

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON ENROLLMENT CAPS

Departmental Survey and Responses

March 1, 2006

To help us address our charges, the committee sought answers from programs that already use, or might be considering using, some mechanism(s) to manage enrollment. Based on our own knowledge of existing policies, college catalog information, and consulting with the three Deans, we identified nine relevant departments. As noted in our main report, the sample is not exhaustive of all potentially relevant departments, but it does provide a good starting point. The committee formulated a list of questions to be asked of the chairs of the departments selected. To help standardize the response and to expedite the process, we emailed the questions to chairs and invited them to send their responses also via email. We sent one follow-up question for additional detail. Not every department responded to every question. Responses included here in this report are verbatim except where otherwise noted.

1. What were the issues you face(d) that led you to implement (consider) strategies for limiting enrollment in your program?

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: There was a sudden influx of applicants to nursing (a nationwide phenomenon)—for a long while freshmen entering as nursing majors were guaranteed a place in nursing if they met basic requirements. When we were flooded with transfer applications, we were turning away many excellent students and admitting a number of borderline students because of prior commitments to freshmen admits. Plus, it did not seem ethical to just keep admitting students when there was little to no hope of them actually entering the nursing program.

Education: Over 1000 certification students (approximately 600 are graduate students) with 15 full time faculty along with the need to place these students in internship sites led to a need to restrict the number of students admitted into EDI certification programs.

Social Work: Our accrediting body, CSWE, requires that we maintain a faculty student ratio of not more than 1:25. Given the staffing resources available, we admit (through a separate admission to the major procedure) only 75-80 junior level students each fall.

PE: In PES, our issues have always been in teacher certification, not the other concentrations (athletic training, exercise physiology and sport management currently have no enrollment management problems). The pinch in teacher certification was felt most in terms of access to the Introduction to PE class (PEP 441). Since this class is the first in the teacher cert. sequence students needed it in order to proceed with their concentration. When every section of 441 closed before the end of the first day of registration, parents would call Frank Short, who was then the Chair, to complain that their child couldn't take anything else until they completed 441 so they were "stuck". We couldn't just open up more sections of 441 since 441 was a feeder to the rest of the methods classes (442, 444, 445). If we overloaded 441 we would just have the same backlog of students at the next level and we didn't have faculty to cover more sections of the next sets of methods courses. As it was (and still is), we have adjuncts teaching all the sections of 441 because we have FT faculty teaching the more advanced methods sections.

While the 441 course was the primary issue, tangential to that was the fact that we were saturating local schools because the state requirement for field experience hours increased, thereby increasing pressure on all the methods classes. That's part of the reason that it was pointless to add more sections of methods classes even if we were given additional faculty to staff them (which we weren't). Methods classes need to maintain "reasonable" class sizes (i.e. less than 30-35 per class) in order to allow students some time to practice teach but, as I indicated above, this was not the primary reason for the cap.

As an FYI our problems have never been in places like advising (although our faculty advise about 40-45 students each). Faculty just seem to deal with this, even if they do so grudgingly.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Business: Too many students declaring a major in our department, too many relative to faculty resources, too many poorly qualified students entering the program at SOAR sessions which made SOAR unbearable for students, faculty, and parents.

Criminal Justice:

(Committee Note: Two individuals from CJ responded. We include verbatim their responses here, although there may be some repetition.)

Our 2.5 GPA was implemented primarily to prevent our program from becoming the dumping ground for CRJ students transferring after their community college program. Our competitors had GPA requirements. An additional factor was the belief it would eliminate many of the students with very poor GPA's that also tend to take up a disproportionate amount of advisement time (both transfer and native) – when you have an excessive advisement load to begin with, it is quite demoralizing to be spending a lot of your time with students that for one reason or another will never graduate.

- A. An attempt to keep the numbers down
- B. To make sure our students can handle the expected work towards the major requirements
- C. External evaluators (Spring 2005) strongly suggested the need for limiting the enrollment
- D. This is directly related to faculty student ratios in our Department when compared at the Campus level, and
- E. Need additional resources both in terms of faculty lines as well as secretarial help.

Dance: Quality was the main issue. All students are not adequately prepared in dance to successfully pursue a college degree in dance.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Psych: 600 majors and 13 faculty. We have too many large classes, and we can only cover requirements—no room for seminars, nonrequired courses, etc. With an average of about 60-70 advisees per faculty member, we spend a lot of time doing advising that is just barely adequate.

Health: Since 1986, the HLS major has grown approximately 8% per year, from 135 students in 1986 to approximately 500 in 2005. FT faculty staffing has not changed. Adjunct staffing has grown to 45-50% of SCH, and expected to exceed 50% soon.

