Comments

campus-wide AIS waitlist policy

It is very important that the students for my Anthro 2 course be differentiated by year and major rather than simply by who signed up first on the waiting list. For example, if they are a senior Anthro major, they need a permission code before someone who is a freshman with no declared major or a junior major in one of the natural sciences. Are you going to have a way to make those differentiations?

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New AIS waitlist policy

Providing more information to students is a step in the right direction.   But it will still be necessary to change capacities, for example, to reserve spaces for new students or when the remaining slots need to be allocated based on priority (such as in the previous post for Anthro 2).   Also since many classes will not have waitlists (because of credit-bearing associated labs, etc) this policy will only apply to a fraction of the classes. So it's not clear to me that the new policy will provide much transparency.

Instead, would it be possible (or even required) for departments to provide information in AIS/Schedule when capacities are changed? There is a button for "Course Materials" in the on-line schedule of classes that links to the book store. It would be exermely useful if there was a way for departments to provide information on enrollment as well as links to the course webpages.   If there is a waitlist, any changes to the enrollment information could e-mailed to the students on the waitlist.

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Proposal for standardization of wating lists

Dear Richard and colleagues,

I'm writing to comment on the proposed Enrollment Wait List policy, dated May 8, 2013.

The policy would work well for a large GE class I teach, Eart10, **provided** that AIS is configured correctly. For Eart10, students are supposed to be required to enroll in a

mandatory (weekly) discussion section, but for reasons that remain mysterious, this requirement was not enforced by AIS in Spring 2013. We think that the requirement that students enroll in discussion section cannot be automated to carry over from year to year, so it has to be requested each year and then someone has to implement the requirement manually within AIS. When this was not done in Spring 2013, it created a mess with enrollment management in sections because students who enrolled early but neglected to choose a section were effectively "shut out" from section enrollment when these sections filled. I'm hoping that AIS can be modified to accommodate standard requirements like that listed above, carried over automatically from year to year, so that the automated waiting list approach might be more effective. But even so, automated movement from a waiting list could create a "cascade" of shifting sections/classes. Seems like a confirmation step would be useful.

The proposed policy could be more problematic for upper level courses like Eart116 (Hydrology) and Eart146 (Groundwater). Both of these popular classes fill quickly (often 30-60 minutes after enrollment opens), and for the last several years I have been managing waiting lists manually. I do so with a clear and transparent list of priorities (on my web site and sent to the students by email):

(a) EPS majors, then EPS minors, then non-EPS majors/minors

(b) Within the groups above: Seniors, then Juniors, then others.

(c) Within the groups above, in order of request to be on waiting list (day/time)

To give you a sense of numbers, enrollment is generally capped at 34, and we have a waiting list initially of 15-20. We have to cap these classes because they are field intensive **and** we use them to satisfy 1/2 of the DC requirement, so I mark up two versions of research papers based on experiments we do in the labs We just can't run these classes with more than 34 (and that is a stretch – I spend more than 60 hours/quarter just grading research papers each quarter, plus students do labs and homework each week, I grade all homework and tests, and TAs are maxed out at 20 hrs/week). And there are limits to the number of students we can fit in vans, so going from 34 to 36, for example, would require another field vehicle for field trips.

There is a lot of shuffling between classes in first two weeks of the quarter, and students sometimes drop Eart116 or Eart146 during this time when they reckon with the workload. I need to be able to verify that those on the waiting list *still want* to enroll if a space opens, knowing the requirements and expectations, so I always check with them first, then move down the list quickly if they decline (sending email and texts to line up the next students). If AIS enrolled people automatically, without confirmation, it would likely cause delays in getting others into the class when those originally offered a position decide to go elsewhere. So, for

the policy to work, there should be a confirmation step, or at least the option to have a confirmation step.

There should be a wait list prioritization option, like those listed above (majors, seniors, etc). However, this often requires discussion with students, because major and year status can be hard to determine, as you know. And I sometimes am able to make exception, for example for a student from another department working in a related research project. Yes, I can give a permission code, but that will often require over-enrolling the class on the hope that someone drops later (see issue with enrollment above).

