

REPORT ON FYE COURSES AND ENROLLMENT  
22 September 2010

The First-Year Experience Program aims to offer 110% of the seats needed for each year's incoming class. That extra 10% helps assure that most students are able to enroll in one of the eight courses they list as their rank-ordered preferences for an FYE section. Note that this 10% cushion is very minimal – the College aims to provide at least 125% of the seats needed for the student body as a whole.

The FYE Committee wishes the College faculty to be aware of how enrollment worked this year.

1. The first-year class was significantly larger than expected.
  - For an overall College enrollment now typically planned for about 1965-75, one could expect incoming classes to fall in the range of 490-525. Our planned enrollment this year: 510.
  - Acceptances received from students by May: over 550.
  - Our final enrollment: 543.
  
2. The larger enrollment created difficulties staffing courses. For our planned 2010-11 enrollment of 510 incoming students, we needed 561 seats, which is roughly 32-35 classes. (510 plus 10% = 561; 561/16 = 35). Since we may offer 2-5 co-taught courses with limits of 25 students, the actual number of courses needed may be 33 or so. Here are the actual offerings and enrollments in recent years, for fall starts only, omitting from the "visitor" category emeritus faculty, but including Riley Fellows.

Year	Class	Courses Offered	25 Limit Class	Seats Offered	Seat Ideal	Short	Total Visitor Blocks	Visitor Both Blocks	Total Courses with Visitor	Comments
2006-07	492	33	2	546	542	+4	10/15%	2/6%	8/24%	
2007-08	524	33	5	573	577	-4	10/15%	1/3%	9/27%	a
2008-09	550	36	4	612	605	+7	11/15%	4/11%	7/19%	
2009-10	526	34	3	571	578	-7	7/10%	2/6%	5/15%	b
2010-11	543	35	3	587	597	-10	18/26%	7/20%	11/31%	c

Comments:

- a. Omits course with visitor co-teaching with regular faculty member both blocks.
- b. Original schedule included a two-block visitor course, cancelled due to low enrollment.
- c. Total enrollment is still not confirmed – 543 is an estimate.

- 2010-11 plan for class of 510: 561 seats needed.
  
- Number originally offered by CC faculty – 28 classes with 475 seats, which would have been adequate for a class of 432 students. This total includes three classes with a visitor teaching one of the two blocks, and a Riley Fellow teaching two blocks. Result: the shortfall for 510 students would have been 86 seats, or around 5 classes. So we recruited more visitors over the spring and summer.
  
- After adding visitor blocks to accommodate the larger class, our final number of classes was 35, offering 587 seats, which is short of our ideal total of 597 seats. **But it took 18 visitor blocks to get there.** In short, visitors are teaching 26% of this fall's FYE blocks, and fully 31% of the fall FYE courses involve at least one visitor block.

### 3. Result for the students:

- On the first run of student preferences, 25 of 35 courses were filled and closed. Most of those students (90%) were placed in one of their three top choices.
- Twice the number of students than in past years (19 instead of nine) were not placed in any of their eight preferred courses.

### 4. Curricular results:

- About 31% of this year's FYE courses (11 courses) are being taught by a visitor for at least one block.
  - 20% have visitors teaching both blocks (7 courses).
  - 11.5% have visitors teaching one of two blocks (4 courses).
- Having 1/5 of the courses with no regular faculty member teaching presents problems both for the advising system, which is designed to rely heavily on FYE faculty to build connections to first-year students, and for the quality of the program. While some visitors turn out to be superb teachers, overall, increasing the percentage of visiting faculty would appear to be in the interest of neither the program nor the students.
- Our regular faculty proposed enough courses to meet an enrollment of 432, including the 10% buffer. Conclusions?
  - We are not able to staff FYE without visitors, which may be fine for courses taught regularly with one faculty member and one visitor. About 3-5 courses per year fit into this category. The impact on advising is limited, and students are able to connect with both a regular faculty member and, to a lesser extent, a regular visitor. With these courses, the College can almost manage to put together a curriculum for incoming first-year classes of up to 500-525.
  - However, even in years during which we have been able to minimize reliance on visiting faculty, FYE continues to have difficulty assembling a full curriculum. Some departments and programs regularly contribute to the FYE program, while others do not, at least not on a regular basis. The reasons for this lack of contribution vary, though one reason often cited is the department's inability to staff its own required courses while contributing to FYE. In block 2, the FYE Committee hopes to present data on patterns of contributions and identify challenges requiring systematic consideration.
  - Increases in class size above 525 have significant negative impacts:
    1. Significantly more FYE courses taught by visitors only.
    2. Decreased ongoing contact with first-year advisors.
    3. Fewer long-term connections made with regular faculty FYE instructors.
  - Overall conclusion – enrolling more students means more sections and more visitors; and the College's commitment to staffing and supporting FYE will need revisiting, particularly if enrollments stay high.