

Memorandum

November 3, 2008

From: Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Dean
Roger Sawyer, Senior Associate Dean
Steve Lynn, Senior Associate Dean

To: College of Arts and Sciences Department Chairs and Directors

Re: Revision of College Low Enrollment Policy

As you have heard, the College of Arts and Sciences is facing the largest single budget cut of the modern era. The extent of this cut will require us to fundamentally rethink the ways in which we operate. Under these conditions business-as-usual is not an option. A budget crisis of this magnitude means that we must reexamine every expenditure in light of our core mission and fundamental values. Faced with difficult decisions we must continually remind ourselves of our highest priorities and then take the steps necessary to achieve those goals. Collectively we have worked hard over the past four years to identify, define and refine our mission. We have consistently reiterated our commitment to recruit and retain faculty of the highest caliber; our commitment to support graduate students at competitive levels; and our commitment to undergraduate education worthy of our position as the flagship research university of the State of South Carolina.

Our resource base has diminished and the economic forecast is uncertain. This means that we will need to take decisive action to immediately reduce our expenditures. At the same time we must maintain our credit hour production and serve the students who major in our disciplines and attend our classes.

For 2008-2009 the College has allocated and is in the process of spending \$1,629,000 for TFAC positions. This funding covers the instructional costs of more than 350 courses. These courses play a critical role in our undergraduate curriculum, but we must work together to find ways to reduce this expenditure. We recognize that many departments have longstanding relationships with TFAC instructors and rely on them to extend instructional capacity and subject matter expertise. However, in order to safeguard funding levels for graduate assistantships and maintain our faculty lines, we must immediately take the following actions:

1. Effective January 1, 2009 the minimum class size for courses at or above the 500 level will be increased from 5 students to 8. For any upper division course with fewer than 8 students, departments will need to either cancel the course or teach it as an uncompensated overload. Courses with fewer than 8 students may not be counted as part of a faculty member's teaching load. Faculty assigned to upper division courses which are either cancelled or changed from group instruction (8 or more students) to

individual instruction (fewer than 8 students) must be reassigned to a course which meets minimum enrollment criteria. Departments with courses unlikely to meet the new standards should begin now to develop contingency plans for the reassignment of faculty. Also, as you develop your plans for 2009-2010 carefully consider minimum enrollment requirements for courses at all levels to ensure that courses do not fall below the established standards (15 students for classes at the 100 and 200 level; 12 students at the 300 and 400 level and 8 students for courses 500 or above).

2. Effective January 1, 2009 courses of less than 3 credits may not be considered as part of faculty load. A faculty member with a 2-2 teaching load must teach no fewer than 6 credits each semester.
3. Effective January 1, 2009 courses that are team taught must have enrollment levels equal to the minimum enrollment level multiplied by the number of faculty teaching the course as part of load. For example, a 300-level course team taught by two faculty members must have a minimum enrollment of 24 for both faculty members to count the course as part of their teaching load. If the course has more than 12 but fewer than 24 students, only one faculty member may count the course as part of their teaching load. If the course has fewer than 12 students it falls below the minimum enrollment requirement and therefore may not count as part of load for either faculty member. The course should either be cancelled or taught as individual instruction rather than group instruction.
4. The enrollment minimums for courses at the 100-200 and 300-400 levels will remain the same – 15 students and 12 students respectively. For courses that frequently fall close to these levels or courses with enrollment caps close to these levels departments are advised to take actions during the planning stages to encourage enrollments higher than the minimums by at least four or 5 students to account for subsequent drops in enrollment as students make adjustments to their schedules. These actions might include offering fewer sections of a course, offering a course at less frequent intervals, or raising the enrollment cap to allow for oversubscription of the course.

Requests for exceptions to these requirements will be reviewed by the Senior Staff of the College and granted only in the rarest of cases. These are significant policy changes which will require coordinated action on the part of all departments and programs. As unpopular as the changes will undoubtedly be, the alternatives – cutting faculty lines and graduate assistantships – are untenable given our stated priorities. Our analysis indicates that these measures will allow an annual savings of \$500,000 in the TFAC line, the equivalent of roughly 7 faculty positions or 21 graduate assistantships.

We will be setting up meetings with departments and academic programs, starting the week of November 10th, to review current plans for spring 2009 and prepare for the FY10 planning cycle. The care you exercise in planning and implementing your curriculum is deeply appreciated. Your leadership and thoughtful review of your academic priorities will be critical as we work together to maintain our academic focus during the next few months.

c: Davis Baird, Dean, South Carolina Honors College