

Student Success Committee: Class Availability, Capacity, Bottlenecks

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Charge:

This task force was charged to review all aspects of the issue with class availability, capacity and bottlenecks to recommend solutions that will enable all students to obtain a full class schedule (15 units) and complete required courses in a timely fashion.

Executive Summary:

The taskforce approached the charge by reviewing the class availability problem for first-time freshmen, first-time transfers, continuing students, and bottleneck courses. New structures, policies and procedures that improve course access were also explored.

Recommendations are set forth to address short term problems by adding courses in targeted General Education areas and providing more prescriptive advising for first-time college ready freshmen. Long term solutions include bold ideas to centralize General Education course scheduling under the supervision of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies, orient chairs to course management and specify a date for students to register for a repeat class.

Issues and Concerns:

Numerous complaints have been received from students and the campus community about class availability and the average course load has decreased over the years. For example, the average freshmen course load in fall 2015 was 13.4 in comparison to 14.7 in 2002. This results in delayed time to degree completion and bottlenecks. Furthermore, the campus has limited spaces for large classes and science labs, especially in chemistry and biology. The overall problem is one of supply versus demand. The number of course seats offered does not meet student demand.

Conclusions/ Recommendations and Actions Taken

First time Freshmen

1. Implement prescriptive advising based on college readiness and change DOG DAYS advising from one semester (fall) to one full year (fall and spring).
2. Establish variations of first-year freshmen course paths that offer each student 5 courses.

First time Transfers

3. Increase the transfer student course load to 13.5 from 12.5 in fall 2015.
4. Add course sections to upper division GE courses where enrollment was over 100% to reach 15-17 total sections. Reserve additional GE seats for new transfer students and not open them to general registration in April.
5. Encourage programs and departments to look at their new transfer student needs and ensure sufficient availability of fall major courses.

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Continuing Students

6. Add seats in key areas for continuing upper division students, especially for those who are near graduation. Ten (10) additional sections of upper division GE and W courses to be released in April for general registration are recommended. Similarly, programs and departments must look into needs of their majors to ensure key courses are available for those who are near graduation.

Bottleneck Courses

7. Build new physical facilities to increase capacity for bottleneck courses, such as chemistry and biology lab courses. Take Chemistry 1 A/B courses for example, it is estimated that lab capacity needs to be expanded by 50%.
8. Increase online offerings where appropriate and possible to release pressure on classrooms and to give students flexibility of course/schedule choices, such as in GE Area IC.

New structures, policies and procedures that improve course access

9. Centralize scheduling of GE classes (a future item, not for f16).
10. Hold deans and chairs accountable in performance evaluations for student *major* course access.
11. Require course management and scheduling training for chairs.
12. Release unused seats in Learning Communities at a specified date.
13. Amend APM 231 to allow three weeks to drop a course without permission after semester starts rather than four weeks, as is the current practice.
14. Delay student registration for a repeat course until a specified date.
15. Encourage programs and departments to examine course offering patterns and sequencing to ensure student access to key courses where appropriate and applicable each semester.

Recommendation	Costs	Responsible	Completed By
Recommendation 1	N/A	University Advising Center	Summer 2016
Recommendation 2	216FTES	College/School	Summer 2016
Recommendation 3	145FTES	College/School	Summer 2016
Recommendation 4	N/A	Departments/Scheduling	Summer 2016
Recommendation 5	N/A	Chairs	Summer 2016
Recommendation 6	125FTES	College/School	Summer 2016
Recommendation 7	\$50-60k	University	next one year
Recommendation 8	N/A	Chairs/Deans	next one year
Recommendation 9	N/A	Academic Affairs	next 1-2 year
Recommendation 10	N/A	Academic Affairs	Fall 2016
Recommendation 11	N/A	Chairs	Fall 2016
Recommendation 12	N/A	Dean of Undergraduate Studies	Fall 2016
Recommendation 13	N/A	Faculty Senate	Fall 2016
Recommendation 14	N/A	Registrar/Scheduling	Fall 2016
Recommendation 15	N/A	Program Faculty	next 12 months

Note: The FTES cost is an estimate. Cost for Recommendation 7 is on lab equipment only, not including building, utility, etc.