

Academic Affairs

September 22, 1999

Class Visitation

The relationship between an instructor and her or his class is a very special one and should not be intruded upon lightly. However, most instructors are proud of their performance in the classroom and welcome visits by colleagues, as opportunities to share successful strategies with others and to receive helpful feedback from colleagues, and as part of what should be an ongoing peer review of teaching. Such visits, arranged in advance and agreed to by both parties, are appropriate when an instructor wishes to improve her or his teaching by observing the teaching of a colleague and when an instructor wishes a colleague to observe her or his teaching and give advice as to how it might be improved.

Class visitation is also appropriate as part of the normal annual review process, as part of review for tenure and/or promotion, and whenever substantive concerns have been raised about the nature of the learning experience. Deans, department chairs, and others with responsibility for assuring a high level of instruction or for evaluating the performance of faculty members have a right to visit faculty members' classes. In most cases, those wishing to observe an instructor should inform that instructor that they wish to do so and agree on a date for the visit, or a range of dates within which one or more visits will occur. When substantive and pressing concerns have been raised about an instructor's performance a chair, dean, or designee thereof may visit a class without any advance notification.