

Statement Against Course Cancellations

We are writing to express our concern about how course cancellations have been occurring under Covid. While we, unfortunately, were not able to fully develop a process for course cancellation under normal times, the moment calls for a DIFFERENT APPROACH to course continuation and cancellation policy.

It feels like we are getting contradictory messages from our administration. Faculty have been working hard to adapt to all of the changing needs and have worked through the summer to ensure that our students have access to quality education. These are extreme times and a period of transition, and it doesn't seem just that the administration is using the same rules as regular times.

In response to course cancellations, there have been inconsistent options presented to faculty across the divisions. Some faculty are being told that they need to use banked units or take a decrease in pay, while others are being informed of their right to bump at our college or across the district. Of course full time faculty don't WANT to bump, but it is wrong that they aren't being informed of all their options. Faculty have been forced to make these important decisions right as the semester is starting.

In the long run, these course cancellations are terrible for programs and could have long term impacts. If we think about this decision in the context of moving toward Guided Pathways, it is even more important that we don't make hasty decisions about class cancellations since they could negatively affect our developing our program pathways in the future.

An additional contributor to the enrollment issues is that students are also confused about the various formats and have had to make decisions about adding and dropping at the last minute. This has led to more volatility than normal in the first few days. The last-minute cancellation of courses has also negatively impacted our students and has caused them to scramble to ensure their financial stability during this difficult time. If we are following Distance Education guidelines that require contact BEFORE the course even starts, it is especially important that our students have consistent information and depend on their course load. If a class is to be cancelled, the professor that has that class should be given the opportunity to communicate with the students to share information.

In particular, we have a few questions about the current process and its transparency:

1. How are we applying our equity lens to these course cancellations?
2. What guidelines and timelines are being used for determining course cancellations under the current circumstances, and are they being used consistently?
3. How are we ensuring that faculty know all of their options under the contract when they are faced with a course cancellation.

In light of these questions and concerns, we would like our administration to either:

1. Commit to a moratorium on cancelling courses during the crisis

2. Or adapt different and more flexible guidelines for cancelling courses and publish that information clearly for faculty.