

Background, Explanation, and Rationale for Recommending Option C from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar

Among other things, one purpose of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar was to look at “the classroom utilization issue (with the aim to ensure that students can get their classes – currently there are many class conflicts because classes are compressed to 10-3 M-Th)... This committee will review weekly and yearly issues and consider ways to maximize use of classroom space, especially during off-hours.” Personnel in the Registrar’s Office were having much difficulty scheduling classrooms on campus, particularly during primetime 10:10 – 2:15 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and 9:30 -1:45 Tuesday and Thursday. Few lecture classes are scheduled at 8:00 a.m. Monday-Friday and Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoons after 2:30.

For over a year the Ad Hoc Committee discussed ways to improve the scheduling system and proposed several alternative meeting patterns for 3 credit courses. Aside from the current standard times, the Committee proposed and presented what were called **Options A and B** for class scheduling to the campus community through a survey to determine preferences. Option A involved starting classes at 8:00 a.m. with a clock schedule very similar to what is current. Option B started classes at 8:30 a.m. with the clock schedule adjusted a half hour later the remainder of the day. Otherwise, Options A and B were very similar where both provided for three 75 minute class meeting periods on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. Both options allowed for open time on Friday afternoon after 2:30 to schedule special seminars, lectures, and other academic events.

The results of our survey favored Option B among the campus groups surveyed. After the survey, the Ad Hoc Committee discussed the potential reasons for the groups surveyed showing a preference for Option B. This option could have been favored due to starting the classes at 8:30, or due to the 75-minute periods provided Monday and Wednesday afternoons, or a combination of these. These could not be differentiated within the survey results. The Committee also received written statements and testimony that expressed opposition to Option B due to the shifting of the schedule to start and end classes one-half hour later in the day. The current set of standard times was the least preferred compared to Options A and B, which the Committee members feel was mostly due to providing more 75-minute periods in the proposed options during the academic week with the added ones on Monday and Wednesday. Even though Option B was the favored one, the Committee recommended Option A for the following reasons:

- a. Option A provided 16 slots (instead of 15 in both the standard schedule and Option B);
- b. If the 8:30 starting time in Option B turned out to be as unpopular as the 8:00 starting time, no improvement would have been accomplished except to move all the classes one-half hour later in the day. There were also some faculty who preferred to start teaching at 8:00;
- c. Instead of changing two variables, the additional 75-minute slots on Mondays and Wednesdays + starting at 8:30, the Committee recommended trying Option A first for three years to see if the problem was resolved;
- d. The Music Department had objections to Option B (because of the packed schedule of the Music students, the need to keep the later hours of the afternoon and the evening for Marching Band [which is not just limited to Music majors], student practices and other activities organized by the department, and the need to start classes in the rooms managed by the department at 8:00).
- e. The half-hour later scheduling for athletes left a much tighter slot for coordinating meals following later afternoon practices.

At an open hearing on October 24, 2011, several faculty members and representatives of campus wide organizations criticized the fact that in Option A general classroom scheduling on Fridays stopped at 2:15 to create more T Th slots on MW and pointed out the effects that this could have on the habits of our students (drinking). People also pointed out the problems for lab and common examination scheduling related to the new sequence.

Taking into consideration the input from the open hearing as well as the results of the surveys and the discussions in the Senate, the Ad-hoc Committee came up with another, less radical option that could be called **Option C** and that would integrate two additional 75 minute slots into the existing meeting pattern, and provide meeting times at 8:40 AM and 3:35 PM.

	Mon/Wed/Fri 50 MIN	Tues/Thur 75 MIN	
Period 1	0800AM-0850AM	0800AM-0915AM	Period 10
Period 2	0905AM-0955AM	0930AM-1045AM	Period 11
Period 3	1010AM-1100AM	1100AM-1215PM	Period 12
Period 4	1115AM-1205PM	1230PM-0145PM	Period 13
Period 5	1220PM-0110PM	0200PM-0315PM	Period 14
Period 6	0125PM-0215PM	0330PM-0445PM	Period 15
Period 7	0230PM-0320PM		
Period 8	0335PM-0425PM		
Period 9	0440PM-0530PM		
	Alternate 75 MIN meeting patterns M/W - W/F - M/F		
Period 1 & 2	0840AM-0955AM		
Period 8 & 9	0335PM-0450PM		

A search for classrooms from 9:05 to 9:55am M/W/F for the spring semester of 2011 showed that there were 43 rooms still available for academic courses. At the 3:35 to 4:25 period, 42 classrooms were still available. Based on the number of classrooms that are still available, the Scheduling Office is willing to permit an overlap of period 2 and period 9 to create two additional 75 minute slots because there will be enough rooms to accommodate a combination of MWF and MW/ W/F and M/F requests.

The Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar proposes the adoption of Option C that would leave everything the way it is but add the possibility for additional 75 minutes slots on M, W, F.

The purchase of a new software package by the Scheduling Office will allow the compilation of detailed and comprehensive statistics about whether or not departments follow the scheduling guidelines and spread courses out throughout the course of the day and by doing so, make good use of classrooms. The statistics will be shared with the departments and the administration with the purpose of making adjustments in the next year.