



MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Faculty Senate
FROM: Dr. Brendan B. Kelly, President
RE: President's Response to Senate Actions
DATE: December 7, 2023

Following is my response to the actions of the Faculty Senate as represented in the minutes of the meeting on October 13, 2023, which were approved electronically on November 6, 2023. All program approvals are made contingent upon the department's commitment to staff the changes out of existing internal funds. Note that Section 3.6.2 of the Board of Regents Policy Manual states, inter alia: "The termination of educational programs, degrees, or majors shall be submitted to the Chancellor for review and recommendation for action by the Board of Regents." So, all program, degree, and major terminations (as well as additions) need to be approved by the Board. Our requests should include the rationale and the plan for addressing the needs of existing students.

Committee I: Undergraduate Programs Committee (Kim Green, Chair)

Action Items:

All items below were approved via block vote with 41 in favor, 1 abstention, and zero opposed.

- A) College of Arts, Culture, and Scientific Inquiry
 - 1) Department of Art, History, and Philosophy
 - a) Philosophy, B.A.
Request: Revise
 - b) Philosophy, Law, Justice, and Society Track, B.A.
Request: Revise
 - 2) Department of Computing and Mathematics
 - a) Computing, Nexus
Request: Revise
 - 3) Department of English, Film, Languages, and Performing Arts
 - a) Theatre, B.A.
Request: Revise
 - 4) Department of Natural Sciences
 - a) Geography, B.S.
Request: Revise

- B) School of Communications, Film, and Media
 - 1) COMM - 2256 - Film Form and Aesthetics
Request: Add
 - 2) Film & Video Production, BS
Request: Revise
 - 3) Mass Communications, BS
Request: Revise

I accept this block vote motion.

Committee II: Graduate Programs Committee (Georgia Evans, Chair)

Action Items:

All items below were approved via block vote with 40 in favor, 2 abstentions, and zero opposed.

- A) College of Education (COE)
 - 1) Department of Literacy and Special Education
 - a) READ - 7201 - Teacher as Language and Literacy Leader
Request: Modify Credit Hours
 - 1) Department of Leadership, Research, and School Improvement
 - a) School Improvement, Ed.D.
Request: Modify Program
- B) Richards College of Business
 - 1) Department of Economics
 - a) Applied Business Analytics, M.S.
Request: Modify Track/Concentration
 - 2) Department of Economics
 - a) ECON - 6486 - Graduate Internship in Applied Business Analytics
Request: Course Addition

I accept this block vote motion.

Committee VII: Student Affairs and Intercollegiate Activities (Dylan McLean, Chair)

Action Items:

Request: Faculty Senate Vote to Support Recommendations, below

- A) *SALA met with the Student Government Association after the last senate meeting and these recommendations were crafted. It was noted that major changes such as campus-wide scheduling need to be supported and highlighted with evidence-based problems that we are trying to solve, not just anecdotes from narrow segments of student body. With the proposed scheduling changes, there are gaps in scheduling that make it difficult for students to organize their day: we need to know what proportion of study body feels that way. Needs to be quantitative.*
- B) *Discussion:*
 - a. *Provost asked Dr. Akins to walk faculty through the process leading up to this recommendation.*