As the proposed policy is currently written, students can't get on the waiting list until after everyone has had a chance to enroll. This means that we won't get seniors first on the waiting list…unless we have a chance to set priorities on this basis. At present, the first allowed to enroll end up being first on the waiting list because they contact me first for this purpose.

On a related note, we have several "pathways" in the EPS majors, including a couple that emphasize "environmental" subjects. Those students should have a higher priority for taking Eart116 and 146 because it fulfills one of a smaller number of pathway electives. But AIS does not know about our pathways, so there is no way to give priority through the system. Seniors in these pathways particularly need priority because this is their last chance to take the class.

I appreciate that there are benefits to automating and standardizing wait lists for classes at UCSC, and I would be glad to not have to worry about this for each class. But the system needs to be set up in a way that (1) allows us to verify continued intent before automatically adding a student (this could be optional, some instructors might opt out), and (2) allows setting of priorities (ordering of wait list entries) based on registrar data (major, year status).

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Automatic wait list concerns

Permalink Submitted by mruby on Thu, 06/27/2013 - 09:06

The proposal is a good step in enrollment management on a "fairness" basis. There are many bugs to be worked out before this is implemented, however. One concern for ENVS is the timing. The hope is that students will use the function, rather than emailing the instructor to get on a list, but the delay in the availability of the wait list function is the concern. Often ENVS courses fill the first day or two of enrollment and accordingly, inquiries begin coming in to the department and the instructor, that first week. There will be increased work load to

field these questions for both staff and instructors (*please wait for the wait list function and add your name there*). The wait list function should turn on when the course is full, not based on a certain date. The function then is tied to the class status.

Another concern is the perceived "transparency". A student has signed up, sees they are #1 on the list and monitors the enrollment. The student then sees that the enrollment is increasing but they are #1 on the list, so who is getting into the class? This will occur when discretionary seats are held by the department for a variety of purposes. These discretionary seats are essential for priority students (seniors,new students, the last class, majors vs non-majors, etc...) because the wait list function has no way to prioritize. The comment above from *martine* about departments providing comments on specific enrollment terms for each course, could help in this area. It would need to be directly accessible however, rather than a suggestion to visit a website to learn more about enrollment. Having enrollment information under "Course Materials", might be missed as enrollment isn't really a part of course materials. Unfortunately, I see that any comments about how a department chooses priority enrollment over and above the wait list, will cause inquiries to come in and in affect negate one of the positive goals of this proposal, ease of enrollment management for departments (and students).

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Proposed Wait List Policy

Permalink Submitted by cbergeon on Fri, 08/02/2013 - 12:01

I'm pleased to see this proposal, and do not have concerns about universalizing wait lists with auto-enroll functionality. I think the benefits to students will be great.

Right now, with a chaotic system of getting into full classes, students utilize a number of the strategies for enrolling that can lead them to neglect enrolling in a high priority class (e.g., when they think it is likely they can gain a permission number) in favor of a lower-priority impacted class that they would like to take. Once the process is rationalized and made transparent, students will be more likely to rely on AIS rather than their powers of persuasiveness with faculty and advisers. I think this would be particularly the case if students were allowed to wait list in the order of their second-pass (or original pass for seniors).

I'd love to see consideration of opening wait lists in conjunction with second pass (or original pass for seniors), and running wait lists once all students have had their enrollment appointments, if this is technically possible. I think this would be a fair way to allocate wait list order, presuming appropriate gating or reserves are made for new students. Opening the ability to wait list to all students on the same date, as we do now, introduces different equity

issues. Working students, for instance, international students and students who are traveling, and low-income students who do not have ready access to computers in their homes, may not be able to wait list courses at the start of the wait list period. Students don't always remember the date they are supposed to take action. And a third enrollment period adds complexity that really should not be necessary.

