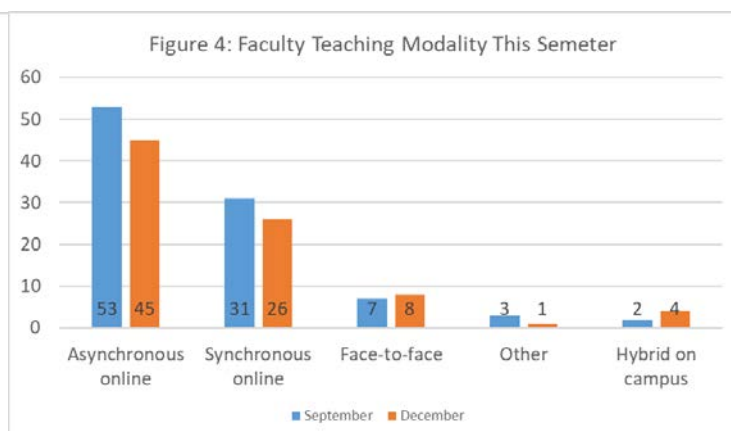
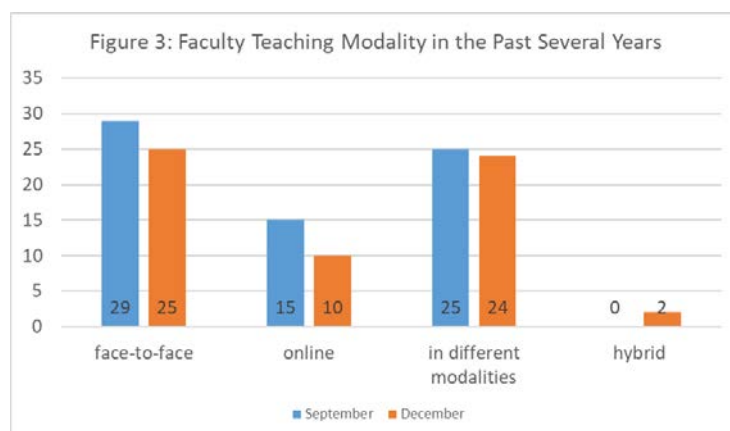
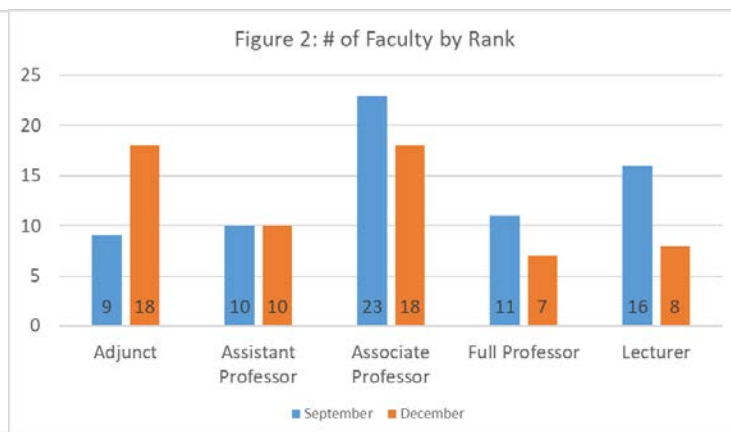
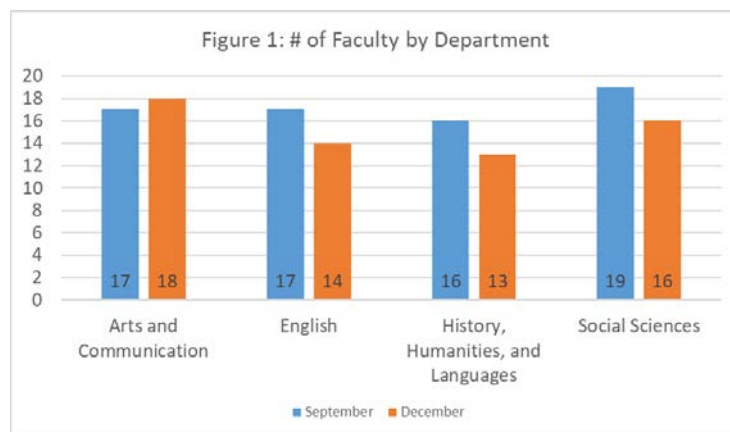
See Figure 4 below that presents trends (# of students) in the selection of all listed challenges:



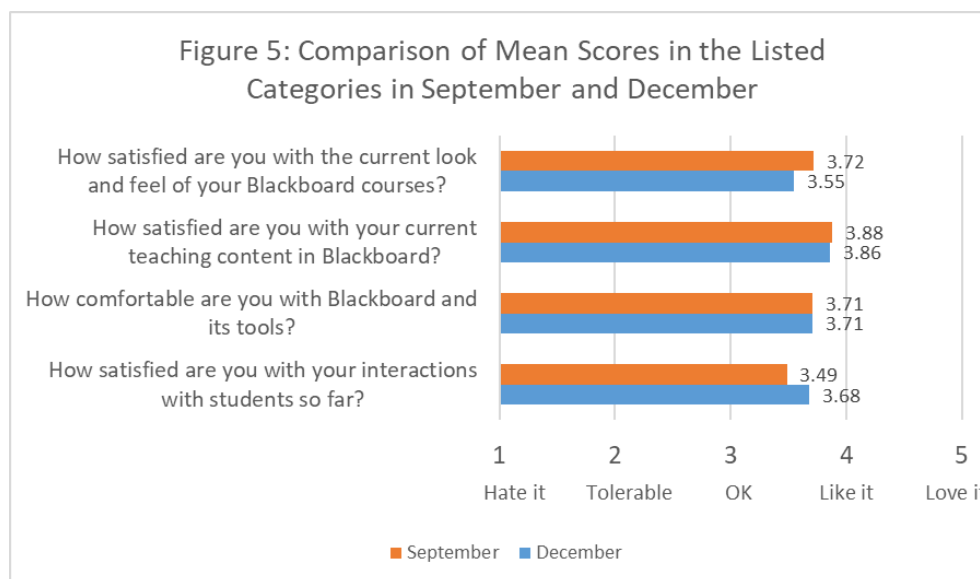
These data are reflective of many difficulties that both students and faculty have been facing during the pandemic and the need for more assistance and flexibility with student and faculty training, time, and resources for online learning and teaching.

