

Principles of Course Enrollment Maximums Guidelines for Establishing Class Caps: A Working Document*

Santa Barbara City College Curriculum Advisory Committee

May 3, 2017; approved on July 12, 2017 by the Academic Senate to use in 2017-2018

Background

The ad hoc Academic Senate Class Size Workgroup met during Spring 2017 semester to develop a document containing principles and guidelines for recommended class sizes of various types. This document is a resource for departments when modifying courses and creating new courses as part of their regular process of curriculum review.

ASCCC Guidance

The following document relies heavily upon the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges white paper entitled “Setting Course Enrollment Maximums: Process, Roles, and Principles.” Bulleted language in italics is drawn directly from the document.

- *California Education Code § 70902 (B) (7) grants to academic senates the “primary responsibility for making recommendations in the area of curriculum and academic standards.”*
- *Because class size can clearly impact instruction, course enrollment maximums are a curricular and academic matter and thus fall under the purview of the academic senate.*
- *Appropriate course enrollment maximums are an essential aspect of guaranteeing the quality of instructional programs.*
- *The primary basis of any determination regarding maximum enrollments should be the pedagogical factors that influence the success of the students in the course.*
- *Because community colleges in California are funded based on enrollment, class sizes have a direct relationship to the economic health of the institution.*
- *In regard to setting course enrollment limits, most academic senates delegate the authority for specific decisions on individual courses to the curriculum committee.*
- *The Senate recommends that faculty-determined enrollment maximums for each course should be documented in the Course Outline of Record (COR) or other official addenda.*
- *Many CTE courses and programs, such as nursing, have external demands from separate accreditations or advisory boards that must inform their course sizes.*
- *The academic senate should also ensure that the processes and criteria developed by the curriculum committee are published in college policy or in other appropriate documents in order to ensure that they will be preserved and officially recognized.*

Philosophy*

While the Curriculum Committee supports the use of this document in promoting student success and the economic health of the College, issues of pedagogy and class size are best determined by recognizing the recommendations of the individual faculty members, departments, and divisions involved.

We also recognize that determinations of maximum class size are based on a combination of the ideal and the real: the ideal for the success of our students and the real in terms of the financial health of the institution. Such considerations include workload, consistency across similar courses, and past practice.

Assumptions

1. The purpose of this document is to minimize the differences between class sizes for particular classes at Santa Barbara City College.
2. In determining class size, faculty should balance four competing concerns: pedagogy, enrollment patterns, labor equity, and economic feasibility.
3. Class size should not be set based on classroom and/or equipment availability.
4. Class size for courses with an online component will be the same as on-site courses unless otherwise specified in the course of record outline. **However, no online course shall exceed a 50-person class cap.**
5. Clear course methodologies should appear in the course outlines to reflect the appropriate class size.
6. AP 7210, page 10, addresses how large classes beyond the standard cap set for the course are handled. It outlines this procedure: *Large classes are those with enrollments of 57 or more students. The determination of the size of large classes for the purpose of assigning TLUs shall be based on enrollment at census. . . . Teaching large classes is voluntary.*
7. Safety, Health, State/Accrediting Regulations, Licensure, and Vocational Advisory Committees supersede the following descriptions.
8. Class sizes that differ from the grid need to be justified through the curricular process.

Class Size Descriptors

Instructional Method	Class Size	Descriptions
Large Lecture	57 or above <i>*The maximum allowable class size for any class at SBCC is _____. Note: AP 7210 lists</i>	Primary mode of instruction is lecture, which may include multi-media and material demonstrations and limited group activities. Assessment is primarily through objective exams and quizzes which may include subjective short answer/essay components. Examples: ENVS 110; EARTH 101; FIN 203; MDT 147.

