

TASKFORCE ON ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING

FINAL REPORT

December 2019

OUTLINE

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Provost Emily McDermott and Professor Heike Schotten from the University's Faculty Council issued a memorandum (see Appendix 1) on February 21 convening a Taskforce "to inquire about alternative scheduling." This Taskforce was composed of ten faculty members, and eight administrators tasked with providing inputs.

"Alternative scheduling" refers to a range of formats characterized by flexibility and the ability to allow departments in consultation with faculty members to decide the most pedagogically beneficial schedule for the courses they teach; with an alternative scheduling format, courses are typically scheduled on M/W, Tu/Th, W/F, as well as M/W/F. In contrast, "traditional scheduling" means that about 50% of courses are typically scheduled on M/W/F across departments.

From March to December 2019, the Taskforce on Alternative Scheduling (henceforward, "The Taskforce") met every month and carried out extensive research on the various aspects and forms of alternative scheduling. We investigated the scheduling practices at other research universities, focusing on urban universities in the Carnegie I and II University categories. We surveyed the existing literature on scheduling. As mandated per the abovementioned memorandum, we consulted extensively with our colleagues, with department Chairs in all Colleges, with the Center for Innovative Teaching, the Ross Center, with undergraduate and graduate students, with university schedulers, and with university advisors. The Taskforce also carried out two surveys, one of the student body, and of the faculty members; they received large responses.

The main findings of our research are:

1. Alternative scheduling is an accepted practice at many research universities, especially public, urban, research universities. Two of our sister UMass system universities use an alternative schedule: UMass-Amherst and UMass-Lowell. Of all the campuses in the UMass system, only UMass-Dartmouth, which is not a commuter school, has a scheduling practice similar to ours. Inputs from several Chairs at UMass-Amherst show that alternative scheduling is indisputably considered best pedagogical practice. UMass-Lowell transitioned to an Alternative Schedule four years ago, to the satisfaction of faculty and students. The College of Management at UMass-Boston and the Department of Engineering also use an alternative schedule.
2. There is an abundance of evidence about the pedagogical benefits of alternative scheduling, as shown by the survey of the current literature on alternative scheduling that we conducted. The main study on the subject states that "[c]ourses that are scheduled two times per week are most consistently linked to positive student outcomes." Students taking courses twice a week outperform their peers for the same courses scheduled three times a week—in the humanities and social sciences. This literature also stresses the importance of courses scheduled in the evening for commuting and working students, and for students who need to enroll in courses required for graduation. Finally, studies on academic scheduling insist that practices should not be fixed in time but adapt to changing demographics and evolving student preferences. The best scheduling practices are therefore those that are flexible.

3. Scheduling formats vary by the field's needs. This Taskforce recognizes the value of M/W/F (3-day) course format for specific fields of study, particularly Biology, Physics, and Chemistry, as well as courses in English composition and language acquisition. In other disciplines, our research shows that the 50-minute session model is considered inadequate if not detrimental to pedagogy, as evidenced in this report by inputs from the Chairs, the students, and faculty at UMass-Boston. The 50-minute session format appears obsolete or inadequate for disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, as well as nursing, exercise science, engineering, education, and management.

4. Two-tiered scheduling formats can satisfy a diversity of pedagogical needs. Many universities on alternative schedules operate on a two-tiered schedule: one for Biology, Physics, Chemistry, English composition and Language acquisition, where 3-day-a-week courses constitute about 50% of course offerings; and one for all the other departments, where the 2-day and 1-day format is overwhelmingly dominant. The two-tier format provides the flexibility necessary to satisfy a diversity of pedagogical needs.

5. Our research showed that our university overwhelmingly remains a commuter school of working students. Over 90% of our surveyed students work, with over 70% working three days a week or more. Evidence gathered in this report shows that our students find it very difficult to juggle the competing demands of their employment and academic life on campus, not to mention their family responsibilities, with a significant portion of their time spent in commuting. The latest report from the organization INRIX¹ shows that Boston has the worst traffic and commuter traffic in the country. With some of our students coming from as far as New Hampshire, Cape Cod, and Central Massachusetts, commuting has become exceptionally challenging. In such conditions, traffic has developed into a major impediment for students to develop workable schedules that allow them to make progress towards their degrees. Studies and reports surveyed in this report also show that, among the students who are most affected by work and family obligations, many come from the lowest socio-economic sectors. Our conclusion is that the current academic scheduling at UMass-Boston, with about 50% of classes scheduled on M/W/F, appears not to meet the needs of a majority of our students and burdens students who are already struggling financially and with family responsibilities. A substantial increase in courses that meet twice or once a week should increase student retention, student success, and student satisfaction. That UMass-Boston is a commuter school should be a central consideration for best scheduling practice.

6. Alternative scheduling can improve the efficient use of our campus facilities. Our report shows that the campus classrooms are underutilized on M/W/F, particularly between 1pm and 4pm and underused after 4pm every day. Our research shows that the physical plant of UMass-Boston and our classroom resources allow for the setting of a wide range of alternative scheduling formats.

¹ <http://inrix.com/scorecard/>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Taskforce recommends that an alternative schedule be established at UMass-Boston.
2. In accordance with accepted alternative scheduling practices, a two-tier scheduling system should be implemented where departments that prefer 50 minute courses on 3-day/week schedules for pedagogical reasons, such as the Departments of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, the program of English composition, and language instruction in the Departments of Modern Language, Classics, and LAIS would continue to use the current scheduling format.
3. For all other undergraduate programs, we recommend that the 50-minute sessions taught 3-day/week become optional. Courses would be scheduled equitably on M/W and on W/F. The College of Education is particularly interested in the W/F slots to fulfill the needs of its students. With such an alternative schedule, there would be courses on all weekdays. This system will also leave the possibility, given the current classroom configuration, of utilizing 150-minute slots on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.
4. Several concrete paths towards implementing the alternative scheduling are possible:
 - a. An immediately feasible solution is to convert current time blocks on M/W/F between 8am to 11am and 1pm and 4pm into Flexible Time Blocks. Flexible Time Blocks are time periods during the day where departments would be allowed to schedule 75 minute courses that meet twice a week or 150 minute courses that meet one time per week, in addition to 50 minute courses that meet three times per week as the current schedule suggests. The utilization rates of these time blocks are low, with 46% between 1pm to 4pm and 63% between 8am to 11am (see Part VI). When looking at similar time periods on Tuesday, we find that utilization rates are 98% and 83% respectively. Given our analysis of the current schedule, we found that many courses are already being taught in 75 minute and 150 minute formats on M/W/F, but that rather than occurring during one consistent time period they are spread throughout the day. We also believe that this will make the schedulers' task of finding times/rooms for alternative time period requests more manageable.
 - b. Our preliminary analysis of the utilization report of the current scheduling system at UMass Boston raises concerns regarding class utilization. Therefore, we recommend using a specialized scheduling software that optimizes classroom utilization, given the limitations of the current 25 Live software. Modern software use artificial intelligence to simulate a wide array of scheduling scenarios, and adapt to find different scheduling schemes. An efficient scheduling software would allow the university schedulers to run scenarios to understand the potential consequences and conflicts that may arise. It can optimize the use of facilities while simultaneously considering other important factors such as non-standard variables affecting students, faculty, and administration, such as travel time, and balance student demands, instructor preferences, and available classroom space in creating course schedules to help students fulfil requirements to graduate. Several universities are now moving to use these modern services (Rutgers and The University of New Hampshire are examples). One company offering this type of system is Infosilem,

and they have a set of competitors as well. In any case, the classroom infrastructure of UMass-Boston has the capacity to accommodate an alternative schedule.

5. In light of the student needs identified and substantiated in this report, we recommend that programs offer more courses after 3 pm. Departments should consider offering more courses after 3pm on weekdays. For the same reason, Departments should also explore the possibility and feasibility of offering 150-minute courses on Saturdays. A variation of the “prime-time” system used at the University of Virginia could be envisaged. There, prime-time is defined as courses taught during the 9am-3pm time bracket. At UMass-Boston, faculty members who choose to teach after 3pm or on Saturdays could accrue points; to ensure equity among faculty members, intrusions into prime-time slots would count against this limit. However, we do not recommend to schedule half the courses outside of prime-time, but rather a number to be determined by Departments. Evidently, the schedule of services provided by the University may have to shift as well to continue until later in the day and on weekends.

6. The Taskforce recognizes the needs of students who have chosen UMass Boston because it is a commuter school and serves the Greater Boston area and its urban communities. The needs of a commuter school should be recognized at all levels of the University. These needs will be facilitated by the alternative schedule and follow our flagship campus UMass Amherst (and UMass Lowell) in adopting an alternative schedule as proposed.

7. In accordance with current studies, we recommend that the University henceforth approaches scheduling with an adaptable philosophy and as a fluid system that adapts to the ever-changing needs of its stakeholders.

I: INTRODUCTION

Academic schedules are a key part of a student's learning process and of a university's life. Efficient academic schedules allow universities to maximize academic and operational resources. The most important objective of academic scheduling is to optimize the chances of students to effectively make progress towards their degrees. Well-designed university schedules are central to the primary stakeholders of a university to achieve teaching and learning goals.

Provost Emily McDermott and the University's Faculty Council jointly set a Taskforce on Alternative Scheduling in February 2019 (see Memorandum in Appendix 1) to investigate possible alternatives to the existing classroom schedule at UMass-Boston. This included "the possibility of switching to a general M/W, Tu/Th, F schedule," but also investigating other scheduling formats such as Saturday classes and labs, and hybrid courses. Concomitantly, while investigating possible alternatives, the Taskforce had to assure that students would continue to "have access to pedagogically challenging and effective curricula, with delivery models appropriately differentiated for lectures, labs, and discussion sections, as well as for the varied learning goals of all disciplines and degree levels on campus;" and finally that students "have maximal access to the classes they need."

"Alternative scheduling" refers to a range of formats characterized by flexibility and the ability to allow departments in consultation with faculty members to decide the most pedagogically beneficial schedule for the courses they teach; with an alternative scheduling format, courses are typically scheduled on M/W, Tu/Th, W/F, as well as M/W/F. In contrast, "traditional scheduling" means that about 50% of courses are typically scheduled on M/W/F across departments.

From March to December 2019, the Taskforce met every month and carried out extensive research on the various aspects and forms of alternative scheduling. We investigated the scheduling practices at other research universities, focusing on urban universities in the Carnegie I and II University categories. We surveyed the existing literature on scheduling. Finally, we consulted extensively with our colleagues, with department Chairs in all Colleges, with the Center for Innovative Teaching, the Ross Center, undergraduate and graduate students, with university schedulers, and with university advisors.

Part II of this report focuses on scheduling practices at peer institutions. We used an ad hoc method—principally course schedules and specific inquiries to Departments Chairs- to determine the type of schedule they use. Part III is a brief survey of the current literature on scheduling practices and their impact on undergraduate students.

The Taskforce carried out two electronic surveys, of the students, and one of the faculty members. The Student Survey received 989 responses. As a point of comparison, the national study on undergraduate students by the Bill and Belinda Gates Foundation, which is used in this report, was based on a sample of 614 students. The Faculty Survey received 401 responses, which is more than a third of the faculty body. We deemed the level of responses highly representative of both bodies. Part IV of this report presents and analyzes these results. We proposed a set of questions that allowed faculty and students to share their preferences for specific formats, both quantitatively and qualitatively. We also collected data that helps us not only contextualize the reasons behind

different preferences but also allowed us to draw relevant correlations. Specifically, for faculty we collected information on department and teaching position. For students we collected data on the number of credits taken and work commitments, among others. Since each survey contained three open questions, we received hundreds of detailed answers that explain the motivations for student and faculty preferences. Many, if not most of them, are not only relevant to our study but could be used for other University studies. Therefore, and since we could not include all of these detailed answers, we decided to reproduce a sample of these contributions in the Appendix.

In the course of our investigations, we realized that more input on the intersection between pedagogy and scheduling was necessary because several departments offer undergraduate programs with complex configurations. Therefore, we asked Department Chairs and, when relevant, Deans, about the scheduling needs for the type of courses in their respective departments and programs. The Part IV of this report summarizes their responses. As several Departments offer programs with complex configurations, we include the exact responses provided in the Appendix.

Our assessment of classroom utilization (Part VI of this report) is based on a study carried out for February 2020 and shows that the classroom infrastructure of UMass-Boston has the capacity to accommodate an alternative schedule. The last part of this report summarizes the views we collected from University Schedulers, Advisors, and the Ross Center.

The Taskforce on Alternative Scheduling was composed of the following members:

Keren Horn, Economics, College of Liberal Arts, Chair
Sarah Bartlett, Registrar's Office
Jean-Philippe Belleau, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts
Caroline Coscia, Political Science, CLA
Ellen Frank, Economics, CLA
Davood Golmohammadi, MSIS, College of Management
Eduardo Gonzalez, Mathematics, College of Science and Mathematics
Michael Johnson, Public Policy, McCormack Graduate School
Rick Kesseli, Biology, College of Science and Mathematics
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Anita Miller, Provost's Office
Lakshmi Srinivas, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts
Angela Stone-MacDonald, Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education and Human
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Jeanmarie Spinetti, Academic Support Services
Wanda Willard, College of Advancing and Professional Studies
Julie Wright, Exercise and Health Sciences
Raul Ybarra, Latino Studies and English, CLA

II: INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH: SCHEDULING PRACTICES AT OTHER UNIVERSITIES

1: Large research institutions that have transitioned to alternative scheduling

As an instrument of measure, the table below mainly considers courses in the humanities, social sciences, and language instruction. In these universities, courses in biology, chemistry, and physics are taught on two, three, or four days a week. English composition is either on 2 or, most often, 3 days.

Arizona State University	Courses are scheduled on M/W and Tu/Th. Longer sessions on every day of the week. Languages and English comp. on 2 or 3 days/week.
Boston University	Courses on M/W and Tu/Th for social science and the humanities. Faculty have the freedom to choose their schedule format. Seminars on all weekdays. Sciences and early language instruction are on 3/day week.
Columbia University	Language instruction takes place 5 days/week at 8am (no other courses at that time on campus). All other courses in social science and the humanities are taught on M/W and Tu/Th, with Fridays used as labs and 3 hour/sessions.
CUNY (all campuses combined)	Public urban research university with courses on M/Th (sic), Tu/F (sic), and M/W. Few courses on Tu/Th. No course on 3/day week, except language instruction and sciences. Writing composition courses in the English department are also scheduled on a 3/day basis. Longer sessions only in evening and at night (from 4 to 9.45pm) on all weekdays and on Saturdays mornings.
Georgia State University	Courses are on M/W and Tu/Th. Longer sessions and labs on Fridays. Language instruction and English comp. on 2 or 3 days/week.
Keen State College (NH)	KSC is on a M/W and Tu/Th format, including all language instruction. (Chemistry & Biology on 2, 3, or 4 days/week)
Purdue University	Courses use a variety of time blocks from 1hr to 4hrs. Departments are assigned a set of rooms and they can schedule classes in those rooms in the standard blocks of time; departments can share with each other as needed. Large classrooms and active learning classrooms follow their own process similar to our TEAL room and active learning classrooms.

