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# Classroom Scheduling Policy Draft

USM Faculty Senate

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## **CLASSROOM SCHEDULING POLICY DRAFT**

**DRAFT COPY AS OF 4-2-13**

### **THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI HATTIESBURG CAMPUS**

The University Classroom Scheduling Task Force has developed a draft copy of scheduling policies and procedures as recommended by the Provost. Please review these and send suggestions by April 22, 2013 to your representative on the Classroom Scheduling Task Force.

Send suggestions by April 22<sup>nd</sup> to one of the members listed below:

Arts and Letters – Jeanne Gillespie

Business – Gwen Pate

Education and Psychology – Thomas Lipscomb

Health – Sue Hubble Burchell

Nursing - Cathy Beasley and Sandra Bishop

Science and Technology – Joyce Bennett and Kevin Sellers

## **Overview**

The primary purpose of the facilities at The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is to carry out the educational mission of the University. Effective class and classroom scheduling is critical to the academic mission of the University. These procedures enable students to take classes they need in a timely manner and contributes to on-going cost containment efforts through efficient space utilization and good stewardship of our valuable institutional resources.

Space policies and procedures for each of USM's campuses are autonomous due to the varying facilities and teaching sites. The policy outlined in this document is exclusive to the Hattiesburg campus.

This policy has been developed jointly by the Office of the Provost, college representatives on a Scheduling Task Force, and the Office of the Registrar to ensure that both classes and classrooms are scheduled efficiently to support the needs of students, faculty and the institution as a whole. All units are strongly encouraged to refer to this policy when planning classes or events that require the use of classrooms.

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to set priorities for facility usage, define scheduling procedures, and outline guidelines for use of instructional space that will maximize efficiency in use of

instructional space while providing course offerings that will enable students to get course schedules that will meet program requirements and enhance their ability to graduate.

## Statement of Institutional Goals for Academic Space

To optimize the use of facilities on the USM Hattiesburg campus, several areas of concern must be kept in mind as academic space is requested for use:

### *Improve Utilization and Management of Instructional Space:*

The Provost created a task force to study the current class scheduling practices used by the Office of the Registrar and others on campus.

### *Enhance Student's Ability to Get Schedules Necessary for Graduation*

The primary goal of the Academic Scheduling Process is to maximize the probability that all students receive their choice of courses required for graduation on a timely basis (within the prescribed number of semesters) by providing a conflict-free resource environment which minimizes operating and capital costs.

### *Decrease Energy Consumption:*

Throughout the year, faculty and staff should make efforts to reduce energy costs using recommended strategies (e.g. turning off lights, closing windows, etc.) Particularly during the summer and mini sessions, efforts should be made to limit classroom usage in designated buildings or sections of buildings whenever possible to reduce energy costs.

## Guiding Principles for Scheduling

1. As with all types of space on the Hattiesburg campus, classroom space is a valuable resource that belongs to the institution. The Provost is the steward of instructional space and is responsible for ensuring that this space supports the academic needs of the University.
2. Deans, directors, department chairs and the University Registrar are responsible for ensuring that all classrooms are scheduled efficiently.
3. All general lecture classrooms need to be shared to support the broader teaching and learning needs of the university.
4. Classrooms and other instructional spaces may be allocated to individual departments, but the assignments are not considered permanent. The space may be reallocated as the needs, priorities, and demands of the school, college, or University change.
5. Credit-bearing courses, their exams, and required class events have scheduling priority over all other activities that require the use of classrooms.
6. Due to limited space, final exams will be given in the same room assignment of the class unless prior arrangements are made at the beginning of the term for an alternate location and time.

7. All units are strongly encouraged to plan and distribute classes across all days of the week (Mon-Fri) and all hours of the day as much as possible to maximize use of campus classrooms and minimize class conflicts for students.
8. IHL guidelines stipulate that sections should have a minimum of 750 contact minutes (including the exam period) per credit hour received. For example, a 3-credit hour course should have a minimum of 2250 contact minutes per term. Some classes may meet more than the required minimum in order to accommodate various accreditation standards and course format.
9. Time patterns are the configurations of days and hours to be used in setting up the Schedule of Classes. If a standard set of patterns is chosen, with compatible starting and ending times, schedules will fit together more easily. If patterns are dissimilar, more conflicts will occur within a given academic week.

