

Academic Senate's Recommendations for Enrollment Management - Spring 2015

The Academic Senate affirms:

- that the college's mission demands that it create a schedule of course offerings that is designed foremost to serve students' needs; and,
- that schedules must account for varied curricular requirements and must enable students to complete degrees and certificates in a timely manner; and,
- that responsible use of limited resources necessitates consideration of enrollment in determining whether a course is scheduled and/or canceled.

Furthermore, the Academic Senate recognizes:

- the significant efforts of the administration to make transparent the processes related to schedule development and course cancelation; and,
- that past performance is not always a reliable guide to predicting future enrollments; and,
- that strategic enrollment management processes can benefit from evaluation and refinement.

Therefore, the Academic Senate makes the following recommendations:

Recommendations regarding schedule development

1. Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and authority of deans and faculty regarding schedule development. For example, what is the relationship between discipline and curricular expertise and schedule expertise? Whose role is it to provide advice, recommendation, or approval?
2. Reassess room allocations within and among divisions to ensure that the schedule development is being driven by student need and not dictated primarily by room availability.
3. Institute an annual or semiannual meeting, hosted by IPC, to explain the budget constraints and overall strategy for schedule development (e.g. explain the goal to grow/maintain/reduce schedule from last term). Invite all divisions to send representatives to this meeting. Identify any special circumstances/needs that will impact schedule development (e.g. commitment to CWA schedule of offerings, linked Puente courses, exemptions for HTP courses, GE Pathways sections, etc).
4. Coordinate with sister colleges to ensure complementary, not competing, scheduling of courses that have enrollment challenges.
5. Develop a one- or two-year schedule of course offerings (at least for some programs) and, if a core course is only offered once/year, commit to keeping it open regardless of enrollment. Advertise these annual predictable schedules to students.
6. (Changes to Documentation) The description of how the schedule is developed needs to be amended to explain that variation exists among divisions as to how the first draft of the schedule is proposed.

Recommendations regarding cancelation process

1. Identify decision deadlines for determining whether a class will be canceled. Ensure that these deadlines take into account other important dates such as the date students are dropped for non-payment, the date of notification of financial aid awards, etc.
2. When a course is added to the watch list, the dean should speak in person or by phone with the instructor of record, and if (s)he is adjunct, then also with a relevant full-time faculty member. The dean should clearly communicate what the faculty may/must do in order to respond to each subsequent deadline. Current exceptions for "program need", "anticipated late enrollment" and "other" are necessary and should be continued.
3. Define the criteria for establishing "program need". At least 9 core courses (required for a major or certificate) with single-section offerings were canceled. Why didn't they meet the "program need" criteria?
4. For sections in jeopardy of cancelation, deans shall share with faculty the historical evidence from Data Dashboard regarding the potential for late-enrollments.

5. For sections in jeopardy of cancelation, deans shall determine whether the course adversely affects other degrees/certificates that are in secondary disciplines.
6. Extra consideration should be given to courses that are being offered in an alternative scheduling experiment.
7. (Changes to Documentation) Clearly explain how load-balancing (i.e. offsetting low enrollments in some courses with high enrollments in others) occurs at Cañada.
8. (Changes to Documentation) Identify whether canceled courses are core courses, selectives, or had other sections that remained open.

Recommendations for additional research/actions

1. Survey students regarding desired schedule of course offerings and about existing obstacles in our registration process (e.g. lack of explanation when encounter prerequisite block).
2. Develop a college-wide campaign to promote timely enrollment and inform students of class cancelation policies/timelines.
3. Use DegreeWorks and/or SEPs to inform schedule development by forecasting student demand for courses.
4. Identify recommendations for developing late start courses - most appropriate subject areas, optimal start date, etc.
5. Research schedules of sister colleges, other districts, and for-profit colleges to determine whether there are alternative schedules of course offerings that we ought to consider (e.g. afternoon courses, compressed courses, accelerated courses, academy style programs, etc.)
6. Obtain clarification from the District Academic Senate and Board of Trustees regarding the intent and rationale of Policy 6.04 Minimum Class Size Guidelines and investigate the impact of adopting a hybrid policy that holds some courses/programs to a minimum Fill Rate.