San Francisco State University	Public urban research university where all courses are on M/W and Tu/Th. Longer sessions on every day of the week in both morning and evening. Languages on Two, Three, and Four days/week.
SUNY-Stony Brook	Courses on M/W and Tu/Th, less than 10% of courses on M/W/F, with 3h-sessions on M and F. Many flexible courses with online components.
University of Colorado Denver	Public urban research university where 100% of courses are on M/W and Tu/Th, including language instruction and English composition.
University of Connecticut	Most courses are on M/W and Tu/Th, about 10-12% of courses on M/W/F, with 3h-sessions on all weekdays. Sciences on 2 and 3 day/week.
University of Houston	Large public urban research university where most courses meet on M/W and Tu/Th; language instruction on M/W/F.
University of Massachusetts Amherst	Across social sciences (except Psychology), 50-minute sessions are almost exclusively for Gen-Ed, large introductory courses with two 50-mn sessions on M and W (60+ students) and then a discussion with a TA on Fridays (20+ students). Most M/W courses are taught after 2pm. 150-mn sessions are scheduled throughout the week, at any time of the day. There are considerable variations from department to department. In Liberal Arts, almost no advanced courses scheduled on M/W/F.
University of Michigan	Language instruction and several 100-level courses in Liberal Arts are four days/week; all other Liberal Arts courses on M/W and Tu/Th.
University of South Florida	Public urban university. All courses are on M/W and Tu/Th. Longer sessions on Fridays, all day.
University of Rochester	M/W and Tu/Th courses. No M/W/F in Liberal Arts, even in English and language instruction. Seminars for advanced courses on M, Th, and F. Science courses on one, two and three days/week.
University of Virginia	M/W/F courses almost only taught in language instruction, English and Sciences. UVA uses a “prime-time” system (between 10am and 2pm) where faculty can only teach once a year in a prime time slot.
Wake Forest University	Almost all courses are on M/W and Tu/Th, except elementary courses in foreign languages and Latin which are taught M/W/F.

2: Other universities with alternative scheduling

The table below mainly considers large research institutions where the 3-day format is moderately used in social sciences and the humanities. Most courses in the Humanities and Social Sciences are taught once or twice a week, with the exception of 100 and 200-level courses in language

instruction, which are predominantly taught on M/W/F. Science courses and English courses are taught twice or, more typically, three times a week.

Florida International University (Main Campus – Modesto)	<p>Large public urban research university.</p> <p>Large majority of Liberal Arts classes are on M/W, Tu/Th, with 10 to 25% on M/W/F (reaches 35% in language instruction). About 50% of writing composition (Writing & Rhetoric) are on M/W/F.</p> <p>About 10 to 15% of courses are hybrid (1/2 online).</p> <p>3-Hour classes on Saturdays (10am to 6pm) and on weekdays, mornings included.</p>
Indiana University Bloomington	<p>M/W, Tu/Th (mainly), and M/W/F courses (10-20%).</p> <p>The Friday sessions of M/W/F courses are taught by TAs in large classrooms gathering several smaller M/W classes.</p> <p>Modern language instruction on M/W/F.</p> <p>Greek & Latin on M/W/Th/F.</p>
Ohio State University	<p>Classes on M/W, W/F, Tu/Th, M/W/F.</p> <p>Long seminars on all weekdays, including morning.</p> <p>Between 20% and 35% of classes in Liberal Arts are M/W/F.</p> <p>Language instruction 4 and 5/day per week (55m. sessionsX4).</p> <p>Sciences up to 4 times a week.</p>
Rice University	<p>Follows same standard blocks of time policy as UMB.</p> <p>One difference is that they designate certain times in the day or days of the week as prime time and others as not prime time.</p> <p>Classes wishing to use non-standard time slots cannot use prime time slots or overlap into prime time slots.</p>
Rutgers University Large urban	<p>All social science departments, except Psychology, teach on M/W and Tu/Th, with large courses in the evenings and Fridays.</p> <p>Sciences teach 2 and 3/days per week. Labs are on Fridays.</p>
SUNY- Buffalo	Courses are on M/W, Tu/Th, and M/W/F.
Tufts University	<p>Courses are M/W, Tu/Th, and M/W/F. Long seminars only for upper-level courses, scheduled throughout the week. No course on Saturdays.</p>
University of Colorado Boulder	Courses are M/W, Tu/Th, and M/W/F. Long seminars throughout the week.
University of Delaware	Courses on M/W, Tu/Th, M/W/F, and 3h sessions on M, W, Th, and F. Languages on Tu/Th or MWF.
University of Maryland, College Park	Complex system with courses either on M/W or Tu/Th, or on two days +. Discussion either on same day, on Fridays, or online.
University of Massachusetts Lowell	UMass-Lowell transitioned to an alternative schedule four years ago. Courses are now on M/W, Tu/Th, and M/W/F. Long seminars are scheduled throughout the week. Sciences teach 2 and 3/day per week.
University of New Hampshire	<p>Uses M/W, Tu/Th, some M/W/F courses, as well as 3h sessions.</p> <p>Courses also taught on M/W, with 50min on M and 100 on W.</p>

University of Washington (Seattle)	Early language instruction meet 5/days week. Other Liberal Arts on M/W, Tu/Th, and Friday seminars.
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3: Institutions that use a traditional schedule:

Bridgewater State University	Classes on M/W, Tu/Th, and M/W/F. Seminars in the afternoon only, all weekdays.
College of the Holy Cross	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
Franklin and Marshall College	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
Illinois-Wesleyan University	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
Northwestern University	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
University of California-Fresno	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
UMass-Boston	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
UMass-Dartmouth	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.
University of South Carolina-Columbia	50% of courses on are M/W/F, 50% on Tu/Th.

III: Impact of Schedules on Students: Literature on Pedagogy and Alternative Scheduling

There are only a handful of studies that specifically look at the impact of scheduling on student preference and outcomes and a significant number are more than 10 years old. We summarize some of the key findings here. Reardon, Payan, Miller & Alexander (2008) found that students prefer two day a week classes and student learning outcomes are better for two day a week classes. Students preferred these class schedules to allow them to do other things on the other three days of the week. For example, students need time for internships and work. This finding was consistent with other studies such as Johnson, Rochkind, Ott, & DuPont (2009) examining why students do not complete college and how their needs and actions differ from students who do complete college. Refuting what they call “Myth no. 1” about why so many students fail to finish college,” this study documents with quantitative and qualitative data collected from across the United States that the main reason why students drop out is that they have to work while in college and, “despite their best efforts, the stress of trying to do both eventually takes its toll” (p.5). Furthermore, this article points out that parents or family members supporting students so they can attend full time without working is not the reality for most college students any more. Dundes and Marx (2006) find that most students need to work at least 10 hours a week and want flexible schedules to accommodate that schedule.

Universities that offer nontraditional students flexible course options may increase their retention rates, full-time enrollment, and shorten degree completion durations. The study by Johnson et al. (2009) pointed at the importance of schedules in student retention:

“[T]he vast majority of young people who made the decision to leave college without a degree point first to options that would give them more flexibility in schedules and help them mitigate the challenge of working and going to school at the same time.” (p. 18)

Online, weekend, evening, accelerated, and hybrid (split between in-person and online) courses allow students to fit their academic career into their already packed schedules (Taylor, Dunn & Winn, 2015). The traditional course scheduling model of predominantly morning and afternoon courses that meet two to three times per week over the course of sixteen weeks does not complement the lifestyles of most nontraditional students (Hanover Research, 2018; Grabowski et al., 2016).

Two key findings from Hanover Research in 2018 stated:

Commuter and part-time students in particular can benefit from flexible and data-driven scheduling. To address their needs, institutions are encouraged to consider business hours and align schedules to accommodate traditional working schedules (e.g., start evening classes at 6:00pm rather than 5:00pm). Similarly, matching course demographics with schedules can help encourage high seat-fill ratios. For instance, if institutions notice that one particular program attracts a lot of parents, they may consider scheduling courses during the day in order to avoid conflicts with children’s school schedule.

Courses that are scheduled two times per week are most consistently linked with positive student outcomes. In one experiment cited by the Hanover Research students

enrolled in an intermediate accounting class in one of three different schedules: one time per week; two times per week; and three times per week. Students in the Monday/Wednesday/Friday section were significantly less successful than their peers. Similarly, community college students who attended algebra class once per week were outperformed by their peers in twice-weekly sections. Although the associations are modest, the results of this experiment provide further evidence on the benefits to students of sessions that convene two times a week. (p. 5).

In Reardon et al. (2008), they acknowledge that universities do not want to only use classroom facilities on Mondays and Wednesdays or Tuesdays and Thursdays. They suggest that universities look at flexible schedules such as various combinations of Mondays and Wednesdays, and Wednesdays and Fridays to keep classrooms full every day of the week.

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IV: THE STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES

The Taskforce designed two surveys, one for the students and one for the faculty members, to gauge their respective views on scheduling. In particular, students and faculty members were asked what scheduling format they prefer: three sessions of 50 minutes, two sessions of 75 minutes, or one session of 150 minutes, and asked to substantiate their answers. Copies of the two surveys as they were shared with the students and faculty are included in the Appendix.

1. THE STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

MAIN FINDINGS OF THE STUDENT SURVEY

- Detailed answers by students show they are fully aware of the stakes of a schedule change.
- A majority of students prefer the 75-minute format.
- A majority of students, 67%, reject the 50-minute format.
- A strong minority, 33%, still favor the 50-minute format.
- A surprisingly high minority of students, 32%, show a preference for 150-minute sessions once a week.
- Academics remain a strong variable in student scheduling preferences. One of the main reasons to justify their preference for the 75-minute and 150-minute formats is pedagogic: to study better, to have more time to study, and to cover more material in class.
- The more credits students have accrued, the more they favor the 75-minute and 150-minute formats and reject the 50-minute format.
- The more students work, the more they reject the 50-minute format. Students who work 3 days or more per week favor 75- and 150-minute sessions.
- Detailed answers unequivocally show that students are struggling to balance work, study, and family obligations. Commuting is described as an underestimated hurdle in students' concerns, especially given major traffic changes in recent years. Time lost in traffic and transportation is seen as an impediment to study.

INTRODUCTION

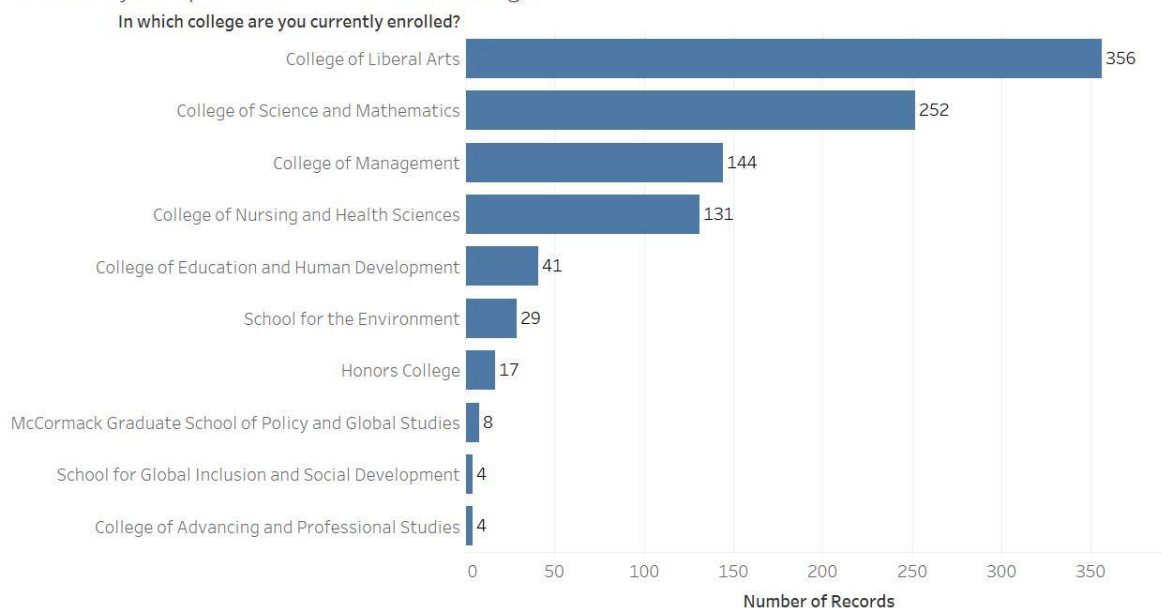
The Task Force asked the undergraduate and graduate students about their scheduling preferences in a survey that ran over a four-week period. This student survey represents a considerable source

of information for our University. It tells us who the students are, what challenges they face, what types of schedules they want, and why they have particular preferences.

Our analysis is both quantitative and qualitative. A review of the detailed answers shows that students clearly understand the stakes of an alternative schedule and what this type of change would entail. Importantly, students understand the schedule changes in relation to their graduation. A majority of polled students have already taken both a M/W/F course and a Tu/Th course, so it is safe to assume that their answers are framed by their personal experiences.

Students were presented with twelve questions, of which three were open ended questions inviting detailed responses (See Appendix for full survey). As of October 19, 2019, 989 students had answered, which represent about 7% of the student body. We deem this a very high response rate. Since few students usually answer UMB surveys –“100 is a good number” according to one prominent administrator from the Provost’s Office, and the Taskforce received almost 10 times this number- these results should be considered a success of the Taskforce. That such a high number of students answered the survey also testifies to their awareness of the stakes of a schedule change.

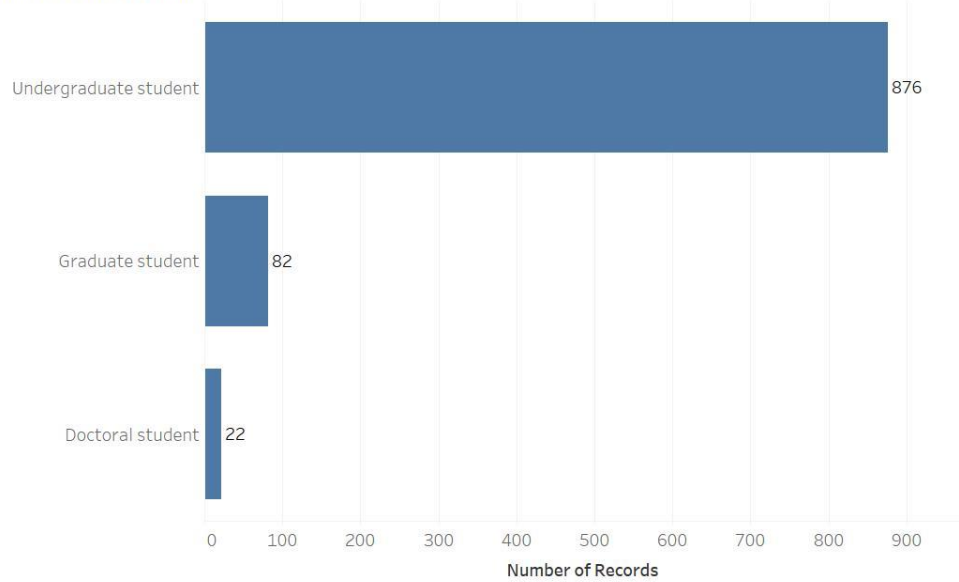
Student Survey Response Distribution College



Sum of Number of Records for each In which college are you currently enrolled?. The view is filtered on In which college are you currently enrolled?, which excludes Null.

