

## Faculty Academic Policy and Standards Committee: Motion for Priority Registration Policy Revision

### Committee Members Spring 2012

Unit	Representative	Alternate	Term Ends
<b>Chair</b>	Stuart Smith, COE		2012
<b>Arts+Architecture</b>	Thomas Forget, ARCH	Jennifer Whittaker, MUSC	2013
<b>Business</b>	Faith Neale, FIN	Jing Zhou, BISOM	2012
<b>Computing &amp; Informatics</b>	Cynthia Gibas, BiG	Susan Sell, BiG	2012
<b>Education</b>	Chuang Yang, EDLD	Dan Surino,	2013
<b>Engineering</b>	Yesim Sireli, SEEM	David Cottrell, ET	2012
<b>Health &amp; Human Services</b>	Ahmed Arif, PHS	Linda Probst, KNES	2012
<b>Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</b>	Cheryl Brown, POLS	Ana Joffry, PHYS	2013
<b>Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</b>	Tony Jackson, ENGL	Veronica N. Hilliard AFRS	2012
<b>Liberal Arts &amp; Sciences</b>	Evan Houston, MATH	Bobby Brame, CJUS	2012
<b>Library</b>	Chuck Hamaker, LIB	Kristy Dixon, LIB	2013
<b>Graduate Student</b>	Cathu Howell, EDLD		
<b>Undergraduate Student</b>	Tori Iffergan,		

\*Leslie Zenk, Academic Affairs, served in an advisory capacity on this committee.

### Overview

During the 2010-2011 academic year FAPSC determined that the Priority Registration Policy was outdated and in need of review. In a memo dated August 26, 2011, Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Joan F. Lorden officially charged FAPSC with review of the current policy and procedure.

The original policy was reviewed by a small working group of FAPSC. The outcome of this review was a revised document that includes two suggested changes—new text is shown in red in the revised document in Appendix A. The first proposed revision is a minor rewrite of the documentation necessary to obtain consideration for priority registration. The second proposed revision specifies consultation with the Registrar and FAPSC Chair in review of applications for priority status by the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. The elimination of an annual review of the priority list is justified due to the existence of the review procedure. Also, UNC Charlotte is quite a different institution than it was when this document was written, and, although this matter is certainly important, it can be more efficiently handled. Finally, the entire document was restructured to comply with current academic policy format.

### Rationale

The policy document was produced in the early 1990's and given the advent of internet and other advances in communication technologies was perceived to be out of date and in need of review. In the spring of 2011 the Faculty Council concurred requesting a review of existing groups receiving priority registration rights and suggested a review.

## Appendix A: Priority registration recommendations

### UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHARLOTTE ACADEMIC POLICY AND PROCEDURE:

#### ENTRANCE TO THE REGISTRATION PROCESS (PRIORITY REGISTRATION)

##### I. Introduction

Fairness in public policy is always a goal, especially when special privileges and significant benefits are involved. Allowing some students to register before all the others is a practice that must be justified as fair, ultimately to those last in line, closed out of courses, who are allowed no such special privilege. Every UNC Charlotte student is entitled to equal access to the best education the institution can provide, recognizing the student's 'choices, abilities and needs. The student's schedule of classes is a significant aspect of the quality of the education. Hence the registration process, in which a student receives a schedule of courses, must recognize the principle of equal access. Burdens or inconveniences because of limited resources should be distributed fairly. This policy defines the categories of need that can merit special permission to register early, and establishes procedures for determining such special treatment.

##### II. Policy and Procedure Statement

Permission to enter the registration process is governed by the general principle of earned hours. The more hours a student has earned, the earlier that student may enter registration. In some special circumstances exceptions to that norm may be allowed. It must be recognized that permission to register first, before the normal sequence begins, or to enter registration earlier than earned hours would dictate, is a substantial benefit toward obtaining a top quality schedule and maximizing the student's educational opportunity. The substantial benefit of an exceptional permission to register early must be balanced by equally substantial, relevant and recognized needs.

The guiding principle for granting early entrance to registration is that of equal opportunity for access to an optimum schedule of courses (understood as an important aspect of the right to equal access to the best education the institution can provide). The burden and standards of proof needed to justify exceptions to normal registration are quite weighty. To justify permission to enter registration early the following must be established:

**Disabled Students:** The capacity to optimize the schedule of classes as needed to equalize the opportunity for a good education.

**Activities and Programs Causing Severe Scheduling Restrictions:** A severe scheduling restriction for the student-participant is caused by participation in a highly valued university-sponsored program or activity.

##### PROCEDURES

###### Disabled Students

The determination of the need for exceptions to normal registration for a disabled student is made on a case-by-case basis by the Office of Disability Services. The goal is to equalize educational opportunity.

###### Activities and Programs Causing Severe Scheduling Restrictions

The supervisor of the program provides a justification for each claim of need for exception to normal registration. The justification is in four parts, and is endorsed by the Vice Chancellor responsible for the program. The justification: (1) documents the existence of a severe scheduling restriction that is caused by involvement in the program or activity, (2) demonstrates that the program or activity and its current design are highly valued university priorities, (3) justifies that this particular class of students deserves priority registration and will be disadvantaged without it, and (4) describes the amount of variance from normal registration (ahead of all students, ahead of the participant's class) needed to achieve equal opportunity for an optimum schedule.

