

November 21, 2011

VPDUE Hughey
Chancellor's Office
Kerr Hall

RE: Class Times Proposal

Dear Richard:

Attached are the responses from the Senate committees that reviewed the *Class Times Proposal*. I transmit to you the comments in their entirety from the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), the Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity (CAAD), the Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT), the Committee on Educational Policy (CEP), the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB), The Committee on Preparatory Education (CPE), The Committee on Research (COR), The Committee on Teaching (COT), the Committee on Committees (COC) and Graduate Council (GC).

The overall view is that there are still remaining key questions about the nature and scope of the problem (availability of large lecture halls), the relevance or appropriateness of the solution, and whether other options may be considered (some committees have offered preliminary ideas). The Senate looks forward to further consultation with you both on the problem and potential solutions. We are not yet convinced of the validity of either one. No changes should be implemented until this consultation takes place.

Thank you for the opportunity to advise on this important matter.

Sincerely,



Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate
Santa Cruz Division

Enclosures

October 14, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Course Time Slot Changes

Dear Susan,

CAP reviewed the proposal for changing course time slots. Such a change does not directly impact the personnel process and we have no comment at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "Dana Takagi". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dana Takagi, Chair
Committee on Academic Personnel

October 20, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Course Time Slot Changes

Dear Susan:

The Committee on Affirmative Action & Diversity (CAAD) has reviewed the proposal to reduce class times by 30 minutes a week forwarded by EVC Galloway.

Setting aside individual committee members' concerns about fewer student contact hours and the ability to cover course content adequately in less time, CAAD found both advantages and disadvantages to the proposed changes to class times. More specifically, we believe the proposed changes are likely to have a positive effect on 4-year graduation rates by increasing classroom capacity and, thus, the number of courses offered per quarter. Given increasing student fees and the fact that many first generation students, especially those from underperforming high schools, come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, CAAD supports efforts to help students graduate within 4 years.

At the same time, CAAD is concerned that these students may be negatively (and disproportionately) affected by the decrease in student-contact hours (even as they are paying higher fees). That said, however, one CAAD member wondered whether UCSC's relatively high number of student contact hours (and the subsequent sense of compressing a great deal of material into a quarter's course) might lead to "attrition, stress, and failure." Without concrete data, we have no way of knowing whether either of these concerns is warranted; we hope that the Senate will seek some of this data before making a final decision.

Overall, CAAD is sympathetic to the need for increased classroom capacity, and we want to facilitate students graduating in 4 years whenever possible. To this end, we wonder whether there are other possible solutions under consideration (e.g., earlier start/later end times).

Sincerely,

/s/

Kimberly Lau, Chair
Committee on Affirmative Action and Diversity

October 14, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Course Time Slot Changes

Dear Susan,

The CCT committee discussed the issue, and we concluded that while it is very important, we don't have a direct comment to make.

Sincerely,

Gregory Laughlin, Chair
Committee on Computing and Telecommunications (CCT)

October 21, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Classroom Time Slot Proposal

Dear Susan,

CEP discussed the proposal to increase the number of class meeting time slots by 3. In a straw poll, 4 members recommended supporting the proposal, 1 member recommending opposing the proposal, and 3 members felt uncertain about whether the costs outweighed the benefits. Some of our discussion points include the following:

Providing more seats to students

There seems to be evidence of a shortage in large classroom spaces, with fewer such slots available than could be used by the campus. This shortage can have rippling effects; for example, if gateway courses are not large enough to meet capacity, students can be delayed for several quarters in making progress in, or even beginning, their major. An example is LGST 10, which is required to declare the Legal Studies major and (anecdotally) sometimes has 2 or 3 times as many students trying to crash the course as there are seats available. CEP is in favor of trying to eliminate these bottlenecks and offer a larger capacity of seats in courses that are impacted. If the plan succeeds in this goal, that would be a positive outcome and would allow some students to graduate more quickly (and cheaply).

For this to occur, however, there would need to be adequate TA support for the increased number of large classes. It wasn't clear to us whether funds for these additional TAs would be available. It also would seem important to be thoughtful about allocating the newly created large lecture slots to courses that are most impacted (with the greatest unmet need) and/or that are bottleneck courses. It might also be prudent, before going ahead, to poll departments to confirm that there is a desire for additional large lecture courses.

Dissatisfaction with fit between solution and problem

Some members noted that this is a very large hammer to tackle a relatively circumscribed problem. In order to provide a few more large lecture classes each quarter, we would be changing the pedagogical experience of every single course on campus. Might there be some other way to deal with the shortage of large lecture courses, that wouldn't negatively impact every course offering on campus?

