

Distance Learning Committee Recommendation – Adding students in an online class

Rationale/Background

1. The Business Division recently asked the Distance Learning Committee if our college has a policy or procedure for adding and dropping students to an online course. In addition students have asked for information on our policy as they are unsure how to add an online class when there is no mandatory on-campus orientation meeting. The Distance Learning Coordinator has been asked several times by faculty regarding how to know if students should be dropped as a “no-show”. Since faculty in an online class might not meet students face-to-face in an online class, it becomes more difficult for students to get add authorization codes from faculty in a timeframe that meets the needs of getting students settled quickly into classes.
2. Since faculty might not see online students face-to-face, it becomes more difficult to determine “no-show” students. Even in an online course, students’ schedules and needs change, and it is not unusual for students to register for a class and later decide the class will not fit into their schedule.
3. Waitlisted students in a traditional course know that they must attend the first class meeting for an opportunity to add a course. **But what about online students who are taking a course that does NOT have an orientation meeting?**
4. Another question that has been asked many times is **what is the starting date of an on-line course?** For a traditional class, the first actual class meeting is the start of the class, but for an online class that has no on-campus meetings, that start date may not be well defined unless communicated by the professor. It is apparent that this is interpreted differently from faculty to faculty. For example, some faculty have indicated that they consider the start of the class to be 12:01 am on the first Monday of the term and others feel that 8:00 am is the start of the class.

Recommendation:

It is apparent that a recommendation may be needed to help students taking online courses and faculty teaching online courses to better facilitate the hectic beginning of the semester adding of online courses. The DLC recommends the following:

In light of the rationale explained above and to address the need of students to know when an online course starts as well as initial requirements of getting started in the course, the DLC recommends the following:

- The start time and date of an online class is at 7:30 am on the first day of the term.
- Faculty are responsible for communicating to students the requirements for confirming their registration and commitment to the course, or they will be dropped as a “no-show”.
- Once “no-show” students have been identified and dropped, faculty must utilize the college’s policy for adding students by first adding students from the official Wait List. If there are seats still available after the Wait List has been exhausted, faculty may entertain additional requests from students requesting to be added using the student’s registration appointment, adding students with the earliest date first.

- Online Faculty must consider the pace at which their course progresses and establish limits within College policy for the last date students may be added without compromising their ability to successfully complete coursework.

Best Practices/Suggestions for Adding and Dropping Students as “No-shows”

It is suggested that faculty email students before the first day of the term to inform them of the requirements for determining “active” students. Give students a reasonable opportunity to complete the required activity or activities with a specific announced due date. In addition, faculty should also reconcile their Banner roster with the list of students in the Learning Management System (LMS).

Dropping Students as “No-shows”

For full online courses, it is suggested that faculty establish some activities that students must complete in a specific time frame to demonstrate their intent in staying enrolled in the class (e.g. syllabus quiz, email to professor, or initial discussion forum post). These requirements must be clearly communicated with enrolled students via announcement or email message. Students should be informed that if they do not complete these tasks by the specified due date, they will be dropped as “No-shows”.

Adding Wait Listed Students

It is also suggested that faculty email all students from the official Wait List since these students are not linked to the Learning Management System (LMS) and will not receive regular “announcements” from the course. Wait Listed Students’ email addresses may be accessed by the Faculty Self Service feature in Banner.

In the email communication to Wait Listed students, provide students with a detailed overview of the course and its requirements to ensure their interest and commitment to join the course.

Require/Request interested Wait Listed students to email you on designated date and time to express their intent to add the course (e.g. Require students send an email to the faculty with a subject of PLEASE ADD ME TO CRN 1234. This will help the faculty determine which Wait Listed students are still interested in joining the course. As we know in traditional courses, not all Wait Listed students attend the first class meeting. We can assume the same in online courses.

***It is not recommended that faculty provide add authorization codes to ALL wait listed students without identifying their expressed interest in the course.**

Once interested students are identified, provide these students with an add authorization code for the course and instruct them to add immediately so that they may register and gain access to the course in the LMS. Provide detailed instructions for required initial tasks due. ***Inform students that their add authorization code is not transferable to any other student.**

Adding Students Not on the Wait List “virtual walk-in students”

After the wait list is exhausted and seats are still available in the course, please follow College Policy for adding additional students based on student registration appointment.

Once it is determined that a student may be added, refer to Adding Wait Listed Students process outlined above for suggested adding procedure.