Guidelines for Class Cancellation Policy Due to Low Enrollment

December 3, 2014

The following policy statement was formulated in conjunction with the academic deans and serves to guide our decision making with respect to class cancellations due to low enrollment during the regular academic semesters and during the summer and winter sessions. All class cancellation decisions are made primarily on the basis of the educational needs of students and the educational goals of departments and the mission of the university. However, financial considerations must also be taken into account in all class cancellation decisions to ensure effective use of state resources. The goal of these guidelines is to encourage better course planning so that low-enrollment courses -- and the practice of cancelling courses with late notice -- are rare.

Fall and Spring Semesters

1. Ten business days before the start of the session (first day of classes), the academic deans will review the enrollments in all courses within their respective schools.
2. Under normal circumstances, classes which normally have enrollment limits of between 25 and 40 students must have a minimum enrollment of 15 students officially enrolled to avoid cancellation.
3. Under normal circumstances, classes which normally have enrollment limits of less than 25 students must have a minimum enrollment of 50% of the normal class size officially enrolled to avoid cancellation.
4. Deans will not hold classes beyond the deadline (i.e. ten business days before the start of the session). Departments shall notify students that classes will be cancelled on the deadline, if they do not have the requisite enrollment.
5. Department chairpersons will notify the full-time or adjunct faculty member of any course cancellation. In the cases of adjunct faculty, the department chairperson will notify the adjunct faculty member and Human Resources of the course cancellation no later than the eighth day before the first day of classes.

Summer Session and Winter Session

1. Ten business days before the start of the session, the academic deans will review enrollments in all courses within their respective schools.
2. The average enrollment for all classes offered by the department in a given session must be 15 students. The minimum enrollment for any single class is 9 students.
3. The dean will not hold classes beyond the deadline (i.e. ten business days before the start of the session). Departments with a history of late registration should notify students that classes will be cancelled on the deadline, if they do not have the requisite enrollment.
**Dean’s Discretion**

In all sessions, the dean may take into consideration the unique nature of the discipline, the rotation of courses within the degree program, the needs of students to graduate on time, and/or other factors and may choose to run sections of classes with enrollments less than those stated above.

**Implementation**

In implementing low-enrollment cancellation policies, schools, departments, and programs must ensure careful planning, informed by enrollment histories. Efforts in this regard include the following:

- Examine enrollment histories and anticipate courses likely to be affected. When the potential for low enrollment is identified, increase seats in acceptable alternative courses and hold enough seats to accommodate the students who might register for those potential low-enrollment courses. Take into consideration the times and days that the alternative courses are offered, because many students arrange their work and/or internship schedules around the courses for which they registered, and so these students will have difficulty switching on short notice to alternative courses scheduled at very different times than the cancelled course. Chairs should be provided reports that include: enrollment trends by course for the past three years, a breakdown of majors by year and requirements left for graduation, and anticipated general education obligations to determine how many general education courses should be offered.

- Deans and Chairs will use a reasonable time frame (i.e., no less than ten business days before the start of the session) to determine when to cancel a class.

- Chairs notifies affected students and school/department academic advising staff as soon as the action is taken.

- Chairs and advisors will work with the affected students to ensure that they find acceptable alternatives.

- If cancelled courses are required for graduation and the affected students are nearing graduation but not in their last semester before graduation, ensure that the students can be accommodated in the class the following semester.

- If cancelled courses are required for graduation and the affected students are in their last semester before graduation, or the students are nearing graduation and cannot be accommodated in the class the following
semester without disrupting their path to degree completion, accept alternative courses where possible that fit the affected students' schedule.

- If cancelled courses are prerequisites for other required courses, accept alternative courses as the prerequisite. If the courses are prerequisite to courses in other departments, notify the other departments as soon as the action is taken and work collaboratively with the other department to the extent possible to identify acceptable alternatives.

- All affected students should be accommodated, but schools and departments must pay special attention to seniors preparing to graduate, international students, students on financial aid, students who need special accommodations for disabilities and might have chosen a class on this basis, and students who require full-time enrollment or who have specific minimum credit hour requirements (e.g., Homeland Security laws require international students to be enrolled full time).

- Note that there will inevitably be exceptions to cancelling classes with low enrollment, such as independent studies and practica, and schools should work with departments to identify these, taking into account the school and department teaching load/compensation policies.

This policy is effective immediately.