Perception of students and others

It appeared to CEP that the underlying motivation for this change was not to save money (as the proposal is either revenue-neutral or might even require some additional funding; e.g., for TAs) but rather to help students by providing them better access to needed courses. For that reason, it will be critically important to emphasize this goal and assess how effectively it is met, if the Senate and administration decide to go forward with the proposal. Members voiced concern that, if the underlying motivation is not properly conveyed, the change would be perceived as providing less instruction to students at a time when their tuition is rising and they have fewer classes and majors to choose from.

Educational quality

Whether educational quality/quantity actually would be reduced under the proposed change is unclear and would depend on how faculty restructured their courses. However, most members felt that the way the modal faculty member would choose to respond to this change would, indeed, result in a lessened educational experience for students. CEP might be able to mitigate this through outreach to faculty, encouraging them to provide five additional contact or instructional hours over the course of the quarter, either online or in review sessions, and providing a list of suggested "best practices" for restructuring courses.

Faculty workload

The committee agreed that the main concern of CEP was the effect of this proposed change on students, not faculty. However, faculty workload issues were briefly discussed. Most members expressed some sympathy toward moving UCSC faculty workload closer to the UC norm/average. Some expressed the desire not to move to the lightest workload of all campuses (save UCLA); however, it was clear after discussion that our campus's commitment to 5-unit courses means that we can't easily hit the 37.5 minutes/unit standard of the other campuses. Members suggested that if the campus decides to keep the workload as it is then our university could consider using this to promote the commitment of UCSC faculty to undergraduate education. In essence, this could be an advertisement for our campus -- pay the same tuition as the other UC's, but get more hours with the instructors.

Alternative solutions

We discussed alternative solutions, such as hosting large lecture courses downtown in movie theaters (impractical due to transportation issues), starting courses at 7am to squeeze in extra time slots that way (unacceptable to the majority of students), utilizing the Friday evening time period (undesirable to students and faculty), and running courses on Saturdays (might be

helpful). In addition, whenever pedagogical needs, resources, and faculty workload considerations allow, departments should increase enrollment limits when the seat limit of the assigned classroom permits.

One idea that would add one additional time slot per week while retaining the current number of minutes per class is the following. It trims "passing time" on MWF to 15 minutes (which is what we currently do on Tu/Th). The MWF times would then be:

8-910

925-1035

1050-1200

1215-125

140-250

305-415

430-540

6-745 (MW)

8-945 (MW)

430-540

6-745 (MW)

8-945 (MW)

Sincerely,

/s/

Eileen Zurbriggen, Chair
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Senate Committee Analysts

November 2, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Course Time Slots Proposal

Dear Susan,

CPB has reviewed the proposal to reduce class times from 210 minutes/week to 180 minutes/week. We understand that as enrollment grows, UCSC is experiencing increasing pressure for additional classroom time/space as departments work to mount courses with adequate enrollment capacity in order to facilitate a timely pathway for the undergraduate degree.

The justification for the change is solely based upon access to facilities, and there is no discussion of the implication for the academic mission. We have concerns about the consequences of reduced class times on academic quality. Faculty would be asked to cover the same material and students develop the same mastery in a schedule that reduces class time by five contact hours, or the equivalent of a week and a half per quarter.

One metric missing from this discussion is the actual decline of faculty and the impact upon specific departments/divisions. The problem is not just about student FTE, but also the proportion of students spread across the divisions, in relation to the faculty FTE shrinkage, which requires an increasing number of faculty to teach large courses or to increase the size of courses that already carry a large enrollment. In other words, individual experiences appear to be leading to assumptions about who is being impacted negatively by the lack of course availability. CPB would like the proposal to incorporate data that addresses time-to-degree of students; the number of students unable to graduate due to the lack of course availability; and the number of faculty available to teach the required courses. This would provide a better sense of the scope of the problem to be addressed.

CPB finds that the comparative data supporting this proposal lacks adequate detail to make its case. In the necessarily generalized form that it takes, idiosyncratic adaptations to 'time-slot' models cannot be incorporated. For example, one member examined the curriculum matching his department on another campus, and found that equivalent courses at UCLA, with 50-minute time blocks, required two time blocks per day, creating 100 minute time blocks. We understand that this level of individual course comparison across campuses would require prohibitively time-consuming data collection, and we don't ask that such a project be pursued. We merely note that such factors reflect the limitations of such generalized charts.

