

**OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
AND VICE CHANCELLOR FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS**

INSTRUCTIONAL SPACE IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

FINAL REPORT

2007-2008



**ILLINOIS**  
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST  
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**Committee Charge**

For the 2007-08 academic year the committee was asked to focus on an important finding and recommendation from the previous year's Instructional Space Working Group final report: current class schedules, which do not utilize all days and times equally and which permit irregular start and end times, contribute to ineffective use of classroom assets and hinder students from taking the courses they need to graduate on time. The charge was to develop a plan by which all class schedules could be regularized throughout the entire week (Mondays - Fridays). This was to include a codified set of policies and principles that could be used to communicate and implement such plan.

**Members**

Robert Graves, Chair  
Leslie Hammersmith  
Paula Kaufman  
Sandy Goss Lucas  
Carol Malmgren  
Keith Marshall  
Joseph Squier  
Jennifer Themanson  
Matthew Tomaszewski  
Ruth Watkins

**Activities and Findings**

There are currently approximately 400 "general purpose" classrooms that are managed and scheduled by Facility Management and Scheduling (FMS), and an additional 400 classrooms that are managed by individual colleges, schools, and departments. Due to the scale and complexity of classroom scheduling on campus, the committee's first task was to understand current practices. A significant portion of meeting time was devoted to a series of study sessions led by the campus registrar. The committee became acquainted with the current scheduling system on this campus and practices at peer institutions. A variety of management issues were identified and discussed.

Three important findings provided focus for later committee activities:

1. The current policy document that guides scheduling practices is nearly 50 years old, having been originally distributed on 16 January 1960.
2. There are, even by the most conservative estimates, 200-300 different classroom meeting patterns on campus.

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3. Classroom usage on Friday drops off considerably in comparison to the other days of the week and represents a significant underutilization of resources (see attached graph).

**Outcomes, recommendations, and plans going forward**

Statement of guiding principles

The committee agreed that the current policy document was outdated and also failed to articulate a set of guiding principles. The following statement, which has been reviewed by the Senate Committee on Campus Operations, is proposed:

*Proper use and scheduling of classroom space is a shared responsibility. Good stewardship of space is achieved through cooperation between campus units, the Office of the Registrar, and the Office of the Provost.*

*The Office of the Provost is responsible for setting policies and procedures for management of all campus classroom and learning spaces. It adheres to the following guiding principles in managing classroom space inventories and class schedules:*

1. *Scheduling should support (1) the pedagogical requirements of teaching and learning, (2) efficient use of campus resources, (3) student access to and choice among courses.*
2. *Classroom inventories should include diverse, creative, and innovative learning environments that are intentionally created for better learning.*
3. *Scheduling policies should undergo periodic assessment and evaluation by a campus committee charged with this task. Policies should be adaptable and flexible.*
4. *Practices should always reflect evolving student and instructor responsibilities, educational practices, technologies, and interfaces with other support services (i.e. transportation and maintenance).*

Additionally, the committee discovered the existence of Communication #28 (attached), titled "Scheduling Classes and Instructional Laboratories," which currently comprises two paragraphs. The committee recommends that the guiding policies statement above become a part of Communication #28, and that this document be expanded and published on the Provost's website.

Audit of classroom space scheduled by departments

Current and reliable data on the classroom space scheduled by individual departments and units is not available. For this reason the committee has initiated an audit of these spaces that will be conducted during the summer. Results of this audit will be evaluated during the next academic year. This information will be useful to campus and colleges alike, and will provide a better

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understanding of successful practices and current limitations.

#### Communicating findings and recommendations

During the summer the committee chair, the campus registrar, and provost-office staff will begin meeting with administrators and stakeholders to share findings and solicit input. The process of communicating recommendations will continue into the next academic year.

#### Incremental implementation of policy reform

The committee recommends an incremental implementation approach to classroom scheduling reform that focuses first on tighter regulation of meeting patterns, and second on increased Friday scheduling. These two factors have the potential to dramatically impact the efficient use of classroom resources.

The process of attempting to decrease the large number of different meeting patterns has already begun with the distribution on 15 November 2007 of a memo from the Provost regarding the renovation of Lincoln Hall. This memo specifically requested that, in planning for the Fall 2008 semester, units schedule all classes to begin on the hour on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays and on the hour or half-hour on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Compliance with this request has the potential to significantly reduce the number of meeting patterns, and thus increase the efficient use of classroom space. The committee recommends that, in late September 2008, the registrar collect and present data on voluntary departmental compliance with this policy and its effect on Fall 2008 classroom usage. Based on the level of voluntary compliance, the committee may need to discuss further incentives and/or enforcement of this policy.

The committee should also begin its work next year with the analysis of current data on classroom usage and embark on a discussion of various models for increasing use of classrooms on Friday. This second phase of policy reform should be targeted for Fall 2009 implementation, meaning that the committee should be prepared to make recommendations by the end of the Fall 2008 semester.

In addition, the committee would like to take into consideration changes in educational practices as they relate to learning spaces of the twenty-first century. Technologies that blur the line between the physical and virtual learning spaces, that connect learning in the physical classroom to learning outside of the classroom, and that facilitate new models of faculty-student interaction will clearly influence how physical instructional spaces are used on campus. This implies that our space utilization and scheduling practices will be impacted when we take advantage of blended learning opportunities that shift learning in time and place. The committee should discuss how campus policies and new practices can be flexible enough to accommodate the changing nature of learning spaces, and consider how new models of teaching and learning may change our view of the efficient uses of classroom resources.

#### **Attachments**

Communication #28

Classroom usage by day and hour, Spring 2008