The Results of the CHSS Faculty Survey in the Fall 2020: September vs. December 2020

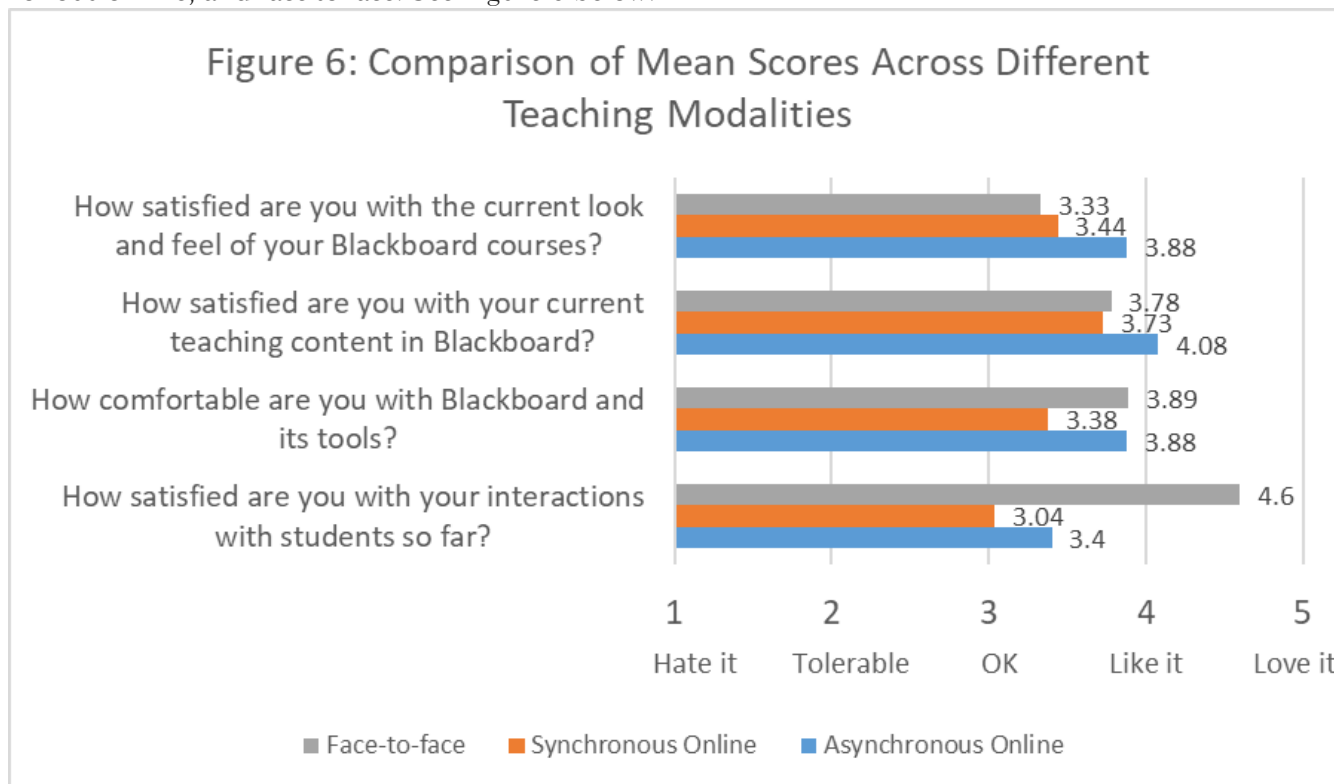
To understand the overall faculty satisfaction with teaching in the fall of 2020, we organized two surveys in the fall of 2020: one early in the semester and one closer to the end. 70 faculty took the survey in September, while 64 participated in December. One notable difference in participants' demographics is the fact that **in December fewer full-time and more part-time faculty participated in the survey.** See the comparative data below.



One of the major findings of the survey is that, based on the mean scores, the CHSS faculty are **doing mostly ok** this semester:



The December survey also contained questions specific to the teaching modalities: asynchronous online, synchronous online, and face-to-face. See Figure 6 below:



Based on the collected data, the **CHSS faculty teaching synchronously online**, which constituted about 40% of the respondents, had **lower rates of satisfaction** this semester. In fact, faculty teaching synchronously online rated their **interaction with students at 3.04**, which was the **lowest mean score** across all questions and modalities. Considering that synchronous online has never been offered as a teaching modality in the past, the results are understandable. Those teaching synchronously online have most likely experienced technology and other issues that made the semester even more challenging. In the written comments, faculty mentioned problems with organizing group work in synchronous online classes and making sure that students were paying attention and were engaged in classroom discussions.

Overall, the survey data is encouraging but also provides ideas for possible interventions at the college level to ensure that the CHSS faculty have necessary tools to teach in all preferred modalities in the forthcoming semesters.

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