

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

S. 85-59

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: SENATE COMMITTEE ON
ACADEMIC PLANNING

Subject: REGISTRATION PRIORITY

Date: November 8, 1985

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In 1982, Vice-President Academic Dr. J. Munro appointed a small ad-hoc committee to consider the problems associated with the ability of the University's current registration priority system (now based on credit hours completed and time of receipt of preregistration form) to cope with the increasing demand for specific course placements. A preliminary report was prepared in June, 1982 and a final report, with recommendations, was considered by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning at its meeting of September 11, 1985. Both reports, as well as responses to them received from Faculties, are attached for information.

At its meeting, SCAP approved a set of five motions, as set out below, designed to put into place a new registration priority system at SFU. These were forwarded to SCUS for consideration prior to their transmission to Senate. SCUS approved all motions except MOTION #3 because of the concern with the growing number of restrictions for entry into programs and courses based on GPA criteria. MOTION #3 was subsequently returned to SCAP at its Nov 6, 1985 meeting; however, a motion to reconsider was defeated.

Therefore, action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following set of motions for consideration of Senate.

MOTION 1

THAT SENATE DELEGATE TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES THE RESPONSIBILITY TO APPROVE AND REVIEW PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES INCORPORATING MOTIONS 2 THROUGH 5 WHICH FOLLOW INTO THE UNIVERSITY'S REGISTRATION SYSTEM.

MOTION 2

THAT FACULTIES OFFERING COURSES WHERE STUDENT DEMAND EXCEEDS COURSE ENROLMENT LIMITS BE ALLOWED TO RESERVE A SPECIFIED NUMBER OF COURSE PLACES FOR PARTICULAR GROUPS OF STUDENTS, SUCH AS MAJORS, COOP STUDENTS, ETC.

MOTION 3 - *Motion Failed S.M. 2/12/85*

THAT FACULTIES OFFERING COURSES WHERE STUDENT DEMAND EXCEEDS COURSE ENROLMENT LIMITS BE ALLOWED TO SPECIFY GPA MINIMA FOR ENTRY INTO THE COURSE.

MOTION 4

THAT PRIORITY ACCESS TO A RESERVED COURSE PLACE AS SET OUT IN MOTION 2 BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF

- A) SEMESTER HOURS COMPLETED, AND TO A LESSER DEGREE
- B) LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE IN RECENT SEMESTERS.

MOTION 5

THAT IN THE CASE OF WD WITHDRAWALS FROM COURSES WHERE STUDENT DEMAND EXCEEDS COURSE ENROLMENT LIMITS, STUDENTS LOSE PRIORITY IN THAT COURSE FOR THE NEXT SEMESTER.

WJW/gg

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on
Academic Planning

From: W. Wattamaniuk
Secretary

Subject: Registration Priority Report

Date: October 31, 1985

In September 1985, SCAP dealt with the report of the ad-hoc Committee on Registration Priority System (SCAP 85-10). Recommendations in the form of five motions approved at SCAP, later went forward to SCUS and to Senate (see attached transmittal memo from SCAP to Senate).

In SCUS, all motions were approved except Motion #3:

"That Faculties offering courses where student demand exceeds course enrollment limits be allowed to specify GPA minima for entry into a course."

The attached memo from W. R. Heath, Secretary to SCUS indicates why the motion was defeated at SCUS.

Motion #3 is thus being brought back to SCAP for reconsideration.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To: Walter Wattamaniuk
Secretary, SCAP

From: W. R. Heath
Secretary, SCUS

Subject: Registration Priority Report

Date: October 21, 1985

In response to the referral from SCAP, SCUS recently discussed the proposal for changes to the University's registration priority system. In the end, motions 1, 2, 4 and 5 from SCAP were approved while motion 3 was not supported.

