

## Provost's Course Scheduling Workgroup Policy Recommendations

1. **Clock time.** Classes start on the hour and half hour.

*Explanation: Aligns UCR class schedules with administrative schedules, event schedules, employment schedules, and widely used scheduling conventions off-campus. Eliminates confusion about whether a meeting that is scheduled to begin at X:00 actually starts at X:00 or at X:10. Allows faculty and students 10 minutes of passing time to administrative meetings, rather than no time. Generally improves coordination both within and off campus. This recommendation could be implemented sooner than others, if desired.*

2. **Course Scheduling Committee (CSC).** The CSC is appointed by and reports to the Provost. The CSC membership includes the Associate Provost, the Registrar, the Associate/Divisional Dean for Student Affairs from each of the undergraduate colleges/schools, and faculty and staff representatives. The CSC works with the Registrar to implement the campus scheduling policy and makes recommendations to the Provost on all aspects of course scheduling, including priority scheduling, departmentally controlled classroom space, final exam scheduling, special agreements with departments that claim unique scheduling needs, and changes to the campus scheduling policy.

*Explanation: Course scheduling should be responsive to evolving campus needs, and should be informed by broad input from stakeholders. This fosters communication and transparency, and provides a forum for inequities to be discussed and addressed. The Provost should develop a detailed charge for the CSC to refine its purview and help to focus its work. Among its first tasks, the CSC should undertake a review of existing special agreements and final exam scheduling. Ongoing coordination between the CSC and the Registrar's office will be essential.*

3. **Prime time.** Prime hours (9 a.m.-3 p.m.) and allocations (up to 50% of all primary activities and up to 60% of all secondary activities) remain unchanged from current policy but are reviewed regularly by the CSC. An activity counts against a department's prime allocation if (1) it starts within the prime interval (9:00am – 2:59pm) and (2) it is not listed on the CSC's 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority list. As with the current policy, departmental compliance with these allocations is measured at the "Call" deadline. If a department is not in compliance at this time, it will not be included in the scheduling process until it comes into compliance.

*Explanation: Survey results show there will continue to be excess demand for these times. Although our scheduling software is sufficiently robust that we can avoid imposing limits on two-day meeting pattern requests, there remains a need for a mechanism to address excess demand during prime hours. Departmental allocations are currently used by UCR and other campuses, they are arguably an equitable approach, and they distribute the workload more broadly rather than concentrating it on limited Registrar's office staff. Departmental scheduling staff also know more about departmental scheduling needs than does the Registrar's office.*

4. **Meeting patterns.** The standard meeting patterns for primary activities are shown in Appendix 10. Each scheduling requests for a primary activity should use a standard meeting pattern unless the CSC has approved a request for an alternative pattern (see below: approved exceptions), otherwise the activity will receive lowest scheduling priority among primary activities (see below: non-approved exceptions).

*Explanation: Compared to the current policy, there is a much greater variety of standard meeting patterns and many more two-day per week meeting patterns to meet demand expressed by both students and faculty, while still allowing for maximum utilization (no unscheduled time blocks) between 8am and 8pm. Early morning and late evening patterns are likely to have lower utilization, but nonetheless are available if needed. Standard patterns also include single-day three-hour blocks (e.g. for film courses), three-day per week patterns, and four-day per week patterns (e.g. for language courses). The larger number of two-day patterns (along with no limit on departmental requests for two-day patterns) also increases contact time due to fewer passing periods during the day, and greatly reduces the likelihood that a faculty member will have to involuntarily switch a course from a two-day to a three-day pattern. More two-day patterns also can help facilitate the efficient scheduling of hybrid-online courses that may desire only one 80 minute meeting per week: two such courses could fill a standard two-day meeting pattern without negatively impacting utilization.*

## 5. Priority scheduling.

- a. 1<sup>st</sup> priority (scaffolding): Primary activities determined by the CSC and Provost to be of significant importance for student progress to degree across multiple majors receive 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority, along with their associated secondary activities. These courses are scheduled by the CSC in standard meeting patterns and rarely change meeting patterns from one year to the next. 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority courses do not count against individual departmental prime time allocations due to the university service nature of these courses, and because departments have relatively less control over when these courses are scheduled. The CSC regularly reviews the list of courses with 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority, and their meeting patterns, and recommends changes. Secondary activities associated with these courses also have 1<sup>st</sup>-level scheduling priority.

*Explanation: Originally suggested by department chairs in CNAS, “scaffolding” creates a foundational framework of courses that are important across majors and thus to the university as a whole. These courses are scheduled first and deliberately arranged to avoid conflicts, thus placing an emphasis on student needs and progress to degree. This minimizes conflicts that would impact large numbers of students, and/or that could neither be foreseen nor resolved by a single department. It also allows for longer-term planning and greater predictability. Listed courses do not necessarily meet during prime time, but if a large number of them do, the common departmental prime time allocation may need to be reduced below 50%. Learning communities associated with “scaffolded” courses also receive 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority scheduling. The CSC also may recommend that a set of courses be treated as a block for scheduling purposes and given 1<sup>st</sup>-level priority. Each course in such a block also must follow a standard meeting pattern.*

- b. 2<sup>nd</sup> priority (approved exceptions). Primary activities with approval from the CSC and Provost to use non-standard meeting patterns receive 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority to promote higher overall utilization rates and to accommodate unusual and unavoidable circumstances. Such exceptions are rare and require strong justification. 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority courses scheduled during prime hours count against individual departmental prime time allocations. The CSC regularly reviews the list of courses with 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority, and their meeting patterns, and recommends changes.

