

RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A FIVE-DAY MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE

WHEREAS the present schedule for final exams, using three possible times per day over a Monday through Saturday period, allows a disturbing number of conflicts between different departmental exams and between departmental exams and those for other courses, and

WHEREAS the Student Government Association has expressed a strong preference for elimination of Saturday final exams, and

WHEREAS Saturday final exams cause additional complications in grading services and finishing all the necessary grading in time for the term's end, and

WHEREAS a task force convened by the Registrar found that a schedule with four time slots per day over a Monday through Friday span, along with policies for precedence in case of time conflicts and the existing deferred-exam policy for relief in case of three or more exams in one day, can deal appropriately with all these issues,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate supports the following change to a Monday through Friday five-day final exam schedule and recommends its implementation by Fall 2002:

BACKGROUND

There have been a couple of reasons to examine the timing of final exams:

students (and faculty, for all we know) really do not like Saturday exams

conflicts have been a serious issue with three exam slots per day over six days and with the Saturday evening time slot being unused. These have been especially painful with departmental exams. These are given for courses with many sections and with required content in which uniformity of assessment is important (some notable examples are Math 110, 112, 113, 115, 121; Economics 110; CS 102; the first two years of French and Spanish; Accounting 210; and Chemistry 102). A surprising number of students are now having conflicts, not just with other courses and departmental exams, but between two different departmental exams.

PROPOSAL

Both of the preceding issues can be resolved by moving to the following Monday through Friday, four-slot daily schedule with hour breaks, keeping our current 2.5-hour exam blocks:

8:00-10:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

3:30-6:00 p.m.

7:00-9:30 p.m.

These issues can also be resolved through adopting a clear policy on priorities in case of conflict or "stacking" (i.e., more than two scheduled exams on the same day). Such a policy will prevent students from mediating conflicts between instructors. Principles for resolving these kinds of problems are:

departmental exams have lower priority than other course exams.

exams for higher-level classes by number (which generally have smaller enrollments) have lower priority.

for the same course level, the 6:30-9:00 p.m. exam slot defers.

In each case, the student may opt to take all exams at the scheduled time, but otherwise, these rules tell which exam should be deferred.

A draft schedule shows that a five-day schedule has only one possibility for conflict between departmental exams (pencilled in with French and Spanish opposite each other). The 3:30-6:00 p.m. slot would be used only for departmental exams, with two additional departmental slots in the evening times.

Through using 20 instead of 17 exam slots, the proposed schedule reduces the chance of three or four exams on the same day. Existing policy of using deferred-exam times in case of triple exams or worse in a single day could deal with that case, now made less common. The student and instructor could also make any other mutually acceptable arrangements.

In this light, the Planning and Operations Committee proposes that this new schedule be approved by February in order to be incorporated into the printing of the final exam schedule for next fall.

Adopted by the Senate January 22 2002