Student Survey Response Distribution Level

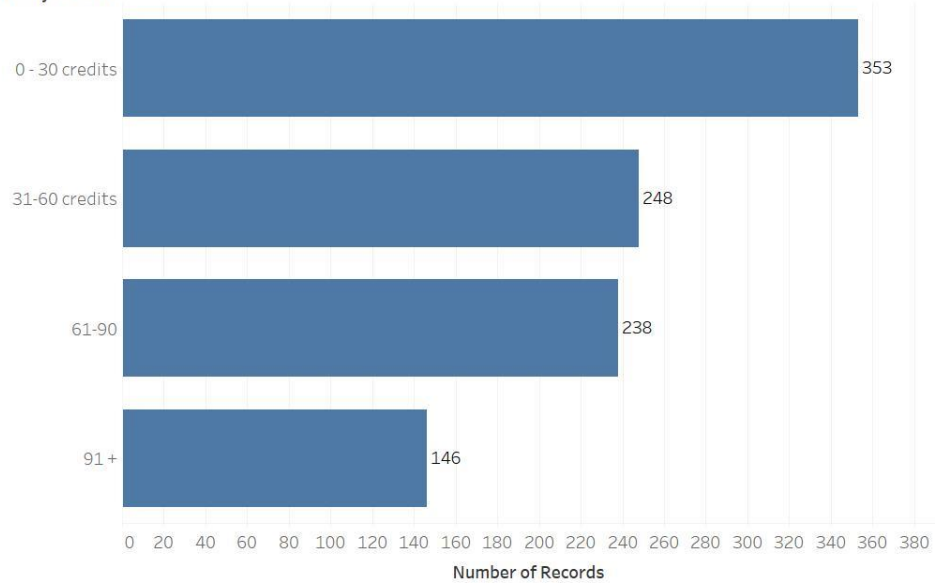
Are you an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral student?



Sum of Number of Records for each Are you an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral student?. The view is filtered on Are you an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral student?, which has multiple members selected.

Student Survey Response Distribution Credits

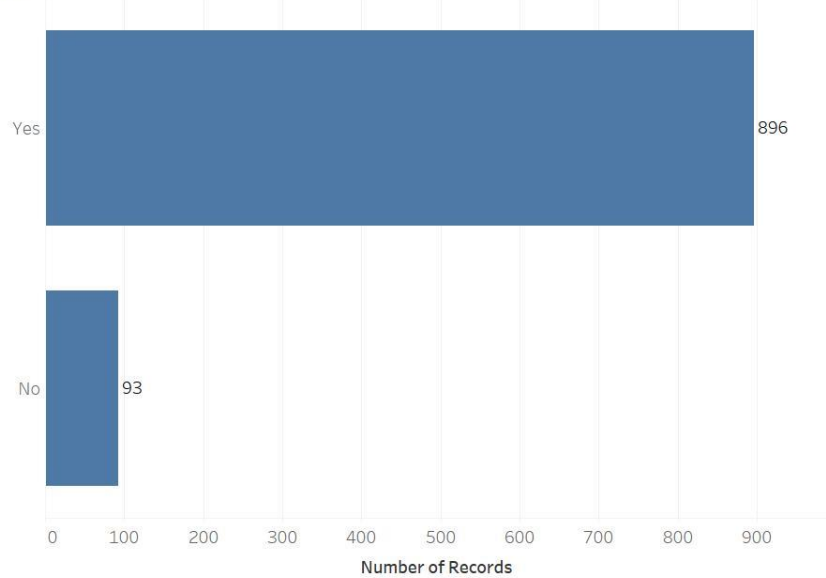
How many credits have you already earned?



Sum of Number of Records for each How many credits have you already earned?. The view is filtered on How many credits have you already earned?, which has multiple members selected.

Student Survey Response Distribution Work

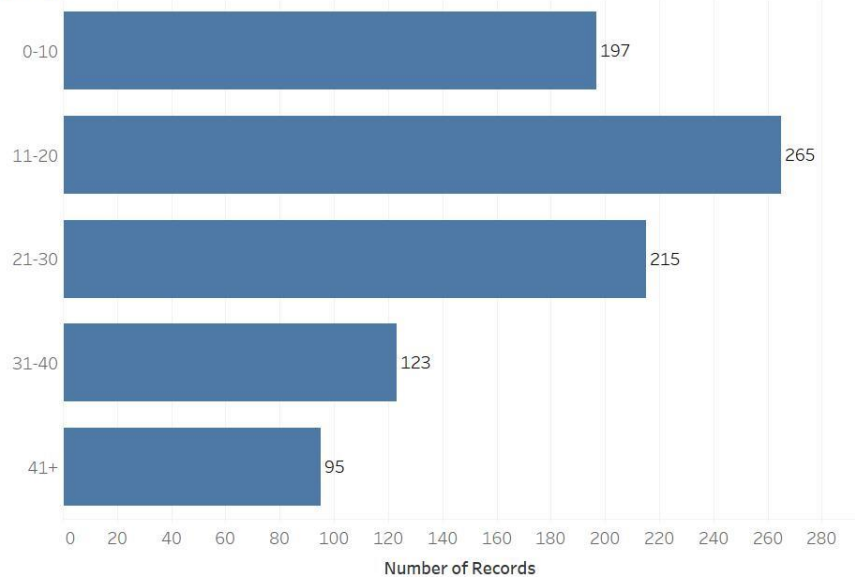
Do you also work during the semester?



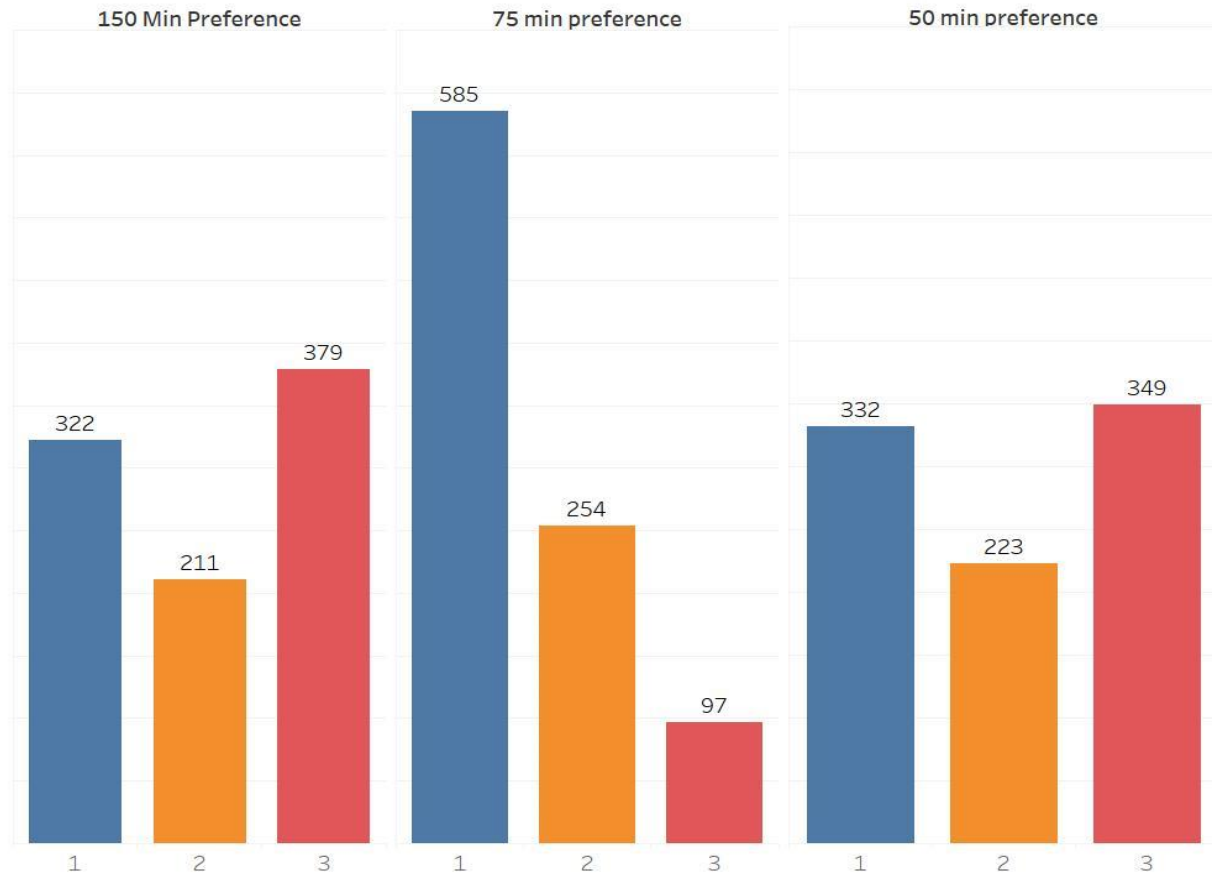
Sum of Number of Records for each Do you also work during the semester?. The view is filtered on Do you also work during the semester?, which keeps No and Yes.

Student Survey Response Distribution Hours Worked

How many hours do you work during the semester?



Sum of Number of Records for each How many hours do you work during the semester?. The view is filtered on How many hours do you work during the semester?, which has multiple members selected.



(1=prefer, 2=neutral, 3=don't prefer)

DETAILED RESULTS

Option A (150-minute Session Once/Week):

Preferred:	322 (33% of votes)
Neutral:	211
Not Preferred:	379
Blank Votes:	76

Option B (75-minute Sessions 2/Week):

Preferred:	585 (59% of votes)
Neutral:	254
Not Preferred:	97
Blank Votes:	52

Option C (50-minute Sessions 3/Week) :

Preferred:	332 (36% of expressed votes; 34% of votes)
Neutral:	223
Not Preferred:	349
Blank Votes:	84

Correlations show that the more advanced in their studies students are (credits earned), the more they favor the 75-minute format (0.131) and reject the 50-minute format (-0.187). Similarly, students who have already taken a 150-minute course tend not oppose it (0.360); most of the students who oppose that format have not experienced it (-0.360). In both cases, experience and maturity make students reject the 50-minute format in favor of longer sessions.

PREFERENCES AND CONSTRAINTS

Format

The two-day format is the preferred format for 59% of UMass students while the three-day format is rejected by a significant share of students. The preference for the 75-minute session is sustained by the students' life experience and by their scholarly expectations, as explained below. Importantly, only 10% of students reject the 75-minute session as the least preferable option.

The 50-minute session

This format is preferred by 34% of students. This still constitutes an important group which should not be sidelined. When asked to substantiate their answers, students mentioned their attention span. However, this preference also correlates with work: the less students work, the more they opt for this format. An analysis of detailed responses show that the 3-day teaching format is represented by students as an impediment to their success (See Appendix). There is no strong correlation between colleges and the preference for this format: among the students who prefer this format, we see students from CMS (89), Nursing (54), Management (34), SE (9), and CLA (138).

The 150-minute session

A significant minority of students (33%) are open to 150-minute sessions. They are a minority, but it is not a small one. Given that this format would not constitute the main teaching mode but would impact a smaller number of courses, this result is highly satisfactory and augurs well to students opting for this format some of the time. However, an important minority (38%) is opposed to this length and their detailed responses point to their own attention span and to the obligation to seat for 3 hours. However, statistical correlations show that most of the students who oppose this format have not taken such a course; those who have had this experience tend to prefer this option. In addition, a close reading of detailed answers show that a significant minority –possibly up to 20%– come on campus for one, sometimes two courses per semester, and would prefer to have their courses on a single day.

Online courses

Student comments show that a minority of students demand more online courses, cheaper online courses, and more hybrid courses.

Academic Performances

Academic performance is clearly a concern for most students and is a strong rationale for their scheduling preferences. Many detailed answers link both session length and alternative scheduling to academic performance. They find that 50-minute sessions do not allow them to retain the material covered. They often find that longer classes allow instructors to cover material better and allow students to better complete assignments. An overwhelming majority of students argue

strongly that spending less time commuting allows them to spend more time on school assignments. A significantly high number of students explain that they “waste” two to three hours/day in traffic which they could use for schoolwork (See Appendix). The majority of students mentioned one of two reasons that motivate their preferences: (1) work obligations, and (2) academic performance –with a significant minority mentioning also family obligations. We therefore foresee that student retention and graduation rates could be positively impacted with an alternative schedule.

Work, Family, Children

Over 91% of the undergraduate students surveyed work. Over 71% stated that they work three days a week or more and almost 48% four or five days a week. The 3-day class format is described as detrimental to these students. This is also true of the graduate students who work off campus.

Commute/ Traffic

This is the number 1 concern of students. They repeatedly refer to their commute and to “traffic” to justify their course choices and their preference for alternative scheduling. INRIX’s 2019 report² shows that the Greater Boston area now has the worst traffic in the country (worse than Los Angeles) and is not the town it was a decade ago. The administration cannot underestimate the cost of this congestion on students. Students are highly aware of the time wasted in traffic.

Parking Fees: A minor concern

Parking fees are a very minor concern of both undergraduate and graduate students (less than 2% of detailed answers refer to it as a concern). If we read closely the detailed answers, this concern appears in 20 answers total (in response to Question 10, Why you prefer this format: answers 22, 111, 215, 243, 341, 517, 545, 598, 770, 856; and in response to Question 11, Main factors driving your schedule decision: answers 27, 49, 154, 215, 227, 344, 350, 447, 506, 738). This is consistent with the President of the Student Government’s presentation to the CLA senate in 2018, who stated that parking fees were not a major student concern.

[Relevant excerpts from students’ detailed answers are in the Appendix section.]

