Dear Committee Members:

The Registrar’s Office (RO), the Provost’s Office, and I have been discussing the possibility of implementing a new deadline for proposals to change course prerequisites. We are proposing that prerequisite change requests be submitted early enough that the Registrar’s Office can make changes before fall registration begins. Given our calendar as well as the registration dates, this means that prerequisite change requests would have to be submitted by the December 16th, 2013, deadline in order to be implemented in the 2014-2015 catalog.

Here is the rationale for this change (mostly from the RO, but with some amendments of my own).

1) The missing prerequisite report for this fall was much larger than usual. This was largely because of the many prerequisite changes that were implemented in March and April, after fall registration began. Some students met the prerequisites at the time of registration but did not meet them after the prerequisites were changed. Departments then had to look at each individual student, including each student’s proximity to graduation, catalog year, academic record, etc., and decide to either drop the students or allow them to remain.

   [DG adds: This situation raises questions about fairness and “truth in advertising.” Students registered for these courses under the legitimate assumption that they qualified—after all, there was nothing to indicate otherwise. When those students are struck from the rolls, they then have fewer remaining options from which to choose, because in many cases other classes have already been filled. It seems unfair for us to make the ground shift under students’ feet in this way.]

2) Credit-hour changes, while rare, can also have adverse effects. When a course is changed from 4 credit hours to 3 credit hours, enrolled students may find themselves dropping from full time status (12 credit hours) to part time (< 12 credit hours). In many cases, students may not be aware of this until they receive their tuition bill during the summer and would then have to scramble to find additional coursework to take to preserve their full-time status.

   [DG adds: This is a biggie. Scholarships and financial aid are often predicated on full-time status, and it again seems unfair to make such a change without prompt notification.]

3) If all course changes, namely restrictions and credit hours, are passed no later than the February Faculty Senate meeting, then academic departments have ample time to disseminate this information to their faculty advisors before advising begins and, if applicable, give faculty a little more time to edit course syllabi. The Academic Advising and Planning Center (AAPC) will also have all relevant information needed to effectively and accurately advise their advisees prior to the start of fall registration.

We can discuss and vote on this proposal at our meeting, but I wanted you to be aware of the issue in advance so you had some time to think about it.

Respectfully submitted,
Daniel Greenberg
FCC Chair