Briefly, in recommending against the implementation of motion 3, SCUS was concerned about the growing number of restrictions for entry to programs and courses, largely based on some sort of GPA. In the extreme, students might be admitted to a program only to find that they were unable to gain entry to courses required for that program. While there was no direct motion or directive, the consensus was that there is a need for the consideration of limiting entry to programs to that number of students who can be accommodated by University resources. Once admitted, those students would have reasonable assurance that they would be able to obtain the required courses. It seemed that the measures proposed were part of a piece-meal approach to cope with the larger problem. It was the opinion of SCUS that such considerations were within the province of SCAP.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

SCUS 85-23

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on
Undergraduate Studies

From: W. R. Heath, Secretary
SCUS

Subject: Registration Priority System

Date: October 10, 1985

The attached report from the committee established by SCAP to investigate and recommend changes to the University's registration priority system was reviewed and accepted by SCAP at its meeting of September 11, 1985. The five resulting motions that were approved were forwarded to SCAR, but it was the decision of SCAR that SCUS should consider the motions before their transmission to the Senate. This decision arose not out of disagreement with the motions but rather on procedural grounds. The motions, if approved by Senate, would give specific responsibility for the registration priority system to SCUS, and accordingly SCUS should have the opportunity to review and respond to the motions.

Should the proposal receive the appropriate approvals, the Office of the Registrar would prepare for SCUS a detailed plan for implementation that would be incorporated into the registration process currently under development. Projected implementation would be the Fall Semester 1986.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

To..... Senate.....
.....
Subject..... REGISTRATION PRIORITY SYSTEM.....

From..... Senate Committee on Academic.....
..... Planning.....
Date..... October 10, 1985.....

In 1982, Vice-President Academic Dr. J. Munro appointed a small ad-hoc committee to consider the problems associated with the ability of the University's current registration priority system (now based on credit hours completed and time of receipt of preregistration form) to cope with the increasing demand for specific course placements. A preliminary report was prepared in June, 1982 and a final report, with recommendations, was considered by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning at its meeting of September 11, 1985. Both reports, as well as responses to them received from Faculties, are attached for the information of Senate.

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following set of motions for consideration of Senate.

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

SCAP 85-10

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate Committee on
Academic Planning

From: W. Wattamniuk, Secretary
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Report of the Ad-hoc
Committee on the Registration
Priority System

Date: September 5, 1985

The Report of the Committee on the Registration Priority System was received by SCAP and tabled for information at the April 3, 1985 meeting. At that time, SCAP requested that Dr. Sherwood, who chaired the Committee, review the responses to the report, consult with the Registrar, and advise SCAP on a plan of action.

I attached for your information:

- (a) the report of the Committee
- (b) responses received from Deans

Dr. Sherwood will be in attendance on Wednesday to address SCAP on this issue.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

Senate Committee on Academic Planning

From... W. Wattamaniuk

Secretary

Subject... REPORT OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON THE
REGISTRATION PRIORITY SYSTEM

Date... March 27, 1985

At Dr. Ivany's request, I am attaching a copy of the final report of the Ad-Hoc Committee on Registration Priorities (chaired by Dr. Alden Sherwood from Chemistry).

Members may recall that the Ad-Hoc Committee was appointed in 1982 by the Vice-President, Academic, Dr. Munro, to look at the problems associated with the ability of the present priority system to cope with the increasing competition amongst students for specific course placements. The Ad-Hoc Committee prepared a preliminary report which SCAP discussed on July 7, 1982 (SCAP 82-18).

The final report is being presented to SCAP for information and general discussion regarding the recommendations within. Based on the feedback, a specific set of proposals may be presented for action and debate at a later meeting. Dr. Sherwood will be available to answer questions.

WW/em
Att



MEMORANDUM

To..... Dr. J.W.G. Ivany
 Vice-President, Academic
 Subject... Registration Priorities


From..... A.G. Sherwood
 Department of Chemistry
 Date..... November 19, 1984
 File: Corres4000, D.66

The Ad-Hoc Committee on the Registration Priority System was appointed in March 1982. It was given the task of examining the registration priority system and with bringing forward recommendations on the matter. Original members of the committee were A.G. Sherwood (Chairman), D. Foth, Ted McNabb and H. Evans. T. McNabb, the student rep., left campus and no replacement was available so the work was completed by the remainder of the committee.

In response to some pressing problems, a preliminary report was made in June of 1982. I have enclosed a copy for your convenience.

Since that time, the committee has grappled with the problem of producing a priority system compatible with a registration system which was yet to be created. Rather than awaiting completion of the planning of the new registration system, we have chosen to make some assumptions about desirable features of the system and to devise a priority system to fit. We have had extensive consultations with people in the registrar's office and Harvey Nagel and David Smithers have been most helpful.

Enclosed, then, is our report.