## Scheduling Distribution Goal

1. Departments must strictly adhere to the approved standard set of time patterns.
2. Because the regular standard meeting lengths are in 50- and 75-minute time blocks, non-standard sections should be offered in multiples of these times to avoid end times that preclude students from registering for courses that may follow the non-standard section.
3. Departments must schedule all multiple lecture and laboratory sections so that student course enrollments will be distributed approximately equally between mornings and afternoons and between the different meeting patterns (TTH vs. MWF).
4. Departments/colleges will have the ability to schedule in rooms they manage first. After this, the Registrar's office will utilize all available classrooms to assist other departments in need of space.
5. Classroom enrollment and room capacities should be based on the actual enrollment trends over the past few years to ensure a realistic estimate of room needs and proper seat and room assignment. Room capacities will be reviewed each semester by the Provost's Office in collaboration with the colleges and departments to ensure that actual instructional capacities for each room are assessed.
6. Departments should strive for a 80% seat utilization, i.e., on average the number of students enrolled in a class divided by the instructional seating capacity of the room that class is in should be greater than or equal to 80%.
7. Prime-time hours are between 10:00 am and 2:00 pm on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and between 9:30 am and 2:15 pm on Tuesday and Thursday. Departments should strive to provide students a variety of options of course offerings throughout the scheduling week by utilizing non-primetime hours.

## Approved Meeting Patterns

### *Regular (Full-term) courses:*

Fall/Spring Semester

| MWF CLASSES   | START      | END        |
|---------------|------------|------------|
|               | 8:00 a.m.  | 8:50 a.m.  |
|               | 9:00 a.m.  | 9:50 a.m.  |
|               | 10:00 a.m. | 10:50 a.m. |
|               | 11:00 a.m. | 11:50 a.m. |
|               | 12:00 p.m. | 12:50 p.m. |
|               | 1:00 p.m.  | 1:50 p.m.  |
| MW CLASSES    | 2:00 p.m.  | 3:15 p.m.  |
|               | 3:30 p.m.  | 4:45 p.m.  |
|               | 5:00 p.m.  | 6:15 p.m.  |
|               | 6:30 p.m.  | 7:45 p.m.  |
|               | 8:00 p.m.  | 9:15 p.m.  |
| TTH CLASSES   | 8:00 a.m.  | 9:15 a.m.  |
|               | 9:30 a.m.  | 10:45 a.m. |
|               | 11:00 a.m. | 12:15 p.m. |
|               | 1:00 p.m.  | 2:15 p.m.  |
|               | 2:25 p.m.  | 3:40 p.m.  |
|               | 3:50 p.m.  | 5:05 p.m.  |
|               | 5:10 p.m.  | 6:25 p.m.  |
|               | 6:30 p.m.  | 7:45 p.m.  |
|               | 8:00 p.m.  | 9:15 p.m.  |
| FRI AFTERNOON | 2:00 p.m.  | 2:50 p.m.  |
|               | 3:00 p.m.  | 3:50 p.m.  |
|               | 4:00 p.m.  | 4:50 p.m.  |
| SAT CLASSES   | 9:00 a.m.  | 11:45 a.m. |
|               | 1:00 p.m.  | 3:45 p.m.  |
| NIGHT CLASSES | 6:30 p.m.  | 9:15 p.m.  |

