

October 13, 2021

To: Walid Najjar, Professor and Chair of Computer Science & Engineering
From: Ken Baerenklau, Associate Provost (on behalf of the Course Scheduling Committee)
Cc: Chris Lynch, Dean of the Bourns College of Engineering
Marko Princevac, Associate Dean of the Bourns College of Engineering
Bracken Dailey, Registrar

Dear Walid:

The Course Scheduling Committee has approved a new pre-assignment agreement for Computer Science. Effective Spring 2022, Computer Science will receive priority scheduling for up to 30 secondary activity sections after 3:00pm, Monday through Friday, in General Assignment classrooms seating less than 80 students. Scheduling requests for these sections must be evenly distributed between 3:00 pm and 10:00 pm.

Background

The Department of Computer Science requested to move a total of 48 lab sections, currently serving 40-50 students each, and totaling 111 hours of contact time each week, out of departmentally-controlled space in Winston Chung Hall (WCH) and into two 50+ seat General Assignment (GA) classrooms which would be set aside for departmental use. The rationale for the request is that applications and enrollments in computing majors are growing rapidly; the WCH space is essentially at capacity and thus creating a bottleneck for growth and student progress through the curriculum; opportunities to migrate labs from in-person to online have already been exhausted, given that not all labs are well-suited for online instruction; and the lab sections in the request do not require any specialized equipment and thus would be appropriate for GA classrooms. The CSC is also aware that undergraduate growth in computing majors is important to the future financial health of the college.

Scheduling of these lab sections includes important elements that are non-standard under the campus scheduling policy: (1) each lab must occupy a 2-3-hour block of time; and (2) for a given course, each lab must be sequenced appropriately with the corresponding lectures, so that all students receive lab instruction after completing the same lecture instruction.

Implementing this request would require a pre-assignment agreement that effectively prioritizes the lab sections over other course sections campus-wide. The CSC is judicious about allowing pre-assignment agreements given the number of faculty and courses to be scheduled and the difficulty of finding rooms for everyone given our space constraints. The CSC has created a pre-assignment category for courses that demonstrate "unique pedagogical needs" and this would seem to be the most appropriate category for the Computer Science request. Within this category are two similar existing agreements:

1. Math's scheduling structure includes non-standard non-unit-bearing activities and a pedagogical need for non-unit-bearing activities to be scheduled on days opposite from the unit-bearing

activity. Math is allotted two GA classrooms so these 2-day activities can be scheduled as necessary. At that time, the room is returned to a general assignment classroom for the Registrar's Office to schedule any remaining slots.

2. BCH 162 lectures need to occur either on MW mornings or TR mornings to coordinate them with the appropriate labs.

The CSC notes some significant differences between the Computer Science request and these two existing agreements:

1. The Math courses were always held in GA space because Math never had departmental space to offer the courses. Therefore, when the agreement was created, there was a relatively smaller impact on other courses scheduled in GA space by the Registrar compared to the impact of a Computer Science agreement which is expected to displace 64 other course sections.
2. Similarly, the BCH agreement is for a single course that was already being offered in GA space, so the impact of the agreement was relatively small.

The CSC also notes the following relevant points:

1. Computer Science requested control of two 50+ seat general assignment classrooms which they would schedule 12 hours per day, 5 days per week to meet their needs.
2. Computer Science plans to use the six vacated departmental classrooms as follows: two rooms for lecturer offices and office hours (currently shared with administrative staff which is expanding); two rooms for TA office hours which are currently held in research labs; one room for lab sections with specialized equipment needs; plus space for their expanding doctoral student population.
3. Computer Science has attempted to slow its enrollment growth but each year there is unexpectedly strong demand that speaks to the strength of the program as well as student interest in computer science careers.
4. Serving students in the areas they want to study is core to the mission of the campus.
5. Growth in Computer Science helps the financial position of the college and the campus, including by providing additional return to aid for low income students.
6. The current request for space is much smaller than the initial request (which was not approved by the CSC) due to efforts made by Computer Science to resolve their scheduling challenges internally.

Given the balance of circumstances, and especially the unprecedented student demand that Computer Science is experiencing and the significant efforts already made by the department to accommodate their courses in departmental space, the Course Scheduling Committee approves the following pre-assignment agreement: **Effective Spring 2022, Computer Science will receive priority scheduling for up to 30 secondary activity sections after 3:00pm, Monday through Friday, in General Assignment classrooms seating less than 80 students. Scheduling requests for these sections must be evenly distributed between 3:00 pm and 10:00 pm.**