

Students Express Concern Over Lack Of Class Availability

Syracuse Students and Advisors Speak Up About Course Enrollment Issues

By Jessica Shechtman

SYRACUSE, N.Y., Jan. 30, 2019 -- Syllabus week is over and professors are hitting the ground running with their classes, but now, three weeks deep in the spring semester, Newhouse students are still struggling to finalize their schedules.

Students who have been waitlist approved are facing the aftermath of having to catch up in their newly added classes. Students who weren't lucky enough to find themselves placed in the courses they need must deal with the stress of feeling behind in their majors. With a drop deadline of February 5 quickly approaching, anxiety is replacing progress for new students.

Ethan Katsoff, a sophomore who switched his major to advertising this semester, could not enroll in his introductory advertising course because spots were saved for students with last names starting with letters in the second half of the alphabet. Waiting until next semester to take the course would have set him back in his major because the course is a prerequisite for others. Finally, a week in to the semester, Katsoff received a seat in the class. "I was really stressed out trying to make my schedule this semester, because I already felt behind after changing my major this late," Katsoff said. "I feel relieved that the situation was worked out, but having to wait so long made me frustrated and upset. I am in the class now, but I am catching up because I missed the first week and a half of it."

Academic advisors try their best to help students during the enrollment and schedule adjustment processes, but it is difficult to resolve every issue that may arise.

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Certain deadlines are put in place to prevent students from missing too much class time by adding a class too late. Advisors do not have the ability to change these deadlines or other policies such as the last name split, opening closed courses, and taking students off of waitlists.

“I don’t understand why exceptions can’t be made for students who really need them,” said Lauren Hurwitz, a second year graphic design major. “We pay a lot of money for these classes, and there is no reason why letting in one more student to a class should be such a problem.”



Lauren Hurwitz views her new course schedule on Myslice after making multiple changes to fit a required class.

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Advisors argue that all of these policies are actually in place for the benefit of students. Courses are kept small to enhance students' educations and one-on-one time with their professors, and the last name split for certain classes is in place in order to make sure that every student who needs a class will eventually be able to take it. "It's a tough spot because there are certain limitations to classes, especially in Newhouse, because our classes are smaller," said academic advisor Richard Mendez. "However, our main focus is to help you troubleshoot during registration and look for alternatives when issues arise. Advisors are here to help in any and every way that we can." Even though the enrollment process is frustrating for students, the system is set up to be as fair and efficient as possible.

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