

Faculty Senate Resolution Number S-2025-18

TO: Dwayne Smith, Ph.D., Interim President, Southern Connecticut State University  
FROM: Natalie Starling, Ph.D., President, SCSU Faculty Senate

The attached Resolution of the Faculty Senate is entitled:

RESOLUTION Regarding Course Enrollment Caps in Writing Intensive ("W") Courses

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This resolution was approved by Faculty Senate on: May 7, 2025

☒ This resolution is presented for APPROVAL

☐ This resolution is presented for INFORMATION

In accordance with the CSU-AAUP Contract (Article 5.10), "When the Senate makes a written recommendation to the President, the President shall acknowledge and respond to the recommendation in writing within fifteen (15) days of receiving the Senate's recommendation."

After considering this resolution, please indicate your action on this form and return it to the President of the Faculty Senate.

Natalie Starling

Natalie Starling, Ph.D., President, SCSU Faculty Senate

05/12/2025

Date

cc: Julia Irwin, Ph.D., Interim Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs

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### ACTION OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT

Resolution for Approval

☒ Resolution APPROVED

☐ Resolution DISAPPROVED (Attach statement)

Resolution for Information

☐ Resolution NOTED (applies to Informational Resolutions only)

Dwayne Smith  
Dwayne Smith (May 27, 2025 11:37 EDT)

Dwayne Smith, Ph.D., Interim President, SCSU

05/27/2025

Date

## Statement



## FACULTY SENATE

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### **Resolution Regarding Course Enrollment Caps in Writing Intensive (“W”) Courses**

Whereas, Southern Connecticut State University (SCSU) exists for the primary purpose of furthering academic excellence;

Whereas, Senate Resolution F-09-01 was approved by the University President on November 24, 2009, recognizing that the Liberal Education Program (LEP) required “smaller classes,” and agreeing to “provide the necessary resources” for the implementation of the program;

Whereas, LEP Tier I enrollment caps for “Inquiry” and “Critical Thinking” courses, which were expected to address “written communication,” were originally capped at 20 students;

Whereas, Writing Intensive (“W”) courses were capped at 20 students;

Whereas, These classes typically involve the close reading and interpretation of selected passages, dialogical interactions, and extensive discussions of the revisions of written assignments as part of their pedagogical design;

Whereas, The abovementioned enrollment caps, resulting from our processes of shared governance, were established to support and enhance the academic engagement and achievement of our students;

Whereas, The Council of Academic Chairs, and the Office of the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs agreed, in March 2011, to a temporary increase in enrollment caps for “Inquiry,” “Critical Thinking,” and “W” courses from 20 to 23;<sup>1</sup>

Whereas, In the Fall 2011 semester, the Faculty Senate passed a “Resolution on Adverse Educational Impacts of Increased Course Limits” (Resolution F-11-01/November 14, 2011), in response to the increase, in Fall 2011, of the enrollment caps from 20 to 23 in LEP Tier I “Inquiry” and “Critical Thinking” classes as well as in “W” classes;<sup>2</sup>

Whereas, In the Fall 2013 semester, the Faculty Senate approved an Undergraduate Curriculum Forum “Resolution on Class Caps” (F-13-03/November 20, 2013), a Resolution that suggested that the increases in enrollment caps may have “serious impact on effective instructional delivery and student success”;<sup>3</sup>

Whereas, Faculty Senate Resolution S-16-13 sought to restore course enrollments for “W”, “Inquiry” and “Critical Thinking” classes to 20;<sup>4</sup>

Whereas, The Undergraduate Curriculum Forum approved a motion September 28, 2017, to restore “W” classes to an enrollment cap of 20 by Fall Semester 2019;<sup>5</sup>

Whereas, Goal 7 of the SCSU Faculty Academic Strategic Plan Committee’s (FASP) “A Strategic Vision for Academic Excellence, 2018” sought to “Promote the academic achievement of our students by establishing appropriate class sizes of no more than 20 students per section for courses that emphasize written communication, including “W” (Writing Intensive), as well as Tier I LEP courses, “Inquiry” and “Critical Thinking”;<sup>6</sup>

Whereas, Faculty Senate Resolution S-2022-13 sought to restore course enrollments for “W”, “Inquiry” and “Critical Thinking” classes to 20;<sup>7</sup>

