

## **SU Biology Department –**

### **Undergraduate Academic Advising, Wait List Guidelines and Course Policies**

#### **Purpose**

This document is intended to summarize the current policies of the Biology Department with regard to undergraduate studies. It is meant to be a guide for both students and faculty as to the expectations the Department and University have of each of us in our roles regarding undergraduate programs.

#### **Undergraduate Advising**

The following from the Syracuse University web site enunciates the framework for advising in the Biology Department.

“Academic Advising is an essential component of a Syracuse University education.

The University is committed to providing the individual advice and assistance that students need at every step throughout their degree programs.

A successful system of academic advising is highly dependent upon a shared commitment of students, faculty, and staff to the process and the availability of timely, accurate information.

**Students** are responsible for scheduling, preparing for, and keeping advising appointments; for seeking out contacts and information; and for knowing the basic requirements of their individual degree programs.

**Students** bear the final responsibility for making their own decisions based on the best information and advice available and, ultimately, on their own judgment.”

#### **What this means for students and faculty –**

Clearly the final responsibility for meeting degree requirements rests with students. The Biology Department faculty and staff are ready to assist students in their efforts and will provide timely advice when requested regarding course requirements for different degree programs. Beyond helping students navigate their degree program requirements, faculty academic advisers and the Biology Department will also work with students to help them seek out information on intended careers and understand how to use their time here to their best advantage to prepare for these careers.

It is important that students have reasonable access to regular and informed advising. Due to the popularity of Biology Program majors, advising will generally be by appointment with an assigned faculty advisor. Given the number of Biology students that each faculty member will advise, it is essential that both students and faculty make every effort to keep such appointments. Making time for “drop-in” appointments with individual faculty academic advisers is simply unfeasible and will therefore rarely, if ever, occur. The Biology Department may periodically hold general “drop-in” pre-advising sessions near the times of Fall and Spring course registration and these will be announced to students well in advance of their occurrence.

## Wait List Guidelines

The following guidelines have been adopted by the Biology Department to ensure the fairest possible treatment of our majors as they attempt to enroll in our advanced Biology courses, particularly laboratories. Current demand each semester for our laboratory courses exceeds the capacity for the labs so we have instituted a wait list procedure for assigning students to laboratory sections.

All advanced lab (300 level and above) enrollments will be assigned from wait lists generated at registration. We are required to let one student, the first to register, enroll in each lab course; all others will be placed on wait lists.

It is the responsibility of each student to be aware of these guidelines. Lack of knowledge will not be a valid argument for avoiding the guidelines.

### **Goals:**

1. To ensure that all Biology/Biochemistry/Biotechnology majors are able to enroll in a timely manner in labs required for graduation.
2. To allow students as much choice as possible of which labs they take.
3. To give our majors high quality laboratory experiences.

### **Constraints:**

The primary constraint is the number of spaces available in lab courses each semester. Each lab section has a limit in number of students - generally between 20 and 24.

## Guidelines and Student Responsibilities

We will follow the following guidelines in assigning students on waitlists to laboratory sections:

1. 3 credit upper division labs and 1 credit upper division labs will be treated as separate sets of wait lists, with each set subject to the following additional guidelines.
2. In consultation with their advisors, **students will use MySlice to place their names on wait lists for a minimum of 2 lab courses for any 1 and 3 credit labs** (a minimum of 3 wait lists if they are trying to enroll in two 3-credit labs in the same semester). Students should be sure that the waitlisted lab(s) fit their schedule and do not conflict with a course that they plan to prioritize over a lab.
3. **Students who appear on only one wait list or who have circumstances that REQUIRE a particular lab must provide to the Associate Chair a written, quality rationale for being given preference for that lab.** Such quality rationales might include documented requirements for a post-graduate program or documented schedule conflicts for all other labs.
4. Students who only appear on 1 wait list and have not provided a quality rationale will be placed in a lab after students who appeared on at least 2 wait lists have been given permission numbers.

5. 2-3 spaces will be left vacant in each lab until the start of classes for emergency cases.