² <http://inrix.com/scorecard/>

2. THE FACULTY PERSPECTIVE

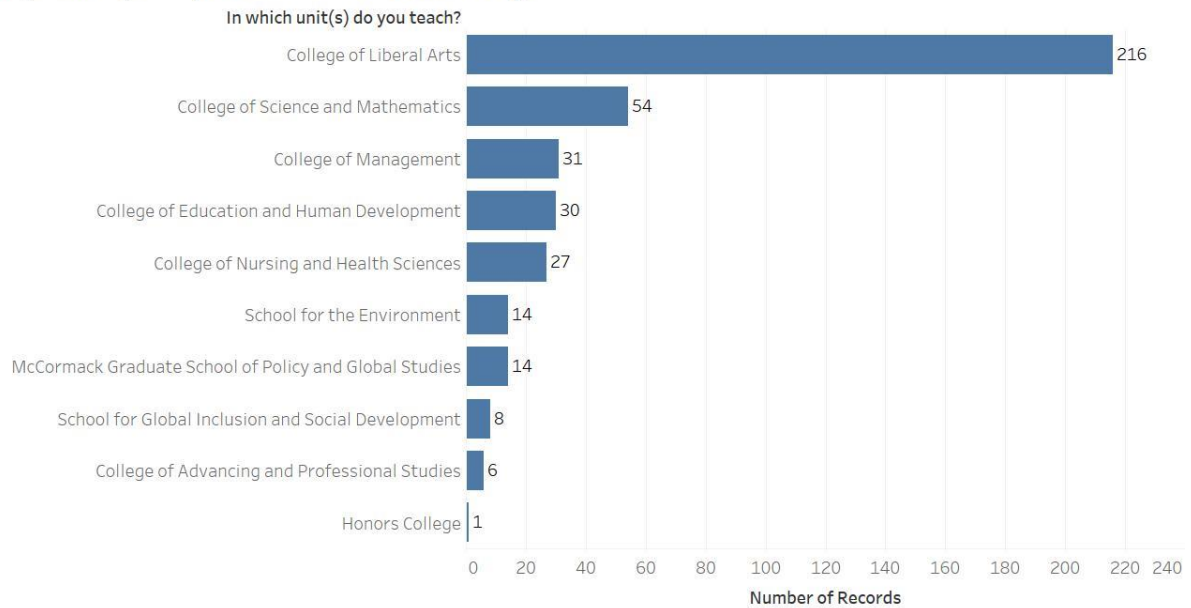
MAIN FINDINGS OF THE FACULTY SURVEY

- 86% of faculty votes articulated a preference for courses that met either once or twice a week.
- A majority of the faculty surveyed rejected the 3-day a week, 50 minutes course format.
- Faculty members in the departments of Biology, Chemistry, Physics, and English stress the importance of 50-minute sessions for their programs. They state that the traditional scheduling system meets their pedagogical needs. Lecturers and professors of English stress that for English composition, repetition is key to student learning.
- Faculty responded in detail regarding the challenges posed by classes that met three days a week for 50 minutes. Many saw their commitment to student success, deep learning, active and participatory engagement challenged by the shorter time block.
- Overall there is an expressed need for a course scheduling system that accommodates both faculty and student needs and constraints, and a clear articulation that the current system does not meet these needs.
- Pedagogy emerged as a prominent factor in faculty scheduling preferences for 75 minute and 150 minute formats.
- Faculty identified a range of courses and teaching formats that are unsuitable for the 50 minute class block. These include courses that are rich in media or technology, film courses, courses that are ‘flipped’ and therefore include a mix of lecture and classroom activities, courses that rely on small-group engagement, involve student presentations, or fieldwork assignments as well as graduate courses in general. Faculty also expressed difficulty with conducting exams in such a short time period. Additionally, the 50 minute format makes it difficult to invite guest speakers.
- Student enrollment and attendance was another concern driving schedule preferences with a number of faculty reporting that enrollments and attendance are lower for courses that meet 3 days a week for 50 minutes.
- Many faculty are willing to teach classes that meet once a week and evening or night classes as well as online and hybrid classes all of which are seen as speaking to student needs. Saturday teaching and teaching on two consecutive days or intensive teaching in alternate weeks or consecutive weeks were other suggestions provided by faculty members.

INTRODUCTION

The faculty survey included 18 questions of which six were open-ended and invited faculty comments. By Oct. 31, 2019, 401 faculty out of 1,163 had responded across the many colleges and departments on campus. This represents 34% of faculty members.

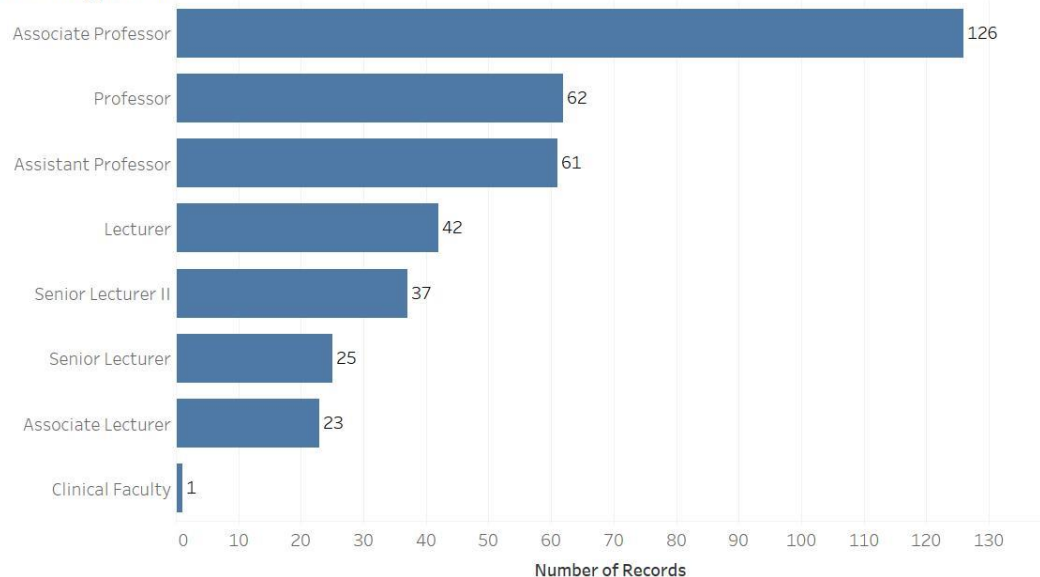
Faculty Survey Response Distribution College



Sum of Number of Records for each In which unit(s) do you teach?.

Faculty Survey Response Distribution Teaching Position

What is your current teaching position?



Sum of Number of Records for each What is your current teaching position?. The view is filtered on What is your current teaching position?, which has multiple members selected.

The majority of respondents were CLA faculty (216 or 54%) with 54 (13.5%) from the College of Science and Math and 31 (8%) from College of Management and 30 from the College of Education and Human Development, rounding out the top four. Other respondents came from the College of Nursing and Health Sciences (27), School for the Environment (14), McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies (14), School for Global Inclusion and Social Development (8), College of Advancing and Professional Services (6), and Honor's College (1). There were 40 faculty that listed two college affiliations and 1 faculty member that listed three college affiliations. For these faculty we assigned them to the college where their primary department is housed. These faculty state that they also teach in Academic Support (1), the College of Advancing and Professional Studies (20), College of Management (1), College of Nursing and Health Sciences (1), College of Education and Human Development (1), Honor's College (11), College of Science and Math (1), McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Inclusion (4), College of Liberal Arts (1) and School for the Environment (1).

377 faculty responded to the question of teaching position. Of this, 33.6% are non-tenure track faculty at different ranks of lecturer, and 66% are tenured and tenure-track faculty. Among the tenured and tenure-track faculty the largest percentage of faculty responding are associate professors, with full and assistant professors at roughly 16% each. The survey respondents included both part time and full time faculty.

Nearly 90% of faculty surveyed have taught undergraduate students and just over 50% have taught graduate courses. Close to 64% of faculty respondents have taught classes that meet twice a week and nearly 45% have taught classes that meet either once a week or three times a week. So faculty are responding with knowledge and experience of these different teaching times and formats.

DETAILED RESULTS

Course preferences

Option A (150 minute sessions 1 day a week)

1st preference: 133

2nd preference: 131

Last preference: 82

Option B (75 minute sessions 2 days a week)

1st preference: 213

2nd preference: 124

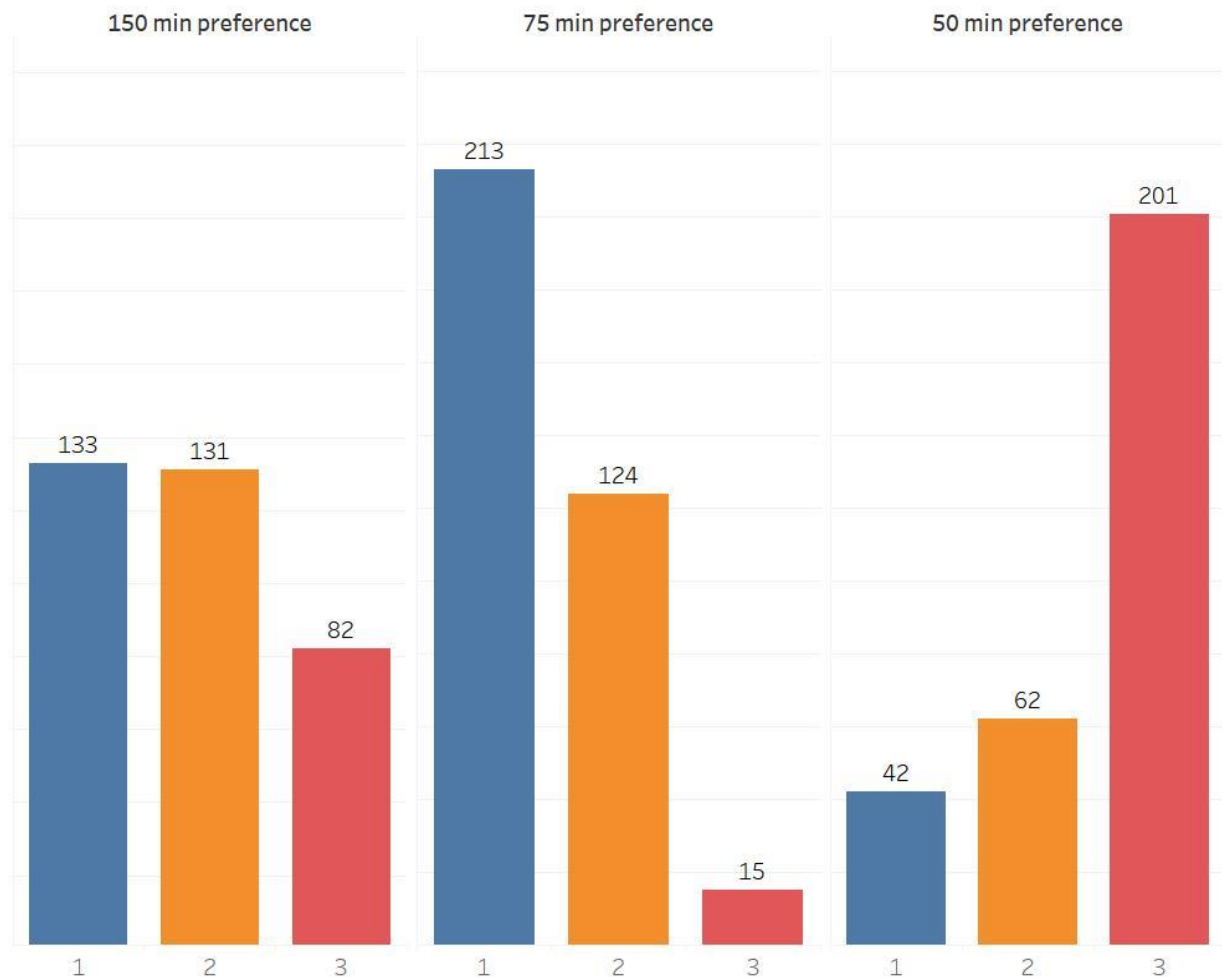
Last preference: 15

Option C (50 minute sessions 3 days a week)

1st preference: 42

2nd preference: 62

Last preference: 201



(1=prefer, 2=neutral, 3=don't prefer)

The majority of faculty expressed a preference for 75 minute courses. Specifically, 53% of expressed votes (213 faculty) were for a 2 day schedule of 75 minutes per class. A third of faculty votes (33%) were for a one day a week for 150 minutes per class, and another third were neutral towards courses of 150 minutes, one day a week. In comparison the 3 day format was rejected by a majority of faculty as over 50% expressed that they do not prefer this format and only 10.5% of faculty voted for it. Nearly 80% of faculty surveyed are willing to teach a 3-hour block that meets once a week. In their comments, many faculty members detailed the advantages of the once-a-week extended time slot. Additionally, 70% of faculty surveyed are willing to teach hybrid or web-enhanced courses.

Summary of faculty comments

As with the quantitative survey findings, the majority of faculty comments are in favor of an alternative teaching schedule where instead of having over half our course blocks allocated towards 50 minute classes that meet three times a week, the university moves to a mix of 2 day classes that meet for either 75 minutes and classes that meet once a week for an extended time period of 150 minutes in addition to the 50 minute courses.

Pedagogy, teaching effectiveness and student success

Faculty preferences rest on a number of issues, a central one being the pedagogical soundness of longer class periods. A number of faculty felt they were unable to deliver what students need in terms of effective instruction in the 50 minute class format.

Faculty comments underscore that student learning is enhanced by classes that adopt a mix of lecture, in-class activities and assignments often conducted in small groups, and use of technology. All of these teaching formats are not supported by the shorter class format of 50 minutes.

In addition, faculty members stress that the 50 minute classes tend to lessen effective teaching and learning time as precious minutes are spent both at the beginning and end of the class meeting in either waiting for students who arrive late or prepare to leave before the class ends. Especially in large enrollment classes students take a while to “get settled”. With the time required to make announcements, take attendance, review the previous lecture and materials covered as an introduction and to provide continuity, the effective time for instruction is whittled down to 35 minutes in some cases. This is seen as inadequate for in-depth engagement with the course materials, or to instruct students in complex theory and conceptual understanding as well as for satisfying a range of student learning styles.

Classes that have “hands on” exercises following lecture need 150 minute class periods as do courses on film and media. The longer meeting times assist students in exploring topics in depth and increase students’ focus while in the 50 minute meeting times some faculty feel they have to cram facts and move rapidly through the material. When a 20 minute assessment is given in a 50 minute class, there are barely 25 minutes left for new material. Classroom discussion and individual student presentations, both important for student success, are often sacrificed in “fragmented” 50 minute class sessions.

Faculty have expressed that 50 minute class meetings were inappropriate for college classes where students need to learn to engage more deeply and participate in active learning, both required for

critical thinking. In the liberal arts, it is well known that students tend to engage with readings and lecture if they have supplemental materials such as video (documentary and film), guest lectures, in class activities and assignments all of which enrich the class. Further, to prepare students for employment post-their undergraduate education or to enter graduate school, the longer class periods are seen to offer better preparation.

A smaller number of faculty expressed preference for the 50 minute classes that meet three days a week. Their comments highlighted student attention span, their ability to get to know the students better if they met them more times a week, the concern that student absences would count more in classes that met fewer times and the benefits of more frequent class meetings for certain types of courses such as writing courses which require more frequent feedback on student assignments. Notably English Composition, language classes and science classes which have laboratory instruction are seen to require instruction that is distributed over 3 days in the week.

Faculty participation, academic activities, service

The alternative schedule is also expected to enhance faculty participation in scholarly events on campus, including talks and workshops which three day teaching does not facilitate. It would also enable faculty to attend to service which has increased across the campus.

Research productivity

The faculty members surveyed believe that moving to an alternative schedule would facilitate research and allow faculty to better balance their time between teaching, research and other academic activities which promote collegiality on campus.

Faculty who have taught at universities other than UMB note that teaching classes that meet once or twice a week is routine for a research university. As one faculty member who has taught at numerous other universities prior to coming to UMB observed, “In my experience, having been now in more than seven Universities across the world, no research University that wants to foster the research productivity of their Faculty requires them to be on campus for three days just for teaching.” Another faculty member directed the Taskforce to look into course scheduling at another nearby university, where she had taught and where she had the freedom to opt for a schedule that suited her research and family needs. Faculty note that having 3 to 4 days to focus on research is required for rigorous research and that the 3 day teaching fragments their time and energies in a way that is detrimental to their research goals.

The University’s emphasis on involving not only graduate students but also undergraduates in faculty research, can only bear fruit if faculty are given the time to do their research.

Multiple benefits and greater satisfaction overall are seen to accrue with the shift to a 2 day teaching schedule. As one faculty member stated, “For faculty it also represents a financial savings, but more importantly a savings in valuable research and work time--simply getting to UMB consumes hours of potential research and writing time every week”.

