

Proposal for Unit Restriction for Priority Registration Students

Joe Saldivar Ph. D. – Faculty Chair, Biology Department

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

Bakersfield College is experiencing a tidal wave of students enrolling in courses. Previous budgetary constraints mandated constraints of “workload reduction”. California Community Colleges (CCC) had to ‘do more with less’ or serve fewer students. The Bakersfield College is currently in a “growth mode”. President Sonya Christian would like to take advantage of monies available to CCCs by increasing FTES targets. Late start classes have been added to the class schedule to help meet the FTES goal. Additionally, enrollment continues to grow while the statewide trends decline. However, as of the first day of the Fall 2016 semester, 7,288 students were on a waitlist (an increase of almost 14% since last year). This as a missed opportunity to serve and educate students who really want to learn at our amazing College (Dean Mourtzanous).

One week before the first day of the Fall 2016 semester...

- BC student headcount was 19,925 with 7,288 students on a waitlist.
- Having a seat in a course is extremely coveted and valuable.

I have spoken with students about a strategy they call “shopping”. Students will knowingly register for more courses than they plan on completing. Thousands of BC students on waitlists have been disenfranchised by this process. It is difficult to tease out certain data, but Lisa Fitzgerald, Director of Institutional Research and Reporting, ‘conservatively’ estimated that 900 students “shop for classes”. This would be equivalent to an increase of 92.6 FTES (using 3.0 units as an average class).

President Christian has placed the onus on administration, faculty and staff to increase in FTES and “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

UCLA Model; <http://www.registrar.ucla.edu/soc/enroll.htm>

UCLA uses the “two pass” system for course registration. The two-pass system is used for the approximately 29,000 undergraduates at UCLA to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to enroll in required premajor, major, and GE courses and to graduate.

FIRST PASS. During their first pass, students **may only enroll up to 10 units**. This gives all undergraduates a better chance to obtain at least two courses needed toward graduation. Students who do not enroll during their first pass appointment period must wait until their second pass appointment to enroll.

SECOND PASS. During their second pass, students can add courses up to the maximum units allowed by their College or school. They can enroll from the beginning of the specified appointment day and time through midnight on Friday of the second week of classes, when wait lists are eliminated and Study Lists of enrolled courses become official

Proposed BC Registration Strategy

Students eligible for, Fall/Spring, priority registration will be allowed to register for up to 10 units (including waitlisted courses). There is a 5.0 unit limit for summer semesters. These students will be able to register for additional courses during open registration. This procedure will place an incentive on students to prioritize their selection of courses. Students would be able to bypass the priority registration, unit restriction policy if they...

- are incoming President Scholars, BC athlete, EOPS, BC Promise Students or
- have not received a “W” or “F” and successfully completed at least 12 units during the previous semester.

Possible Opposition/Scenarios

1. “Do any other colleges or universities employ this registration strategy?” Response – The entire UC system and 13/23 CSUs employ an early registration policy.
2. “We are hurting our students by limiting their access to register for courses.” Response – Students are still able to register for more than 10 units, but those courses can be added 48-hours after open registration. As a matter of fact, the BC model is less restrictive. Students are eligible to register for more than 10 units during priority registration the following semester if they meet the criteria listed above.
3. “This registration policy will hurt a huge number of students.” Response – Approximately 33% are full-time students (6580 full-time students).
4. “Why set the limit at 10 units?” Response – A large proportion of courses at BC are 3.0 unit courses. This will allow a majority of students to register for three courses or two 5.0 unit classes for STEM students.
5. “Why set the limit at 5 units during the summer?” Response – Students success/retention drops dramatically when they take multiple courses during the summer. Priority registration students will still be able to register for additional courses/units following the 48-hour window of open registration.
6. “Why would incoming President Scholars be eligible to register for more than 10 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 12 or more units.
7. “Why should a “W” count against a student that has successfully completes at least 12 units?” Response – The purpose of this procedure is to decrease the ability to “shop” for classes.
8. “Can Banner handle this?” Response – “Yes.” (Sue Vaughn)

In Conclusion

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

Students are frustrated when they don't have access to courses due to having a late, priority-registration date. It is even more frustrating when they see students drop a course and leaving an empty seat that could have gone to a 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 BC's and President Christian's goal increasing FTES, increasing access, retention, success and “getting these students out of BC”.

Data from

- Institutional Research and Reporting –Karen Snow and Lisa Fitzgerald
- BC Office of Admissions – Sue Vaughn
- CCCCCO.edu – California Community College Chancellor's Office