	a category of 125+.	
MUSIC Ensemble course		This is the effective number of students needed to have the proper number of instruments to perform the required ensemble music. The evaluation is based on small group performances as well as the ensemble finale. Ex. MUS 132A, MUS 132B, MUS 133
Lec/Lab combo, with or without Dist. Ed.	96	This number (96) is appropriate for lecture meetings and allows for students-teacher interaction and answering questions effectively. Lectures are comprised of multiples of 24 students per lab section. Max lecture size for online version is 48, this number ensures regular effective contact between instructor and student for lecture portion of class (online). See Distance Education addendum for this course. Lab groups of 24 is optimal for safety and pedagogy in lab (face to face).
Large Lecture/Lab (Students enroll in a large lecture and corequisite lab section)	Multiples of 24 (lecture) 24 (lab)	Primary mode of instruction is lecture, which may include multi-media and material demonstrations and limited group activities. Assessment is primarily through objective exams and quizzes which may include subjective short answer/essay components. These classes are linked to lab components. Also see "Lab – individualized Feedback/Evaluation descriptor" below. Examples: BIO 100; BMS 100; Chem 101; EARTH 115L
Lecture/Discussion	50	The primary mode of instruction is lecture and may include discussion and/or <i>independent</i> group learning. Evaluation primarily through objective exams. Writing assignments are assessed mostly for critical thinking, concepts, and structure. *Examples: Anthro 104; Bio 103; Bot 121; Econ 101, 102; Engineering 115; Hist 112; Mus 122.

Lecture/Discussion with Writing Emphasis	40	<p>The primary mode of instruction is lecture, but small and large-group discussion are also emphasized. Evaluation includes both objective exams and multiple written assignments. Writing assignments are assessed mostly for critical thinking, concepts, and structure.</p> <p>*Examples: AJ 101; Anthro 101; BLST 101; CNA 102; ECE 107; Engl 200; Psych 100.</p>
Lecture /Discussion/ Group Learning/Student Presentations	35	<p>While the instructor does lecture, much of the class time focuses on discussion, guided group learning, and/or formal/informal student presentations. Multiple assignment types may be incorporated. Evaluation through multiple formats, which may include objective exams, skills demonstrations, and portfolio. Writing assignments are assessed mostly for critical thinking, concepts, and structure.</p> <p>In lecture/lab combination courses in PE, this is a typical class size for fitness-oriented classes in which group instruction is the primary method of instruction.</p> <p>Examples: Acctg 150, 230, 240; Art 108; Bus 101; ECE 102, 120; Health 101; PE 112, 130, 138.</p>
Mathematics	33	<p>Class time includes lectures often interspersed with activities requiring guided group learning and/or individualized instruction. Evaluation includes weekly or daily assignments that often require detailed instructor feedback, as well as multiple exams assessed for critical thinking, conceptual understanding, and proper notation/vocabulary.</p> <p>*Examples: Math 95, Math 220.</p>
Group Learning/ Individualized Instruction/Student Presentations	30	<p>In addition to short lectures, class time focuses on pair and small-group work, role plays, discussions and/or presentations that require instructor's monitoring, input, and assessment. Includes weekly or daily assignments that require instructor feedback. Assignments are assessed for accuracy, critical thinking, and other subject-specific standards.</p>

		Examples: Acctg 150; ADC 124; CIS 120; COMM 121, 131, 141; COMP 132; EH 110; ESL 60; French 101; Japanese 101; Span 101.
Practicum Courses that involve demonstration and group/individual exercises with specialized equipment	25	Small Lab/Lecture combinations that involve individual and group demonstrations and exercises. Labs that involve complex group exercises involving specialized equipment or instruments. Extensive group and individualized feedback/evaluation on a regular basis during staged/performed events, including health and safety concerns, as well as external regulations. Examples: Filmpro 170; Theater Arts 121.
Developmental Courses in Reading and/or Writing	25	Class time focuses on small- and large-group discussion, collaborative group learning, short lectures, and individualized instruction as needed. In addition to daily assignments, instructors give feedback on a variety of written products such as tests, response papers, learning logs, and multi-draft essays. Students produce a minimum of 4000 words requiring feedback which addresses critical thinking, conceptual understanding, structure and style with a strong emphasis on mechanics. Examples: Engl 70, 80, 103.
Lecture/Lab	25	Lab/Lecture combinations that involve individual and group demonstrations and exercises. Labs that involve complex group exercises involving specialized equipment or instruments. Extensive group and individualized feedback/evaluation on a regular basis. Example CNEE 102
Composition Courses	24	Class time focuses on short lectures, large-group discussion, collaborative group learning, and individualized instruction as needed. In addition to daily assignments, evaluation is mostly through multi-draft essays. Final drafts total a minimum of 6000-8000

