(Sender Copy) Math 2B: Jeff's Add Code Policy

Jeff Anderson <andersonjeff@fhda.edu>
Mon 9/25/2023 4:37 AM
To:Jeff Anderson <andersonjeff@fhda.edu>

Subject: Math 2B: Jeff's Add Code Policy
Sent on: Monday 9/25/23

Greetings,

My name is Jeff Anderson. I am a math instructor at Foothill College.

I'm writing because I notice you are currently on the waitlist for my Math 2B.01 course (CRN 20501) at Foothill College.

In this email, I will explain my add code policy.

I maintain a policy that in almost all cases, I do not hand out add codes.

I feel strongly that our current college system asks me to do WAY too much without enough support. It is cruel to both my students and me ask one person to teach 40 students in one class. It is even more cruel that my full-time job demands that I teach three separate classes, each with 40 people enrolled. These policies imply that, in each quarter, I am asked to serve 120 students. How good of a job could a single mother/father do in caring for 120 children?

Seriously. Think about this for a minute.

What would you say about a mother/father who had to care for the needs of 120 human beings? Is it possible to do that in thoughtful, healthy, meaningful ways without substantial help? Could that parent give each learner under their care the type of individual attention they might need to really thrive?

When I work with students in my classes, I think of each of my students as part of my learning family. Based on 15+ years of teaching experience, I don't believe it is possible to create the type of educational experiences you deserve when I am charged to teacher 40 people per class.

The older I get, the more open I am about advocating for a system that places ten people under my care per quarter. Ten is a lot but I think I can do some good work under that constraint.

For more about this, you might enjoy a blog post I wrote a few years back that speaks about this subject:

https://jeffandersonmath.wordpress.com/2020/07/15/the-brain-to-hands-ratio/

Based on these beliefs, I do everything in my power not to hand out add codes. One of the features of my class is that I meet individually with every student under my care. Ideally, these individual learning conferences happen once every two weeks. Each class is 135 minutes and that happens twice per week. So, if we add that up, this is 270 minutes of in-class time each week. If we divide this by 40 students, that is 6 min 45 seconds per student per week. If we do that once every two weeks, that is about 13 min, 30 second per student.

To me, that is an insufficient amount of time to develop authentic relationships, get to know each other on a personal level, and to customize the experience for each individual student. The thought of adding more students to that list is overwhelming to the point of pain. Moreover, if I say that I'll add just one student, then I open a whole bag of problems with other students who want to add. I share all this to explain what my late add policy is and why it exists.

For students who are on my waitlist and want to add this class, I have a few ideas for you:

A. Have you explored other options (eg. an alternate section of the same course) for this quarter?

B. If you feel strongly that you'd like to take this class with me, please look at my course history page. As soon as I know my upcoming schedule, I post the classes I plan to teach in the future on that site. If you see that I'll be offering the same class again in the future and this works with your schedule, be sure to sign up early. My classes tend to fill quickly! If you feel strongly that you'd like to take a class with me but can't do so for your target class for this quarter, you might consider taking one of my other classes in the future. I teach all my classes using a similar student-centered approach.

Thanks again for your interest in my class and I hope to serve you in the future. One of the joys of my life is spending time with students and supporting your dreams!

Best,

Jeff

PS. If all the sections of this class are full for this upcoming quarter, I invite you to email Foothill College's STEM division dean. To find that email address, do an internet search of the phrase "Foothill College STEM Division Dean." You should be able to find the current dean's name and email address within a few minutes of browsing. Below is an example email you might send:

Dear STEM Division Dean,

My name is [Enter your name here]. My Campus Wide ID (CWID) number is 12345678.

I'm writing because I am interested in taking the following class:

Math XX.

However, I notice that all sections of this class are currently full. I would like to request that, if there is enough demand, Foothill College should open a new section of this class this quarter.

Please let me know what I can do to help get that new section started. In this case, I might ask how I can be added to the roster for that class.

Thank you, in advance, for your attention and consideration.

Best regards,

Your Name

Your preferred email

Your phone number