

Course numbers and titles may not match

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system," said Doctor Patricia Johnson, Director of the School of Humanities. The degree audit system has flaws that need updating. Currently the system of degree audits has a problem with matching what course numbers and titles are listed by University Park with what the numbers and titles are at PSH.

While the problem may lie in a miscommunication of what the actual course numbers and titles are there are some instances where just not enough courses are being made available at all. The communications program within the School of Humanities has a lack of 400 level courses. Any student that still needs the required 12 credits of communications courses, with a grade of C or higher, may find themselves short changed when scheduling courses for the 2007 spring semester.

"We've had a lot of pressure from University Park to match University Park courses, and from younger students so we have needed to shift focus to lower level courses," said Johnson.

The same dilemma of available

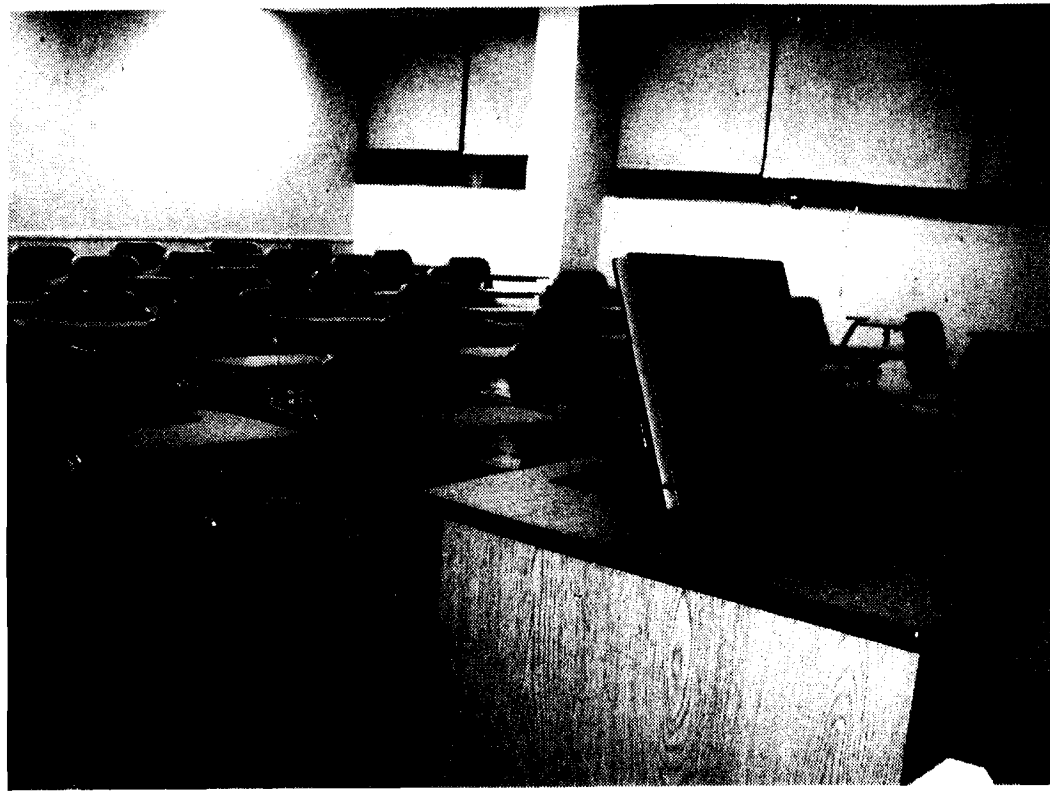


Photo by SUPAT KANCHANASAKUL/Capital Times

Without available courses many of the classrooms in Olmsted could be as empty as this one.

courses versus what is required also affects structural engineers that need 25 credits of core classes and have less than 20 available when comparing degree audits to the available course list.

Part of the problem is not having

the resources available to offer every class needed, every semester. Most schools set up their degree programs on a rotation that places students in a predictable cycle of courses and makes it easier to anticipate a graduation date. The system of cycling classes,

Business. The open forums are held every semester, by every school within PSH.

There are solutions available to students with this dilemma. All students are encouraged to speak

and where the degree audit system hinders students, is when it comes to transfer students.

Anyone outside of the cycle may have a harder time scheduling courses that can lead to a quick graduation date.

"Scheduling courses is always a topic that is brought up at our open forums," said Dawn Hamaty, administrative assistant, School of

with their advisor when it comes to scheduling courses. Sometimes the problem is as simple as comparing what the University Park generated degree audit states to what the corresponding courses are at PSH.

As in the case of most business students the degree audit may state that a student needs to take a course with the abbreviation FIN, but at PSH the same courses are available under the abbreviation FINAN. The same applies to student needing a management course with the abbreviation MGMNT, but an advisor can tell a student what course to take with the abbreviation MGMT.

The advising program allows students a way to ensure their graduation will not be postponed. "Students can take an independent study or do a course substitution," said Johnson, offering suggestions on how students can make up classes.

Although PSH has been forced to adopt the degree audit system, flaws and all, there are being measures taken to get the available course list here up to speed with what is required by University Park. "We're trying to be more proactive rather than reactive to student needs," said Hamaty.

While the process of course

offerings and degree audits is being streamlined no school has realized that the problem of available courses and that conflict with degree audit statements is something that happens campus wide. No school had any knowledge of this problem affecting other schools:

Also, there are problems tied to being outside of the cycle of available courses. Having only one class and four credits or less does not entitle a student to any state aid. One class will also make a student ineligible to receive Penn State Health Insurance, affecting a wide range of potential students.

Overall, students are encouraged to talk to their advisors, and, if necessary, up through their program coordinators and school directors. While the system is being overhauled, due to increased student population, differences in abbreviations or more four year degree programs the first available tool for students to use in securing their classes is to consult their advisor.

Once an advisor has pointed a student in the right direction a simple hand scrawled message on a post note can replace the meticulously planned degree audit as the road map to planning a schedule.

Students Speak Out:



"They need to make the system more student friendly due to the fact that Penn State thinks that certain classes should only be offered at certain times."

-Paul Manarchuck
Junior
Behavioral Science Major



"I haven't had any trouble scheduling my classes for this Spring but they did not offer certain classes anymore- and the advisors don't help much."

-Rebecca Johnston
Junior
Behavioral Sciences




"Yes, I've had trouble in the past getting into a course that I wanted to take."

-Joseph Nooraga
Senior
Computer Science


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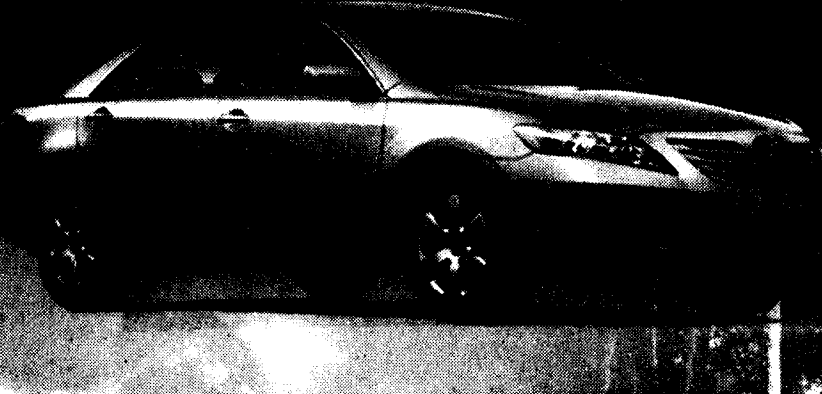
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