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In addition, the comparative data on other campuses indicates that just as time in the classroom frequently involves fewer contact minutes, the credited units are generally four, not five. If UCSC reduced our contact minutes in line with the apparent practice at other campuses, would we then need to reduce courses' credit units, thus requiring students to take four classes per quarter rather than three? If UCSC did reduce credit units per course, then students would have to take more classes to accumulate the 180 credit units required for a BA, and the campus would need to offer more, and perhaps more large, classes, putting a greater demand upon the classroom facilities.

We are sympathetic to the need for more access to larger classrooms, but we question the framing of these issues from strictly a facilities perspective. The academic quality and faculty workload issues definitely need to be addressed by the relevant Senate committees. In short, the broad impact of proposed changes seems disproportionate to the acute but narrow problem that they are intended to address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lynn Westerkamp". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Lynn Westerkamp, Chair
Committee on Planning and Budget

October 17, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Classroom Time Slot Proposal

Dear Susan,

CPE looked over the proposal for course time slot changes from the VPDUE and had several questions and observations.

First, there wasn't enough information to judge the urgency of the proposed changes. Our questions are:

- 1) How soon will we reach the point where a large course doesn't get offered specifically because there's not a room for it? Or have we reached that point already?
- 2) The goal of the changes is listed as being able to "mount more courses." Is it realistic to expect a scenario in the near-to-mid- term where there is funding to pay faculty to mount significantly more courses? Or is the purpose to be able to mount extra sections of large courses, probably at the expense of upper division and graduate ones (as has been happening already as enrollment rises and budgets fall)? Or, finally, is the real issue that the largest courses are too full, and need bigger rooms, without much need to change the actual offerings at all?
- 3) Is there a shortage of rooms for small to medium classes (< 50 students)? We are concerned that the quality of instruction in small classes (such as preparatory writing classes) will suffer, and are particularly concerned that this suffering might be unnecessary if there is no shortage of rooms for these classes, and everything is being driven by the large lectures.
- 4) What other options have been considered? If there is no shortage of small rooms, a solution that compromises only the quality of the large lectures (such as closed circuit TV in a second, smaller overflow room) is preferable. In that case, this service would have to be offered by the campus administration and not be deducted from departmental budgets, as is the present practice when such a request is made.

We also note that there seems to be a possibility of making better use of evening hours in the large lecture halls than is currently done. For example, classes that are now 105 minutes long on MW evenings could be converted to 70-minute MWF classes, with a standard MWF evening schedule containing three slots, 5:00 p.m. -6:10 p.m., 6:30 p.m. -7:40 p.m., and 8:00 p.m.-9:10 p.m. While we don't claim to know the advantages and drawbacks of approaches like these, we'd like to know whether they've been considered and the arguments relative to the current proposal.

Preparatory classes are often taken by students with less-developed academic skills overall. We are concerned that these students will be disadvantaged by a shift that reduces classroom contact time by over a full week per quarter. The requested shift of emphasis to homework and reading at the student's own initiative is particularly difficult for preparatory math courses, where a large component of the instructor's task is to lead the students through the material carefully and to combat a lot of their insecurities about tackling it themselves. Indeed, we expect that entrusting more and more of learning to the students' initiative on their own time will not succeed for many of our students in many other sorts of courses as well, with the result that faculty will end up either having to fail more students or lower grading standards.

It might also become harder to justify (to others or ourselves) the 5-unit status of UCSC courses under this system in the long run. If we therefore end up moving toward a 4-unit norm, the problem of classroom space will only get worse.

That brings us, finally, to the argument that bringing our campus into conformity with other UC campuses should be a goal per se. We believe that our judgment of what is best for our students within space and budget constraints should be the only criterion under consideration. Referring to the system of instruction on other campuses might be used to argue why a certain change will not be disastrous, but should not be used as a positive argument for a change, not even as a secondary argument.

To conclude, we feel that the proposed change is an evil, but we don't deny that it could be the least of those now available. Our questions above indicate that we don't have enough information to judge this based on the proposal from the VPDUE.

Sincerely,

/s/

David Smith, Chair
Committee on Preparatory Education

cc: Senate Committee Analysts

October 14, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Course Time Slot Changes

Dear Susan,

At our October 11 meeting, COR discussed the proposal to reduce course time slots. COR understands the scheduling difficulties and agrees that the lack of large lecture halls is a problem that needs to be solved (preferably through the construction of new high capacity lecture halls; new buildings are still being constructed on campus). The committee felt that a change of this magnitude must go out for wider campus consultation since it will impact nearly every facet of our mission. There could be unintended consequences since all courses would be impacted, including those that don't require large lecture halls. This could lead to increase in teaching loads and thus negatively impact the research time of faculty. It may also be necessary to increase the number of required courses for some majors. While additional homework or assignments could be given to maintain 3 hours per week, additional TA and grading resources may be necessary. Some departments may want to consider differential teaching loads. Clearly, a broader discussion is needed. COR would also find it helpful if COT could provide analysis of the impact on teaching.