**6. Permission numbers allowing enrollment in labs will be issued about three weeks after the beginning of registration and must be used before the last day of registration during that semester for the coming semester. Students failing to use permission numbers issued to them in the appropriate time will lose their priority for the lab.**

**Priorities, in order, for assigning students to labs from the wait lists:**

1. Seniors with quality rationales will be given permission numbers for that lab; if the number of seniors in their last semester exceeds the capacity of the lab, then spaces will be allocated by lottery. Rationale for juniors to be given priority must include reasons they cannot take the course during their senior year.

2. Seniors in their last semester or 7th semester seniors in the BS program who have not yet been able to enroll in a lab will be assigned next.

3. If more seniors are on a wait list for a lab section than can be accommodated in the lab, then permission numbers will be assigned by lottery, except for those with a quality rationale who will have been admitted as a result of #1.

4. Seniors not getting into one lab as a result of the lottery will be assigned to their other choice unless #1-3 above left no vacant spaces.

5. We expect that #1-4 will take care of all seniors needing a lab to graduate. If that is not the case, then the remaining seniors will be assigned to a lab with open places meeting at the same time.

6. Juniors receive next priority and will be assigned to labs that have open places. We will first put them in a lab in which they were on the wait list; if none is available we will offer a lab that does have space. Juniors meeting the prerequisites for a lab will be given preference over other juniors for that lab.

7. Open spaces in labs after #1-6 above will be offered to seniors who are on the wait list, but have already fulfilled all lab requirements for graduation.

**8. Permission numbers allowing enrollment in labs will be issued about three weeks after the beginning of registration and must be used before the last day of registration during that semester for the coming semester. Students failing to use permission numbers issued to them in the appropriate time will lose their priority for the lab.** Unused permission numbers after that date will be invalid and cannot be reissued except following the rules in #9.

9. Any open spaces available on the first day of class will be filled by the laboratory instructor from students still trying to get into the class and who appear at the first class of the semester. At this time preference will be given to seniors needing a lab to graduate, seniors in their 7th semester who have not taken a lab, and finally juniors.

10. Any complaints about lab assignments MUST be registered before the end of the semester prior to the start of the lab.

## **Biology Course Policies**

- A. General: In all courses, faculty will communicate clearly to students enrolled in courses by means of written course schedules, syllabi and course policies which document the manner in which grades will be determined. This information will be made available to students during the first meeting of the course and may be provided as a handout and/or as documents posted in Blackboard.

Faculty will be expected to set reasonable grading standards in courses appropriate to the level of the course they are teaching, consistent with written expectations regarding attendance and participation and reflective of any prerequisites listed for the course.

Course communications with students will occur via their “student@syr.edu” institutional e-mail accounts. Per the policy of the University, students are responsible for maintaining these accounts in such a way that they are able to receive information transmitted from faculty regarding their courses.

### B. Grade Appeals

If the student has concerns about her/his grade they are encouraged to contact the course instructor immediately with their concerns. If a grading concern cannot be resolved through discussion with the faculty and staff teaching the course, there exists a formal Grade Appeal Process developed by the College of Arts and Sciences.

The first step in a formal grade appeal is to **develop a clear statement, in writing, of the reason(s) you think your grade should be changed and collect any supporting materials you want reviewed.** Developing a clear written statement and compiling all supporting materials will ensure that all the reasons you have will be addressed. Your appeal going forward will be limited to the valid reasons you raise at this time and the supporting materials you compile, and you will only be able to appeal your grade once, so be sure that your statement and supporting materials are complete.

Next step is **to meet with the instructor and discuss the reason(s) you think your grade should be changed.** Provide the instructor with your written statement of the reasons your grade should be changed and supporting materials prior to or at your meeting with her/him. This written statement and supporting materials will help guide the conversation and allow the instructor to address all of the issues you raise. Document the date on which you met with the instructor, what you told the instructor, and the instructor’s response. If the instructor gives you a written response, include that response with your documentation.

**If you are not able to resolve your grade dispute with the instructor of record, the next level of appeal is to the person in charge of the instructor. This may be a faculty member who is in charge of the course or the coordinator of the program. This appeal must be in writing, and your appeal may be submitted electronically.** If you do not know who supervises the instructor, please consult the Chair of Biology, who will put you in contact with the appropriate supervisor. If you do not know who the department chair is, please consult the department web site or ask in the Office of Curriculum and Instruction in 441 Hall of Languages. Remember that only the reasons you raised with the course instructor will be considered. If you are not given a written response, be sure to request it and include that response with your documentation.

