To: Barbara McGraw, Professor  
From: Frances M. Sweeney, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Academics 
Date: 1 May 2011 
Re: Course allocation process  

Per your inquiry into how undergraduate course allocations are determined, here is an overview of the timeline and steps involved. 

Here is an overview of course allocation process:  

1. Each year in January, the Trustees vote on the next year's budget based on recommendations from our campus Budget Committee. Their budget includes items that impact course allocation: average class size, incoming enrollment targets for new students, transfer student expectations, and total student enrollment.  

2. In January, I use those items (e.g., average class size, new students, continuing students and total students) and I review the prior years' allocations. I typically go back three years. I then make projections by program, for each program and each undergraduate school, as well as Collegiate Seminar. I meet with the director of Collegiate Seminar and the deans to review each school's (and each program's) needs. Sometimes a program has faculty on sabbatical so they will reduce by a course, etc. We determine a total allocation by program, by school and across the undergraduate college.  

3. In February, we present the chairs with their allocation. Each chair discusses with his/her dean whether it is the right allocation. We also present them with other data (e.g., percentage of courses taught by full time, participation in CS and JT, enrollment targets and realities, average class size targets). Within and across schools, for each year we need to stay within a maximum due to total enrollment, but there are changes from year to year, and from term to term, due to program-related causes and college-wide issues.
4. Through spring and summer, we make adjustments program by program. Often there are courses cancelled due to low enrollments after fall registration. Other times we need to add sections due to an increase in transfer students (upper division courses) or first-year students (lower division courses). Last summer, for example, we added 43 courses between fall registration and first day of class, due to the substantial increase in new students.

5. There is no zero sum balance of courses per program, nor per term or year. Factors that impact allocation include average class size, new student projections, transfer student projections, total enrollment, study abroad projections, and program changes such as the Business Administration proposal itself. We do not base allocations on the number of majors or minors in a program.

6. Overall, we have tried to make this as transparent and collegial as possible. I have been very impressed by chairs and deans in their support for program change and growth. We have added courses across the three schools in the past few years. Faculty have been great at responding to need, both in terms of adding courses when needed, and reducing courses. Some programs offer courses on rotation, etc.

Let me know if you have other questions about this.