 A.G. Sherwood

AGS:pw
 Enclosures

To..... Dr. J.M. Munro
..... Vice-President, Academic
.....
Subject..... Ad-Hoc Committee on Registration
..... Priority System

From..... Dr. A.G. Sherwood, Chairman of
..... A-HCRPS (!)
.....
Date..... June 18, 1982

The committee has completed an initial consideration of problems associated with the registration priority system and offers the following analysis by way of an interim report.

Registration priority rating is now based essentially on the number of credit hours of coursework which each student has completed in his degree program. It is calculated and printed on the preregistration form before the student receives it, i.e., before the selection of courses is made.

Although it would be possible to use another formula for the calculation of registration priority, the formula must be based on information already in the permanent record at the time of preregistration. This information does not include grades obtained in the semester preceding the one for which the student is registering, nor does it include any information about the course selection indicated on the preregistration form. This rather severe limitation is imposed by the computer facility used for the registration process. With these limitations, no significant improvement in the method of calculating registration priority is possible.

We therefore recommend that no effort be expended in attempting to improve the registration priority system within the context of the present computer system, but that the committee work to develop principles for a system based on the assumption that an improvement in computer facilities will take place.

The above is a long-term project. There are, however, some problems which require resolution before the next preregistration procedure begins this summer.

Extended Studies Diploma Students, notably in Computing and Business Administration, have, in the past, been given the highest priority rating. The departments involved have argued that top priority should be given to their own honours, majors and minor students. The committee feels that priority rating should continue to reflect the decrease of flexibility available to students as they near completion of their programs. In principle, then, priority should be determined by the number of semester hours required to complete the program. This information is not, however, available in the permanent record and so, since ESD students most commonly require 30 semester hours of coursework for the program, the committee makes the following recommendation:

We recommend that ESD students who have completed 15 semester hours or fewer be given a priority rating of 2 and that those who have completed more than 15 semester hours be given a priority rating of 1.

If a department feels that its own honours, majors and minor students will be severely disadvantaged by such a principle, serious consideration should be given to limiting the admission of ESD students in that area. The university should not admit students to programs unless there is reasonable probability that the necessary courses will be available during the time normally required for completion of the program.

Second Undergraduate Program Students should be assigned priority on a similar basis. Since programs for these students commonly involve 60 semester hours of credit,

We recommend that candidates in second or further undergraduate programs be given priority ratings as follows:-

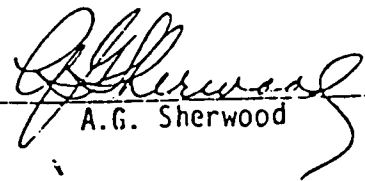
<u>Semester Hours Completed</u>	<u>Priority</u>
0 - 15	4
16 - 30	3
31 - 45	2
46 - 60	1

Students in CO-OP Programs have occasionally had difficulty gaining admission to specific courses which are required in preparation for practica. Although CO-OP students have reduced flexibility because of the necessity of scheduling practica in their programs, the assignment of higher priority rating does not seem to be a sensible solution to the problem. All CO-OP students do not require all courses that they request. The department involved should have the opportunity to meet the needs of its CO-OP students without disrupting the programs of its other students. We therefore suggest the following procedure:-

We recommend that students not be given higher priority rating by virtue of involvement in a CO-OP program. A department with a limited enrollment course which is essential to some CO-OP students should register these students in the course on an overload basis.

Careful assignment of class capacity will be required to ensure the degree of flexibility necessary to accommodate these overloads, but these procedures should meet the needs of CO-OP students without needlessly disrupting the registration priority system.

If these recommendations are accepted, they can be incorporated into the 82-3 pre-registration procedures and the committee can proceed with the task of developing the principles mentioned in the first recommendation.


A.G. Sherwood

AGS:pd

c.c. - H. Evans, Registrar

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON REGISTRATION PRIORITIES

The Committee has examined the role of the registration priority system in the registration process and has prepared a recommendation of a registration priority system compatible with a new computer-based registration system.

1. THE PRESENT SYSTEM

The resources of the University are limited, to the extent that all students cannot have access to every section of every course. The registration process must therefore include a system by which conflicting demands are assigned priority.

In the present registration system, a priority is assigned to each pre-registering undergraduate student on the basis of the number of credit hours of coursework completed.