The first and second pass enrollment system currently allocates course spaces based on class level with some arbitrary time assignment within each level. Mirroring this timing would encourage students to plan effectively and comprehensively by prioritizing classes and setting up wait list swaps at the time enrollment in 15-19 credits, perhaps eliminating the need for students to seek out exceptions at this point, and eliminating the need for students to keep checking back just to see if something opened--a method which introduces a pretty big measure of luck in getting an optimal class schedule. And tying wait lists to the enrollment pass system may alleviate some of the concerns expressed by faculty and programs about the need to prioritize advanced students.

There are, however, some technical issues that may still make wait lists very confusing to students. It is not clear these technical issues will be resolved with adoption of the proposal: During enrollment, the "Wait list if class is full" checkbox is available for students to check, even when wait lists are not active. This leads students to believe they have placed themselves on a wait list when they have not. (Opening wait lists sooner at second pass may mitigate this problem.) Also, wait listing for a particular discussion section seems to introduce confusion and allocation issues. Should a student wait list for two different sections of the same class? I've seen cases where a student was #1 on the wait list, but the particular section they wait listed for did not open when other sections did. These are minor concerns, however. I hope the proposal is implemented, perhaps with modification of timing of wait lists.

Thank you for considering my comments.

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wait list comments

Some courses have space in the classroom but limited capacity due to equipment or curriculum (for example, extensive writing or exercises by the student to be graded daily or weekly). In this case, The only people I'd like to let in who are on waitlist will be those who have a strong or perfect record of attending the class even though they are on wait-list status.

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This makes great sense, Linda

Permalink Submitted by rph on Tue, 10/01/2013 - 15:27

This makes great sense, Linda. Programs would have the option of setting capacity to 0 after the classes start, which would then give instructors or program the ability to do things like this depending on the specific class needs.

Richard

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Students attempting to swap into full section

Permalink Submitted by susanw on Thu, 10/03/2013 - 09:13

Linguistics just started using the wait list system in AIS this quarter, fall 2013. We've had one big problem - students (who are enrolled in the course) attempting to swap from their current section into a full section by mistake. They get bumped out of the course and onto the wait list, at the top, until a space opens in the section they need. It would be very helpful if a warning message came up to let them know that this was about to happen.

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another thought on automatic/computer controlled wait lists

Permalink Submitted by afisher on Fri, 10/04/2013 - 23:07

I'm back with another comment, expanding on something noted above that was not clear.

In Eart10, students have to take a 1-hr section, these must be limited to 30 (rooms really hold about 24-25), and we have to limit sections because of TA support (20 hr/week limit for them, etc). When students register for Eart10, they must choose a section that has space.

If the waiting list is set up to automatically enroll someone else when there is a drop, that person would have to be able to take the available section, not just the class. But how will the computer know? It is not enough to look for openings in the student's class schedule, there could be jobs or other issues. There are 4 or 5 or 6 section options. We would have to have students indicate **when they go on the waiting list** which of the section options they would consider, or else someone could be automatically enrolled and stuck in a section he/she can't take. This will delay someone else gettting in. Note also that moving people between sections is challenging because AIS drops students when they drop a required section, in order to select a different one, and with an automated waiting list, someone else would be put in. This

is why we generally handle section enrollment offline at present, once the initial pulse of enrollment is done.

In classes where there is a required section or lab, the waiting list procedure must include having the student indicate which options *could* work. In effect, this is not one wait list for Eart10 but N wait lists, where N = number of sections. I suppose that another option would be to have all students do this, and then the computer could do some shuffling of section enrollment when people drop, in order to get others in...but I'm skeptical that this would be well received, shifting people around, etc.

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Wait Lists

Permalink Submitted by peterson on Tue, 10/15/2013 - 08:19

In theory, I think wait lists are a good idea, but in practice, as noted by several of the comments above, they can be clunky and confusing. For our major, there are two required classes where wait lists might be problematic. They are both open to all majors, but we would want priority given to students declared or planning on declaring Community Studies. However, there's no way to identify those students if they are not coded CMM1, which many of them won't be. I foresee continuing to cap the enrollment artificially low and then using permission numbers to enroll students. It could also be a problem for CMMU electives, but less so than for the required courses.

