

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair   
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Changes to Registration Priority Rules  
(SCUS Reference: SCUS 98 - 27)  
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 99 - 4)

Date: February 11, 1999

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Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following motion:

**Motion:**

"that Senate approve, as set forth in S.99 -25 , the following change to the Registration Priority Rules:

Students attempting to register for a course for the first time shall be given the opportunity to register prior to any students who are presently registered in the course or who previously passed the course with a C- or better."

This regulation will take effect for the 99-3 semester preregistration process.

## SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Senate Committee on Academic Planning

**From:** A. MacKinnon, Chair  
Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies

**Subject:** Changes to Registration Priority Rules  
(SCUS reference: SCUS 98-27)

**Date:** January 26, 1999

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**Motion:**

"That SCAP approve and recommend to Senate, the following change to the Registration Priority Rules:

Students attempting a course for the first time shall be given the opportunity to register prior to any students who are presently registered in the course or who have passed the course with a C- or better."

**Rationale**

Large numbers of course spaces in high-demand courses are often taken up by students duplicating the course. In a 1996 report on course duplications by the Office of Analytical Studies, there were 25 courses spread over 7 departments in which the number of spaces taken up by course duplicators was 10% or higher. Students attempting such courses for the first time are often turned away.

Many course spaces are in fact taken up by students who have passed the course with a C- or better (26% of all duplication attempts). Another 15% are taken by students who chose not to complete the initial attempt (N grade). Because it is possible to register for a second attempt at a course even while taking it the first time, students who anticipate a low grade may do so and then leave the course incomplete with the expectation of getting a higher grade next term. Only 27% of course duplications are due to failure (F grade) in the initial attempt, while 31% are for students who have passed the course with a D grade.

The proposal introduces registration priority rules for course duplication versus new course attempts based on relative need. In general, a student currently registered in a course has a chance to pass it, even if they are anticipating a poor grade. Therefore such a student has less relative need to register for that course in the next semester than a student attempting to take it for the first time. Similarly, a

student who has not taken a course has a greater need to take it than one who has passed it with a C- or better. Although a C- may sometimes be inadequate for prerequisite purposes, waivers based on supplementary preparation are often available. In the event of a student who has previously obtained a D or F in the course, the issue of relative need in comparison to new course attempts is somewhat less clear. Registration priority decisions may be best left to the existing framework in such cases.

This proposal is the result of an extensive consultation process with students that has been conducted by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies on proposed course duplication rules. Although the initial proposal contained changes to the rules for GPA calculation in light of course duplications, those changes have been tabled for further study because of their controversial nature. The proposed changes with respect to registration priority had considerable student support, particularly in the modified form that maintains the current framework for students that have obtained a D or F in the first course attempt.