Commuter school, working students with family responsibilities

Faculty responses emphasized the need for scheduling and course formats to address the needs of a predominantly commuter population of students and faculty. As one faculty member put it, “As

a primarily commuting school in the 21st century, we should offer more once-per-week classes on evenings and weekends, enhancing class meetings with online components. The old MWF system is a relic of the past, and not appropriate for our student body and our times. Many community colleges are ahead of us on this.”

Classes that meet fewer days a week combined with online courses would help students who are juggling long commutes with work, childcare and other family responsibilities. Faculty expressed concerns that the time students are on the road could be better spent in preparing for classes, mastering the subject and completing assignments.

Faculty members believe that multiple benefits are seen to accrue when the 3-day class meetings are replaced by 2-day classes or classes that meet once a week for an extended time. In the words of one faculty member, classes that meet fewer times in the week, “would benefit students by making attendance less costly (given the expense and hassle of traveling to UMB) and would increase their performance and overall satisfaction.”

The question of enrollments for M/W/F versus Tu/Th courses also surfaced in faculty comments. Some faculty observed that enrollments for 2 day courses are better than enrollments for courses that meet 3 days a week.

Adjunct/NTT faculty

The question of how alternative scheduling would impact NTT faculty who teach 4 courses was raised in the faculty survey. Some NTT faculty are in favor of 2 day a week teaching and even of courses that meet once a week. Adjunct faculty at UMB who also teach at other universities prefer classes that meet either twice or once a week as it would free up their schedule. NTT faculty who teach full course loads at UMB might find they need to manage their courses between 2 day and 1 day a week teaching to make their schedules manageable. As the proposed alternative schedule retains a certain number of 3 days a week courses, NTT faculty are expected to have some flexibility in designing their schedule.

Hybrid, online and block teaching

Hybrid and online courses are seen as effective ways in which courses may be taught. Online courses also increase the reach of the university and its programs and may be a way of addressing enrollment issues as well. Hybrid classes offer some degree of flexibility to both students and faculty. Block teaching is another course format that faculty raised in connection with alternative scheduling. A faculty member teaching in the MBA program suggested more classes be taught in blocks rather than full semesters in keeping with competitor programs. “i.e., meeting every day for a week or two weeks. It would be ideal to move towards this type of flexibility within our MBA program.”

V: SCHEDULING AND PEDAGOGICAL NEEDS OF DEPARTMENTS AT UMB

The Taskforce contacted the Chairs and, when needed, Deans, to provide information on pedagogy and scheduling. Their communications, detailed in the Appendix, provide valuable information on almost every discipline in the University.³

Input from Chairs or Deans

CLA Departments	Courses that need to be taught in 50-mm sessions	Courses that should <u>preferably</u> be taught in 50-mm sessions	Frequency
Africana	0	0	
American Studies	0	0	
Anthropology	0	0	
Applied Linguistics	0	0	
Arts	0	3	Once/year
Asian Studies	0	0	
Classics	0	See comment in Appendix	
Communication	0	0	
Economics	0	0	
English	Some LE sections that require recitation led by TA rather than faculty one day per week	Composition I and II	Once/year
History	0	0	
Labor Studies	0	0	
Latin American Studies	0	100-level language courses	Once/year
Modern Languages	0	100-level language courses	Once/year
Performing Arts	0		
Philosophy	0	0	
Political Science	0	3 large enrollment courses	
Psychology	0	0	
Religious Studies	0	0	
Sociology	0	0	
Women Studies	0	0	
College of Education			
Curriculum and Instr.	0	0	
Counseling & School	0	0	
Leadership in Ed.			
College of Nursing			

³ Chairs and, when applicable, Deans, were asked the following question: “How many courses in your department have to be taught for pedagogical reasons on a 3-day/week schedule (in 50-minute sessions)? You may also consider that some of your courses do not necessarily *have* to be taught on a 3-day schedule but that it would be preferable (for any pedagogical reason) to teach them on a 3-day basis: please let me know about these as well.” Blanks indicate a non-response from the department. We will continue to update this table as responses from additional departments arrive.

Exercise Science	0	1 (EHS 120)	Twice/year
Department of Nursing			
CSM			
Biology	Mixed format required (no change in schedule) - Need large classrooms		
Chemistry	Mixed format required (no change in schedule)		
Computer Sciences			
Engineering	0	0	
Mathematics	0	Math 114, 115	Twice/year
Physics Department	Mixed format required (no change in schedule)		

Sch. of the Environ.			
College of Managmt.	0	0	
McCormack School			
Conflict Resolution	0	0	
Gerontology	0	0	
Public Policy			

The 3-day format is preferred by many instructors for the 101 and 102 English composition courses offered by the English Department. According to the Chair of the English Department a very large number of sections need to be taught every semester in this format. The Chairs of the Departments of Classics, Latin American Studies, and Modern Language point out that language instruction can benefit from meeting 3 days/week. The Chairs of the Department of Biology, Physics, and Chemistry wish to have the same scheduling format they currently have.

The Chairs of most other departments point out that the 75-minute session format is better for the courses they teach for pedagogical reasons. These are: Asian Studies, Anthropology, Engineering, Labor Studies, Religious Studies.

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction and the Department of Engineering have eliminated 50-minute sessions and teach only 75- or 150-minute sessions. The College of Management currently teaches about 10% of its courses on a M/W/F schedule, while about 20% of its courses meet once a week. The Interim Dean of the College of Management wishes to maintain the possibility of courses that meet three times a week.

VI: CAPACITY ASSESSMENT

We have worked with the registrar's office to construct an assessment of the current space available at UMass-Boston and the current scheduling processes. We have relied heavily on information provided by 25 Live to construct our availability and utilization assessments of classrooms. Below we describe the key findings from our analysis.

The current availability and usage of classrooms at UMass-Boston is as follows:

- For Spring of 2020 we have 108 classrooms that are shared by all colleges.
 - 7 classrooms in the science building were taken offline, presumably permanently.
 - 7 classrooms in McCormack are offline, presumably temporarily.
- Each college is given a classroom allotment (example CLA may offer 57 sections per each day time block).
- Classroom Capacities
 - *Less than 25 = 22 classrooms*
 - *25-39 = 46 classrooms*
 - *40-69 = 26 classroom*
 - *70+ = 14 classrooms*
- We offer 568 classes on Tuesday February 11th between 8am and 5:15pm and 543 classes on Wednesday February 12th between 8am and 5:15pm.
- There are 13 day time blocks (before 4:00pm)
 - *M/W/F 8:00-8:50am, 9:00-9:50am, 10:00-10:50am, 11:00-11:50am, 12:00-12:50pm, 1:00-1:50pm, 2:00-2:50pm, 3:00-3:50pm.*
 - *TU/TH 8:00-9:15am, 9:30-10:45am, 11:00-12:15pm, 12:30-1:45pm, 2:00-3:15pm.*
 - Note: MW 4:00-5:15pm and TUTH 4:00-5:15pm are not considered day time blocks, but we have included them in our analysis as utilization during this time period is relatively high, similar to other day time blocks.
- Although most classes meet for 50 or 75 or 150 minutes per day, there are also classes that have an extra hour and/or discussion section, and/or extended time (Seminars, four+ credit courses, film course, NURSNG classes).
- We are also contractually obligated to provide classroom space for some grant programs (OLLI, UB, US, Navitas).
- Classrooms are also used for academic events (review sessions, tutoring, makeup, etc) and non-academic events (meetings for departments & clubs, etc).
- Final exams are scheduled based on the current standard meeting times.

We conducted a detailed utilization analysis for Tuesday February 11th and Wednesday February 12th in the Spring of 2020 to gain a better understanding of current utilization and capacity constraints. This is the first semester where none of the classrooms in the old science building are being used and thus represents the most constrained capacity we have experienced to date. Additionally, there are 7 medium sized classrooms in McCormack that are offline in the Spring,

but hopefully will be returned to classroom use in the future, thus representing additional capacity in future semesters.

We examined the number of rooms that were utilized during each of the 13 standard day time slots as well as the 4:00-5:15 M/W and TU/TH slots. We also noted the number of rooms that were utilized according to the standard slots and the number that are already being utilized on an alternative schedule. We conducted this analysis for all 108 classrooms overall and then for the 14 LE classrooms (70+ students). We present these data in Table 1.

Table 1: Classroom Utilization Statistics

All Classrooms N = 108

Tuesday February 11th, 568 Classes Total	8:00-9:15	9:30-10:45	11-12:15	12:30-1:45	2:00-3:15	4:00-5:15	Overall
Utilization Rate	70%	95%	98%	98%	98%	86%	91%
Standard Time Utilization Rate	64%	84%	89%	90%	83%	56%	78%

Wednesday February 12th, 543 Classes Total	8:00-8:50	9:00-9:50	10:00-10:50	11:00-11:50	12:00-12:50	1:00-1:50	2:00-2:50	3:00-3:50	4:00-5:15	Overall
Utilization Rate	44%	68%	77%	86%	80%	62%	54%	23%	80%	64%
Standard Time Utilization Rate	36%	56%	62%	69%	60%	46%	44%	8%	36%	46%

Table 2: Classroom Utilization Statistics

LE Classrooms (70+) N = 14

Tuesday February 11th, 71 classes total	8:00-9:15	9:30-10:45	11-12:15	12:30-1:45	2:00-3:15	4:00-5:15	Overall
Utilization Rate	36%	100%	100%	100%	100%	93%	88%
Standard Time Utilization Rate	29%	93%	100%	100%	79%	71%	79%

Wednesday February 12th, 54 classes total	8:00-8:50	9:00-9:50	10:00-10:50	11:00-11:50	12:00-12:50	1:00-1:50	2:00-2:50	3:00-3:50	4:00-5:15	Overall
Utilization Rate	36%	29%	79%	86%	50%	29%	29%	36%	64%	48%
Standard Time Utilization Rate	29%	21%	64%	71%	43%	21%	14%	21%	29%	35%

We see here that there is a U shape in utilization patterns, where mid-day time slots are the most utilized and early morning and late afternoon time slots are less well utilized. It is also immediately apparent that utilization rates on Wednesday are significantly lower than utilization rates on Tuesday. Specifically, there is only one time slot on Tuesday where utilization rates are below 80%, and in contrast there are only three times on Wednesday where utilization rates are above 80%.

Additionally, from this analysis we see that utilization rates on Wednesday from 1:00pm to 4:00pm are significantly lower than those during all other time slots. Furthermore, when looking at the rooms that are utilized in the standard times during these windows we see that utilization rates are below 50% in all three windows, highlighting that there is already a fair amount (~20%) of alternative scheduling happening during this time period.

We conduct the same analysis for the LE classrooms, as this is an area that has been identified as a further bottleneck. We present these results in Table 2. Here we see that differences between Tuesday and Wednesday utilization patterns are even more stark. On Tuesday there are four time periods where 100% of LE classrooms are utilized. In contrast, on Wednesday there are five time periods where fewer than half of the LE classrooms are utilized. When looking at the one 500 student classroom, this pattern is the same. We find that the room is booked solid on Tuesday but only half the day on Wednesday.

We have conducted a portion of this analysis for previous semesters. Specifically, we examine TU/TH 12:30-1:45 and 2:00-3:15 utilization as well as M/W 1:00-1:50, 2:00-2:50, 3:00-3:50 utilization by classroom for Spring 2019, Fall 2019 and Spring 2020. We present these results in Tables 3, 4 and 5. We see here that these differences in utilization for LE classrooms are consistent across time. With LE classrooms consistently booked 100% of the time on TU/TH and only about half the time on M/W during these similar time periods.

Table 3: Large Enrollment Classrooms Availability
Spring 2019

Room Number	Capacity	T 12:30-1:45	T 2:00-3:15	W 1:00-1:50	W 2:00-2:50	W 3:00-3:50	Notes
HLL-3507	142	X	X	X			
M-409	90	X	X	X	X		
S1-6	106	X	X	X			
S2-3A	512	X	X	X			
W1-4	80	X	X	X			
W1-5	80	X	X				
W1-6	70	X	X				
W1-88	222	X	X	X			
W2-158	82	X	X	X	X		
W2-200	95	X	X	X	X		
Y1-1100	500	X	X		X		
Y1-1300	150	X	X	X	X	X	(but in a 3 hour block)
Y2-2110	85	X	X	X	X		
Y2-2120	150	X	X	X	X	X	(2-3:30 is used)
Y2-2300	200	X	X	X			
Y2-2310	200	X	X	X			

Table 4: Large Enrollment Classrooms
Availability
 Fall 2019

Room Number	Capacity	T 12:30-1:45	T 2:00-3:15	W 1:00-1:50	W 2:00-2:50	W 3:00-3:50	
HLL-3507	142	X	X	X			
M-409	90	X	X	X	X		
W1-4	80	X	X	X	X	X	(2-3:15)
W1-5	80	X	X	X	X	X	(3 hour class)
W1-6	70	X	X	X			
W1-88	222	X	X				
W2-158	82	X	X	X	X	X	(3-5 class)
W2-200	95	X	X	X			
Y1-1100	500	X	X	X	X		
Y1-1300	150	X	X	X	X	X	(1pm used as part of 3 hour morning lecture)
Y2-2110	85	X	X	X	X	X	
Y2-2120	150	X	X	X	X		
Y2-2300	200	X	X	X	X	X	(2 and 3pm part of 3 hour lecture)
Y2-2310	200	X	X	X	X		

Table 5: Large Enrollment Classrooms Availability
Spring 2020

Room Number	Capacity	T 12:30-1:45	T 2:00-3:15	W 1:00-1:50	W 2:00-2:50	W 3:00-3:50	Notes
HLL-3507	142	X	X				
M-409	90	X	X			X	
W1-4	80	X	X				
W1-5	80	X	X				
W1-6	70	X	X				
W1-88	222	X	X	X			(3-hour block 11-2 PM)
W2-158	82	X	X		X	X	
W2-200	95	X	X				
Y1-1100	500	X	X		X		
Y1-1300	150	X	X				
Y2-2110	85	X	X				
Y2-2120	150	X	X	X		X	
Y2-2300	200	X	X	X	X	X	(3-hour block 2-4:50PM)
Y2-2310	200	X	X	X	X	X	(3-hour block 2-4:50PM)

VII: ASSESSMENTS OF SCHEDULERS, ADVISORS, AND THE ROSS CENTER

1. The Schedulers

The schedulers, with assistance from Anita Miller, provided the following feedback:

- Schedulers primarily agree that students prefer 75 minute courses.
- Since so many courses are already being scheduled in alternative time slots, moving to an alternative primary schedule may streamline that process.
- The primary concerns of schedulers are about space, and whether UMass-Boston has the capacity to accommodate an alternative schedule.

2. The Advisors

The University Advisors, with assistance of Ana Frega, provided the following feedback:

- Primarily express agreement that students prefer 75-minute courses twice a week to 50-minute courses three times a week.
- Concerns are that students may be affected in two different ways:
 - That students have difficulties to continue learning during 75 minutes vs. 50 minutes.
 - Students may pack their schedules at the expense of their college career.
- Some advisors are concerned that many holidays take place on Mondays and may make courses scheduled on M/W shorter than those scheduled on Tu/Th.

