

## Guidelines for Using the New Course Block Schedule

### 1. Maintaining Existing Blocks.

- **If your department is offering courses during a MWF 50 min block that work within your schedule and/or are important for pedagogical reasons, please keep offering them!** The CC is not encouraging anyone to change *how* they teach, and students appreciate these shorter blocks.
- If your department is offering courses during overutilized T/Th 75 min blocks (i.e., 9:55-11:10, 11:20-12:35, 1:15-2:30, 2:40-3:55), *consider* moving to a new block. **However, we only need about 15-20% of courses offered during these high-traffic periods to move in order to ease conflicts.**

### 2. Carefully Considering Conflicts.

- Start within the department. Please avoid overlapping courses with no (or the same) prerequisite(s) that are required for the major/minor.
- If, however, your department offers courses that have an essential prerequisite (meaning that students **MUST** take one course before a second), consider scheduling them at the same time. Students can only register for one at a time and this will ease their conflicts.
- Many intro-level courses in the Arts & Humanities and NSE Divisions are commonly offered during MWF 50 min blocks. Courses aimed primarily at upper level students may be less likely to conflict with these courses if moved to the new MW 75 min blocks.
- It is important to recognize that large courses with high attendance have limited flexibility in scheduling, partially due to the need for one of the few large lecture halls on campus.
- If a faculty member is scheduling a smaller class or seminar and is willing to find a time to fit students' schedules, the CC recommends that they list a time for registration, but also reach out to students directly and publicize more broadly that the time may be changed to accommodate the schedules of all interested students.

### 3. Communicating.

- First, we encourage a meeting of the faculty within the department to facilitate collaborative planning and coordination of schedules. We hope that this initial meeting will promote cohesion and integration of schedules within a department.
- The CC encourages holding a scheduling meeting for all chairs/coordinators within a division before setting their schedule (NSE uses a spreadsheet that is shared among chairs, for example).
- Given the interest in more oversight and decreased conflicts within our schedules, the CC may review schedules and provide additional guidance.

## Best Practices for Course Scheduling

Ensure equity. Course blocks should not be determined by seniority or rank within a department; all instructional staff should be allowed to teach (at some point) during priority blocks. This may be accomplished in multiple ways, determined by the chair/coordinator. (For example, faculty may submit ranked blocks in terms of preference rather than simply stating their selections.) Chairs should attempt to balance requests with need, equity, and fairness.

Encourage (or require) flexibility. We currently offer a number of course blocks that are underutilized (e.g., any day at 8:30 am; F 2:15-5 pm; M-Th 7-8:15 or 7-10 pm). Faculty should be encouraged to use these underutilized blocks at least on occasion.

- A number of peer institutions *require* faculty who teach 3 or more courses in a year to use at least one block outside of priority blocks.
- Similarly, at least one department on campus currently requires faculty who teach TTh one semester to teach MWF another semester.

Again, the CC is not instituting any requirements along these lines as of yet, but may consider them in the future. We are hoping that encouraging good citizenship will be sufficient incentive at this time.

Recognize true limitations. Some faculty may have obligations (e.g., child or family care) or other constraints (e.g., health concerns) that prevent them from teaching in some course blocks. Please recognize and respect these constraints while balancing them with equity issues and the recognition that, as a residential college, we generally expect faculty to be on campus most days of the week.

Athletics & Other Student Activities. Consistent with a focus of the Strategic Plan on educating the entire student, the CC encourages a recognition and respect for the learning that occurs outside the classroom in a wide variety of activities. This includes Athletics, for which [guidelines on resolving scheduling conflicts](#) exist (see also the [Student-Athlete Manual](#)). In lieu of providing an exhaustive list here, the CC encourages departments and programs to review the guidelines, which include such suggestions as finalizing and communicating the times of course-related events at the beginning of the semester, providing alternatives for events should conflicts arise, honoring the 4:15-7:00 pm block that is heavily used by students for extracurricular activities and dinner, and cultivating open lines of communication between instructors, students, and coaches.