

Office of the Provost: Course Cancellation Policy

The discussion about the timing and current practice of course cancellation for under-enrolled courses at the Heads and Chairs meeting on February 26, 2019 and Faculty Academic Policy meeting on April 4, 2019, has resulted in the following policy.

The discussion revealed a number of benefits of an earlier decision date for canceling classes. These include enabling students to reorganize their course schedules, faculty to be reassigned to teach other courses, and the Registrar's Office to have sufficient time to add and delete course offerings. An earlier date reduces the likelihood of students feeling faculty pressure to enroll in a course and should allow more careful planning of course offerings from semester to semester and year to year.

A written policy should lead to a better and more broadly shared understanding of how low-enrollment courses are treated. The policy is as follows:

1. Except in extraordinary circumstances, classes with an enrollment of fewer than 5 students will be cancelled on the last day of classes of the preceding semester.¹ Auditing students are not included in the enrollment count.
2. However, courses that are required to complete the major and which must necessarily be offered in the following semester may be taught when 2-4 students enroll in the course and the course is scheduled as a traditional course. Faculty teaching a required under-enrolled course can choose between counting the course as a 0.5 teaching load or receiving financial compensation; financial compensation will be prorated based on the number of enrolled students using the applicable base rate of overload payment with a minimum of 50% of the standard overload payment. Any teaching load shortfall that results in such a situation is expected to be made up by the faculty member, normally during the next semester or academic year.
3. Course enrollment will be considered as final one week after the add-drop period in the semester ends, which is the College's final census date for reporting course enrollments in the Common Data Set. To carry a 1.0 teaching credit, a course must have an enrollment of 5 or more students by the final census date. This requirement will be waived if the enrollment shortfall is due to one or more student(s) withdrawing from the course due to a medical or other emergency. If enrollment drops by the final census date to fewer than 5 students, the faculty member can choose to receive a 0.5 teaching load or financial compensation for teaching the course, as described in #2 above.
4. This policy will be posted on the information page for Heads and Chairs. The Registrar's request for course schedules for the following semester will include the reminder that "Scheduled classes whose enrollment is fewer than 5 students will normally be cancelled on the last day of classes this semester."

Thank you for your cooperation in adhering to this policy.

¹ This does not include gateway or foundational courses on the roster that are under- or un-enrolled because registration is not open to upper class students, the course will be filled by entering students who do not enroll until the summer, or a course section must be added to course offerings because a substantial number of students have historically needed to retake a course.