3. The Ross Center

The director of the Ross Center, Joyce Morgan, expressed serious concerns about 150-minute sessions for undergraduate students who may struggle with attention challenges, executive function disorders, and brain injuries, including but not limited to concussions. She added that these students would likely fare better in 50-minute sessions rather than 75-minute sessions. Mrs. Morgan also remarked that students followed by the Ross Center usually have the same concerns as other students, such as juggling complicated schedules, commuting and parking. Judiciously, Mrs. Morgan remarked that, would Departments increase the offerings of classes in the evening, the Ross Center would also have to consider expanding its services until later in the day, particularly for alternative testing (testing spaces and time offered to Ross Center students).

PROVISO

The members of the Taskforce who collected the data contained in this report did so to the best of their abilities. While we have taken the greatest care to gather, compile, and provide accurate and up-to-date data in the imparted time, we make no representation or warranties of completeness and accuracy.

APPENDICES

MEMORANDUM

February 21st, 2019

MEMORANDUM FOR: University Community

FROM: Emily McDermott, Interim Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Heike Schotten, Chair, Faculty Council

SUBJECT: Taskforce on Alternative Scheduling

We are happy to announce the creation of a faculty governance/administrative Taskforce on Alternative Scheduling. Pursuant to a motion passed by Faculty Council last spring, this joint faculty-administration taskforce will be charged with investigating possible alternatives to our existing classroom schedule. The faculty who brought the motion to Faculty Council were particularly interested in the possibility of switching to a general M/W, Tu/Th, F schedule, but the broader charge to the taskforce will be to consider this and other potential scheduling changes (including but not limited to Saturday classes/labs and hybrid face-to-face/online classes), in the overarching contexts of:

- Assuring that students have access to pedagogically challenging and effective curricula, with delivery models appropriately differentiated for lectures, labs, and discussion sections, as well as for the varied learning goals of all disciplines and degree levels on campus;
- Assuring that students have maximal access to the classes they need; and
- Assuring maximally efficient use of our physical plant.

The members of the taskforce, drawn from faculty nominated by the Faculty Council, self-nominated, or nominated by peers, and department chairs, staff, or administrators with extensive experience with the complexities of course scheduling, will be as follows:

Keren Horn, Economics, College of Liberal Arts, Convener
Sarah Bartlett, Registrar's Office
Jean-Philippe Belleau, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts
Alan Christian, School for the Environment (never served)
Rosanna DeMarco, Nursing, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
(Replaced by Julie Wright, Exercise Science, Chair)
Davood Golmohammadi, MSIS, College of Management
Eduardo Gonzalez, Mathematics, College of Science and Mathematics
Michael Johnson, Public Policy, McCormack Graduate School
Rick Kesseli, Biology, College of Science and Mathematics
Cheryl Liberatore, Registrar's Office
Denise McNair, College of Education and Human Development
Anita Miller, Provost's Office
Lakshmi Srinivas, Sociology, College of Liberal Arts

Angela Stone-MacDonald, Curriculum and Instruction, College of Education and Human Development

Jeanmarie Spinetti, Academic Support Services

Wanda Willard, College of Advancing and Professional Studies

We expect this taskforce to consult heavily with faculty and relevant university constituencies, including academic departments and college or school governance bodies, over the course of the Spring 2019 and Fall 2019 semesters and report to the Faculty Council and the Provost by the end of the Fall 2019 semester.

Note: The composition of our committee changed slightly from this initial composition as additional individuals expressed interest in the committee and some individuals changed roles during the course of the year.

MODEL OF EMAIL INQUIRY SENT TO THE CHAIRS TO RECEIVE THEIR INPUT ON PEDAGOGY AND
ALTERNATIVE SCHEDULING

Dear Professor _____,

We are contacting you on behalf of the Task Force on Alternative Scheduling as we are trying to assess departments' needs and preferences in terms of scheduling and pedagogy.

We have two questions: How many courses in your department catalogue need to be taught on a 3-day/week schedule (in 50-minute sessions) ?

You may also consider that some of your courses do not necessarily *have* to be taught on a 3-day schedule but that it would be preferable (for any pedagogical reasons) to teach them on a 3-day basis: please let me know about these as well.

To make it easier, you can report these courses directly in the tables below, or you can list them in response to this email.

Courses that require to be taught in 50-minute sessions

Course title	Number of sessions it is taught per academic year

Courses that should preferably be taught in 50-minute sessions

Course title	Number of sessions it is taught per academic year

Please let me know if you have any question.

Thank you for your cooperation.

DETAILED INPUT FROM DEPARTMENT CHAIRS ON PEDAGOGY AND SCHEDULING

Chair of the American Studies Department:

“There are no classes in American Studies that need to be taught on a 3-day/week schedule. In fact, because of our course content, longer class meetings are quite preferable. Furthermore, I have taught at multiple institutions, and the one class I have taught (while still in grad school) that benefited from a 3-day schedule was Russian language. There are many studies that show that language classes are more effective if taught more often for less time. But for our current department, longer sessions help a lot. I think this is true of large sections in particular, but overall, the professor has to spend time getting students on-track (i.e. remind about assignments, etc.) and even if this is not a long time, it is a huge percentage of course time. And then we need to dive deeply into analysis. In my department, every faculty member has noted that 2-day classes are much more productive.”

Chair of the Arts Department

“In terms of the question: How many courses in your department catalogue need to be taught on a 3-day/week schedule (in 50-minute sessions) ? The answer is none of our courses. Indeed, over the years we have struggled with this requirement to offer MWF 50-minute classes, since it defeats the pedagogical aims of both studio and art history courses.”

Chair of the Asian Studies Department:

“None of [our] courses need to be taught on a 3-day schedule; in fact, they benefit from a 2-day schedule (can integrate discussion with lecture on the same day instead of saving discussion for the third day, etc.).”

From a Language instructor in the Classics and Religious Studies Department:

“I would say that 50 minutes 3/week is already skimpy. 75 minutes 2/week will be both worse and better. I can get more interaction in 75 minutes, but throwing larger amounts of material in one sitting isn't as effective. You still need more repetition. BUT, there are so many online options for communication. If they are properly embraced (by faculty, students and IT services) I think a 2x week class could be potentially even better than 3x 50 minutes. The caveat is that the class (and the students) need to have it posted right up front that 4 credit language classes come with specific outside-of-classroom commitments. I think it should be written into the WISER requirements and day/time meeting info: "Mon-Wed 1:00-2:15 AND XYZ online commitments." Possibly even live-chat at pre-set days/times. Is the University going to be willing to support this. We already need better support for Blackboard/Voicethread/etc. for online and hybrid classes anyway, so hopefully this could be another way to push for that. Also, how do we serve our most at-risk students who just don't have access to devices or internet services off campus?”

Chair of Communication Department:

“We discussed the alternative scheduling options at our last faculty meeting and there are several classes that are much better for a 2-day a week schedule (upper level electives, the capstone, project-based classes), but none that seem to be better on a 3x/week. The biggest complaint that came up was that faculty sometimes have to shift between a 2x and a 3x schedule across semesters,

and that's very time consuming (e.g. someone is on a MWF this year and then gets the TTH next year...this happens because everyone would prefer the TTH so I rotate it among the faculty)."

Chair of the English Department:

"5-6 large-enrollment courses per year must be taught 3 days a week. These need to be taught this way because one day a week is reserved for a discussion section. It would be impossible to run these large-enrollment courses with 75 minutes for lecture and 75 minutes for discussion. Instead, we must have 100 minutes for 2 lectures and 50 minutes for discussion, usually led by a graduate student instructor on Fridays. For pedagogical reasons, it is preferable that a large number of our 320 annual sections of First-Year Composition (190 sections of English 101 or 102 in the fall, and 130 in the spring) should be taught in 50-minute blocks. Authorities in composition studies have suggested that maximizing the number of times students meet with faculty is better for the progressive development of student writing assignments. (I suppose this is similar to the norm in foreign language instruction.) Of course, we have just as many sections of English 101 and 102 that meet twice a week. (...) [T]here are [10] large-enrollment courses that must be taught 3 days a week: ENGL 110 Reading Like a Writer, ENGL 120 What to Read: Life-Changing Literature, ENGL 124 Science Fiction: Cross-Cultural Perspectives, ENGL 125 From Crime to Sci-Fi: Popular Literary Genres, ENGL 126 Young Adult Literature, ENGL 130 Vikings!: The Literature of Scandinavia, Medieval and Postmodern, ENGL 135 American Stories, ENGL 245 Global Voices, ENGL 258 Introduction to World Cinema, ENGL 259 Sexuality in Literature & Film. [W] will generally offer 5 or 6 of the above-listed courses every year."

Chair of the History Department:

"There are no history courses that need to be taught over three days, rather than over two. All of our faculty prefer TuTh but, of course, cannot always have it as their schedule, so we all tend to alternate, one semester Tu Th, one MWF each year. We do have several instructors who ask that their LE courses be MWF; rather than listing specific courses I will just say that, that about 1/5th of the department, if having to teach an LE and having to teach MWF, wants the LE on MWF."

Chair of LAIS Department:

"None of our courses requires three days/week. However, there are pedagogical reasons that suggest more regular contact for 100-level language learners is preferable. But we are also concerned about student success and access to classes, so this means that we run 100-level language classes on both a M-W-F and a T-Th schedule each semester. I would say that we have a strong preference to make about 7-8 sections of 100-level language classes (Span 101, Span 102, Port 101, Port 102) available every semester on a M-W-F schedule. The other dimension to the question, however, is the pedagogical disadvantages of requiring classes to meet on a M-W-F schedule that would be better offered on a two-day/week schedule. For any of our upper-level classes, the type of intensive discussion and analysis that needs to take place requires longer than the sessions that are offered 3x/week. But because of the limited availability of two day/week options, we always are forced to put some of these courses on a M-W-F schedule, to the great disadvantage of student learning and often access (due to the difficulties that many of our students have getting to campus 3x/week, whether b/c of their work schedules, public transportation problems, or the extremely high cost of on-campus parking). So, in the end, what would be ideal

for our department would be the availability of more day/week options -both on Tuesday/Thursday and on Monday/Wednesday (in order to spread them out a bit so that students with different schedules have access) - while retaining some limited access to 3 day/week options. However, if we had to choose between one or the other (2 day/week for all classes vs. keeping things as they are), we would choose moving to a fully 2 day/week schedule, since that is the change that would best help our majors. I'll add that we also teach a couple of cinema classes, so having some flexibility in alternative scheduling would also be a benefit."

Chair of the Modern Languages Department

"[W]e have similar concerns and feelings [as LAIS] about the 2 vs 3 day a week schedule and I second what [the Chair of LAIS] has said; for the elementary language courses, meeting 3 times a week is preferable, but not absolutely essential. For our majors, the two day a week schedule is much more effective. Right now we offer a good number of Cinema Studies courses and we would absolutely not want these to meet over 3 days, for instance. Because currently we have to balance MWF with Th/Th we are sometimes obliged to schedule courses that should be taught over 2 sessions as courses taught over 3."

Chair of Performing Arts Department

"Currently, all our studio classes that need set-up and break-down for practice and performance, are taught twice a week in double-time blocks for pedagogical reasons. These include Acting, Dance, Stagecraft, Costume Construction, Music Ensembles, etc. These courses are scheduled in specific Performing Arts designated studios or labs, e.g., the dance courses are scheduled in the dance studio because of the (safety) need for a sprung floor, proximity to dressing room/lockers, wall dance bars, etc. All other theory courses, that satisfy general education distributions or diversity, e.g., History of Music, Dramatic Literature, etc., are taught in the regular 50-min sessions in regular mediated spaces."

Chair of the Philosophy Department:

"None of our course have to be taught on a three day a week schedule, nor is there pedagogical reasons why it is preferable. There is one faculty member who *prefers* to teach MWF, but all the rest do not (as chair I have reliable information to this effect)."

Chair of the Psychology Department:

"For every course that someone would prefer to teach 3 days a week, someone else prefers 2 days a week."

Chair of the Sociology Department:

"I really don't think there are any of our courses that NEED to be taught on a MWF schedule. A few individual faculty may feel that some courses fit better in a 50-minute session 2 times a week (for example, statistics). None, however, has requested that they teach a particular course only on MWF."

Chair of the Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies:

"I cannot think of ANY courses that are benefited from the 3 day/week @ 50 mins each schedule."

Chair of the Curriculum and Instruction Department:

“None of our courses are taught 3- days a week. They all meet at T/Th 75 minute sessions or 1 days a week for 150 minutes. (...) I am supportive of using M/W for two 75 minute sessions and then a Friday slot of the 150 minute slot.”

Chair of the Chemistry Department:

“Chemistry needs to have the ability to schedule both two-day and three-day course sequences. Going to an all two-day sequence would be a disaster for Chemistry and most of the other experimental sciences. We need to have the flexibility to schedule labs and discussions that accompany our lectures. Cramming the all lectures into two-day sequences would be a nightmare for scheduling these. Exacerbating this, because science majors curricula are so structured, we need to be very careful about scheduling large required courses in conflict with other essential courses science majors will be taking. The balance of scheduling these has been worked out over decades (literally!), and every time we add a new section or consider changing the time of a course we must carefully research potential conflicts anew. We need flexibility. I know that is not an issue for CLA, but we in other colleges need that. This whole effort to change the scheduling patterns that now exist is extremely misguided from our perspective.”

Chair of the Engineering Department:

“All of our courses are [already] on the 2-day/week schedule. The 50-min courses are not serving our students well for either lectures or labs because we cannot cover enough materials or have enough times to run labs. I would like to see our university allow for MW, WF, or MF type of 2-day/week schedules.”

From the Department of Mathematics:

“The classes Math 114 and Math 115 are entry level classes and can be taught in both formats, 75 and 50 min classes, no preference in pedagogical methods. All the classes above Math 125 would be best taught in a 75 min block twice a week, since it is best for pedagogy in that way. We teach them in both formats to have them spread over the week, to offer students options, but it would be best if we offered these classes in a two day a week or a one day a week format. Some NTTs prefer the MWF schedule. The ones that prefer this model teach full time. They indicated that the main reason is that teaching four classes on TuTh is too much. The TT people, strongly prefer the two day a week schedule, with exception of one member, who prefers to work in his office and does not mind to teach three or even four days a week.”

Chair of the Physics Department:

“My preferred scheduling scenario would be alternating 50 minute and 75 minute blocks on every day of the week because that gives us optimal flexibility in terms of scheduling our lecture classes and allows us to also book 135 minute lab classes without conflicting with more than 2 other scheduled blocks.”

UMB Alternative Scheduling Student Survey

This survey is designed to collect data from students on how an alternative schedule may help students succeed at UMass Boston.