The pre-registration period is divided into two intervals. Forms received during the first interval of about 2 weeks duration are manually ordered according to priority and those with equal priority are ordered according to date of receipt of the approved form. These forms are processed by computer in order and students are thereby assigned to classes.

During the second interval, which constitutes the remainder of the pre-reg period, forms received each day are ordered according to priority and are processed each day.

Assigned priority is involved in in-person registration as well since admission to the registration hall is in order of priority. Late registration is conducted on a first come-first serve basis.

A significant fraction of students registered in a particular course are dropped from the initial class list mainly because they do not pay their fees. This process provides openings which must be filled as early as possible. Thus, not only must the initial preparation of class lists be complete before the beginning of classes, but the preparation and delivery of invoices must be complete as well. Preparation of adjusted invoices is necessary when withdrawals, course changes or late registrations take place.

The whole process presently requires some eight weeks. This lengthy period consumes an inordinately large number of man hours of time, and is based on questionable criteria for determining access to class places.

For departments, the only management of enrolment possible is a limit

on the total number of students who enrol in a course. The 'mix' of these students by major, faculty etc. cannot be controlled. In addition, where other enrolment restrictions exist (such as Business and Computing CUMGPA minimums) they cannot be enforced by the system.

2. THE PROPOSED REGISTRATION PRIORITY SYSTEM

The acquisition, by the registrar, of improved computer facilities will allow the development of a registration system which will proceed with greater speed, less manual labor, greater accuracy and will provide the opportunity for the use of a more effective priority system.

Although the new registration system has yet to be developed, it is necessary to anticipate some of its essential features in order to devise a compatible priority system.

Desirable features are:

- The registration system should allow departments to specify a number of reserved course places for its major students, Co-op students, etc.
- It should allow a department to specify GPA minima for any of these reservations.

Such specifications might take the following form:

ASTR 123-4
TOTAL PLACES 120

GROUP	PLACES	RESERVATION	NUMBER	GPA MIN	NO WD
1 RS	30	CHEM	25	0	0
		COOP	05	0	X
2 RS	30	BICH	10	0	0
		ENSC	10	0	0
		OPEN	10	3.0	0
3 EV	30	EV ON	20	0	0
		OPEN	10	0	0
4 DT	30	DT ON	20	0	0
		OPEN	10	0	0

In the above example, the effect has been to reserve 25 places in group 1 of course ASTR 123-4 for Chemistry majors and minors and 5 places for Co-op students. In Group 2, 10 places have been reserved for Biochemistry majors, 10 places for Engineering students and the remaining 10 places open to any student with a GPA of 3.0 or better.

In group 3 which is conducted in the evening, 20 places are reserved for evening-only students and the remaining 10 are open. In group 4, given downtown, 20 places are reserved for downtown-only students and 10 places are open. In a similar way, some DISC course places may be reserved for DISC-only students.

The final column indicates that Co-op students who have previously withdrawn from this course have no priority for this course and must register for it on a course-add basis. Other places have no such limitation. This matter is discussed later.

A department may be authorized to specify that enrollment in a certain number of its courses will be by department approval only. This could apply to FPA courses where auditions are required or to Special Topics courses where formal approval processes are required.

A student eligible for a place in any reserved group of a particular course will have access determined by his Registration Priority Rating ie. students will be assigned to places in order of their RPR until the reserved places have been filled.

The committee considered many factors which might have determined priority rating.

1. Course credits completed

This was regarded as the single factor which most seriously influences the degree of flexibility that a student enjoys in selecting his courses. A student in his final year of study may have no flexibility at all. If access to a particular course is denied, he may require another semester of study in order to take the one course to complete his program.

2. G.P.A.

If course places are limited, more successful students should have first access. It is recognized that there may be temporary problems which should not be allowed to permanently handicap a student in gaining access to courses so it is suggested that the G.P.A. be averaged over those semesters immediately preceding the semester for which registration is taking place and which includes at least 30 semester hours of credit.

3. Course load

It might be argued that a larger course load decreases flexibility and therefore should confer a higher priority rating. Many students work part time and this is also a factor which decreases flexibility, so, course load is not recommended as a factor which should determine priority rating.

4. Students on AP or AW

These students are in enough difficulty without imposing penalties beyond those already imposed by virtue of their GPA.