		<p>words. Essays are assessed for critical thinking, conceptual understanding, structure, style, and mechanics.</p> <p>Examples: Engl 110, 111.</p>
<p>Lab – Individualized Feedback/Evaluation</p> <p>(Also see “Large Lecture/Lab” descriptor.)</p>	24	<p>Labs in which the instructor provides extensive individualized feedback and tutelage with “hands-on” projects such as experiments, student group exploration of material and concepts, development of vocational skills, and use of discipline-specific tools/techniques. Assessments include frequent (i.e., weekly) quizzes, lab reports, problem sets, and/or demonstration of technical proficiency, and assessment typically includes a cumulative component such as a lab notebook and/or lab practical exam(s).</p> <p>*Note: These labs may be individual sections of a larger (46 or 96 cap) lecture course, as described above in “Large Lecture/Lab.”</p> <p>Examples: BIO100; CS 133; EARTH 115L</p>
Specialized Courses	Less than 24	<p>Courses with specific concerns about health, safety, and potentially hazardous conditions or regulatory requirements must submit a justification to the Curriculum Advisory Committee with the approval of the dean. Also see Assumptions 7 and 8 on page 2 of this document.</p> <p>“An effective student teacher ratio due to the instructor providing extensive individualized feedback and tutelage with “hands-on” projects such as experiments, student group exploration of material and concepts, development of vocational skills, and use of discipline-specific tools/techniques. Safety issues involving power tools, machinery and heavy equipment.” (Various Auto labs)</p>
Specialized Courses	20	<p>The proposed cap of 20 is necessary due to the intense nature of this course. There is a clinical aspect in which students must go to a healthcare facility to complete on site hours. This is a workload challenge for the</p>

		<p>instructor since she/he must assist the student in finding a site, developing or renewing affiliation agreements, completing requirements (i.e., background check), and communicating with the site supervisor and student throughout the semester. Also, a virtual practicum was recently added, which requires additional support/instruction from the instructor.</p> <p>HIT 275</p>
<p>Program-Driven Speciality Courses</p>	<p>20 or fewer</p>	<p>Some courses are subsets of programmatic offerings that must be limited to a specific size. These courses may be multiples or stand alone. In all cases, these classes result in a “product” that is shared with or performed for the public. In most cases, these classes are offered simultaneously with others and taught by an instructor paid through program load.</p> <p>Examples: JOUR 121, JOUR 122 A&B and JOUR 123A&B that make up The Channels staff; TA 141, TA 144, TA 250 theatre arts classes that make up the cast for Garvin and Jurkowitz theatre productions, and music classes that make up the choirs and music combos.</p>

CAC noted that 24 vs. 25 is a hard distinction to justify.

CAC also thought it would be best to include examples from as many disciplines as possible under each descriptor.

**The format and some principles listed above draw from the “Fullerton/Cypress Class Size Planning & Resource Document” dated 11/30/2006 (page 7): <http://www.cypresscollege.edu/ad/uploads/25017//CCASApprovedMinutes01-25-2007.pdf>*

**Language in purple summarizes feedback from the April 17, 2017 CAC meeting.*

**Language in blue reflects discussion at April 26 Academic Senate meeting.*