

Transmission of PROPOSAL to Senate Report

**Background Information for Proposal**

<i>Agenda Item Name:</i>	<b>Proposal to allow local waiver of course prerequisites in student case-by-case situations</b>
<i>Rationale for proposal:</i>	The SRs do not currently provide local units clear authority to waive course prerequisites in individual student cases. This proposed change to SR 3.2.2.2 would clarify that Instructors of Record can waive course prerequisites unless the local faculty body responsible for the course reserves that authority to itself or delegates it to others.
<i>General description and type of proposal:</i>	Campuswide policies (including SR changes) Change
<i>Reviewing body and chair:</i>	Consent by SC Chair to present proposal Roger Brown,
<i>Proposer's name and affiliation:</i>	Roger Brown Department of Agricultural Economics, CAFE
<i>Committee Would Like:</i>	<b>Reviewed by SAASC. Slight edits made and now ready for final steps</b>
<i>Involve Senate Rules change?</i>	Yes

**Additional Information Below (not applicable for every proposal)**

<i>Voting Info:</i>	<u>In favor</u> <u>Opposed</u> <u>Abstained</u>
<i>If applicable, which SR section is being changed?</i>	["Section 3 - Programs, Courses, & Curriculum Procedures"]
<i>Requested effective date:</i>	Upon approval by Senate
<i>Written report:</i>	

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## Proposal to Allow Local Waiver of Course Prerequisites

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Summary and Rationale. The Senate Rules currently provide **no general local authority** to waive Senate-approved course prerequisites. This proposed Senate Rule change (on next page) would allow the **Instructor of Record** by default and where not otherwise restricted to waive some or all course prerequisites when **merited** on a student **case-by-case** basis. Alternatively, the **local faculty body** responsible for a course (SR 3.2.3.3) could **reserve unto itself** or its designee(s) the same authority, but if so Instructors of Record would still retain final disapproval authority. Local faculty bodies can always propose formal changes to course prerequisite allowances and, if approved by the Senate, those more specific allowances would be controlling and would override the authorities created by this proposed rule.

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### Questions / Answers

- Aren't instructors currently allowed to waive prerequisites?

In general, no. Instructors are not allowed to waive any Senate-approved prerequisites. However, there are four narrow exceptions. **First**, instructors may waive prerequisite courses if the course description explicitly allows them to do so (e.g., "...or consent of instructor"). **Second**, SR 3.2.2.2 allows "seniors with superior ability or preparation" to be admitted to courses numbered 600 to 799 "upon approval of the instructor, the dean of the student's college and the dean of the Graduate School." **Third**, SR 4.2.1.3.2 allows non-degree-seeking students to enroll in a course without satisfying the course prerequisites if the student "obtain[s] the consent of the instructor." **Fourth**, SR 5.1.3 allows instructors to waive prerequisites for courses taken on a pass/fail basis.

If the Senate intended the general rule to be that instructors may waive course prerequisites (e.g., for all students and all courses), the Senate Rules need not have articulated a special rule for non-degree-seeking students or for pass/fail courses. The existence of those rules imply that no general allowance exists to waive course prerequisites.

- How do instructors waive a course prerequisite if none of the three narrow exceptions apply?

If not excepted otherwise, the only way to waive a Senate-approved course prerequisite is to get approval from the Senate Council or its Chair under SR 1.1.1.3.

- Why allow local faculty bodies to interfere with instructors' preferences about prerequisite waivers?

While course instructors may be best able to decide the merits of waiving course prerequisites in most individual student cases, the parent faculty body and/or program director (e.g., Director of Undergraduate Studies or Director of Graduate Studies) may not want instructors to make this decision without oversight or documentation. Consequently, the Senate should assign the faculty body the option to be involved in course prerequisites waiver decision while preserving the Instructor of Record's privilege to prevent such waivers, if desired. Instructors of Record should have final disapproval authority since (1) they bear the burden of having unprepared students in their courses and (2) local faculty bodies have authority to change course prerequisites and prerequisite authorities, if desired, using formal Senate processes.

- Why not just strictly enforce the Senate-approved course prerequisites without a waiver option?

Course prerequisites serve purposes beyond just the need for students to have specific prior knowledge. **For example**, some course prerequisites are designed to signal—admittedly imperfectly—a need for general, not specific, prior learning. [STA 296](#) requires but does not use calculus; the calculus prerequisite mostly provides students with a useful—but imperfect—signal about what it takes to do well in STA 296. **Alternatively**, course prerequisites may also be used to impose—again, imperfectly—structure on programs that facilitate common cohort progression (e.g., sophomores take certain courses together, juniors take certain courses together, etc.).

**Finally**, strict enforcement of course prerequisites might prompt an unwanted wave of minor course change proposals to change the course prerequisite language (e.g., to add "...or consent of instructor"). Such proposals require activity in Curriculog and the approval of the Senate Council Chair.

- Why involve the college deans and the Registrar?

This proposed rule would require all such course prerequisite waivers to route to the Registrar through the dean. The college dean "is responsible for the implementation of the curricula of the college" ([GR VII.F.2.c](#)). Deans can monitor that course prerequisite waivers are used appropriately (e.g., in specific student cases) and, if warranted, advise faculty to consider formally changing a course prerequisite if waivers become the norm for a course.

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### Proposed Rewording of Senate Rule

(black text is original; add [blue underline](#) text)

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## 3.2.2 COURSE NUMBERING SYSTEM

### 3.2.2.1 Standard numbering system

The number system reflects the level of course material and associated rigor. With the exception of upper graduate level and professional courses, any prerequisite restrictions limiting the level of a student accepted into a course shall be specified in a course's prerequisites. [US: 11/14/2016] Courses shall be numbered as follows:

001-099	No credit, non-degree and/or developmental courses; [US: 9/10/2001]
100-199	Freshmen-level course; undergraduate credit only; [US: 11/14/2016]
200-299	Sophomore-level course; undergraduate credit only; [US: 11/14/2016]
300-399	Junior-level course; undergraduate credit only; [US: 11/14/2016]
400-499	Advanced junior- and senior-level course; undergraduate credit only;
400G-499G	Senior and first-year graduate-level course; graduate credit for non-majors only; [US: 11/14/2016]
500-599	First-year graduate-level course; undergraduate and graduate credit; [US: 11/14/2016]
600-799	Upper graduate-level course; open only to graduate students; [US: 11/14/2016]
800-999	Professional programs course; open only to students enrolled in professional degree programs (see SR 9.20). [US: 2/13/2012; 11/14/2016; 3/19/2018]

### 3.2.2.2 Exceptions

Exceptions to the requirements for admission to courses may be made as follows [US: 11/14/2016]:

#### 3.2.2.2.1 Local Educational Policy Authority to Waive Course Prerequisites Upon Student Request

Instructors of Record may waive, when merited on a student case-by-case basis, some or all course prerequisites for their courses, unless either (1) another Senate Rule or Senate decision prescribes otherwise or (2) the faculty body responsible for the course (SR 3.2.3.3) has reserved that authority to itself or its designee(s). If the latter, the faculty body or its designee(s) must obtain the approval of the Instructor of Record. The respective dean for the educational unit (or unit equivalent SR 3.2.3.1) shall process such waivers through the Registrar.

#### 3.2.2.2.2 Admission to Courses Numbered Between 600 and 799

Seniors with superior ability or preparation may be admitted to courses numbered between 600 and 799, upon approval of the instructor, the dean of the student's college and the dean of the Graduate School.