Enrollment Guidelines

In order to “right size” course enrollments in the College, we must balance classroom pedagogical concerns and department curricular development with administrative concerns for seating all enrolled students, available course times, and available space. Striking this balance strengthens classroom experiences for faculty and students. By striking this balance early and clearly, we reduce last minute course cancelations. Cancelations are never anyone’s first choice but they don’t need to take us by surprise.

The normative enrollment for undergraduate courses is 25-49 depending on student interest and classroom availability. With that said, scheduling is not a one-size-fits-all approach in the College. In some departments, such as Economics, and Psychology enrollments are regularly 100-125. On the other hand, College Writing, studio and activity courses, science and technology labs, and Honors in the Major, as well as courses in the smaller programs (UC, UCC, CBRS, AU Scholars, and Honors) may have lower caps either because of the size of studios and labs, or because of university-wide mandates.

Whenever possible, when evaluating enrollments the undergraduate and graduate associate deans consider the development of new programs, major requirements, prerequisites, and courses needed for graduation. Please note, however, that departments and programs that consistently request permission to run courses under the enrollment targets will want to reconsider the design of their programs.

We encourage all departments and programs to strategically bolster their enrollments by cross-listing courses with other departments and units whenever possible.

**Academic year courses to be flagged for under enrollment.** University policy sets minimum enrollment for undergraduate courses at 12 students, for 400/600 courses at 10 students, and for graduate courses at 8 students. To account for the likelihood of attrition, the College flags courses for low enrollment before they reach the threshold of cancelation. Accordingly, all undergraduate courses, 400/600- and 500- level courses with enrollments of fewer than 15 will be flagged in a low enrollment report. All 600- and 700-level graduate courses will be flagged for low enrollment when they have fewer than 10 students. When a course is flagged for under enrollment, Departments are asked to actively engage in measures to boost enrollment. Several effective strategies are included in the section “Notification Process.”

**Summer session courses to be flagged for under enrollment.** During summer sessions all courses (undergraduate and graduate, online and in person) with enrollments of fewer than 8 students will be flagged and may be cancelled.

Notification Process
Academic Year
1. Four weeks before the start of classes, associate deans will send a notice to chairs and directors that identifies courses that are slow to enroll and ask departments to take a two-fold response.
   a. *Promote slow-to-enroll courses.* This might include developing a flyer to be sent through other department listservs and/or sending flyers of under enrolled courses to Emily Green Jones (Jones@american.edu). Emily will distribute these to advisors across the university. This may be the most direct access to students who have not yet enrolled.
   b. *Prepare alternative arrangements for their faculty should these courses be cancelled.*
2. Approximately two weeks before the start of classes, chairs and directors can expect an email update regarding the status of under-enrolled courses. Discussions between the chairs/directors and the respective associate dean will be very helpful during this period.
3. One week before the start of the semester, the associate deans will ask chairs and directors to cancel under-enrolled courses.

Summer
1. Two weeks before the start of each summer session, associate deans will send chairs and directors a notice identifying courses that are slow to enroll. Here again, we ask chairs and directors to promote under enrolled courses and to pursue conversations with the appropriate associate dean.
2. One week before the start of the semester, the associate deans will ask chairs and directors to cancel under-enrolled courses.