Summer Semester

| MWF CLASSES   | START      | END        |
|---------------|------------|------------|
|               | 8:00 a.m.  | 9:30 a.m.  |
|               | 9:40 a.m.  | 11:10 a.m. |
|               | 11:20 a.m. | 12:50 p.m. |
|               | 1:00 p.m.  | 2:30 p.m.  |
|               | 2:40 p.m.  | 4:10 p.m.  |
|               | 4:20 p.m.  | 5:50 p.m.  |
| MW CLASSES    | 6:00 p.m.  | 8:05 p.m.  |
|               | 8:05 p.m.  | 10:10 pm   |
| TTH CLASSES   | 8:00 a.m.  | 10:10 a.m. |
|               | 10:20 a.m. | 12:30 p.m. |
|               | 12:40 p.m. | 2:50 p.m.  |
|               | 3:00 p.m.  | 5:10 p.m.  |
|               | 6:00 p.m.  | 8:05 p.m.  |
|               | 8:05 p.m.  | 10:10p.m.  |
| SAT CLASSES   | 8:00 a.m.  | 12:45 p.m. |
|               | 1:00 p.m.  | 5:45 p.m.  |
| NIGHT CLASSES | 6:00 p.m.  | 10:10 p.m. |

**8W1/8W 2 - (Half Semester) Courses:**

Half semester courses (8w1/8w2 – fall/spring or 5w1/5w2 – summer) meet on a ‘double’ timeframe by meeting every day of the week or two periods consecutively.

Fall/Spring Semester

| MWF CLASSES | START      | END                   |
|-------------|------------|-----------------------|
|             | 8:00 a.m.  | 9:50 a.m.             |
|             | 10:00 a.m. | 11:50 a.m.            |
|             | 12:00 p.m. | 1:50 p.m.             |
| MW CLASSES  | 2:00 p.m.  | 4:45 p.m.             |
|             | 5:00 p.m.  | 7:45 p.m.             |
| TTH CLASSES | 8:00 a.m.  | 10:45 p.m.            |
|             | 11:00 a.m. | 12:30 p.m. <u>AND</u> |
|             | 1:00 p.m.  | 2:15 p.m.             |
|             | 2:25 p.m.  | 5:05 p.m.             |
|             | 5:10 p.m.  | 7:45 p.m.             |

Note: Depending on the calendar year, the 8w1 and/or 8w2 courses may need to meet on a regularly scheduled holiday to meet contact minutes. Please refer to the Academic Calendar at [www.usm.edu/registrar](http://www.usm.edu/registrar)

**5W1/5W2 – (Half-Semester) Courses:**

Summer Semester:

Summer classes can meet either every day of the week using the schedule above OR can meet a double period as shown below to meet contact minutes.

| MWF CLASSES | START      | END        |
|-------------|------------|------------|
|             | 8:00 a.m.  | 11:10 a.m. |
|             | 11:20 a.m. | 2:30 p.m.  |
|             | 2:40 p.m.  | 5:50 p.m.  |
| TTH CLASSES | START      | END        |
|             | 8:00 a.m.  | 12:30 p.m. |
|             | 12:40 p.m. | 5:10 p.m.  |

**Mini Session Courses:**

Mini session courses are offered before each term begins and counts as a part of a student’s academic load for the term it precedes.

| 2-week                          | START     | END        |
|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
|                                 | 8:00 a.m. | 12:00 p.m. |
|                                 | 1:00 p.m. | 5:00 p.m.  |
| 5 days (M-F) – Week 1 <b>OR</b> | 8:00 a.m. | 5:00 pm    |
| 5 days (M-F) – Week 2           | 8:00 a.m. | 5:00 p.m.  |

**Block Schedule Courses:**

It is recognized that block scheduling is advantageous within some degree programs, however, this makes compelling rationale to schedule in blocks that span normal time periods. Block scheduling should only be used as an exemption to the normal scheduling process and must be approved by the Provost.