- i. *Dr. Akins: Workgroup to develop this proposal was Sonya Adams, Donna Haley, Jeffrey Reber, Karen Owen, Pauline Gagnon, Dr. Akins, and Whitney Brand (among others). Meetings were held in July and August to create proposal for review. Popularized the proposal to faculty senate, deans, etc. Currently in progress and a survey has been sent out to all faculty. Encourages everyone to provide feedback so that there will be robust review.*
- b. *Questions:*
 - i. *Q: Was there discussion of cohorts? Would cohorts be exempt?*
 - 1. *A: Yes, will not impede students in areas such as Nursing. The Provost noted that decisions will not be made in a vacuum and that he appreciates the work of the committee in drafting potential scheduling solutions.*
 - ii. *Q: What numbers exist in terms of patterns? What numbers informed these options? What specific problem has been shown consistently? The midday break may overwhelm dining facilities: how will it play out in reality? May be a logistical bottleneck.*
 - 1. *A: The President noted that we have capacity on campus right now and can adapt service model if needed. We do not have many structured places where people gather: must create more of those spaces. Part of our responsibility is to create community, and this model may contribute to embracing the opportunity to be together.*
 - 2. *A: The Provost also mentioned that the university did a utilization analysis including a heatmap analysis about a year and a half ago. Big discrepancy between peer and aspirational universities. The need emerged to adjust computer programs to allow for fifty minute blocks and address micro-stresses. Can share spreadsheet and visualization.*
 - iii. *Q: Were students surveyed on their preferred start times? Many students strategically assemble their schedules and the open hour may be a hardship.*
 - 1. *A: Dr. Akins mentioned that students will vote with their feet, so historic data was used: it is hard to measure how many students were inconvenienced. Looked at utilization patterns and when courses were mostly populated to optimize classroom utilization. Whitney Brand addressed these concerns and discussed significant difficulties. It is a complex matter over three campuses. We want to attract and enroll more dual enrolled students, especially Newnan and Douglasville: they have a high school transportation and bell schedule. Proposed schedule provides early opportunities for students and faculty. Further, we will lose 12 classrooms from Pafford next year and this must be accommodated. Also reached out to the SGA and students are still completing the survey. Encourages feedback in survey. The Provost also noted that schedule changes and any impacts can be reviewed continuously. There is an immediate need to address concerns as Fall 2024 scheduling starts in December. Safety concerns were also mentioned if late night classes are increased, but it was noted that we already have late classes and adequate security measures on campus.*
 - iv. *Q: Would it be possible to also consider changing the university calendar to better align with local school districts?*
 - 1. *A: Provost: there is a calendar committee, yes, that can be visited. President: we do not control school districts, but perhaps we could talk to superintendents. We have a contact hour requirement, but dates could be flexible.*
 - v. *Chair Reber noted the need to avoid linearity in temporal thinking.*

- vi. *Q: Is a scheduling committee going to be in place next year?*
1. *A: Dr. Akins noted that the committee will meet after survey results are available. Committee will remain active and include people who remain knowledgeable. The survey is confidential: the committee will not see emails linked to answers. Emails are only be collected to ensure one person per answer. The survey was also sent to a select group of students. In response, the President requested that the survey be emailed to all students.*

After this discussion, senators voted on the below recommendations as a block. The item passed with 18 in favor, 11 abstentions, and 5 opposed.

A) SAIA has three specific recommendations regarding the proposed block schedule. We ask the full senate to support these requests:

- 1) The student body's preferences about class scheduling should be investigated through quantitative survey research. This survey must measure dissatisfaction with current scheduling practices.

Rationale: It is essential that the administration gathers systematic feedback from our students about what schedules work for them. When do our students want classes? Rigorous survey research into this and related questions must be conducted. The results of this research must then inform any revisions to our current scheduling practices.

- 2) The faculty's preferences about class scheduling should be investigated through quantitative survey research. This survey must measure dissatisfaction with current scheduling practices.

Rationale: It is essential that the administration gathers systematic feedback from the faculty about scheduling practices. Faculty are close to our students and understand their needs. Faculty also understand the unique needs of their programs. The results of this research must then inform any revisions to our current scheduling practices.

- 3) Implementation of changes to existing scheduling practices must be delayed as necessary to ensure that any changes to those practices are essential and based on solid evidence that was collected through rigorous research.

Rationale: Revamping our schedule in this way would significantly alter campus life. It is a big change. This plan was only recently presented to the campus community. We need to take time to systematically and comprehensively investigate course scheduling from multiple perspectives. If that research process determines that scheduling changes are warranted, we then need additional time to draft a revised proposal and evaluate that revised proposal with additional research.

Most importantly, we need to take the time to consider whether, or not, completely overhauling our traditional approach to scheduling is necessary to solve any problems the current system has. Let's take time to apply Occam's razor so that we can ensure we are selecting the simplest solution to our scheduling problems.

Given the interest of the Faculty Senate to continue to discuss the proposed schedule of times/days when courses are offered, UWG will continue to utilize the existing standard schedule as published online for fall 2024, with flexibility for specific academic areas as we have historically allowed. The proposal presented by the working group supports placemaking and streamline course offerings to improve student success, and our focus will be to adopt an updated version for spring 2025 classes. Please present any findings and input by March so that UWG can incorporate these into our planning for spring 2025.