Follow-up to #1—Where do they specifically feel the pinch?

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: Regarding nursing - our accreditation agency and clinical agencies require a clinical ratio of faculty to student of 1 - 8 or 1 - 10, depending on the acuity level of the patients involved. That is the number one issue I worry about as far as resources - can we hire adequate numbers of faculty - even if the college authorizes more money for faculty, the shortage of nursing faculty could prove a big hurdle.

The second biggest issue for nursing is the size of the nursing lab - we are really over capacity at 70 students - to serve more students we would need a day AND evening group - I have worked that way at another college, and it works well - BUT we would virtually have to double the current faculty to accommodate that structure.

Another hurdle that I cannot control is that every nursing school has increased enrollment and clinical sites are literally bursting at the seams. And then there are still the advisement/committee loads.

Education: Our accreditation requires us to be at at least 50% FT faculty. At this point, EDI is hovering around 25%; our faculty supervise an average of 43 graduate advisees each; EDI is forced to use adjuncts to supervise capstone projects since there are around 100 theses, projects each year.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health:

1. We have hundreds of students taking courses in summer and winter sessions, not due to preference, but because they cannot get into these required courses during the regular semesters and face delays in student teaching and graduation.
2. Similarly, in order to meet student demand, HLS 301 in the summer session has been "uncapped" so that it is not limited to 25 or 40 students, but may take as many as need it (usually between 60 and 85), even in a time shortened (2 or 5 weeks) format. This is not based on student success or quality.
3. Also, in order to meet student demand, we are over-staffed with adjuncts. We have been running 43-48% SCH taught by adjuncts and expect that to break the 50% level in 2006.

4. With regard to advisement, having 40-50 advisees, including 4-5 graduate students, diminishes the quality of the mentoring. Generally we meet with our advisees for 15 minutes per semester, only to schedule courses. It is not possible to do independent studies, internships, senior seminars, or other capstone or mentoring experiences with this number of advisees. Sadly, it is difficult to even know their names, much less their academic or career goals. These are just some of the most pressing issues with regard to the supply/demand imbalance.

2. *What alternatives to limiting enrollment did (are) you explore[ing]? In your mind (or based on departmental discussion), what do you see as the advantages or disadvantages to specific alternatives?*

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: We do not see any alternatives to limiting enrollment, as there is a severe and worsening nursing faculty shortage, local clinical sites are bursting at the seams, and we do not presently have adequate lab or office space to admit more students even if the other obstacles could be addressed.

Education: We are exploring raising the minimum GPA to 2.75 from 2.5, requiring a C or better in all cognate courses, and a C or better in all courses in the liberal arts majors. Advantages of these are: reducing the numbers while positively affecting student quality in our program. Disadvantages: GPA and grades alone are not the only criteria used for admittance.

Social Work: Our admissions process does take considerable time. It is a major program governance assignment for one faculty member and requires much time on the part of our department secretary.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Business: Strategies being explored include limiting enrollments by major and increasing GPA entrance requirements. Advantages are controlling the number of students to more manageable numbers and raising standards and quality of program/classes/graduates. No disadvantages.

Criminal Justice:

Since we take in a very large number of transfer students and admissions accepts juniors only with declared majors, one easy way to limit would be to stop taking them after a certain number – CLOSE ENROLLMENT after 50 acceptances are sent, for example. A little analysis would easily overcome the uncertainties associated with whether some will really come or not (i.e. accepting 50 will get only 40 or 45). The native freshman group is harder to cap. One of our competitors caps internally by deciding how many spots it will have and then has an application time after the sophomore year and accepts based on GPA (for example if they will take 50 a year, the top 50 in GPA get admitted; that may put the cutoff at different GPA's from year to year, but a general trend develops to guide students who may have to consider other majors.

We have used the intent status to allow students to get CRJ advisement while they try to reach the 2.5 GPA requirement, but if they reach it, we take all comers. We have too many majors. If we continued to use that system and wanted to reduce numbers we would consider raising the GPA to 3.0. A problem with internal cumulative or department grade based systems, though, is that it promotes overtly or covertly grade inflation pressures. That's why we have not considered raising the current GPA

requirement as a capping mechanism. Also, Brockport is getting a better quality student in the first instance, according to admissions data, so now does not seem the time to raise internal standards – I see us moving to the “Harvard Model” that assumes the students admitted can all do the work and graduate – the problem becomes encouraging them in that pursuit. That puts capping for freshman back in the hands of admissions with some type of selective targeting of admissions categories or special requirements to get into Brockport’s CRJ program in the first instance as a freshman admit.