Sincerely,

Scott Oliver, Chair
Committee on Research

October 24, 2011

SUSAN GILLMAN
Academic Senate Chair

Re: Course Time Slot Changes

Dear Susan:

In general, the Committee on Teaching was not favorable to the proposed reduction of Course Time-Slots. Although COT is certainly aware of the shortage of large classrooms on campus, which in part motivates the initiative, we found more problems than benefits to making such a change.

As Marc Cioc noted in his letter of May 24, 2011, Academic Senate Regulation 760 reads: “The value of a course in units shall be reckoned at the rate of one unit for three hours' work per week per term on the part of a student, or the equivalent.” As things stand currently, students spend 3.5 hours per week in class, leaving them roughly 11.5 do complete their assignments outside of the classroom.

The longer time slots at UCSC, as we understand it, are part of the campus' inaugural mission. As the founders organized teaching here, one UCSC quarter course (10 weeks) was intended to be equivalent to one UC Berkeley semester course (15 weeks)—hence the longer time slots at UCSC, and the normal student course load of three as opposed to four classes per quarter. Reducing UCSC class times from 210 minutes to 180 minutes of contact hours effectively destroys this logic, rendering one UCSC class equivalent to one UCLA quarter offering.

At the same time, a reduction in student contact hours would require a wholesale rethinking of the current organization of the curriculum—including, but not restricted to, such matters as the number courses offered by each department, as well as the sequencing of classes within the major. This, in turn, would necessitate a complete overhaul of long-standing pedagogical practices. Expecting all faculty to rethink their courses in order to accommodate the new course time slots is to require of them a significant amount of extra labor.

Finally, it occurred to COT that state-wide publicity of the sort “UCSC now pays faculty to teach less” is not going to fly well with the public, nor induce the legislature to allocate more funding to the system. Therefore COT could not help but wonder if this is not a covert, first step that will eventually require the faculty to teach a heavier course load, as faculty do—for example—at UCLA

Sincerely yours,

/s/

Daniel L. Selden
Chair, Committee on Teaching

October 19, 2011

Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

RE: Committee on Committees' response to Class Time Change Proposal

Dear Susan:

Per your request that all committees discuss the VP/DUE's class time proposal, COC did so—relatively briefly—at our meeting on Wednesday, Oct. 12.

These are the salient points: We acknowledge that in a period during which additional building is extremely unlikely, some sort of class time reform is the only means of wedging more large classes into our large lecture halls.

That said, we are concerned that the effect of this class time proposal would be to diminish the value of the education students are receiving. Fewer minutes in class means more self-directed learning. Fewer minutes in class also means fewer minutes in class, and thus less direct teaching time. The departmental colleagues of one member of COC, discussing the proposal, agreed that this class time proposal would mean reducing textbook coverage from 10 chapters in a textbook to 8, and universally disapproved the proposal for what they expect will be adverse effects on student learning. Though COC did not vote on the matter, the four members able to remain through the discussion generally agreed: student learning would likely suffer, and for that reason we did not like the proposal.

I should add this: COC immediately considered the likelihood that reducing class time would lead to reducing per-course units from 5 to 4. We didn't like that, either, especially for majors with higher than the minimum 180 units required for graduation.

Sincerely,

/s/

Elizabeth Abrams, Chair
Committee on Committees

October 21, 2011

To: Susan Gillman, Chair
Academic Senate

From: Graduate Council

Re: Proposed Course Time-Slot Changes

Dear Susan,

During its October 6 meeting, the Graduate Council discussed the May 24 2011 proposal by IVPDUE Cioc to reduce class contact hours by approximately 30 minutes per week. While the Council understands that increasing budget exigencies require that sacrifices be made, the Council cannot support this proposal. Members of the Council saw no benefit to the quality or efficacy of the delivery of graduate-level instruction that would result from such changes. Members of the Council were in unanimous agreement, on the other hand, that reducing the direct contact hours between faculty and students would degrade the overall quality of graduate instruction. Impromptu surveys of students in graduate classes indicated a clear and impassioned negative reaction to the proposal. A concern was also expressed that increasing the average size of classes without increasing TAS budgets would lead to either an increased workload for graduate student Teaching Assistants or a dilution of their teaching effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bruce Schumm".

Bruce Schumm, Chair
Graduate Council