

Proposal for Change – BC Academic Senate

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Issue and Rational for Addressing the Issue – “Shopping for Classes”

California Community Colleges are currently experiencing a tidal wave of students willing to enroll in courses. The current budgetary constraints have initiated a mandate of “workload reduction”. CCCs can either ‘do more with less’ or serve fewer students.

Bakersfield College is not immune to this problem. Current Spring 2011 student headcount is 18,209. Even more astonishing...there are 6,509 students on a waitlist (unduplicated) and 2,170 of these students are not even enrolled in any other course. Having a seat in any course is extremely coveted.

Anecdotally, I have spoken with students about a strategy they call “shopping”. For example, a student will register for 5 courses but only plan on completing 3-4 courses. Thousands of BC students on waitlists have been disenfranchised. Most recent IRP data (2008-2009) has BC’s retention rate as 89.5%. This would equate to 1,912 seats that could have been taken by students on the waitlist.

President Greg Chamberlain has placed the onus on administration, faculty and staff to focus on “getting students out of BC” by increasing access, retention and success. How can they get “out of BC” if they can’t get in?

Proposed Solution – Unit Restrictions During Early Registration

Students eligible for Fall/Spring, early registration will be allowed to register for up to 14 units and up to 5 units in the summer (including waitlisted courses). These students will be able to register for additional courses 48-hours after open registration. This procedure will incentivize the prioritization of course selection. Students would be able to bypass the early-registration, unit restriction policy if they...

- are Incoming President Scholars or
- have not received a “W” or “DR” and successfully completed at least 14 units during the previous semester.

Possible Opposition/Scenarios

1. “We are hurting our students by limiting their access to register for courses.” Response – Students are still able to register for more than 14 units, but those courses can be added 48-hours after open registration. Students are eligible to register for more units during early registration if they meet the criteria listed above.
2. “This policy will hurt a huge number of students.” Response – Approximately 13,700/18,000 (76.1%) are part-time students.
3. “Why set the limit at 14 units?” Response – A large proportion of courses at BC are 3.0 unit courses. This will allow a majority of students to register for 4 courses. This would also not be detrimental to students that are required to register for 12 units.
4. “Why set the limit at 5 units during the summer?” Response – Students success/retention drops dramatically when they take multiple courses during the summer. Early registration students will still be able to register for additional courses following the 48-hour window.
5. “Why would Incoming President Scholars eligible to register for more than 14 units.” Response – Incoming President Scholars have achieved a GPA of at least 3.5 in high school. This can be used as a recruiting tool to bring in excellent high school students. Give them the opportunity to “prove” that they can successfully complete 14 or more units.
6. “Why should a “W” or a “DR” count against a student that has successfully completes at least 14 units?” Response – The purpose of this procedure is to decrease the ability to “shop” for classes.
7. “Why do early-registration students have to wait for 48-hours before they can register for additional courses?” Response – This 48-hour window will allow students with low-priority registration to register for courses that would normally be closed. Early registration students will still be able to register for additional courses following the 48-hour window.
8. “Can Banner handle this?” Response – “Yes.” (Sue Vaughn)

In Conclusion

A similar registration procedure is currently used in the University of California system. Students are limited to register for 10 units (quarter units), including waitlisted courses. They are able to add more courses during open registration.

It just kills me to hear and see students that don't have access to courses due to having a late, priority-registration date. It hurts me even more when I see students drop prior to the "W" date, leaving an empty seat that could have gone to another student on the waitlist. This process will...

- Provide an incentive for students to prioritize courses
- Provide greater access for students that would not have been able to enroll in a class
- Increase retention rates
- Increase success rates
- Support President Chamberlain's goal "getting these students out of BC".