5. Student has previously withdrawn from a course

It is the recommendation of the committee that, except in the case of WE withdrawals, the student should lose all priority for that course, i.e., the department may chose to deny the student access to the course until all other requests for the course have been processed. This loss of priority should last for one semester. This might seem a harsh penalty but it seems reasonable to allow every student equal opportunity to attempt the course and to make the decision whether or not to withdraw.

Upon completion of a degree program, a student starts a new degree or diploma program with none of these penalties carried over.

6. The student is repeating the course

It should not be assumed that students repeat courses flippantly. An unsatisfactory grade obtained in a first attempt would have the effect of reducing priority rating through the GPA so no additional penalty is necessary.

It seems, then, that a satisfactory registration priority system can be based upon two factors: -the number of semester hours completed and the level of performance in recent semesters.

FOR EACH STUDENT

REGISTRATION PRIORITY is a number in the range 0 to 160 calculated as follows:

$$\text{REGISTRATION PRIORITY} = \text{TOTAL HOURS} + (\text{REGISTRATION GPA} \times 10)$$

Definitions

TOTAL HOURS

for Multiple degree students
= HOURS PASSED + 60 + CURRENT HOURS to a
maximum of 120

for Diploma students
= HOURS PASSED + 90 + CURRENT HOURS to a
maximum of 105

for PDP only students
= HOURS PASSED + 75 + CURRENT HOURS to a
maximum of 105

for all other students
= HOURS PASSED + CURRENT HOURS to a maximum of
120

The factors 60, 90, and 75 have been included
in the formulas in the case of the Multiple
Degree, Diploma, and PDP only cases in order
to take into account the smaller number of
credit hours required for the completion of
these programs.

CURRENT HOURS

= The total hours in which a student is
currently registered, excluding audit and
challenge courses.

HOURS PASSED

= Total credit hours earned plus transferred
hours towards the current goals, excluding
duplicates and audit but including
successfully challenged courses.

REGISTRATION-GPA

= The GPA based on the last 30 SFU
hours attempted (including duplicates)
or
If less than 30 SFU hours but more than 9
hours attempted, then the CUM-GPA on the
transcript
or
If less than 9 SFU hours attempted, then the
ADMISSION-GPA

ADMISSION-GPA

= For each admission category, the GPA as
defined in the admission regulations to
illustrate the effect of the system

11 45-19

SIMON FRASER STUDENT SOCIETY
Rotunda, TC-321
291-3181

To: Dr. JWG Ivany
Vice President, Academic

From: Sheila Monroe
President

Subject: Registration Priorities Date: 85.3.15

.....

The Student Society has received the draft proposal for changes in the current registration priorities system. There were several recommendations which concern us, including:

1. The use of a weighted GPA factor;
2. The loss of priority due to prior withdrawal from a course;
and
3. Departmental reservations for courses.

The following comments have been discussed with and ratified by Student Forum.

1. Weighted GPA:

The Registration Priorities Committee assumes that GPA is capable of making fine discriminations between students in different programs and year's of study. At SFU, evaluation is an inexact science. It is doubtful that differences of, for example, a half a grade point are either valid or reliable criterion for indicating the academic differences between students in the same department and year. To believe that GPA can accurately differentiate between students across the University is naive.

We cannot agree with the Committee that GPA is more important in assigning registration priority than other factors. We believe other important factors are: the relevance of a course to a student's course of study; the length of time until graduation. priority would have distinctly negative consequences. Students should be encouraged, through their undergraduate career, to explore disciplines and topics new to them. This involves a risk of a reduced GPA. It is unreasonable to expect students to explore other disciplines and to gain a wider

Registration Priorities 85.3.15

education if the risks they take include increased difficulty in getting the courses they require for graduation. We believe this factor alone should rule out the use of a weighted GPS factor in determining registration priorities.

2. Withdrawal

The second area that we are condered about is the Committee's suggestion that students who have withdrawn from a course lose priority registration if they register again for that course. The report does not give any recognition to the reasons that may lead a student to withdraw. These include any or all of the following factors:

- *the quality of instruction may turn out to be inadequate;
- *the course may differ in content or difficulty from the calendar description;
- *the student may have received incorrect advice from faculty or Academic Advice as to the suitability of the course.