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Auto Enroll Wait List

Permalink Submitted by sawyer on Mon, 10/21/2013 - 20:59

In general I support the idea of a campus wide wait list policy. We should have a clear and standardized enrollment process. However, I have reservations about requiring all departments to use auto-enroll wait lists at this time. There are technical issues that need to be addressed some of which have already been mentioned in earlier comments. Most notably:

> – During enrollment, the "Wait list if class is full" checkbox is available for students to check, even when wait lists are not active. This leads students to believe they have placed themselves on a wait list when they have not.

In my experience even those students who have successfully used a wait list before have trouble with this. They often forget that they have a third, wait list specific, enrollment appointment.

> – Students (who are enrolled in the course) attempting to swap from their current section into a full section by mistake. They get bumped out of the course and onto the wait list.

This has been a serious problem as of late. It causes unnecessary stress for the students and has become a workload issue for both faculty and staff.

To these excellent comments I would also like to add the following: My department utilizes interest-only wait lists with great success. Using the auto-enroll wait list function was rejected in favor of interest-only wait lists largely due to the fact that students are unable to edit their section preferences. This is problematic for two reasons:

1) The only way for a student to independently change his/her discussion section once added to the course wait list is to drop from the wait list entirely, re-add with the new section, and sacrifice his/her wait list position in the process. Presently students are advised to deal with this problem as follows:

> **Q: How do I change sections on a _wait_-listed course?** [hide]

> A: When adding yourself to a wait list, it is important to make sure you choose a section that is open and fits in your schedule without many people on the wait list for that section. If you receive a time conflict error e-mail from the Office of the Registrar, first attempt to change your current schedule. If the only way to resolve the time conflict is by changing your wait listed section call the Office of the Registrar at (831) 459-4412.

Many students work, have family commitments, participate in extra-curricular activities, and/or simply have busy lives and busy course schedules that can change at a moment's notice. Therefore, students should be able to edit their wait list section preferences as needed and without penalty. Additionally, asking students to call the Office of the Registrar could negatively impact the Registrar staff's already heavy workload.

2) A student who has reached the top of the wait list is skipped over by the auto-enrollment process if his/her selected discussion section is full. Any available enrollment space is given to the next student in line. If the wait list is still going to operate on a first come first serve basis then students should be allowed the opportunity to edit their section preferences without sacrificing their wait list position.

As mentioned in VPDUE Hughey's letter to CEP, the absence of a campus wide enrollment policy has been confusing and, at times, unfair to students. It has also affected staff and faculty workload. I therefore support the implementation of this proposal, albeit cautiously. Technical improvements should and need to be made to the current enrollment and wait list system. Doing so would ensure the technology on which we are dependent matches the proposal's hopes and expectations. Otherwise, we run the risk of simply trading in one set of problems for another.

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Timing of waitlist activation

Permalink Submitted by mcdowell on Wed, 12/18/2013 - 14:33

I'm afraid this all seems rather complicated and I'm not sure I even understood it all. I'm having a hard time understanding why waitlists are not enabled from day 1. If a student has priority at time T to enroll in a class and it is full, why don't they have prority to get on the waitlist at time T.

A separate issue is auto-enroll and if I understand correctly, that is always controllable by simply setting the class size to zero when the time comes to start selectively choosing from the wait list.

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Wait List Considerations

Permalink Submitted by tnikfarj on Mon, 01/13/2014 - 12:56

I think implementing wait lists for the whole campus is a great idea, and particularly option A with wait list appointments makes the most sense. I wanted to add a few of the issues that have arose since the wait lists have become available. These minor issues that we deal with now can potentially be much larger problems when the whole campus begins using the wait list system:

- When a student is already enrolled in a class that has a wait list, but they decide to switch into another section that has already filled, the system doesn't prevent them from doing it, instead it takes them out of the class and wait lists the student in the first position with the new section selection. If swaps like this can be prevented (just like they are with non-wait listed classes), or if at least there was a warning message, telling the students that they are about to be kicked out of the class and wait listed instead, it would greatly help.