Whereas, The enrollment of writing intensive classes at Eastern Connecticut State University are limited to 20 students;<sup>8</sup>

Whereas, The enrollment of writing intensive classes at Central Connecticut State University ranges from 12 to 18;

Whereas, In 2015, the College Conference on Communication and Composition (CCCC), the leading organization for postsecondary teaching of writing, resolved that “No more than 20 students should be permitted in any writing class,” and “Ideally, classes should be limited to 15”;<sup>9</sup>

Whereas, Our students were negatively impacted by the disruption of on-ground class attendance and increased anxiety caused by the Covid-19 pandemic both at the pre-college and higher education levels;

Whereas, Setting the enrollment caps of 20 in “W” courses, will enable our faculty to better support our students;

Whereas, The university no longer receives data on the writing ability of all entering students that would have previously been provided by the SAT;

Whereas, Numerous scholarly inquiries reiterate the realization that writing courses that emphasize revisions benefit from smaller enrollments that allow teachers to provide meaningful individual support to each of their students;<sup>10</sup> and

Whereas, As a social justice university, SCSU is cognizant of the potential of such personalized support for student writing for closing the achievement gap for students who have been socio-

economically disadvantaged and its impact on enrollment, retention, persistence, and completion; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That beginning in Fall 2025 information be gathered--with contributions from the Undergraduate Curriculum Forum (UCF), Academic Affairs, the Writing Center, the Director of Composition, the Faculty Academic Strategic Planning Committee (FASP), and faculty volunteers from "W" courses--regarding teaching, learning, and undergraduate student achievement, as well as retention and graduation rates, such that the impact of the change in enrollment caps can be assessed; and be it further

*Resolved*, That enrollment caps for "W" courses be set at 20, effective beginning Fall 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution S-16-13, <http://www2.southernct.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/F-17-06%20W%20Course%20Enrollment.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution F-11-01, [http://s3.amazonaws.com/ares2.southernct.edu/old-wysiwyg/facultysenate/uploads/textWidget/wysiwyg/documents/F-11-01\\_Adverse\\_Educational\\_Impacts\\_of\\_Increased\\_Course\\_Enrollment\\_Limits.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/ares2.southernct.edu/old-wysiwyg/facultysenate/uploads/textWidget/wysiwyg/documents/F-11-01_Adverse_Educational_Impacts_of_Increased_Course_Enrollment_Limits.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution F-13-03, <http://www2.southernct.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/F%2013%2003%20Resolution%20UCF%20on%20Class%20Caps.pdf>. The UCF Resolution supported by the Faculty Senate established that a range of professional organizations, "including National Education Association (NEA), National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), Associated Writing Programs (AWP), National Communication Association (NCA), American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), Association of Departments of Foreign Languages (ADFL) and Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) have guidelines for establishing class caps and/or faculty/student ratio based on pedagogical concerns."

<sup>4</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution S-16-13, <http://www2.southernct.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/AY%2016%20S-16-13%20Restore%20studentClassCapsForInquiry.CriticalThinking.AndWritingIntensiveClasses.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See Faculty Senate Resolution F-17-06, <http://www2.southernct.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/F-17-06%20W%20Course%20Enrollment.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution S-18-11, <http://www2.southernct.edu/faculty-staff/faculty-senate/S%202018%2011%20ResolutionEndorsingFSAcademicStrategicPlanCommitteeVision.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Faculty Senate Resolution S-22-13, <https://inside.southernct.edu/sites/default/files/inline-files/S-2022-13%20Course%20Caps%20revised%202022%2003%2023%20signed.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> "Proposing a Writing-Intensive Course," Eastern Connecticut State University, <https://www.easternct.edu/writing-program/proposingawritingintensivecourse.html#:~:text=Minimum%20requirements%20for%20writing-intensive,also%20considered--see%20below>

<sup>9</sup> College Conference on Communication and Composition Position Statement (CCCC). A Statement on an education issue approved by the CCCC Executive Committee. Principles for the Postsecondary Teaching of Writing. <https://cccc.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/postsecondarywriting>

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Alice Horning, "The Definitive Article on Class Size," (2007). WPA: Writing Program Administration 31(1/2), p. 14.