Our discussions with students indicate that the above stated reasons are present in a significant number of withdrawals. In addition, a student may discover that she/he has taken on too many courses, or that his/her ability level is not adequate for the course. We think that under these circumstances, the student has shown good judgement and should not be penalized.

While there will always be cases where a student drops a course for insubstantial reasons, there is no way to seperate these cases from those which arise because of the circumstances outlined above.

Departmental Reservations:

The Student Society agrees with the principle of having seats available for students in the department, but we are concerned that this may reduce the range of courses open to students outside their major discipline.

Summary

The use of GPA in registration priorities is unwarranted. Such a use of GPA is unfair and would have unintended and

Registration Priorities 85.3.15

undesireable consequences. If you are planning to recommend adoption of this report by Senate, we would ask that you notify us as to which committees will consider the report.

With thanks for your consideration.

-*-

cc: Dr. Sherwood, Chemistry
V. Finberg, SFSS

SM/edb
Cupe 2396

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

6-85 19

MEMORANDUM

To.....Dr. J.W.G. IVANY.....

From.....Thomas W. Calvert.....

.....Vice-President, Academic.....

Dean,

.....Faculty of I.D.S.....

Subject....REGISTRATION PRIORITIES.....

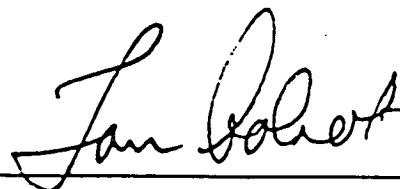
Date.....March 25, 1985.....

The Report of the ad-hoc Committee on Registration Priorities has been circulated to our departments and was discussed at our DAC on Tuesday, March 19. Although most departments and programs felt that the proposals were appropriate and useful, there was strong dissent from Computing Science. The views of Computing Science are set out in the attached memos from Nick Cercone and Rob Cameron.

There is no question that the problems in Computing Science are more acute than in any other unit of this Faculty. Thus I take their position very seriously. However, the solution may be for Computing to develop a totally closed admission system parallel to that operating in Engineering Science.

Encl:
TWC/rj
cc:

D.A. George
R. Health
D. Smithers



Simon Fraser University
Memorandum

To: T.W. Calvert, Dean
Faculty of Interdisciplinary Studies

From: Nick Cercone, Chairman
Computing Science Tenure Committee

Subject: Registration Priorities

Date: 12 March 1985

I have read the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Registration Priority System Report dated 7 November 1984 and find it difficult to believe that "the Deans believe that the proposal will offer significant advantages,...". Perhaps even more incredible is the fact that Elma Krbavac and I discussed the old registration priority system at length on several occasions with the Registrar (H. Evans) and Prof. Sherwood in the past and have articulated concerns which are still not reflected in the 7 November 1984 document. Needless to say Computing Science does not support this proposal at all!

It appears to Computing Science that the (perhaps unknown) implementation constraints have once again preceeded the solution of the problem. For example, it seems to us that priority should really be given on the basis of how to maximise student flexibility by assuring that "bottleneck" courses are available to them at appropriate times and not strictly based on "course credits completed". Also, Co-op students are given no credits for work semesters (as it should be), nonetheless in a priority system which rewards "course credits completed", it seems inconsistent to ignore the work semesters which have no course credit attached as though they did not play a part in the student's education and may in fact force the student to sacrifice certain courses relative to his immediate student peer group who may have amassed more credits without the work semester(s).

I have asked the Director of Undergraduate programs in Computing Science to give me his thoughts on the proposal and attach them for your consideration. I agree with his observations completely as do a number of other Computing Science faculty and support staff (the "firing line") who deal with students continually.

I ask, in addition to your considering the attached comments, that before any such priority scheme be sanctioned that the University solicit the opinion of the various academic advisors and the opinion of the Academic Advice officers who should be able to provide additional insight into many special problems our present system engenders. Finally, I ask again that SFU give real consideration to a once a year registration system with minor alterations allowed during semester breaks. I believe this will

force better planning on the part of Departments and administrators and significantly enhance student opportunities for timely graduation. At least it should eliminate costly, inefficient use of faculty and staff who try, sometimes patiently, to deal with registration problems three times a year.