*Explanation: The current policy gives lower priority to non-standard meeting pattern*

*requests. This policy change recognizes that some exceptions are necessary and should not be penalized in scheduling priority because they don't fit the standard mold. Coordinating exceptions also helps ensure efficient space utilization by bundling them together under this higher priority. Hybrid-online courses could be on the 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority list. For approved non-standard meeting patterns that span across prime and non-prime hours, the CSC will determine whether the activity counts against departmental prime time allocations.*

- c. 3<sup>rd</sup> priority (standard). Most primary activities receive 3<sup>rd</sup>-level priority. Departmental requests for these activities must follow standard meeting patterns. Prior to this step, the grid of 1<sup>st</sup>-level and 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority activities is shared with college enrollment managers to reduce the number of infeasible scheduling requests.

*Explanation: Standard priority is similar to current policy. Most of these activities are scheduled using the Registrar's optimization software. Faculty time and location preferences are expressed through departmental requests, while the optimization step aims for high rates of room placement and seat utilization. Advanced notification of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>-level priority scheduling results enables department staff to make well-informed scheduling requests for standard priority courses.*

- d. 4<sup>th</sup> priority (non-approved exceptions). Primary activity requests for non-standard meeting patterns that were not approved, and that were not re-submitted as standard requests, are scheduled into remaining rooms and meeting patterns. A 4<sup>th</sup>-level priority course counts against a department's prime time allocation if any of its meeting times starts during prime hours.

*Explanation: Outstanding requests for non-standard meeting patterns are fit into rooms and times that remain available. This does not include requests from departments that were not in compliance with prime hour allocations at the time of the "Call." As is the current policy, each department must be in compliance before it will be included in the scheduling process.*

- e. 5<sup>th</sup> priority (secondary activities). All secondary activities not previously scheduled. These activities should align with standard meeting times to the greatest extent possible to promote coordination with primary activities and improve overall utilization.

*Explanation: Most secondary activities receive the lowest priority in order to adequately prioritize primary activities. Because most secondary activities are 50 minutes in length, they should be scheduled on the hour.*

- 6. **Room holds.** A department may keep a classroom assigned to an activity in "hold" status for up to two weeks prior to the first day of instruction. At that time, if an activity has not been placed into "active" status, the room will be released back to the Registrar. The Registrar will then work with departmental scheduling staff to reassign heavily impacted activities to larger rooms, and to address other outstanding scheduling needs.

*Explanation: Departments currently may "hold" rooms past the start of classes, leading to underutilization. Often these holds occur during prime hours, yet are never filled. The proposed policy requires unutilized space to return to the Registrar's pool for assignment prior to the start*

*of classes. To avoid creating a cascade of conflicts, activities should be moved only within existing meeting patterns (i.e. rooms may be reassigned but meeting patterns should remain unchanged), unless another preferred solution can be identified with minimum disruption to other activities.*

7. **Annual scheduling.** Initially, departments should develop, disseminate, and attempt to adhere to an annual (or possibly biennial) list of course offerings. Course scheduling will continue to be done quarterly to allow for more flexibility and last-minute adjustments as the proposed policy is brought online. As the proposed policy becomes more routine, the CSC should re-evaluate annual scheduling.

*Explanation: "Course offerings" refers to a departmental plan to offer courses in particular terms. "Course scheduling" refers to how the offered courses are scheduled into rooms and meeting patterns. Currently, course offerings often are published on a quarterly basis, so it is possible to plan ahead only for the next quarter. Our survey found that students would appreciate knowing anticipated course offerings over a longer time horizon for better planning around other activities (e.g. employment, study abroad, etc.). Additionally, UCR is adopting related planning tools (such as EduNav, a degree planning tool) that would benefit from having a longer-term view of anticipated course offerings. Although the workgroup sees merit in annual scheduling, we feel it is best to take up this issue again later for the reasons stated above.*

8. **Guidelines and expectations.** These should be developed by the CSC to help department chairs address challenging issues at the department level rather than relying exclusively on the department scheduler or appealing to the Registrar's office or the CSC. Among these, the central role of the chair in helping to resolve conflicts should be clarified, rather than relying on unilateral engagement between faculty and scheduling staff.

*Explanation: We found that a variety of faculty and staff frustrations derive from the lack of clear expectations and workflows. The CSC should develop, publish, and communicate clear guidelines related to course scheduling that will help department chairs better manage the process and create greater efficiency through coordinated workflow. The process mapping exercise undertaken by the workgroup provides a good starting point for this effort. Guidelines also might be developed for how departments can manage and mitigate scheduling conflicts between graduate courses and undergraduate discussion sections (i.e. for teaching assistants).*

9. **Transparency and coordination.** Information related to the scheduling process (for both centrally and departmentally controlled space) should be migrated to an open online system with secure login to promote greater transparency, host important policy documents, and realize the benefits of information sharing.