Block scheduled courses must start on the regular scheduled meeting times in order to alleviate more room and schedule conflicts. To utilize space efficiently when using block-scheduled courses, departments should schedule appropriate block times on corresponding days of the week, i.e., Monday 8:00 am – 10:45 am and Wednesday, 8:00 am – 10:45 am.) – See Appendix 1 for details.

| M, W, F CLASSES<br>(one day each week) | START      | END        |
|--|------------|------------|
|  | 8:00 a.m.  | 10:45 a.m. |
|  | 11:00 a.m. | 1:45 p.m.  |
|  | 2:00 p.m.  | 4:45 p.m.  |
| T, TH CLASSES<br>(one day each week)   | 8:00 a.m.  | 10:45 a.m. |
|  | 1:00 p.m.  | 3:45 p.m.  |

### *Alternative Scheduled (CE1) Courses:*

Classes that meet within a term but on an irregular week basis are coded as CE1 sessions but still must adhere to contact-minute guidelines. Departments are responsible for ensuring the irregular meeting times meet contact minutes by utilizing various instructional modes such as online, chat, IVN, etc. These courses usually do not fall into standard meeting patterns and **MUST** be coordinated with the Registrar’s Office for the most appropriate classroom assignment.

## **Classroom Scheduling Strategies**

1. The purpose of using Ad Astra scheduling software is for maximum space utilization and efficient room usage. The Registrar’s Office will assist the colleges with space utilization reports and other data to allow for evidence-based scheduling for future terms.
2. Colleges need to provide written justification for “restricted” rooms. Some room restrictions are acceptable based on room type, such as Laboratories, Studios, and Conference rooms. However, written justification needs to be provided to the Provost Office for all Lecture, Lab/Lecture, Auditorium, Starboard, and Seminar rooms. The Provost will determine if the restriction is warranted.
3. Highly Visible Undergraduate Classrooms (HVUC) will not be restricted to any departments. Priority to a specific department may be given for some HVUC rooms, but none will be restricted. Again, priority to room usage may be granted at the discretion of the Provost.
4. The Provost grants the Registrar’s Office authority to make decisions in cases where the enrollment of a class is low and could be moved to a smaller classroom to allow a larger class to be scheduled in the room in consultation with the appropriate departments.
5. Once-per-week classes can start at any of the start times indicated above. Once-per-week classes that start prior to 3:00pm, however, should be paired according to one of the two-day per week patterns (MW, TTH) indicated above. For example, a Monday class starting at 2:00pm should be balanced by another Wednesday class starting in the same period.



6. Auditoriums are very limited; therefore, classes with seating capacity of 100 or greater must meet during standard meeting patterns and should strive for a seat fill of 80% to retain the use of the room.
7. Classes that have five meeting patterns or less must coordinate times and locations that will best suit the overall schedule.

## Schedule Entry Procedures

1. In October after Executive Cabinet has approved the upcoming academic calendar, the Registrar's Office will copy the last summer and current fall terms forward to the next like terms. At that time departments will be notified of schedule entry availability via the Deptchrssec listserv and the Registrar's website. In early May, the current spring schedule will be copied forward to the future spring term. See the Timeline for Schedule Entry in Appendix 2 for complete details.
2. The Learning Enhancement Center will offer training sessions for departmental schedulers in October. A one-time training session is required for departmental access.
3. Once schedule entry opens in October, the departments will be able to adjust offerings, days, times, rooms, instructors, etc.
4. Schedule entry will be closed a MINIMUM of one month PRIOR to pre-registration for the term in order for students and advisors to establish a schedule during advisement. After schedule entry has closed, the Registrar's Office will assist in assigning classrooms throughout campus based upon enrollment and availability.
5. Once schedule entry for the term(s) has expired, Change of Schedule forms with the appropriate signatures to the Registrar's Office will be required to adjust the class schedule.
6. Once registration has begun, Change of Schedules for sections with students enrolled will require justification, student impact, etc. with the approval through the appropriate Academic Dean.

## Other Points Regarding Classroom Use

### *Cancellation of Classroom Space*

The University Registrar's Office should be notified immediately if the scheduled room(s) is no longer required so allocation of the space may be granted to alternate users.

### *Changes in Classroom Assignments*

Departments must coordinate with the departmental scheduler and the Registrar's Office in the event a change in classroom assignment is needed after the term has started. Recording changes ensures the accurate reporting, public safety, and proper notification of registration or emergencies. Instructors should not assume that because a classroom is empty that the room is available.

