



SMCCCD Academic Senate

Taskforce for Teaching & Learning

Fall 2020 Semester: Considerations for Class Size Maximums

Context and Goals

The COVID-19 Pandemic has created a situation for the Fall 2020 semester in which, to the greatest extent possible, courses will be taught in an online, distance education modality. It is important to keep in mind that we will have students who are new to the online learning environment, and many that are new to college, which may require additional support. This will require faculty interactions, feedback, instructional guidance, assessments, assignments and the overall classroom experience and environment to be designed differently. As we have a number of faculty that will be teaching in the online modality for the first time or teaching their entire load online for the first time, the following guidance was created to help facilitate conversations around class maximums. We recognize there is no one size fits all for class maximums for online courses – there are too many considerations from course to course and from instructor to instructor.

Questions and Factors

When thinking about class size maximums, there are many questions and factors to consider:

- Have I previously taught this course online with the current class maximum?
- Has this course previously been taught in an online modality within my department?
- What is the norm for maximum class size for this course within my department?
- How do the Title 5 requirements of regular and effective contact factor into the overall quality of the learning experience, both for the instructor and the students?
- Are your classes already full with waitlists; will there be an impact on students already enrolled?
- Are your classes likely to have students who need additional support (e.g., ESL, Math with co-requisites, etc.)?
- What types of assessments are you required to include, based on the course outline of record and/or other accrediting bodies?
- Do you have access to online teaching support?
- Faculty should think about their students, so therefore they may need to engage in discussion about how the new environment will affect their pedagogy. How do we maximize student success in this environment?

As you consider these questions and factors, is the class maximum that you are requesting reasonable?

Additional Considerations for Faculty

- Faculty who have never taught online should be prioritized in class maximum reduction conversations.
- If you have never taught online before you should not request to teach a 'supersized' course of 70 or more students.
- There are additional supports that are available to assist faculty:
 - Advanced Teaching Online Methods (ATOM)
 - [CVC-OEI](#)
 - Additional district and campus online academic support services, including forthcoming Flex Day programming and professional development opportunities
- It is expected that all conversations and decisions will be completed by **July 9th** at the latest, but time is of the essence.

Additional Considerations for Deans and Administrators

- Deans need to understand the level of preparation and experience that faculty have in online teaching and learning.
- Deans should prioritize faculty who have never taught online in class maximum reduction conversations.
- Deans should not prioritize faculty who teach overload for class maximum reduction conversations. If faculty teaching an overload request class size reductions, the first step will be to reduce the amount of overload.
- Deans should look beyond an individual section to consider the capacity of the Department and/or the Division.
- When considering other courses that are available to students, keep in mind that not all courses are articulated the same at all three colleges (e.g. general education courses, major preparation, student educational plan). Therefore, counselors and librarians should be consulted.
- Deans shall provide a rationale for denying any request for a class size maximum reduction with their decision to the requesting faculty member.

Process for Engaging in the Discussion

- After reflecting on the class size questions and factors, faculty that will be teaching in the online modality for the first time or teaching their entire load online for the first time should schedule a Zoom meeting or phone conversation with their Dean around class maximums.
- Deans should arrange to meet with faculty requesting this discussion within a reasonable timeframe (i.e., 1 -2 days).
- Deans have the permission and responsibility to engage in **timely** dialogue with their division and department faculty about reasonable adjustments to maximum class sizes identified in Banner.
- Deans may need to take additional information into account, but decisions should also be reached within a reasonable timeframe (i.e., 3 - 4 days).
- Deans and/or Departments are encouraged to reach out to adjunct faculty and work together, with their deans, to discuss class size changes for specific sections.
- It is expected that all conversations and decisions will be completed by **July 9th** at the latest, but time is of the essence.

Disclaimers

- Complete alignment across the District, the Division, or the Department is not required.
- Not all classes will have their class maximums lowered.
- Reduced maximums are not meant to be permanent; depending on the criteria for the adjustment (e.g., first time a faculty member is teaching online), they may be revised after the fall semester concludes. These changes will not automatically apply after the fall semester, whether the course returns to face-to-face modality or continues in a distance education modality.