- A. Currently, we do not have an exit course in our program.
- B. External evaluators strongly suggested the need for developing a capstone course.
- C. This would be advantageous to the department, and
- D. Perhaps in limiting the enrollments

Dance: There has been much faculty discussion on this issue. In addition, we are somewhat bound by the accrediting organization, NASD. We have established a rather successful non-major program as an alternative to those students who are interested in dance, but who may not have the requisite background to be a major.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: Over the years, we have repeatedly requested additional faculty lines, but have not had an increase in FT faculty. That would be our preferred option: to meet demand with appropriate supply and allow qualified students to succeed in the major of their choice. However, absent sufficient staffing, we have proposed an application to enroll in HLS, with acceptances based on a cap defined by the level of faculty staffing. (Please see the HLS cap proposal of 2004).

Psych: We have considered requiring a 2.5 GPA to declare, requiring a minimum 2.0 in all required classes, etc. The usual stuff.

3. *For those of you who have used various strategies to manage enrollment, has it worked? Did it solve the issue you originally set out to address?*

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: Admission of transfer students was suspended for 2 yrs. Current Brockport students still changed their major to nursing, and some savvy students figured out they could be admitted under another major and then change to nursing. However, overall, closing transfer admissions temporarily was effective in decreasing the number of students who could not realistically be admitted to nursing here.

Education: Yes, our current GPA requirement allows us to deny about 5-10% of applicants and likely prevents others from applying.

Social Work: Generally speaking this has worked well. The only caveat is that we currently face a reduction in full time faculty and will have to reduce enrollment if other alternatives fail.

PE: I do believe the "cap" on incoming transfer students has helped manage the numbers. Perhaps more importantly, we have added the requirement of a 2.5 gpa after a minimum of 12 credits at Brockport in order to enter 441. This has helped students realize that there is not an "automatic" entry to the program; they need to earn it. At this point we no longer have a problem with access to 441. Between the "cap" and the additional requirement we seem to have greatly reduced the problem in PES and have increased the individual student's ability to succeed in 441.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

- A. The department in the past has discussed the need for limiting the number of transfer students from the local community colleges
- B. This is directly related to the high enrollments in our program, and
- C. Currently, these alternatives are on the table

Dance: Yes, all prospective students are required to audition for entrance into the program. In addition all students are interviewed by faculty and required to write an essay on dance.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: NA

Psych: NA

4. What do you think has been the impact of your policy[ies], whether intended and/or unintended?

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: The downside of this is we have prevented a lot of very talented transfer students from coming to Brockport.

Education: See above [Yes, our current GPA requirement allows us to deny about 5-10% of applicants and likely prevents others from applying.]

Social Work: NA

PE: *[Committee Note: The following is based on additional, more recent comments provided by Dr. Petersen after she had written her response to #3 above..]* Students who fail to meet gateway requirements do not necessarily just “go away,” never to be seen again. Based on recent course scheduling work done by the PE department, they’ve discovered a “backflow” of people who did not meet the GPA requirement initially in their gateway course (441) now coming back to complete the requirement. They had to add an additional section of the course for the spring. Some may also be coming from other areas once they met the GPA requirement. This surge may also add to problems in later requirements such as their methods courses (e.g., more sections likely needed) and student teaching.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

- A. Our departments major concern is to develop some meaningful measure in limiting the enrollments, and
- B. If possible secure additional support from the administrators to meet the student/faculty ratios.

Dance: All prospective students are required to audition for entrance into the program. In addition all students are interviewed by faculty and required to write an essay on dance.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: NA

Psych: NA

5. *Are you aware of any impact on other programs? If you've actually had to limit the number of students in your program, could you estimate the number of students who have been affected (turned away) because of the limit?*

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: I have no real figures—many students probably give up when they apply on-line and get the message back that the program has closed. I have not kept track of my phone calls, but between my secretary and I, we have probably turned away over 100 potential applicants this past year.

Education: See #3 [Yes, our current GPA requirement allows us to deny about 5-10% of applicants and likely prevents others from applying.]

Social Work: I would guess we turn away 10-15 students each year. I assume a few select a related major while the majority wait and reapply the following year. If social work is the profession they want and they plan to go on the grad school, spending an extra year to get a BSW can reduce their MSW studies (one year). This is cost effective for most students.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

Criminal Justice has some naturally related departments that “intents” who don't make the GPA can go to as juniors or sooner – Sociology, Political Science, Psychology, and Afro-American Studies. That has make it easier to enforce the 2.5 requirement (students can be advised into other disciplines that still serve their career goals)

Dance: It is difficult to ascertain. We accept approximately 1/3 of the students who audition. Some of those turned away may or may not have decided to come to Brockport anyway.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: Please note that summer 2005 SOAR sessions, following caps in PES and NUR, saw transfer students declaring HLS, but without interest or plans to take HLS courses, but a plan to change their major when possible. This seems to disserve students and to funnel students from those overenrolled programs to HLS, an overenrolled program that has not been able to manage enrollments in any way.

