

Low Enrolled Course Cancellation Policy
For Chair and Dean use during Fall and Spring semesters**

**This policy does not pertain to winter and summer courses.

The following policy is proposed for several reasons:

- 1.) To more effectively ensure that students are able to finalize schedules in a timely fashion in order to avoid negative impacts on completion and/or financial aid
- 2.) To carefully monitor the university's resources particularly pertaining to costs associated with Temporary Services; and
- 3.) To provide departments with adequate time to finalize faculty workload load.

Perhaps most importantly, this process is intended to promote dialogue across departmental faculty, chairs, and their deans regarding assessment of their curricular programs and how best to schedule course offerings to meet student needs.

A "course" is defined as a lecture, seminar, lab, recitation, or group studio regardless of course modality.

As an initial baseline, effective Fall 2023, a "low enrolled course" is defined as having less than 15 students for undergraduate classes and less than 8 students for a graduate class.

Based on feedback from faculty, the first level of assessing courses for running will be asking if the course has reached 60% of the specified cap. 60% of a course with a 25 student cap is 15 students, and so 60% of enrollment targets for courses that are set for 25 or more students should be fine. Classes smaller than 25 students which do meet the 60% threshold will be reviewed by department chairs and deans to determine what is best for our students within particular majors and programs alongside of sequencing plans within departments for course offerings needed to meet student degree requirements.

There **will be** exceptions to these course enrollment minimums that are warranted due to needing to support the growth of new programs, equipment needs, type of course, classroom space, type of pedagogy, and other relevant factors.

In general, minimum enrollments should not be used as the threshold for “splitting” courses. Courses can only be split into multiple sections upon approval by the Dean.

The following process is adopted effective immediately (April 2023):

- Chairs will continue to closely monitor course enrollments and communicate to deans on a regular basis regarding courses that have the potential for low enrollments.

Note: if a course is combined with other sections (cross listed), and consequently has a total enrollment of over 15 (undergraduate) or over 8 (graduate), and is being counted as one “load” for that faculty member, the course will not be considered as low enrolled.

We are aware that in some graduate and extension site programs, students routinely register for classes late; chairs are to proactively work with the Graduate Office to encourage students’ timely registration but also to keep the dean apprised of any expected late registrations.

Decisions on low enrolled classes will be completed at least three weeks in advance of any semester’s start. We recognize the challenges this may pose for faculty who may be asked to pick up a new course within that window, due to course cancellation. Deans and chairs are asked to be sensitive to the faculty workload that can ensue as a result of such decisions and avoid them as much as possible.

Deans have final approval on running any low enrolled courses (according to the above definitions).

Notification to Students: It is critical that affected students be notified immediately so that they can work with their advisors to modify their course schedules to ensure they have a full load, avoid jeopardizing financial aid, and have the coursework necessary to remain on their path to timely graduation, and minimize the need for course waivers/substitution. Students must be notified **before** they are deregistered from a canceled course.

If a canceled course is required for graduation and the affected students are in their last semester before graduation, or the students are nearing graduation and cannot be accommodated in the class the following semester without disrupting

their path to degree completion, deans and chairs/program directors are asked to collaborate and identify alternative courses or independent studies that fit the affected students' schedule and maintain the integrity of the academic program. These alternatives should be identified in advance and communicated to affected students. Note: Deans and chairs need to be cautious in over-relying on independent studies arrangements for such students as they are time intensive for faculty, who are already meeting their contractual teaching obligations. Enrolling in related courses on our campus or other SUNY system campuses is preferable.

If a canceled course is a prerequisite for other required courses, programs will need to identify appropriate alternative courses as the prerequisite. If the canceled course is a prerequisite to courses in other departments, deans and chairs/program directors must notify affected departments as soon as possible and work collaboratively to identify acceptable alternatives. When possible, deans, chairs, and program coordinators should document these agreements for future course planning.

Revisions to Faculty Workload:

For courses that are canceled, it is the expectation that the deans will work with the chairs as quickly as possible to ensure that all full-time faculty members have a full teaching load, as defined by their contract.

In circumstances where there is no available course to reassign, faculty members may be given an “alternative assignment” due to a canceled course; these assignments must be approved by the dean and provost.

The following strategies could be considered when reassigning the affected faculty member:

- Reassignment to a required course that is in high demand and another section would open up desirable seats.
- Opening another section of an existing course that has a wait list
- Expansion of enrollment in another course that the instructor is teaching
- As directed and approved by the dean and provost, assignment to administrative, or other duties that are normally compensated with course release in the school, department, or division.

Course Review: For frequently low enrolled courses (i.e., low enrolled for three consecutive semesters in which it is offered), it is expected that the dean and

chair/program director meet to discuss the following and develop a written plan of action:

- What are the contributing factors to this course's low enrollment?
- How can these factors be addressed?
- Does the consistency of low enrolled courses indicate that changes be made to requirements in the curriculum?
- Are there other alternatives for electives that have the potential to be fully enrolled?
- Is this course scheduled too often? Or at times when students are unable to take the course?
- Is this a course that should be moved to the summer session?
- Is this course part of a new/revised program or change in program location? If so, what are the planned strategies to increase enrollment for future course offerings?

If there is a consistent pattern of multiple low-enrolled courses in a program, the chair will initiate dialogue with their dean and faculty in order to consider broader curricular issues and program revisions.

Finalized: April 11, 2023