

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 1 October 2026
TO: UFS Undergraduate Programs Committee
FROM: Christopher Beetle, Chair 
SUBJECT: Explanation of DIR Proposals

In 2024, the Department of Physics in the Charles E. Schmidt College of Science proposed a Directed Independent Research course for Physics majors under the course code PHY 4916. This proposal was approved by UFS. However, the course number was already in use, having been previously proposed and approved for use by students in the Physics concentrations of the Bachelors' programs in Biological and Physical Sciences offered by the Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College.

We have learned that FAU's course scheduling infrastructure does not allow the Department of Physics to create sections of PHY 4916 directly, as we do for all other courses in our programs. Rather, requests to schedule sections must be routed for approval at the College and University level before they can be opened to Physics students. This creates a logistical bottleneck as those requests often come late in the drop/add period.

The accompanying course proposals use a different pair of course numbers, PHY 2/4911 for letter-graded DIR sections and PHY 2/4912 for S/U-graded sections, over which the Department of Physics should have unit-level scheduling authority. Although these course codes already exist under the Statewide Course Numbering System, but not within FAU, they differ from those recommended by OURI:

<https://www.fau.edu/ouri/dir-designation/>

However, the alternate numbers will streamline the scheduling process for Physics faculty by eliminating the need to seek approval outside the Department to schedule such courses.

To clean up the catalog, we also propose to cancel our DIR course, created in 2024, under the PHY 4916 course code. The Honors College's course under the same code should not be affected. We have also implemented our S/U lower-division proposal as a course change, since the corresponding course was also created in 2024.

If FAU's scheduling infrastructure can be updated to grant more than one academic unit latitude to schedule sections of courses such as this, then the Department of Physics will happily revert to using the OURI-recommended course codes that currently are *de facto* reserved for use by the Honors College (absent the intervention of University-level scheduling authorities).