The case must be made for each individual student or it must be established that every participant in the program experiences essentially the same scheduling restriction, and needs essentially the same degree of special exception to normal registration. (Note: In some programs or activities, juniors and seniors might need less variance from the norm than freshmen. In other situations, the reverse might be true. The variance needed might differ semester to semester.)

### **Approval of Requests for Special Registration Priority**

The Registrar is responsible for implementing registration policy including special permissions to register ahead of others. The Registrar keeps a record of all programs and activities granted special permission and the written justification which the privilege was granted. Requests with justifications endorsed by the appropriate Vice Chancellor are presented to the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, who makes the decision whether to allow the special permission. In making these decisions the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs consults with the Registrar and the chair of FAPSC.

### **Exceptions**

Exceptions to normal registration, and not based on handicap need or severe scheduling restriction caused by involvement in a university program or activity, can only be made on an individual basis by the Registrar with approval of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Exceptions are not granted on the basis of employment conflicts. A student may enter the registration process any time after the assigned entrance time.

### **III. Definitions**

**Severe Scheduling Restriction:** Participation in the program or activity makes it impossible for the student to take courses at specific times or on specific days, when students not in the program or activity are able to schedule classes. The situation is so severe that the student cannot receive in normal registration a full or reasonable schedule that will allow participation in the program or activity. In other words, there is a dilemma in which to receive a full and reasonable schedule either participation in the activity must be limited or, early entrance to registration must be allowed. The application of this criterion rests on the definitions of (a) "full, reasonable schedule," and (b) "limited participation in the activity."

(a) A full schedule is roughly 15 semester hours that makes progress toward a degree and a major. "Reasonable" refers to aspects that make it possible to do well and profit by the courses without extraordinary difficulties and extreme inconveniences resulting from the schedule. E.g. five classes in a row on Tues./Thurs. might place an unreasonable burden on the student, interfering with class performance, examinations, etc. The student's involvement in the program or activity should not force her or him to accept a schedule that only a student registering late would have to accept on a "take it or leave it" basis.

(b) "Limited participation" means the student cannot attend scheduled events of the program because of class attendance requirements; and this significantly hampers both the student's success in the program or activity and the success of the program or activity itself.

(Note: When program participants receive pay or other direct compensation, excluding scholarships, the degree of the severity of the restriction that must be documented increases. It is arguable that in such a case the scheduling restriction is freely accepted in order to receive the pay.)

**Caused by:** The severe scheduling restriction results from involvement in the activity or program (i.e., the restriction is not the result of a combination of the university activity and something else, like a part-time job or non-university activity). Furthermore, the only available means of alleviating the restriction is to grant special permission to register ahead of others.

**University Program:** The program or activity is one that the university judges significant enough to merit the special exception to normal registration. Furthermore, it is the program as currently designed that outweighs the value afforded by normal registration. (E.g., a program that involves daily meetings produces a scheduling restriction. Both the program and its current design with daily meetings must be values that outweigh normal registration.)

**Extent of Special Privilege:** The special permission to enter registration early is the least variance from the norm needed to alleviate the scheduling restriction and achieve equal scheduling opportunity. The largest variance, the greatest special permission, is to allow registration before all others. A smaller variance, a lesser special permission, is to allow registration first in the student's category (freshman, sophomore, etc.)."

#### **IV. Background**

During 1988-89 it had become evident that procedures for granting special permissions to enter registration early were inadequate. A policy was drafted by small task force lead by the Registrar, but implementation was postponed to allow faculty deliberation. In Spring 1990, the FAPSC recommended adoption of the draft policy. But the Faculty Executive Committee returned the proposal to FAPSC in order to receive input from affected programs. These include the Honors Program, Residence Advisers, Athletics, North Carolina Teaching Fellows, Disabled Students, Orientation Counselors, and several programs requesting special permission to register students early.

The directors of all affected programs were contacted directly and concerns identified in personal conversations. A meeting of the FAPSC and the program directors was held on Sept. 11, 1990, at which a document listing the needs of various programs and other factual matters was discussed. On the basis of that meeting and the information generated there, a draft policy was distributed to the committee and the directors and discussed on October 2, 1990. Further revisions were indicated and put into a draft discussed on October 23, 1990.

There was agreement from all program directors present that the policy being defined is a fair, appropriate and "livable" one. The directors not present had already expressed their agreement with the policy being developed. The FAPSC voted (members present: John Nelson, Mike Pearson, Ed Hopper, Eric Anderson, Rick Zuber, Doris Anne Bradley, Carolyn Maynard, Dick Toenjes) to recommend the policy to the faculty, after revisions of the October 23 draft were made and distributed individually to committee members.

The five-page policy, noted as "FAPSC final draft, November 5, 1990," is the result of the process just described.