

OFFICE OF CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT ISSUE PAPER  
EXCESSIVE COURSE CANCELLATIONS

A significant part of the growth in demand for classrooms can be categorized as artificial demand created by departments who submit large numbers of courses for scheduling, and subsequently cancel an excessive number of them. These cancellations occur *after* room assignments have been made in the initial batch schedule run and before the end of the second week of the semester. Even though they are later cancelled, each of these courses requires assignment of a classroom and occupies that room at the expense of other valid courses that are on the unplaced course list. In the aggregate, these excessive cancellations also perturbate the overall class schedule and inconvenience students who have registered for the courses. As shown in the following table, the number of sections that are cancelled after scheduling is large in absolute terms and as a percentage of the total teaching effort.

Percent of Initial Course Sections Scheduled That Are Cancelled			
	Initial Course Sections	Cancelled Sections	Percentage
Fall '99	12,221	2,450	20%
Spring '00	14,553	3,467	24%
Fall '00	13,967	3,087	22%
Spring '01	13,924	2,654	19%
Fall '01	14,184	2,853	20%
Spring '02	13,626	2,235	16%

Note: "Cancelled Sections" is a net figure reflecting late cancel/add actions

The OCM Scheduling Unit has a very manually intensive process that does not maintain a journal record that would illustrate this aggregate data at the department level. The enterprise level Electronic Course Scheduling Project (ECSP) that is now in progress will give us this more detailed data after it is implemented in Nov/Dec 2003.

This high cancellation rate contributes significantly to inefficiencies in room utilization and to unplaced courses. The synergistic impact of the different scheduling problem areas has an interactive rippling effect throughout the schedule. We are familiar with these elements - too many courses that are not in compliance with the Senate standard hour policy, too many departments that exceed the Provost's 60% maximum in peak time figure, too many sections with highly inaccurate projected enrollments, too many sections that are scheduled and then canceled (or not scheduled, and then are added), loss of the "slack" that used to be in our classroom inventory, year-in-advance registration, etc, etc.

OCM is producing detailed utilization reporting and is actively working with colleges to improve scheduling efficiency. Colleges and departments who improve the accuracy of projecting their instructional effort will not only benefit overall UMTC scheduling and room utilization, but will also positively impact the management of their own resources and budgets. The near term planned completion of the ECSP project will be a major step forward in the ongoing effort to improve classroom space utilization and scheduling efficiency.