February 14, 2007

CHAIR JAYE PADGETT
Committee on Educational Policy

Dear Jaye:

Re: Enforcing Course Requisites for Summer Session

Enclosed is a proposed statement about policy on enforcing course requisites for summer session courses. I ask that CEP review and comment on this proposal. I would welcome it if CEP would wish to formally approve a recommended policy or practice that would assist departments, the Registrar, and the summer session office to regularize the set up of the summer session schedule.

As you know, the university has the goal of integrating summer session curriculum with its Fall-Winter-Spring operation to provide capacity for students to make degree progress as well as offering opportunities that do not fit well into the FWS academic calendar. Consistent with the commitment to ensure that summer instruction is of equivalent quality to that offered in other terms, it is important that we take steps to increase the participation of UC students in summer session. To do this, we must take care to remove any unnecessary barriers to summer enrollment and also to look for appropriate ways to encourage students to enroll in summer.

The enclosed statement is based on past practice that has been worked out on a case-by-case basis with departments and faculty. This seems an appropriate point at which to codify it as guidance going forward.

I look forward to CEP’s comments and thank them in advance for their attention. I request that Summer Session Director Pat Vani be invited to attend the meeting when this matter is scheduled for the agenda.

Sincerely yours,

William A. Ladusaw
Vice Provost and Dean of
Undergraduate Education

Attachment

cc: Director Vani
Statement on Enforcement of Course Requisites in Summer Session

Course requisites that limit enrollment to students who meet certain requirements serve two distinct functions:

1. To indicate a level of expertise or prior course work presupposed in the course.
2. To limit the enrollment in the course by prioritizing certain groups of students.

Course requisites of the first type are true “prerequisites”. Students should be allowed to enroll in the class only when the prerequisite can be satisfied by documenting that the requirement is satisfied by work from the student’s record or by being waived in individual cases under guidelines approved by the course faculty.

Enrollment limits of the second type, such as restrictions to students in certain majors or students at certain stages of progress, may be less associated with presumed content than with a desire by the sponsoring agency to prioritize enrollment by certain students in cases where the course is oversubscribed.

Proposed policy for Enrollment Limitation requisites

Summer Session proposes that the course requisites that are intended to limit enrollment to particular student groups be by default removed as conditions for enrollment in a course when it is offered in the summer. The demand for courses overall is lower in Summer Session and past experience has shown that departments consider restrictions to particular majors or to specific levels less critical in the summer, especially since the restriction can negatively affect enrollments leading to cancellation of the course.

Some examples from past experience are AMST 105A, which is restricted to AMST majors in FWS, studio art classes that are restricted to art majors, and the restriction that excludes seniors from LIT 001.

By making the default removal of such limitations, departments can maximize the chances that the course will be offered and available for the priority students. Departments could still request that these types of requisites remain on their courses for pedagogical reasons or, for example, if believe that a course is so heavily impacted that it will fill during the summer with prioritized students. (For example, SPAN 5M will remain restricted to health science majors in summer ’07.)

Proposed policy for Prerequisites

Course prerequisites are enforced during enrollment for UCSC students as they are during the other terms. The enrollment process in AIS will ensure that the student’s record satisfies the prerequisites in the same way that it does during the other terms. In individual cases faculty can waive the prerequisite and authorize enrollment by issuing a permission code.

Summer session courses also attract non-UCSC students whose records are not available to be used in satisfying pre-requisites. In the past it has proven effective to allow these students to enroll in the course without requiring a permission code in advance. This helps to ensure that interested qualified students can add to the course enrollment and confirm their preparation with the faculty later.