

**SAN DIEGO MESA COLLEGE**  
**ACADEMIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**POSITION PAPER #4 – 2003**

**TITLE: CLASS CAPACITY – CAP**

Presented to President's Cabinet, November 17, 2003 with no comment or action

The establishment of a class capacity (CAP) for each class offering should be made in a systematic and considered fashion. In Light of new contract language, the following recommendations for a procedure and criteria to establishing equitable Caps are made to the President's Cabinet for consideration and approval.

**PROCESS:** The CAP assigned to each section offered at Mesa College shall be reviewed by the department chair and appropriate manager periodically. According to contract Section VII 7.6 (attached), decisions regarding class size and class cancellation shall be made by the appropriate manager after consultation with the department chair. It is expected that department chairs would consult with department faculty. In circumstances in which the department chair concludes that the decision of the appropriate manager does not meet program needs, the chair may request further review by the Vice President.

**Rationale:** A regular review of the appropriate capacity of each section is a healthy process which will allow adjustments to take place in a rational, uniform and timely manner. The dean, in consultation with the department chair, can put the recommendations in the perspective of the school's overall objectives and goals. Individual circumstances can be explained and agreed upon relative to meeting the criteria established in this document. The Vice President's review of the recommendations will ensure campus wide conformity to uniform standards. This is a joint effort designed to ensure uniformity and fairness.

**CRITERIA:** It is recommended the following criteria be used by the department chairs when recommending CAPs for sections offered each scheduling cycle, as well as by the deans and Vice President when evaluating recommended CAPs.

1. **Safety** and adherence to laws and regulations concerning class size and room occupancy capacity are a primary concern. No student or faculty member can be placed at risk due to class size relative to facility capacity.
2. **Pedagogical issues** including method of instruction and the nature of the course work must be considered. Also included are issues involving the review of class assignments such as term papers and creative projects. These issues will be decided by consensus of the program faculty including the department chair.
3. **Room and lab capacity** such as the number of lab or computer stations available will of necessity limit class size.
4. **Regulatory issues** (such as compliance with ADA regulations) may govern class size by statute or the rules of a sanctioning body.
5. **Accreditation and articulation** to other institutions may establish maximum class size.
6. **WSCH to FTEF ratios.** Campus productivity goals and assignments must be met in order to maintain financial stability. Careful consideration must be made to maintain the largest possible class size consistent with issues #1 through #5 above. Specifically, the following must be considered:
  - a. The appropriate class size, large or small, must be established for each class and section consistent with these criteria. After the CAP for a class is established, an appropriate room or lab will be assigned. If a room or lab of the appropriate size cannot be found, then the CAP for the class must be reevaluated considering the available room or lab.
  - b. Where the application of the above criteria results in a small class CAP, the program should not be penalized for low production rates.

**Rationale:**

When establishing an appropriate CAP for an individual class, no one of these criteria is to dominate. They all should be considered. Some issues, such as safety laws and

available lab stations, may be easier to assess than pedagogical issues, however, this does not diminish the importance of the latter. Limiting class size in some cases or increasing class size in others may both be appropriate. The task is to achieve educational standards of excellence while also maintaining overall WSCH to FTEF ratios and financial stability.

### **Guidelines for Exceptions:**

Exceptions in which a class size is significantly larger than the established CAP may be appropriate. Reasons for these exceptions may include examples such as program growth strategies, supporting small class sections by allowing other large class sections, etc. The important issue is that these large classes are exceptions to the established CAP and do not establish a new CAP for the course.

Last draft #4 – 5/5/00  
Rewrite 9/23/03 w/ att.  
gsv

**AFT CONTRACT LANGUAGE REGARDING CLASS SIZE  
AND CLASS CANCELLATIONS – ARTICLE VII – 7.6  
FOR THE PERIODS 7/1/97-6/30/98 AND 7/1/98-6/30/2001 (PRINTED 2/1999)**

**Decisions regarding class size and class cancellation shall be made by the appropriate manager after consultation with the department chair. Class section capacities shall be established and set prior to enrollment. In circumstances in which the department chair concludes that the decision of the appropriate manager does not meet program needs, the chair may request further review by the Vice President.**