Psych: NA

6. *How have your policies affected transfer students that you're aware of?*

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: As above. [I have no real figures—many students probably give up when they apply on-line and get the message back that the program has closed. I have not kept track of my phone calls, but between my secretary and I, we have probably turned away over 100 potential applicants this past year.]

Education: Yes

Social Work: We admit rising juniors before transfer students so depending upon the size of the transfer pool, we turn away as mentioned above 10-15 students. Those who come to Brockport and delay entering the major are admitted early in the next admissions cycle.

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

- A. Our department attracts a large number of students from the local two year colleges.
- B. We require a 2.5 overall GPA to enter into our program, and
- C. Perhaps there is a need to redefine the policies pertaining to transfer students.

Dance: Some transfer students come from community colleges where dance is not offered. These students often have to spend more than two years to complete the program requirements.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: See #5. [Please note that summer 2005 SOAR sessions, following caps in PES and NUR, saw transfer students declaring HLS, but without interest or plans to take HLS courses, but a plan to change their major when possible. This seems to disserve students and to funnel students from those overenrolled programs to HLS, an overenrolled program that has not been able to manage enrollments in any way.]

Psych: NA

7. *Following up on the issue of impact, is there any thing else you'd like to add? Other specific problems/issues you've run into that we haven't thought to ask about?*

Programs with Explicit Caps

Nursing: NA

Social Work: NA

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

- A. Specific problems, directly related to class size, advising and our ability to the related administrative tasks/expectations.
- B. Faculty – impacts the ability to engage in active research, and
- C. Attending the regional, national annual meetings

Dance: As expected students are disappointed when they are not accepted to the program. The other issue is that we have continued to recruit extraordinary students to the dance program. However, due to a lack of freshman scholarships we have been unable to get them to come to Brockport (even though they are very interested in doing so).

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: NA

Psych: NA

8. For those of you thinking about taking steps to manage your enrollment, what strategies might you implement to address the issue?

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Business: As stated in #2, limiting enrollments by major and increasing GPA entrance requirements.

Criminal Justice:

- A. Develop strategies to offer capstone courses, and
- B. We need the administrative support in developing this activity.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: Our preferred strategy would be to have administration apply a faculty allocation model which is responsive to student demand. Given the decades during which this has not occurred, we developed a proposal to set an enrollment target/cap based on staffing. Instead of setting an arbitrary GPA, which would inaccurately suggest the effort is based on managing student quality, rather than quantity, we decided to propose a cap directly based on staffing. Alternatively, we could propose a GPA cap, but that might still miss the goal of accurately matching enrollments with staffing.

Psych: See #2 above. [We have considered requiring a 2.5 GPA to declare, requiring a minimum 2.0 in all required classes, etc. The usual stuff.]

9. *If you're considering establishing limits of some kind, what do you anticipate to be some of the costs and/or benefits of such action?*

Programs with some Enrollment Policies in Place

Criminal Justice:

- A. By establishing limits of some kind, will be advantageous to the students in our program.
- B. We will be in a position to offer some level of individual attention.
- C. Faculty can develop innovative teaching models, enhances critical thinking, reading and writing skills.
- D. Helps faculty in providing opportunities to meaningfully engage in research related activities.

Programs Considering Enrollment Policies

Health: The most important cost is the loss of student autonomy. Specifically, we would be sacrificing the right of students to succeed in the major of their choice. Clearly, the preferred option would be to adequately match supply and demand, to match staffing with enrollments.

Let me be clear that our preferred option would be to have supply (staffing) meet demand (enrollments). We have estimated that 4-5 additional FT faculty in HLS would accomplish this goal, allowing students to select the major of their choice, and to have it adequately staffed with FT tenure-track faculty. I realize that requesting 4-5 faculty in 2005 seems unreasonable. However, imagine if we had been allocated 4-5 faculty lines over the last 20 years (since 1986) during which time our enrollment growth has been a stable, predictable trend. That is one line every four years. Suddenly, that does not sound so unreasonable. But now we are past the tipping point, requiring hundreds of students to take summer and winter courses in order to graduate on time. Our education students recently rated the availability of courses as problematic (discussed in the PEU Assessment Committee 10/05).

Again, the preferred option is matching supply (staffing) with demand (enrollment) via faculty allocations. The less preferred option requires managing student enrollments in some way (e.g., applications, capping, GPA requirements, weed-out courses), which inherently limits student choice, autonomy, and potentially, student success.

Psych: The most important cost is that significant numbers of students who want to major in psychology will not be able to do so.