

Minutes
Academic Policy Committee, Faculty Senate
Regular Meeting: 9/16/2014

Senators Attending: Montse Fuentes (Co-chair), Derek Aday (Co-chair), Sarah Ash, Alton Banks, Roy Borden.

Guests: Jo-Ann Cohen (Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, COS), Michelle Johnson (Senior Associate Registrar), Brittany Mastrangelo (Associate Registrar)

1. Introductions

Meeting began at 3:15pm with introductions of those in attendance.

2. Unified Campus Time Table Proposal and Scheduling Policies

Michelle Johnson, Senior Associate Registrar, led a discussion about the proposal for a unified campus time table. Primary driving factors include improvement of classroom utilization, improvement of class options spread over times and days of the week, increasing course availability for students (through more scheduling options), and simplifying the current exam schedule.

In addition to the unified campus time table there was discussion about proposed scheduling policies, which include: 1) a course distribution policy requiring a maximum of 50% of scheduled courses Mon – Thurs during primetime hours, a minimum of 20% of scheduled courses to include a Friday meeting time, and a requirement that departments offering one day per week courses schedule them at corresponding times on different days (e.g., first course scheduled on Monday from 11:30 -1:20, second course scheduled on Wednesday from 11:30 – 1:20); 2) a policy for use of 110 classroom space that follows the course distribution policy and uses the new unified time table; and 3) a policy associated with non-standard time courses requiring that these requests must be submitted to the University Calendar Committee for approval and that all non-standard courses must either start or end at a standard start/end time under the new unified time table.

Discussion focused on the change in start time to 8:30am, which might increase student willingness to take these early classes and might decrease traffic on campus (students would be arriving later than staff). However, concern was raised about effects on the number of afternoon lab sections that would be available (which would decrease following a later start time). One example discussed was use of Riddick 301, and guests indicated that capacity issues in that space (and others) may be able to be addressed with the new unified time table. Similar concerns were raised for a variety of colleges and there was discussion about how space needs could be addressed with reduced time blocks. A suggestion was made that departmental review of the proposal would be valuable to ensure that space needs would be appropriate for specific classes and labs. Guests indicated that it would also be possible to drill into these

changes through time mapping and fit analyses to ensure changes will be feasible. Another concern mentioned was that the 15 minute break between classes may be insufficient for laboratory breakdown and setup. Guests indicated that all simulations performed to date imply that the unified time table will work well, but reconsideration of laboratory setup time may be necessary.

There was discussion about how to get more campus use of Friday time. Suggestions were made about policy development requiring 20% use of classroom space on Fridays. This would only apply to 110 classrooms as 210 spaces are scheduled by departments. Discussion with scheduling officers must happen to determine how to effectively use these spaces. There was also discussion about whether a 'forced Friday' policy should be part of policy associated with classes that meet only once per week, and concern was expressed about CHASS, which teaches many of those classes.

Further discussion focused on how to distribute the 'other' 50% of classes that can't be scheduled during primetime slots, which would require a lot of scheduling early in the morning and in the late afternoon and evening. This could present a problem for programs that intentionally schedule classes in the morning to leave open blocks for laboratory sections in the afternoon. The problem remains, however, that space issues are requiring some new policy to deal with limited classroom space during primetime hours. Continued discussion focused on the need to rebalance departmental utilization of primetime space; some departments schedule 100% of classes during this time block whereas for others it is <40%. There is a need for more equitable distribution of classes across departments during primetime hours.

Concern was expressed about how much time has gone into the development of eight semester displays for students. The new policy will likely lead to time conflicts and force rescheduling. Guests indicated that this is happening already and that a primary driver is scheduling of non-standard courses. New policy should trigger a fresh look at scheduling priorities and may require some adjustments on the eight semester displays.

A suggestion was made that these changes be simulated for spring and fall and sent to departments to allow them to react. One option would be for the new unified time table to be in place for fall, 2015. This would require roll out this November. A second option would be to delay this until spring, 2016, providing more time for review. There was general consensus that slowing things down would be a better strategy in terms of giving time for review and adjustment. It was also suggested that the Registrar's Office develop a presentation for faculty explaining why these changes are necessary.

Michelle Johnson asked if it would make sense to separate these issues, first dealing with the unified time table and then later dealing with the proposed scheduling policies. That suggestion was well received by the APC. The new plan would be to work to get support for the unified time table now, with the potential for having the time table in place for fall of 2015 but the possibility that things may have to be delayed until the following spring. It was also

suggested that time changes be modeled for specific programs (e.g., Animal Science, Chemistry, and English) and used as examples to communicate with other departments to indicate that the new strategy is workable. The biggest concerns are making sure that everything fits into classrooms and that faculty will accept the changes. It may make sense to bring in scheduling officers to help with the decision-making process.

Status of this issue: Unified Time Table: Closed. Scheduling Policies: Open

Action: The APC expressed support for moving forward with the Unified Time Table proposal within the parameters indicated above and with an uncertain time table (fall 2015 or spring 2016). The APC will continue to collect feedback through communication with colleges and departments and pass along that information to the Registrar's Office. Further discussion will be required about scheduling policies once the unified time table proposal has been implemented.

The meeting adjourned at 4:45pm

Submitted by Derek Aday