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EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

MEMORANDUM

September 11, 2007

TO: College of Arts and Sciences
Chairs and Directors of Academic Departments

FROM: Mary Anne Fitzpatrick, Dean 

RE: Minimum Class Size/Low Enrollment Policy

The College of Arts and Sciences is currently experiencing a period of tremendous growth and change. We hired thirty-nine new tenured or tenure-track faculty members last year. We have authorized over sixty searches for new faculty members this year. We have worked very closely with the Provost's office to establish a suite of new family friendly policies, which will make us even more competitive in the marketplace for new professors.

This is a very exciting time for us. Through your efforts, we are transforming potential opportunities into reality. Even as we celebrate our current success we must also remain vigilant if we hope to implement our vision for the future of Carolina. In order to meet our current financial obligations and be poised to respond to additional demands on our limited resources the College and departments must work together to effectively manage the curriculum and maintain fiscal responsibility during these challenging times.

The College and departments have a shared interest in ensuring that teaching resources are allocated and used wisely. Courses taught to a low number of students do not optimally utilize the faculty, staff and other resources of the university. As such, the College asks each department to evaluate the need and desirability of those of its course offerings that have low enrollments.

Several chairs have asked for additional guidance in this area. In response to these requests the College has articulated the following policy regarding minimum class sizes and low enrollments.

Defining Low Enrollment

For the purposes of this policy, low enrollment is defined as the following:

Course Level	Minimum class size
500 or above	5 students.
300 and 400	12 students per section.
100 and 200	15 students per section.

Independent study courses, practicum, research, and internships, will ordinarily be excluded from this policy. (Course numbers in the x98 and x99 series are automatically excluded from the policy.) Please notify the dean's office of any other course numbers routinely used for practicum, internships, independent study or directed research.

Monitoring Low Enrollment

All departments and academic programs should monitor course enrollments during registration periods in an effort to identify courses at risk for low enrollment.

Early identification of low enrollment courses allows for the efficient reassignment of faculty and instructional staff to alternative courses and ensures that students will have sufficient opportunity to make adjustments to their schedules in the event that a course must be cancelled.

Review during the Registration Period

The College will conduct a formal review of low-enrollment courses for the spring semester in late November and at the end of Freshman Orientation for the fall semester. Departments and academic programs will be notified of courses that have not yet met minimum enrollment standards. Departments and programs should review these course lists carefully, considering the nature of the course, the role of the course in the curriculum and past enrollment patterns. In some instances it may be appropriate to seek a waiver to the policy or allow time for enrollments to increase. If it is clear, however, that a course will not produce sufficient enrollments, cancellation at this time provides the greatest opportunity for students to identify alternative courses and for faculty and instructional staff to be reassigned.

Review prior to Commencement of Classes

The College will conduct a formal review of low-enrollment courses at the conclusion of transfer student orientation. Courses which have neither received a waiver to the policy nor met the minimum enrollment requirements to the commencement of classes must be cancelled.

Mid-semester Review

Departments and academic programs are encouraged to monitor class sizes throughout the semester. Courses that fall below minimum enrollment levels in two consecutive offerings should be reevaluated by the department for frequency of offering and relevance to curricular needs.

Waivers

Temporary

Departments may seek a temporary waiver to this policy. Possible considerations for a waiver include, but are not limited to, courses recently introduced to the curriculum or courses required for timely progress to a degree. Requests for a waiver must include the name and number of the course and a brief justification for a temporary waiver. Waiver requests will be evaluated based on the nature of the course; its role in the curriculum; and, where appropriate, the relationship of the course to faculty workload.

Permanent

Departments may seek a permanent waiver for specific courses based on pedagogical requirements. Such requests must include the name and number of the course, a three-year enrollment history, a narrative describing the need to maintain a class size lower than the established minimum, and an alternative minimum course size to apply to the course. Once approved, departments will be required to monitor and evaluate the course based on the criteria approved in the waiver.

Exclusion

Departments may also request that courses used exclusively for independent study, directed research, internships, and practicum be excluded from the policy. Courses excluded from the policy need not establish alternative minimum class sizes. Courses in the x99 and x98 series are automatically excluded from the policy. Departments seeking exclusion for other courses should submit the course name and number and, if appropriate, identify circumstances under which the course would count as part of faculty workload.

MAB/cs

c: Senior Associate Dean Roger Sawyer
Senior Associate Dean Steve Lynn
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