

CHANCELLORS

14 March 1973

Gentlemen:

The following supercedes Vice President McCorkle's memoranda of June 9, 1971 and January 5, 1972 concerning the University's Policy on Minimum Class Size.

Minimum class enrollment norms are to be continued at each level of instruction, and exceptions to these norms are to be authorized only where the special justification clearly warrants the exception. Consultation with appropriate agencies of the Divisional Academic Senate on each campus in implementing the policy is essential.

The minimum enrollment norms are set at: Lower Division (12), Upper Division (8), and Graduate Division (4). In the event that enrollment in a class falls below this specified norm in two successive offerings the class should be conducted again with an enrollment below the norm only with your approval or the approval of your designee(s). Less frequent offering of the class may eliminate the need for such special consideration, and this alternative should be kept in mind.

You will recall my memorandum of November 9, 1970 in which I did express the view that there must be an opportunity for every freshman to participate during at least one quarter of the academic year in a small group class directly taught by a faculty member in one of the professorial ranks. This is to be viewed, of course, as one part of our continuing effort to improve the quality of undergraduate teaching and to provide additional attention to students in the lower division. A class in which enrollment falls below the norm established above may be continued where necessary to achieve this purpose.

Additional criteria which might justify conducting a class below minimum size are suggested below. Department chairmen may of course cite other evidence for special justification which in your discretion you may take into account.

1. The course is required for graduation, and if the class were cancelled the date of graduation of students who wish to enroll in the course would be affected.
2. The course is required in a major program, and the class must be offered at a particular time in order to maintain proper sequence of courses.
3. The course (and/or the program of which it is a part) has been offered for only a short time, and has not yet developed to its full potential.

4. The course is of an experimental character, either in its subject matter or in its mode of teaching, or both, and time is needed to assess its potentialities.
5. The need for special facilities (laboratory, studio, etc.) limits the size of the class.
6. The need for close personal supervision of the students by the instructor limits the size of the class (e.g. certain types of fine arts instruction, clinical teaching, etc.)
7. The course is an offering in a subject field which does not attract a large student clientele, but which nevertheless should be included among the instructional offerings of a major university because of its importance to scholarship.

The following notes on implementation of the policy are included for clarification:

- a. The policy does not apply to independent study, research, or thesis work.
- b. The policy is to apply to primary section enrollments of each course and to the average enrollment of each type of subsection (laboratory, quiz, discussion).
- c. Advance approval should be obtained before offering for the third time a course which has fallen below the prescribed norm in the past two successive offerings.
- d. If such a course on being offered for the third time fails to attain the minimum enrollment size after the second day of enrollment, it should not be offered during that term, and not scheduled again until there is convincing evidence that it will meet the prescribed norm.
- e. Courses for which permanent exemption from the minimum sizes can be adequately justified under criteria 5, 6, and 7 above should be reported to your office and in turn to the Vice President – Planning – with the stated justification in each case.
- f. The term “two successive offerings” should not be interpreted merely to mean offerings in consecutive quarters of an academic year. Offerings in non-consecutive quarters or in consecutive academic years are also subject to the policy.

The Data Systems for Instructional Resources in the Office of the Vice President-Planning will attempt to provide campuses with a “course profile” which will indicate the dates each course is offered and will enable reports to be made of courses and classes which fall below the norms in two successive offerings. It will also provide the needed information on exemptions approved under the policy and on the reasons for each exemption.

We shall continue to review the general policy on minimum class size from time to time; I hope you will call to my attention any problems that may arise in connection with it. I am convinced, however that in the interest of allocation resources in ways that will optimize the educational quality of the university we must continue to give attention to this problem. I ask your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Charles J, Hitch

cc. Members of the Academic Council
Vice President McCorkle
Vice President Johnson
Vice President Kidner
Vice President McGuire
Vice President Taylor