- If a student had put themself on the wait list or added to their shopping cart a section that was initially open but later became full, and they later receive a permission code and don't choose a new open section, then the system allows them to enroll over the section capacity. It's really important that students don't over enroll into a section, especially for the TAs. And as much as you tell students to choose an open section, the fact that the system allows them to enroll, bypassing the section capacity, has been a big problem for us.

- Wait lists for cross listed courses have to be set up by both departments and by Tchad or else they do not function properly. In addition, if there are adjustments to the class or section capacity, then it has to be done on the departments side and Tchad's side. So adjustments take longer and are not able to be done completely by the department. I can see this being an increase in workload issue.

- When students add themselves to a wait list, they must choose one section, whether currently open or not. There are cases in which none of the students on the wait list choose

the section that becomes available, which results in all the students being skipped over and the class becomes open for regular enrollment instead. Two problems with this: (1) It's difficult to predict which section will have a seat available, and students can only choose one section even if multiple sections could work with their schedule. A student in the first spot on the wait list wouldn't necessarily be the first to be enrolled into the class if they didn't choose the section that becomes available. Not sure if this is a possibility, but I wonder if there could be an option for students to choose multiple sections that work with their schedule, or if there was an option for choosing all sections and then the system could place them in a section that works with their schedule. As of now students can call into the registrar to edit the section they chose, but once the whole campus begins using the wait lists, then this could be another workload issue for the registrar, having to deal with the increase in students wanting to edit their sections on the wait list. (2) The second issue is when all the students are skipped over on the wait list (because the section choice was not available, they have a time conflict, or they reached their unit loads) and the course becomes open for regular enrollment. It would be great if the class didn't open for regular enrollment once the students on the wait list were skipped. Students shouldn't be skipped over and then not given any time to make the adjustments they need. By the time they make the adjustments, those seats would already be taken by students who just happened to see the class became available, enrolled, and bypassed everyone on the wait list.

-In general, if we can add more warning messages to MyUCSC for students, as they are adding themselves to the wait lists, it would be very useful. Such as "Adding this course is above the 19 unit limit, use the swap function instead" "Swapping this section will result in you being kicked out of the class and wait listed instead". Etc. When students are scrambling for enrollment or wait lists, they're not always aware of these issues, so warning messages could decrease some of these problems.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these issues, and I hope they can be addressed prior to the implemention of the wait lists.

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Wait list campus-wide implementation

Permalink Submitted by susanw on Tue, 01/21/2014 - 10:16

I agree with Tina above about the issues concerning wait listing, and also agree that Possibility A is the best option.

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Wait List Campus-wide Implementation

Possibility C, leaving how the wait list is currently implemented, may work well. It remains the same each quarter (unlike Possibility B) and offers one date for all students to begin adding themselves to a wait list, which keeps it simple. Upper-classmen have already had two opportunities through the two-pass enrollment system to enroll in high priority classes for their majors and so Possibility C gives more sophomores and frosh a better chance at getting into courses they need as well.   Some may argue that this option does not allow for early recognition of the need to increase the enrollment in a course. We recognize the need for this when we see a course fill after first pass and we are also alerted to the need to expand a course by our students who immediately begin emailing the department or stopping by to voice their concerns.

On the other hand, Possibility A may work best for some departments with a number of regularly impacted courses and a course flow that demands students take specific courses sequentially. In this case, adding appointments by class level would probably serve their majors better.

Both Possibility A and C allow for gating for frosh and transfer students (a very important element) and both of these are simpler than Possibilty B. I think either A or C will best serve the campus and our students.

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Waitlisting

I believe that C is the best choice. As noted before Seniors have 2 chances to enroll in necessary classes. It is the simplest and most easily understood by the students. I, for one, will reserve a few spaces for those students in need, and special cases that come up just before the quarter begins.

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Waitlists

Option C is our preferred choice.

Question:

Regarding faculty preference in allowing students into their classes if the student is not already on the wait list. For example, if a student approaches a faculty member with special circumstances, and the faculty decides to give them a permission code even though the student was not on the waitlist - what happens to the person on the top of the waitlist - can they contest that situation.