

**CATHERINE  
DRENNAN:**

The idea was in a big class of like 300 students, most of the students are not going to have an opportunity really to meet the professors. They may go to office hours, but even then, the office hours, you can't schedule your office hours at a time where all 300 people in the class are available. So you'll just get to know maybe a few.

But with the pizza forums, they're every few weeks during the semester, and we encourage at least one person from each recitation to come. And it's just a way for the students to get to know the faculty and vice versa.

And sometimes we discuss things about chemistry, you know, especially if people have suggestions of what they like and don't like. But a lot of times, they're just talking about their experiences at MIT. And there have been some really useful things, I think, for the course that have come out of it, like learning, for example, that we had our problems sets due at the same time as pretty much all of their other classes. So we moved it to a different day because that made no sense.

And also, kind of some of the educational ways-- what clickers they're using, how they like them. We heard some horrible things about clickers that had been used in physics. And so then they started to change them. And when we looked at clickers, we learned from the physics experience. But it really came through knowing that from the students, rather than talking to the other faculty. We had sort of heard what worked and didn't work. So having those kind of direct conversations. And they feel like they're representing the student body in saying, oh we like this, or we don't like that, or have you thought about doing something this way.

And it's just also a lot of fun. And everyone goes around and says where they're from. I love to ask them, what is one thing about MIT that is exactly what you expected and what's one thing that really surprised you when you got here? And I just find it really interesting to see what people said. And I often get, I expected everyone to be smart, everybody is smart. I expected everyone to be just more serious, but people are fun and nice and silly and they're kind of like normal people and that sort of surprised me. So that is always a lot of fun to hear that and get to know them.