1. In which college are you currently enrolled?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ College of Advancing and Professional Studies
- ☐ College of Education and Human Development
- ☐ College of Liberal Arts
- ☐ College of Management
- ☐ College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- ☐ College of Science and Mathematics
- ☐ Honors College
- ☐ McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
- ☐ School for Global Inclusion and Social Development
- ☐ School for the Environment

2. Are you an undergraduate, graduate or doctoral student?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Undergraduate student
- ☐ Graduate student
- ☐ Doctoral student

3. How many credits have you already earned?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 0 - 30 credits
- ☐ 31-60 credits
- ☐ 61-90
- ☐ 91 +

4. How many credits are you taking in Fall of 2019?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ 1-6
- ☐ 7-9
- ☐ 10-12
- ☐ 13+

5. Do you also work during the semester?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

6. How many hours do you work during the semester?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 0-10
- ☐ 11-20
- ☐ 21--30
- ☐ 31-40
- ☐ 41+

7. How many days of the week do you work during the semester?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 1 day
- ☐ 2 days
- ☐ 3 days
- ☐ 4 days
- ☐ 5 days +

8. Which types of courses have you taken here at UMass Boston?*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ 50 minutes, 3 times per week
- ☐ 75 minutes, 2 times per week
- ☐ 150 minutes, 1 time per week
- ☐ Other

9. Which course format do you prefer?*Mark only one oval per row.*

	Prefer	Neutral	Don't Prefer
50 minutes, 3 times per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
75 minutes, 2 times per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
150 minutes, 1 time per week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. Please describe why you prefer the specific course format you selected above.

11. What are the main factors that drive your scheduling decisions?

12. As we explore alternative schedules at UMass Boston is there a specific change that would make it easier for you to succeed at UMB?

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UMB Alternative Scheduling Faculty Survey

1. In which unit(s) do you teach?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ College of Advancing and Professional Studies
- ☐ College of Education and Human Development
- ☐ College of Liberal Arts
- ☐ College of Management
- ☐ College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- ☐ College of Science and Mathematics
- ☐ Honors College
- ☐ McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
- ☐ School for Global Inclusion and Social Development
- ☐ School for the Environment
- ☐ Academic Support

2. For which department(s) do you teach?*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Accounting and Finance
- ☐ Africana Studies
- ☐ American Studies
- ☐ Anthropology
- ☐ Arabic Studies
- ☐ Archaeology
- ☐ Applied Linguistics
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Asian Studies
- ☐ Biology
- ☐ Chemistry
- ☐ Cinema Studies
- ☐ Classical and Religious Studies
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Community Development
- ☐ Computer Science
- ☐ Counseling and School Psychology
- ☐ Criminology and Criminal Justice
- ☐ Curriculum and Instruction
- ☐ Early Education and Care
- ☐ Economics
- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ English
- ☐ Environmental Science/Studies
- ☐ Exercise and Health Science
- ☐ Global Inclusion and Social Development
- ☐ History
- ☐ Human Services
- ☐ Information Technology
- ☐ International Relations
- ☐ Labor Studies
- ☐ Latin American and Iberian Studies
- ☐ Latino Studies
- ☐ Leadership in Education
- ☐ Management
- ☐ Management Science and Information Systems
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Mathematics

- ☐ Modern Languages
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Native American and Indigenous Studies
- ☐ Nursing
- ☐ Performing Arts
- ☐ Philosophy
- ☐ Physics
- ☐ Political Science
- ☐ Psychology
- ☐ Public Policy
- ☐ Sociology
- ☐ Urban Planning
- ☐ Women's and Gender Studies
- ☐ Other: _____

3. What is your current teaching position?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Assistant Professor
- ☐ Associate Professor
- ☐ Professor
- ☐ Associate Lecturer
- ☐ Lecturer
- ☐ Senior Lecturer
- ☐ Senior Lecturer II
- ☐ Clinical Faculty

4. Which students do you teach?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Undergraduate Students
- ☐ Graduate Students

5. What course formats do you typically teach?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ 50 minutes 3 times per week
- ☐ 75 minutes 2 times per week
- ☐ 150 minutes 1 time per week
- ☐ Other: _____

6. Which course formats do you prefer? (please rank each of these options with 1 being your most preferred option and 3 your least preferred)

Check all that apply.

	1	2	3
50 minutes 3 times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
75 minutes 2 times per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
150 minutes 1 time per week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please provide the main reasons for your choice.

8. If you take attendance, do you notice a difference in attendance rates between different course formats?

9. Which days of the week did you teach in the Fall of 2018?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday

10. Which days of the week did you teach in the Spring of 2019?

Check all that apply.

- ☐ Monday
- ☐ Tuesday
- ☐ Wednesday
- ☐ Thursday
- ☐ Friday
- ☐ Saturday

11. Would you be willing to teach three hour block classes one day per week?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

12. Do you teach large enrollment courses? (more than 70 students)*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

13. If so, would you be willing to teach large enrollment courses in a one day per week format?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ N/A

14. Please explain your rationale.

15. Do you teach hybrid/web enhanced courses?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16. If you do teach hybrid/web enhanced courses, are there times that you strategically do not use the classroom? Please explain.

17. **We are currently considering a set of alternative schedules. One option is to move to M/W, TU/TH and use Friday for 3 hour classes, where we could still schedule 50 minute courses within 75 minute blocks. Alternatively, we are also considering adding some additional 75 minute blocks to M/W but keeping the morning at 50 minute blocks. We are also very open to other suggestions that faculty believe would be beneficial. What teaching schedule would you recommend and why?**

18. **Is there any other information you would like to share with us as we explore alternative schedules at UMass Boston?**

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REPRESENTATIVE ANSWERS FROM THE STUDENT SURVEY

*Numbers at the end of quotes refer to the position of students in the survey results, for verification.

Undergraduate Students Who Prefer 50mn Sessions

“I prefer the shorter class time, it gives me more time day to day.” CLA, 50.

“It is not as hard to sit through the class.” CLA, 58.

“I feel like the 50 minutes 3 times a week actually allows more time with the professor and allows for an easier pace of class. I also think that the 150 minute classes are such a marathon that most students and the teacher are completely out of gas by the last hour.” Science, 81.

“I prefer the three day a week classes because it works for work, but having more classes on twice a week would be great!” CLA, 93.

“Its easier on your health. Its not good to sit for long periods of time and to be frank NOBODY wants to sit in a 2 hour class. You can't focus , you lose interest and you zone out.” 807.

“I like coming to school every day so my schedule isn't pack on Tuesday/Thursday or Monday/Wednesday/Friday.” Science, 119.

“Class time is much shorter and you also get to see the professor more often, which allows one to get to know the professor.” Environment, 219.

“It's easier to stay focused and on task for 50 minutes than 75.” Science, 235.

“I hate sitting in a class for longer than 50 minutes. I lose interest.” Nursing, 242

“Math and science require repeated practice and reputation. Twice weekly meetings are not sufficient to keep up with course goals.” Science, 255.

“I have an sorry attention span and become very fidgety.” CLA, 258.

“Dont have to sit in one place.” CM, 262.

“I dont like long classes, some teachers dont even give breaks and then go over the time as if an hour and a half is not enough lecturing time.” CLA, 284.

“So I'm not bored for a long time in class.” Science, 354.

“I prefer the 50 minutes class because it gives me time to spend time studying and really focus on each individual class and their materials.” CLA, 474.

“50 mins classes are okay because they go by quickly and work is not shoved down your throat, but, at times it can be annoying because it is a reminder that you have assignments due almost every day; which can mess up a busy schedule and over-stress a student. Yet, these classes seem to be easier because you are not there for too long and there is more access to professor's office hours. 75 mins is a bit better because there is enough time for the professor to discuss that they need to and meet with their class for further explanation, if need be. Also, it gives students a more reasonable time to get their work done and turned in for that class. 150 mins are okay depending on the subject being taught. For the most part, they are good because you can organize what you need to get done throughout that week (for students who are organized and follows a schedule). Also, the student only stays in class for one day compared to two or three days in the week; meaning, less time on-campus. However, to sit in a class for 150 mins is AGONIZING, especially if you aren't that interested (and it is REQUIRED for your major). It is boring! No one wants to be in school, so to be forced in a class where you BARELY have a break is a lot on someone's brain!!!!!!!!!!!!!! If there were more interesting 150 min classes, I would've gone that route 100%; but, for now, I can't vouch for them because I'm not having a great time with mine. And, they are scheduled for later in the day and no one likes to leave so late. Having to sit in a class for an extended amount of time is exhausting, especially if the professor expects students to participate but don't account for other things the students have going on can be draining. Also, the student could be taking other classes that day, which leads them to be drained already (i.e. on top of not having a proper eating & sleeping schedule). It can be OVERWHELMING. Please take that into account. Everyone wants to graduate as quickly as possible, and some of these courses won't matter to certain majors. The best solution is 2 days a week classes. The least stressed I've experienced are from those classes; allows the students and professors to interact more, but gives everyone days to take a break before coming back refreshed.” CLA, 522.

“Sitting for 150 minutes is too long.” 849.

“Three hours in one place is a long time. But also, I tend to take time to digest material; for example, just after the class I may have some ideas but waiting a week to talk about it would be annoying.” CLA, 195.

Undergraduate students for 2-day classes:

“Longer class period meaning we get to learn more at once and build off of it instead just starting the class and it ending very soon without getting any points across. The less amount of classes per week, the more work days.” CLA, 98

“50 minutes isn't enough time to get adequately into any material. As a graduate student, in addition to classes, I work about 60 hours per week at a hospital and doing research. So, having all the classes twice a week is really important for my work schedule.” CLA, 122

“For one semester I did 2 days a week and felt like I had much more time to work on my assignments.” CLA, 128.

“I think it’s important to recognize and accommodate for the fact that UMB educates many students who need to work while going to school. It’s also important to offer more courses meeting 2x/week given the number of commuting students enrolled at the university.” CM, 139.

“As a student who commutes from Cape Cod, it helps for me to be able to take a full course load without having to be on campus 5 days a week. I prefer to do long days, two days a week to save money, wear and tear on my car and free up my week to be able to work and pay my bills.” CLA, 146

“Meeting two times a week allows for more time in class to understand concepts and it allows more time outside to work on the class and study. Meeting for 50 minutes 3 times a week isn't usually enough time for the professor to go in depth and he or she always usually goes over the time limit or is cut off in the middle of something important.” CLA, 166.

“By the time the 50 mins are over, I have gained interest or my scope of attention has increased further. I want to sit there for another 30 mins at least to learn more about the subject. Also the commute is increased 2 times a week considering that both of my 50 minutes 3 times a week classes are scheduled on the same day.” Science, 171.

“50 minute classes don't give the professor enough time to get into topics in class. Have Monday, Wednesday and Friday classes turn into just Monday and Wednesday, like Tuesday and Thursday classes, use Fridays for the 150 minute classes that meet once a week.” CLA, 197.

“Yes , I would prefer to have class twice a week. AND also have classes scheduled for both day and evening options. some people work days and they can come to class in the evening. while others work evenings and would prefer morning classes.” CLA, 199.

“50 is too short, 150 is too long. some mean professor should be fired.” Science, 206

“It gives enough time to cover material while also giving time to do assignments and adds more flexibility to the schedule.” CLA, 366.

“I prefer the specific course formats because I believe it gives the class and professor more time to go over the material; it makes me a better student and helps me to retain the information more effectively.” CLA, 386.

“As someone that commutes an hour to get to class and needs to work a minimum of 4 shifts per week in order to pay for school/housing/groceries/etc., having glasses three times per week is nearly impossible. Having classes that meet two times per week is incredibly more convenient and allows me to schedule the rest of my week easier in terms of budgeting time for school work and work and maybe even sleeping.” CLA, 389.

“I live in Taunton so with traffic it takes me over 2 hours to get to class in the mornings, plus over an hour to drive back home. Therefore I prefer taking longer classes that meet less frequently, in order to decrease the number of times I have to make the commute to campus.” 413.

“For things like a language and math I would want 50 minute three day classes because I need that repetition and if I only saw that class twice a week with the break between Thursday and Tuesday it would be worse for me to retain the information.” Science, 504.

“50 min seems rushed, while 150 you loose focus easily.” CLA, 506.

“If physics was also offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays are instead of the only MWF that would be incredibly helpful.” CLA, 507.

“More two day a week classes. TU-TH Three day a week classes are inconvenient and less can be accomplished in a 50 minute period. I’d rather have continuity. I’m currently here five days a week due to the courses I HAD to take this semester being offered on different days and this really negatively impacts my work schedule as I often work overnight shifts and come directly to class from work. Thank you for this survey. I wish it came sooner.” Science, 524.

“Less stress on academics and more study time. There isn’t enough time and thinking space for a lot of people that have classes 3 times a week. One day we’re being taught something new now we have 48 hours to understand everything from every class along with the assignments. More Monday & Wednesday or Wednesday & Friday.” CM, 580.

“It’s much more effective for learning and not as rushed.” CLA, 583.

“Gives me more time to work and study for class.” CLA, 585.

“I prefer 75 minutes because that way, the teacher has more time to expand on the classwork.” Science, 599.

“I like having classes get over in a day or two rather than multiple times during the week because it gets out of the way and leaves me with more time for work or studying.” Science, 606.

“50 minute classes are too short. you spend 5 mins in the beginning setting up and 5 at the end wrapping up and we barely have time to actually learn.” CLA, 619

“Keep offering upper level classes (400-level) to meet once a week, because many upperclassmen work or intern, and need extra time to study, work, and do activities that involve their careers (development, job search and interviews, etc.)” 701.

“Classes are just the right length. 50 minutes is too short I feel like classes are sometimes rushed. 150 minutes are too long. It’s easy to lose concentration in these classes and if you have to miss a day you get very behind.” 733.

“In my experience, having classes Monday to Friday is unproductive. When I have classes only Monday to Thursday, this allows for more time to work on my assignments, studying, work, etc. What also helps is when one of my courses is only once a week. This class may be on a Monday when I only have one other class, so it allows for more time to do work during the rest of week. I

prefer to have 2 classes Monday and Wednesday, and then 3 classes on Tuesday and Thursday, or vice versa. A schedule like this allows for much more flexibility and time. Some main factors are usually time. Classes that are twice a week are usually more focused than smaller 50 minute classes. It also allows for more time for me to do my assignments. This applies especially to Friday afternoons. I have more time on Fridays to work on stuff. I've read a lot on how colleges are getting rid of Friday courses because they are a waste of productivity. Students are much more productive in a 4 day week than a 5 day week. Some feel that this may not set up students for the real world where jobs are 5-6 days a week but I disagree. This is because many students work at part time jobs already so they are prepared. I can tell you from experience, going to class and then work later was definitely stressful for me on the weekends. When I am lucky enough to have no classes on Friday, I am much more productive throughout the semester. As stated before, having no class on Friday gives me more time to work on my assignments and have a productive semester. I feel that this change would definitely improve things for the university." 824.

"If they have Monday and Wednesday 75 minutes, it would be ideal." 832.

"50 mins isn't enough to cover a good amount of material and not only that but 3 times a weeks seems a lot whereas 2 times for 75 min or once a week is more efficient for the students and the instructors at the same time." 848.

"I'll choose 3x50min classes over twice or once per week because I'll have more weekly meet times (days out of the week) to seek out instructor(s) for coursework assistance if needed. It also gets me to go to school more days of the week and encourages me to seek other on campus opportunities in addition to my academics." Science, 788.

"Commuting to school takes more time than the classes themselves. Commuting students should have longer and less frequent classes available for them." Management, 801.

"I liked taking this Japanese history class and art architecture class that meets once a week for about 150 minutes with a break in between. For other classes I prefer 75 minutes." 952.

