User Needs - Attendance Tool (for F2F classes)

The current NYU Classes environment provides a gradebook, but no native tool for recording what in many courses is a fundamental element of a student’s grade: attendance. We propose to explore several options for meeting this need (which it currently seems no LMS provides out of the box), either through a Sakai community effort or (more probably) through an outside, lti-compliant tool that accommodates the data collection and deduction rules we need, which could then be fed to the gradebook (possible tools to consider include Scholar Chip, Attendance2, and Class120).

Recording attendance is a particular need at the Global sites, which have strict policies on attendance; the need is perhaps most acute in Sydney, due to fire code regulations. Of course, collecting attendance and lateness data from the LMS might also be a means to identify at-risk students and trigger advisor meetings.

Baseline Needs (must haves)

- Check-off absent/present on roster or gradebook
- Minimal effort by instructor to take attendance (at the least, no harder than paper)
- Option for attendance to be registered by student (not instructor)
  - Means for ensuring student who checks in as “in attendance” is actually there in the classroom (with high accuracy - say 90% or higher - no system will be undefeatable) - feeding profile photo to current attendance chart
- Ways to record late attendance (or early departure)
- Attendance record can feed to gradebook
  - Variety of ways to make deduction in Gradebook for absences - rich variety of settings, such as:
    - automatic deduction for each absence - eg, ½ point per absence - with instructor manual override
    - automatic deduction after certain thresholds passed - eg, -3 points for 3rd absence, full letter-grade deduction (10 points) for 4th absence, F for 5th absence - with instructor manual override
    - some combination of above; eg, lateness deduction of ½ point per class up to 4 absences, automatic F after that (with instructor manual override)
    - partial deduction for lateness (after a certain time, set by instructor for whole term or changeable per class session - eg, 5 minutes except for day of a test, when there’s no lateness deduction, etc.)
- Mobile friendly so attendance can be taken outside classrooms [this could also be considered as high on the list of “eventual needs”]
Eventual Needs (can implement without these, but need to be capabilities in the pipeline)

- Trigger for advisor/student/instructor alert with logic adjustable by course (e.g., # absences that trigger alert)
- Visual display of students in attendance that corresponds with a seating chart
- Notes field/manual override to change status from not attended to attended (or choose range of labels to describe attendance - late, excused, etc.)
- Way to distinguish excused from unexcused absences
- Variable weight for absences for different sessions (e.g., higher deduction for higher stakes session, as when a student is scheduled to present)
- Means to accommodate special sessions, cancellations, and make-up classes

Blue-Sky Needs (nice to have someday, but not essential)

- Tool that interfaces with the physical classroom to record attendance - e.g., room swipe devices to use ID cards, thumb-swipe, etc.