Nick Cercone, Chairman

cc Elma Kravac, DA Computing Science
Rob Cameron, Lou Hafer, Art Listman - Program Directors, Computing Science

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Memorandum

To: Nick Cercone
Principal, School of Computing

From: Rob Cameron
Vice-Principal for Undergrads

Re: Proposed Registration Priority
System

Date: March 17, 1985

I have read the November 7, 1984 report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Registration Priorities, and while it is a good discussion of certain aspects of the problem, it completely misses some issues that I think are well worth considering.

The goal of any registration priority system is to provide a fair mechanism for registering students in courses for which there are more attempted registrations than available spaces. Perhaps the greatest need for an effective registration priority system is in the registration of students for upper level CMPT courses, where attempted registrations (including alternates) frequently outnumber available spaces by more than three to one. By contrast, the registration priority system is absolutely irrelevant to the large number of courses in other programs where available space exceeds the number of attempted registrations. Therefore, a primary requirement for a registration priority system is that it meet the needs of registration for upper level CMPT courses. If a proposed system can so meet those needs, then it is likely to also be the basis for an effective system for other high-demand courses.

Currently, CMPT manages to provide a measure of fairness in registration for upper division CMPT courses through a set of manually enforced measures. The basic scheme is to allow each student with a CGPA above 2.6 to pre-register for a maximum of 3 CMPT courses. Students with a lower CGPA are permitted maximum of 2 CMPT courses. This meshes pretty well with the requirements for a major in CMPT: students need a total of 30 upper division CMPT credits for their degree, which averages to 7.5 credits or 2.5 courses per semester. Furthermore, students who can show that they need one additional course in order to graduate at the end of a given semester are typically given permission to pre-register in 4 CMPT courses for that semester. Finally, during the first week of classes, students are allowed to register in courses which are not full on a first-come, first-served basis. As shall be described below, these measures are not completely fair, but are reasonable given the nature of the current registration system.

Unfortunately, substantial manual labor is involved in providing a measure of fairness in upper level CMPT registrations. Currently, the Departmental Assistant must enforce the limit of 2 or 3 CMPT pre-registrations per student; this involves individually initialling over 3000 attempted pre-registrations per term. Whenever a student appeals for additional pre-registrations the decision is made by a faculty member, namely, the Director of the Undergraduate program. During the first week of classes, the

Departmental Assistant is again busy, this time registering students in courses where spaces are available (often because registrations are cancelled due to inadequate grades).

With the implementation of a new registration system including a new system for registration priority, we would hope that the need for manual measures for ensuring registration fairness would be unnecessary. Unfortunately, and for several reasons, this would not be the case with the system proposed in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Registration Priority.

How Priorities are Used

The first issue which the above-named report fails to address is how priorities are or should be used in the registration process. Given a priority ranking of students, there are various different ways of using that priority ranking in registering students. First of all, a one-pass registration system, such as the current one, does the complete registration of each student in turn in order of priority. Another alternative, however, is a multi-pass system which would iterate through the priority list several times, assigning one course at a time to students. Hybrid schemes could also be devised, e.g., a single-pass scheme for going through the priority classes and a multi-pass scheme within a priority class.

By failing to address the problem, the report seems to imply that the new registration system should continue with the one-pass registration scheme. Unfortunately, no matter how sophisticated the scheme for assigning priorities is, a one-pass registration scheme leads to results which are patently unfair. In a high-enrollment program like Computing Science, many high priority students would like to take four and even five Computing courses. If allowed to do so, most upper level Computing courses would be over-subscribed at pre-registration time by a factor of at least 3 (3 attempted registrations/alternates for every available spot). Using the one-pass registration system, this would result in an elite of high priority students (not necessarily all Computing Majors) having all the Computing courses they want (typically four or five each), while lower priority Computing Majors would have no Computing courses at all. The only reason this does not happen currently is because of the manual pre-registration process described above.

Inadequacy of the Reserved Spaces Scheme

One of the apparent steps forward in the registration priority system proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee is the concept of reserved spaces for the majors of a given department. However, this scheme really misses the point, because substantial over-subscription to courses is not caused by students outside of the department, but by majors and intended majors within the department. This latter point is the major issue that should be addressed by a registration priority scheme, but is totally ignored by the report of the Ad Hoc Committee.