### *Classroom Capacity*

Classroom arrangement should be left as found. Classroom capacities are determined by fire marshal codes. Furniture in classrooms should not be removed from classrooms since it affects all sections and gives the false impression that the official room capacities are incorrect. Seating capacities should be checked at the beginning of each term by the Building Liaison and any adjustments need to be emailed to the Registrar's Office in order to maintain accurate reporting data and assignments.

### *Classroom Custodial Servicing*

Classrooms should be left orderly and food and drink should not be allowed in instructional spaces. Leaving the classroom 'better than you found it' for the next user also reduces expenses for non-scheduled cleaning. Any deficient issues in the classroom environment should be reported to the Building liaison and the Physical Plant.

See appendices on pages 10 and 11

## Appendix 1 – Regular and Block Meeting Patterns

### FALL or SPRING REGULAR AND BLOCK STANDARD MEETING PATTERNS

| Monday            |                 | Tuesday                     |                 | Wednesday         |                 | Thursday                    |                 | Friday           |                 |  |                |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|--|----------------|
| 8:00 - 8:50 am    | 8:00 - 10:45 am | 8:00 - 9:15 am              | 8:00 - 10:45 am | 8:00 - 8:50 am    | 8:00 - 10:45 am | 8:00 - 9:15 am              | 8:00 - 10:45 am | 8:00 - 8:50 am   | 8:00 - 10:45 am |  |                |
| 9:00 - 9:50 am    |                 |                             |                 | 9:00 - 9:50 am    |                 |                             |                 | 9:00 - 9:50 am   |                 |  | 9:00 - 9:50 am |
| 10:00 - 10:50 am  |                 | 9:30 - 10:45 am             |                 | 10:00 - 10:50 am  |                 | 9:30 - 10:45 am             |                 | 10:00 - 10:50 am |                 |  |                |
| 11:00 - 11:50 am  | 11:00 - 1:45 pm | 11:00 - 12:15 p.m           |                 | 11:00 - 11:50 am  | 11:00 - 1:45 pm | 11:00 - 12:15 p.m           |                 | 11:00 - 11:50 am | 11:00 - 1:45 pm |  |                |
| 12:00 - 12:50 pm  |                 | 12:15 - 1:00 pm<br>No class |                 | 12:00 - 12:50 pm  |                 | 12:15 - 1:00 pm<br>No class |                 | 12:00 - 12:50 pm |                 |  |                |
| 1:00 - 1:50 pm    |                 | 1:00 - 2:15 pm              | 1:00 - 3:45 pm  | 1:00 - 1:50 pm    |                 | 1:00 - 2:15 pm              | 1:00 - 3:45 pm  | 1:00 - 1:50 pm   |                 |  |                |
| 2:00 - 3:15 pm    | 2:25 - 3:45 pm  | 2:00 - 3:15 pm              |                 | 2:00 - 4:45 pm    | 2:00 - 2:50 pm  | 2:00 - 4:45 pm              |                 |                  |                 |  |                |
| 3:30 - 4:45 pm    |                 | 3:50 - 5:05 pm              |                 |                   | 3:30 - 4:45 pm  |                             |                 | 3:00 - 3:50 pm   |                 |  |                |
| 5:00 - 6:15 pm    |                 | 5:10 - 6:25 pm              |                 | 5:00 - 6:15 pm    |                 | 5:10 - 6:25 pm              |                 |                  |                 |  |                |
| 6:30 - 9:15 pm    |                 | 6:30 - 7:45 pm              |                 | 6:30 - 7:45 pm    |                 | 6:30 - 7:45 pm              |                 |                  |                 |  |                |
| 8:00 pm - 9:15 pm |                 | 8:00 - 9:15 pm              |                 | 8:00 pm - 9:15 pm |                 | 8:00 - 9:15 pm              |                 |                  |                 |  |                |

Classes with a block schedule is for a class meeting only one day per week. To maintain contact minutes, the class would have to meet 14 times during the term.

# Timeline for Class Schedule Entry

- Schedule entry by departments should be complete a minimum of one month PRIOR to pre-registration for that term.

