L&S Class Sizes: Measures and Future Options

L&S Plenary 2/17/14
Developing information to help inform department and college planning

• Measure how much we are teaching, and how

• Basic measures tell only part of the story
  – Measures of credits generated do not capture differences in effort, pedagogy, quality, etc.
  – Measuring “expense” of a class does not capture “value”

• But measures can help us:
  – Understand current allocations
  – Consider alternatives that may better meet our goals
  – Respond to the new Campus budget model
Notes on Preliminary Measures

• Course sizes defined by total credits assigned to each instructor:
  – Very small 1-24 credits (generally below our 8 student minimum at 3 credits per student)
  – Small 25-60 credits (up to 20 students at 3 credits)
  – Medium 61-150 credits (21-50 students at 3 credits)
  – Large 151-450 credits (50-150 students at 3 credits)
  – Very large 450+ credits (more than 150 students at 3 credits)

• Use Campus measure of credits follow instructor (CFI)
  – Preferred campus metric
  – Credits adjusted for TA sections (i.e. faculty not assigned credits associated with TA-led sections)
  – Credits follow Instructor (e.g. International Studies course taught by faculty 100% appointed in Political Science is credits to PS)

• Credits for team-taught courses split evenly
L&S Courses, 2012-13

number, by class size

- Very Large Classes
- Large Classes
- Med Classes
- Small Classes
- Very Small Classes

Faculty only, courses taught

Faculty and staff, courses taught
L&S Courses & Credits, 2012-13

distribution by class size

Faculty and staff, courses taught

Very Large Classes: 4%
Large Classes: 13%
Med Classes: 33%
Small Classes: 30%
Very Small Classes: 0%

Faculty and Staff, credits taught

Very Large Classes: 5%
Large Classes: 33%
Med Classes: 30%
Small Classes: 10%
Very Small Classes: 4%
Number of courses by size, by department
(randomly selected depts; faculty credits)
Example:
Using Measures to Support Innovation

- **Issue**: monitoring course sizes and teaching load
- **Problem**: basic minimum enrollment policies may have unintended consequences (e.g. need for graduate programs to be “too large” in order to assure 8 students per course)
- **Innovation**: Use more comprehensive measure of teaching contribution (e.g. total credits) to support alternative enrollment policies
Minimum Enrollment Policy

• **Current policy**: minimum enrollments of 8 and 12 for graduate and undergraduate courses; no compensating credit for large courses

• **Innovation**: the College will allow departments to propose alternative enrollment policies

• **Goals:**
  – Provide more flexibility
  – Allow “right sizing” of graduate programs
  – Promote strategic allocation of resources
Minimum Enrollment Policy: Process

• Proposals should be sent to your AAD for initial review, and then L&S Senior Staff for approval

• In addition to supporting other department goals, approved proposals will generally:
  – maintain the current number of courses taught by each faculty member (e.g. if a standard 4 course load, must still teach 4 courses per year)
  – maintain (or increase) the total number of students served (e.g. same number of graduate and undergraduate credits, Comm A or Comm B, etc.)
  – maintain (or improve) access, and avoid creating bottlenecks