The Inadequacy of "Course Credits Completed" as a Basis for Priority

A major flaw in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee is that it continues to regard course credits completed "as the single factor which most seriously influences the degree of flexibility that a student enjoys in selecting his

courses". While it may be true that average flexibility in course selection weakly correlates with the course credits completed, it is completely ridiculous to say the number of course credits completed is a "factor" influencing flexibility. Flexibility, rather, depends on the specific number of options available to the student for completing his degree, or progressing towards that completion in a timely manner. For example, many students complete all their specific course requirements well before they have complete their general degree requirement of 120 credits; these students have tremendous flexibility in the courses needed to complete their requirements. On the other hand, students part way through a program often have no flexibility in certain decisions; they must take specified courses to proceed further because of prerequisite requirements.

A Rational Basis for Registration Priority

The one valuable insight in the Ad Hoc Committee's report is that flexibility in the timely completion of remaining course requirements is a fair basis for assigning registration priorities. A student who needs a given course to proceed should have priority over a student who has other available options. The key to applying this notion, however, is that the registration priority for a given student depends on the individual course of concern and the importance of that course to the student's degree program.

I should mention two other factors that should be considered in developing a fair basis for registration priority. First of all, a student who once attempts registration in a given course could be given a substantially higher priority for his second attempt, even though the importance of the course to his program remains unchanged or even diminishes. Secondly, priority consideration should be given to students who declare in advance an interest in taking specific courses as part of their elective requirements. For example, upon entrance to the University a student might declare his intention to major in English, for example, but also to take a given CMPT course as part of his program; this student should eventually be given priority for that CMPT course even though it may not actually be required for the English degree.

Specific Requirements in CMPT

There are two specific groups of students whom we wish to give low priority for registration in upper division CMPT courses. The first is CMPT students who have already completed their upper division CMPT requirements. Substantial numbers of these students want to take further CMPT courses to fulfill their general elective credit and some even continue to take CMPT courses well after completing the requirements for a degree in CMPT. These students currently have a very high registration priority and would continue to do so under the scheme proposed by the Ad Hoc Committee. Secondly, low priority should also be given to intended majors in Computing who have completed 60 credit hours but do not have the requisite CGPA of 2.6 for declaring as CMPT majors. A recent count put the number of such students at 111.

Concluding Remarks

I have only had the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Registration

Priorities a short time, and so I have not had time to consider the problem seriously in all its aspects. Nevertheless, based on the above analysis, I urge that the School vigorously oppose the adoption of the Ad Hoc Committee's report as the basis for a new registration priority system.

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dr. J.W.G. Ivany
V.P. Academics

FROM:

G. C. Hoyt, Dean
Business Administration

SUBJECT:

DATE: April 24th, 1985

I am sending this memo to you, with my approval, for possible inclusion in the papers of a forthcoming Deans' meeting.

GCH:ms

To Walter W.
for attention

To Deans
for info

/s/ GCH

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

MEMORANDUM

Bob Rogow

To: G. Calvin Hoyt, Dean
Faculty of Business Administration

From: R. Rogow, Undergraduate Program Director, FBA

Subject: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE
REGISTRATION PRIORITY SYSTEM

Date: April 2, 1985

Based on discussion with our Undergraduate Curriculum Committee and our Undergraduate Program Coordinator I make the following recommendations:

1. The present pre-registration priority system (based exclusively on hours completed) is so bad that any movement away from it--including this one--is an improvement.
2. We therefore express moderate enthusiasm for the report's substituting for "hours only" the following formula:

HOURS + (G.P.A. X 10)

-a- Our enthusiasm is only moderate because we don't think the formula goes far enough.

e.g.	100 hours	and	2.0 G.P.A.	=	120 points
	60		3.0	=	90
	40		4.0	=	80

We would prefer a formula giving greater weight to G.P.A.:

HOURS + (G.P.A. X 20)

(which would produce 140, 120, and 120 respectively above).

-b- We are also unhappy about the 60-point bonus for second-degree students and indignant about the 90-point bonus for diploma students.

3. Despite "2." above, we strongly favour the report as a whole, provided it does:

"allow departments to specify a number of reserved course places for its major students, Co-op students, etc." (p. 2), and

"allow a department to specify GPA minima for any of these reservations" (p. 2), and

"authorize a department to specify that enrollment in a certain number of its courses will be by departmental approval only."(p.4)

Such authority would be useful to us in controlling student quality and quantity flexibly.

4. The report does not address the problem of the excessive length of the pre-registration period.