Why Does the Availability Sometimes Seem Wrong in Class Search

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This article applies to both MJC Class Search and Columbia Class Search.

Have you noticed sometimes that a class will list available spots, but yet have a waitlist. Why is that? What's really going on?

Let's take a look at CSPCOM-4-4252 as an example.

Its for Columbia Spring 2020 Term uruse location. title, and tupe codes printed in blue (links) can be clicked for additional information.					Oldoo	Search Resu							
Name	Section	Title	Important Notes	Instructor	Ĭ	Location	Туре	Times	Days	Max/ Avail	Status	Text Books	IGETC/ C\$U.GE CC.GE
CSPCOM-4	4008	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20		Elizondo Tim	3	CSUG 214, Columbia	LEC	9:40A - 11:05A	TTH	30/0	Wait/2	Books	1C,A1
CSPCOM-4	4009	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is an online class.	Elizondo Tim	3	CONS. Online	DINT	3.30 hrs/wk	ARR	30/0	Wait/5	Books	1C,A1
CSPCOM-4	4225	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Amador Economic Prosestry Center, The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live video of the class will be broadcast to the Center.	Steen Turda	3	CAPC 1, Amador County	LEG	6.00P - 9.05P	TH	10/6	Open 2	Books	10,41
CSPCOM-4	4252	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This face-to-face course will also be video-broadcasted to students at the <u>Amador</u> <u>Economic Prosperity Center</u> and <u>Calaveras County Office</u> of <u>Education</u> .	Sten Tinta	3	CAPL 104, Columbia	LEC	6.00P - 9.05P	TH	159	Walt/7	Books	1C,A1
CSPCOM-4	4271	Introduction to Human Communication 01/13/20-05/02/20	This is a video-broadcast class. Students will meet at the Calaxeras County Office of Education. The instructor will be teaching from Columbia College and live video of the class will be broadcast to the Canter.	Qisen_Turda	3	CCOE.1. Calaveras County	LEG	6.00P - 9.05P	TH	10/1	Open	Books	1C,A1

In the above example, we see a max capacity of 15 for the class, an availability of 9, and a waitlist with 7 students.

How can there be an availability when there is a growing waitlist?

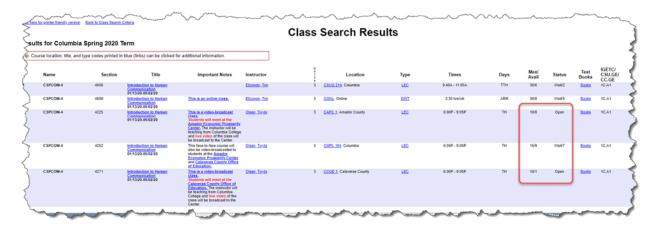
What may appear to be an error is actually not. We'll get back to that strange behavior in just a moment. First, let's take a look at how Class Search is designed to work.

Class Search is designed to count down the available spots as students register for the class. Once a class is full, the waitlist will open and as students add to the waitlist those numbers go up. When that happens, the available number usually remains at zero. However, sometimes it does not.

Why is that? Time to get back to that strange behavior from earlier.

If a class is cross-listed with other classes, Class Search is designed to display the total number of available spots that exist across those other cross-listed sections.

Let's look back at our example. It just happens that CSPCOM-4-4252 is also cross listed with CSPCOM-4-4225 and CSPCOM-4-4271 which appear above and below our example class.



Notice that section 4225 has an availability of 8. Notice also that section 4271 has an availability of 1. Added together, we can better see where the availability of 9 in section 4252 comes from.

Why does Class Search do this?

Well, this is meant to be an indicator to students that they may be able to find a spot in a different section allowing them to take the class they want. However, this may not always be great news as the alternative sections may be on a day, at a time, or at a location that does not work for the student's schedule.