*Explanation: A secure online system is not a replacement for other modes of communication, but nonetheless establishes a good foundation for transparency, communication, and efficient workflow. In addition to scheduling staff, the system should be accessible by all faculty.*

## **Provost's Course Scheduling Committee**

### **Committee Charge**

**September 2018**

The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor (PEVC) is responsible for determining how campus space is allocated, including classroom space. Thus, the campus course scheduling policy also falls under the purview of the PEVC. Course scheduling should be responsive to evolving campus needs, and should be informed by broad input from stakeholders. Therefore, the PEVC relies on a Course Scheduling Committee (CSC) to foster communication and transparency, to provide a forum for concerns to be discussed and addressed, and to make recommendations to the PEVC on all aspects of course scheduling. This includes priority scheduling, final exam scheduling, special agreements with departments that have unique scheduling needs, exceptions and changes to the campus scheduling policy, and other related issues. The CSC also works closely with the Registrar to implement the campus scheduling policy on an ongoing basis. The CSC is comprised of the following individuals, most of whom are ex officio members:

- Associate Provost (Chair)
- Registrar
- Divisional Dean for Student Affairs, CNAS
- Associate Dean for Student Affairs, CHASS
- Associate Dean for Student Affairs, BCOE
- Associate Dean for the Undergraduate Program, Business
- Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education, GSOE
- Associate Dean, SPP
- Faculty Representatives (2), nominated by the Academic Senate
- Staff Representatives (2), enrollment managers from the large colleges

**Prototype Scaffolding Room Matrix for 201740 - Build 1**

Pattern	Days/Times	SPR 1102	C-HUNG. 138	OLMH 1208	BRNHL A125	UV THE8	HWNSS 1501	WAT 1000	MSE 116	PHY 2000	MSE 104	INTN 1020	LFSC 1500	BRNHL B118	UV THE10	UV THE9	UNLH 1000
B01	MW 8-9:20a	100	105	110	130	135	138	170	284	288	293	300	303	329	334	416	570
B02	TR 9-9:20a		CS 010	BIOL 005A	MATH 005		MATH 007A	MATH 007B	MATH 009A	PHYS 040A	ANTH 002	SOC 002S		POSC 010			CHEM 001W
B03	MW 9:30-10:50a		CS 010		MATH 009B		MATH 009B	SOC 002F	BIOL 005A	PHYS 040A	MATH 004	MATH 007A					GEO 009
B03	TR 9:30-10:50a				MATH 009B		MATH 007B		ENSC 001		ANTH 005						HIST 015
C01	MW 11a-12:20p		CS 010		MATH 007A				CHEM 001A		BIOL 005C	HIST 020W				BUS 010	ETST 001
C02	TR 11a-12:20p							PHIL 030E	CS 008	PHYS 040C	BIOL 005C		MATH 006B			POSC 020	HIST 010
C10	MW 12:30-1:50p		CS 010				MATH 006A		SOC 010	MATH 007A	MATH 007A	CHEM 001A			HIST 020	BUS 010	ECON 003
C03	TR 12:30-1:50p						MATH 007A	PSYC 049	CS 008	PHYS 040A	CHEM 004	MATH 009B	MCS 001		POSC 015		BIOL 005B
D01	MW 2-3:20p		CS 010		MATH 009A		MATH 009B	MATH 006A	BIOL 005C	CHEM 001A	POSC 005W	GSST 001S		CHEM 001C	ETST 002	PHIL 001	ANTH 001
D02	TR 2-3:20p							MATH 009B	CS 008	CHEM 001A	MATH 022						ECON 002
D10	MW 3:30-4:50p			MATH 009B			MATH 006A			CHEM 001C	BIOL 005B	PSYC 049	MATH 005	MATH 009A			PSYC 002
D03	TR 3:30-4:50p			MATH 009B	MATH 007A		MATH 007B		ETST 003	PHYS 040C	EE 001A		BIOL 030				SOC 001
																	PSYC 001

**Notes:**

- The time frame was expanded out of Prime hours to accommodate all necessary sections in UNLH 1000.

- Sections were generally kept as close to their current days, time, and rooms as possible, except:

- a) when the original time was outside the 8am-5pm window considered, or
- b) the class conflicted with another section already on the matrix, or
- c) a class time shift caused two sections of the same course to occur at the same time, or
- d) when additional time options were needed for conflicting courses.

- Sections in UV THE9 & 10 have not had their meeting patterns shifted to account for offset time for the Village

- 99 sections, representing the large lectures on the courses list, were scheduled in this sample.

- This matrix is a first sample draft and proof-of-concept. Room utilization and overall scheduling has not been optimized in any way except to avoid or provide alternatives to known conflicts.

This is a sample build of a "scaffolding" matrix of high priority courses for Fall 2017. This is not a final build for actual scheduling but rather is representative of what such a matrix might look like.