**If your appeal to the Instructor or the faculty member in charge of the course was not resolved to your satisfaction, your next appeal is to the Chair of Biology. This appeal must be in writing, and your appeal may be submitted electronically.** Remember that the Chair of Biology may only consider the reasons you raised with the course instructor. Be sure to explain clearly why you believe that the instructor (and, where required, the supervisor in charge of the course) was incorrect in determining that your grade should not be changed. The department chair will respond to your appeal in writing. Include her/his decision in your documentation.

**If your appeal to the Chair of Biology was not resolved to your satisfaction, your next appeal is to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. This appeal must be in writing, and your appeal may be submitted electronically.** Present documentation of each step in the appeal process to the dean, and explain why you believe the department chair was incorrect in denying your appeal. The dean will respond to your appeal in writing. Include her/his decision in your documentation.

- C. Student Privacy Rights Students should also be aware that the Biology Department takes very seriously the rights of students to privacy under the Federal Education Rights to Privacy Act:

<http://registrar.syr.edu/students/ferpa.html>

Therefore, we will discuss grading concerns with parents only after we secure adequate confirmation (generally written) from the student that they have shared their concerns regarding any matter with their parents. Because of this, students should be aware that while parents may participate in discussions regarding grading concerns, requests for grade reviews must originate from students and all subsequent communications must occur through the student for the reasons outlined above. For these reasons, students are encouraged to raise grading concerns themselves as this mechanism may often yield the most rapid resolution of their request.

- D. Course cancellations - Very occasionally, some courses may fail to enroll an adequate number of students (e.g. 5 students or less) to warrant expenditures of department resources associated with offering the course. In other instances, personal emergencies that preclude faculty from providing their full effort to a course may arise with a timing that precludes obtaining a replacement instructor. In such cases, cancellation of these courses will only occur by decision of the Biology Chair and Associate Chair. Students enrolled in such courses will be contacted as soon as a decision of cancellation is reached and will be accorded every consideration in helping them obtain access to courses serving as replacements for the cancelled course in their schedules.

#### **E. Course Fees**

Lecture courses taught by the Biology Department on the SU campus will generally not carry additional course fees through the Registrar beyond tuition. Courses associated with internship experiences required for selected Biology Programs may involve fees to offset costs associated with organizing and managing such experiences. Laboratory courses will typically carry an additional modest fee to partially offset the purchase of supplies required to mount such courses and maintenance of specialized equipment (microscopes, spectrophotometers, etc.). Detailed accounting of course fee expenditures will be available to students upon written request.

## **Additional Policies**

All courses taught through the Biology Department will adhere to the University's published policies regarding Disability-Related Accommodations, Religious Observances and Academic Integrity. Specifically:

### **Disability-Related Accommodations**

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services(ODS), <http://disabilityservices.syr.edu>, located in Room 309 of 804 University Avenue, or call (315) 443-4498 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations. ODS is responsible for coordinating disability-related accommodations and will issue students with documented Disabilities Accommodation Authorization Letters, as appropriate. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact ODS as soon as possible.

### **Religious Observances Policy**

SU religious observances policy, found at [http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp\\_ben/religious\\_observance.htm](http://supolicies.syr.edu/emp_ben/religious_observance.htm), recognizes the diversity of faiths represented among the campus community and protects the rights of students, faculty, and staff to observe religious holidays according to their tradition. Under the policy, students are provided an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirements that may be missed due to are religious observance provided they notify their instructors before the end of the second week of classes. For fall and spring semesters, an online notification process is available through MySlice/StudentServices/Enrollment/MyReligiousObservances from the first day of class until the end of the second week of class.

### **Academic Integrity**

The Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Students should be familiar with the Policy and know that it is their responsibility to learn about instructor and general academic expectations with regard to proper citation of sources in written work. The policy also governs the integrity of work submitted in exams and assignments as well as the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verifications of participation in class activities. Serious sanctions can result from academic dishonesty of any sort.