"I would like to mention that the way the UMASS campus is set up, does not encourage students to stay on campus. If my classes are not back to back im not sure what to do during breaks. If there were more common study areas/sitting areas available to accommodate students it might make a different in the time spent on campus and how people pick their classes." 691.

"I prefer this course format because it will allow me to work because some semester I have to quit working because most classes are offered 3 times per week and other twice , so it's not possible for me to work due to this inconvenient." Management, 697.

"Meeting three times a week increases commuting time and expenses, and doesn't really allow me to learn because classes feel very rushed." CM, 701.

"I waste 1.5-3h on the commute daily!! For no reason. It's ridiculous, & everyone I've spoken to says the same." 837.

“I feel like as a student, I get very limited flexibility along with other fellow students. I feel like with a 1 hour 15 minutes course meeting Mon/Wed, Tue/Thur, or Wed/Fri for example, this would allow students to be more flexible and easing their burden.” 868.

“I prefer 75 minutes because it feels like the professors are able to slow down their lectures more and they are able to explain more.” 870.

“Some classes are way harder and require that extra help from teachers... like nursing majors or bio that meeting three times might help more. Two class weekly is also good for students who are busier. I’ve taken one class per week and felt like I didn’t really learn much unless that class was an elective or a class that didn’t have to do with my major and wasn’t fully necessary but a major class meeting only once a week requires more on students to go out of there way and learn. It depends on the student and there capabilities I guess. The school is so far from my campus and driving twice a week was just much easier then driving threee times a week but if I lived closer I don’t know how that would alter it maybe I wouldn’t mind as much taking three times. Living in Chelsea and driving to UMass Boston is not the best thing in the world because of how horrible traffic is.” Nursing, 860.

“have more time to study and having 50 minute class, 3x/week interferes with my work schedule and ability to make money, which pays for my books, tuition, etc. With classes 2x/week, I can see TAs and professors more often with questions, but classes are long enough to go through more material and give me more time to do homework and studying.” 861.

“I prefer that course format because the amount of time it’s not too much, neither too little that we can’t cover an specific topic fully. Additionally, meeting 2 times per week gives more room for us as students to divide our time more conveniently. On the other hand, meeting for a class of almost two hours would be too much, and overwhelming for getting the material, while meeting for 50 minutes can be kind of disadvantage when trying to group our learning together because lessons sometimes have to be divided for two classes because time isn’t enough. Making classes to be given twice a week, for 1 hr and 15 minutes. Even though the amount of work will still be the same no matter what, I feel that I’m getting more attached and comfortable with the classes that I have two days a week, we have enough time to connect during a class period, but we also have enough time between classes to do what we have to do from week to week.” 741.

Undergraduate Students who prefer once a week classes:

“I prefer the 1x per week due to its flexibility to let me work. Currently with the types and amount of time I have to come to campus I have to also work evenings and weekends just to try and make enough money to survive.” Nursing, 34.

“Once a week classes and online classes are more convenient for my scheduling needs. Job and motherhood.” CLA, 35.

“I work full time on the north shore so once a week classes are best for me. CLA, 62

I have attended UMass Boston as both an Undergraduate and Graduate student, and in both cases having courses that meet only once or twice a week have made it much easier for me to balance my full-time work schedule with a full-time course load. It also allows ample time for discussion in classes, since each individual session is longer.” Grad student, CLA, 76.

“I prefer once a week courses and more hours to the course because it gives me more time to myself and to get work done without being stress about homework and work. Also because it will make my work schedule easily.” CLA, 78.

“I prefer the longest time because it allows for the greatest amount of class discussion all at once. It also makes it easier planning work/my commute since I only have to travel to campus once for class.” CLA, 276.

“Meeting longer, once a week would increase my time to do homework and go to work.” Nursing, 360.

Graduate Students:

“I have to balance getting to campus, and putting in 36 hours per week of work, while meeting my work obligations. I cannot take courses if they interfere too much with my work schedule. Graduate classes should only be delivered one time a week. I am having to find non-UMB alternatives for an economics class (that is part of my curriculum), because the class is offered twice a week. Classes should be scheduled squarely in the morning, afternoon, or evening so that I can also put in 4+ hours of a work day.” Environment, 13.

“A once-a-week night class works best for me as a working professional. It cuts down on the time I spend traveling to and from campus each week.” CM, 22

“Transportation is big for me, given I live in Attleboro and work in Providence, RI.” Graduate Student, 47.

“The way graduate courses are scheduled has already impacted my ability to keep a regular job and kept me from pursuing employment opportunities. Instead, I essentially work 3 part time gigs to fund my education. I love these positions but I'm constantly exhausted. I'm a TAI and teach 2 sections of Comp on campus, I'm an academic coach elsewhere in the city, and I'm a contractor for a tech company providing language analysis. If I didn't maintain this effort? I would not have money for food or any emergency expenses whatsoever. I took extra classes earlier on in my program so that I would have more time to work. I am completely and totally drained of savings paying for my program. I'm proud of the fact that I'm on track to graduate without crippling loans, but I've tried so hard to maintain a simpler schedule to allow me to continue to pay for my expenses and education. More evening graduate course options or more funding for graduate students. But I don't think the latter will ever happen.” CLA, 32.

“More evening classes. Also, when a program has specific required courses and they are all offered at the same day/time, it makes it impossible to complete the degree in a timely fashion. I don't appreciate needing to take "junk" courses to stay at least half-time. I had two required

courses (only) offered this semester, but they were both Tues 5:30 to 8:15. I could only take one. If you are doing a one night course, make sure it has multiple sections so you can mix and match.” CM, 38.

“Three times a week is based on a historic system, and transportation/parking can be stressful. I support reducing the number of 50 min/three times a week courses offered at our University. I’d also support more online courses.” CM, 47.

“I am currently in a 3 hour long evening class that I absolutely can't stand. Classes should not run so late if it can be avoided. I wish it were spread out more OR during the day so I could focus.” Science, 178.

Demands for Evening Classes and Online Classes

“Having more classes once or twice a week, and more classes available in the evening would make a huge difference thanks to a super long commute time and my work schedule.” CLA, 173.

“More options for online classes or even hybrid classes. More summer class offerings. Oh and can the online price per class be the same as the on campus one? Never understood why I have to pay more for a class I’m not taking on campus.” CLA, 218.

“I prefer 150 minutes, 1 time per week because I am then able to enroll in more courses per semester. I also prefer online courses because it is easier for me to access and enables me to enroll in more courses per semester.” CLA, 219.

Submersion

“i am able to be submersed into the content more when we meet once a week.” CLA, 154.

REPRESENTATIVE ANSWERS FROM THE FACULTY SURVEY

“There are definite, significant pedagogical advantages to teaching most courses in 75-minute blocks twice weekly, advantages noted by nearly every colleague I have spoken to about this in the CLA and at other universities. I do not wish to discuss those here: my concern instead is with how conducive a two-day teaching week is to research and writing.

The CLA’s transition from a normal (tenure/tenure-track) teaching load of 3/3 to 2/2 was a bold move to improve faculty research productivity. In my view this is incomplete without the logical corollary of a two-day teaching schedule, or at least more flexibility, for the vast majority of humanities and social sciences courses. The issue is not simply the total amount of time spent in teaching-related activities: the efficient allocation of time is almost as critical. Serious research and writing require large, undistracted blocks of time—stretches of at least three to four hours, in my view, and preferably as many of these as possible in a row. Creative artists and writers are keenly aware of the need to carve out undistracted time, and many stages of the research process benefit similarly. Achieving initial absorption into the problem or project at hand, in all its complexity, can require significant time, especially if one returns to this after one or more days. And once one attains peak productivity, a “flow-state” of focused concentration, it is enormously wasteful to break this off for other work and start the cycle afresh.

A three-day teaching week with two courses is thus enormously inefficient: although on a majority of weeks I am able to confine my teaching activities to these three days, they do not feel well-utilized (unless, for instance, one of the courses is a new prep, or I have time-consuming, recurring administrative work). On a typical MWF week, I have a good number of ‘extra’ daytime working hours MWF which could potentially be used for research and writing. Sometimes this is welcome: these hours can be fruitfully used in professional correspondence, peer-review, revision of publications at the draft or copy-editing stages, and so forth. What this time is not useful for is making progress in primary research, or in the most critical stages of the writing process. The only semester I have found the MWF schedule at UMB conducive was when teaching three courses (owing to a cancellation the previous semester), one of which was new.

The contrast in productivity between teaching two courses TTh and MWF is immense. The possibility of focusing on a single project or problem Friday through Monday throughout the term (life’s ‘interruptions’ aside) is the difference between making incremental, piecemeal progress on a project and making major progress (e.g. writing full articles or book chapters, completion of major basic research, etc.). From this standpoint, a TTh teaching schedule is much preferable to MWF, as I experienced at another university and as colleagues elsewhere note in conversation (for faculty with more family obligations or desire for weekend downtime, this may not be true). The main issue at stake is not the number of days one spends on campus, though this could also matter. Coming to campus on one or two non-teaching days (whether regularly or irregularly) is not only normal but can be perfectly congenial to research. Spending a few hours on non-teaching days meeting with students and doing administrative work simply does not detract from productivity in the way that having two 50-minute teaching sessions does.”

A. Professor, Classics and Religious Studies
(Letter received by the Taskforce)

Arguments in favor of 50-minute sessions

“I strongly recommend keeping with a schedule that allows 3 50-minute classes per week.”

Assistant Professor, Biology

“I believe the current system works well and does not need to be changed. I don't see how this change will benefit the students. I also think it will be difficult to co-ordinate the labs, which

already run for 3 hours, into this schedule format. I think it will make it more difficult for students to fit the necessary lecture and labs in their schedules with the proposed formats.”

Associate Professor, Biology

“This is very confusing and I think would be disruptive for those who teach science courses and want a 3 x week schedule; plus students need to fit 3-hour labs into time blocks, which I think would make this challenging.”

Associate Professor, Biology

“Keep it as is. The reason many faculty want a 2 day schedule has to do with their needs to do research or not be on campus, not with the student's needs in mind. Students LARGELY benefit from 3 day courses, particularly on the first years.”

Lecturer, Biology

“Honestly, for large lower level courses, I'm not sure some of our students have the skills to succeed if they were to meet fewer times a week. I'm sorry, but I would be incredibly unhappy about teaching my large enrollment course in a one day per week format! The large enrollment course I teach is a lower level required course. First, I reiterate important concepts each lecture, which would be harder to do in a 1x a week course. Many studies have been done that show that learning requires reinforcement! Second, I think many of our lower level students do not yet have the discipline and study skills necessary to succeed if the course only met 1x a week. If I could count on them doing the reading and studying while not in class, 1x a week would work - but for our lower level students who are adjusting to the greater independence (compared to high school -- even in a 3x a week course!!) in college, I think this would be a huge adjustment to ask and I worry that student success rates would drop. It is also important to keep in mind that for scheduling, we must also be able to set up the schedule so that important courses that students typically take concurrently must not conflict. Furthermore, if there are lab sections associated with these courses, there must be some way for students to fit these labs in as well. Perhaps the proposed alternative schedule may work better for some colleges, but I think it would be difficult for some.”

Professor, Biology

“I do not prefer Friday 3 hour course. It may be good for faculty, but student's can absorb. The class I teach for 3 hours is a lab course. So there is a difference.”

Associate Professor, Physics

“For Chemistry lower level courses, it is necessary to offer the class in a MWF schedule (with an additional discussion section) to help the students learn and retain the material. I also think that scheduling will be a nightmare if we try to do a mixed methods type of course blocks. I don't understand why this is even an issue. Is it because people don't want to have to work three days a week?”

Professor, Chemistry

“Leave the current patterns in place. This new sequencing would be a disaster for the sciences, where courses frequently consist of a combination of lectures, discussions, and laboratories. It will greatly complicate the interdepartmental scheduling of courses normally required in the same semester for students in many disciplines. These schedules have been worked out over decades to avoid conflicts and to allow maximum flexibility for students in building their schedules to progress in the major without semester delays.”

Professor, Chemistry

"I've been fortunate to get my preferred Tues/Thurs schedule for the past several semesters, so I don't feel a strong need to change the current scheduling, as I know some faculty do."

Associate Professor, History

"I can imagine there is talk of a hybrid classroom with some in-person meetings and some online. This seems like it would mitigate the problem I mentioned above re: increased travel to campus for a 4/4 NTT teaching MW/TTh. That said, this structure is more conducive to the learning goals and outcomes for some EN classes and not others. Particularly for the NTTs teaching first-year writing, EN 102 is much better suited to that kind of structure, and thus I am concerned that an across-the-board approach to this schedule may have some drawbacks."

Senior Lecturer, English

"Please consider the impact of this possible scheduling change on large, multi-section, workshop-style courses like Composition and FYS. A two-day schedule would create major problems with our limited classroom space on campus and would therefore impact the ability to deliver quality instruction in small-class-size formats-something we've been working towards for years and only just achieved. Any schedule changes should not come at a cost to the quality of student learning in our foundational General Education courses, which succeed in serving large numbers of students in small-size seminars. The Composition courses and the seminars are community building in addition to academic. Please consider the importance of building community by meeting regularly, several times a week to our commuter campus."

Lecturer, English

"Current teaching schedules. More frequent contact with students is beneficial, especially for writing instruction."

Lecturer, English

"I recommend class meetings 3 days a week. In the last few years, I have taught all 3 options for classes: MWF, TTH, and 3 hour Sat. courses. What I found is that students typically do assigned work the day before it is due (not surprisingly). Therefore, I cannot assign more work on Thurs. to be due on Tues. because many students (especially freshmen) are not good planners. They simply cannot complete the work and manage multiple complex concepts. Similarly, the Sat. 3 hour course meant that I could not assign as much reading, and so I had to limit the concepts I could present to students. We could blame the students for their ineffective study habits, but I prefer to recognize that we are a university with an urban mission. My students benefit from seeing me 3 days a week to have concepts reinforced and as incentive to complete reading and writing assignments. Education is a social activity and benefits from greater interactions with teachers and other students. Frequency of meeting with students is imperative but so is small size. Teaching a workshop-style composition course means that my interaction with each student is essential to their learning. Please carefully consider not just the research about alternative schedules, but carefully consider the UMass Boston student is unlike students in many other universities. I am proud that UMB offers a high quality education to students who have often been underserved in education in the past. We must understand who they are and offer them the best education possible."

Lecturer, English

“The current scheduling system works well and I don't understand why this is being changed.”

Associate Professor, English

“I'm not really sure of the implications of this change, but I can say that anything involving a 3-hour block is a "no" vote on my part. things are great the way they are right now. Teaching for 50 minutes, 3 days a week is great, and teaching for 1h15 min, two days a week is great too. 3 hour lectures are not awesome.”

Professor, English

“Your questions are presently phrased in a way that makes it seem that scheduling/space is the only concern. While I don't, in principle, object to schedule changes, I hope you are also looking into the impact such a scheduling change would make on courses like Composition, which serve many, many students (more than 160 sections) well. Whatever schedule changes you make should not be at the expense of students in Gen Ed courses like composition.”

Associate Professor, English

“It is important that the shift in class schedules does not come at the expense of small class sizes for those courses who deliberately and purposefully teach writing. Scholarly research confirms that students work within small class sizes have more time to engage the writing process with more focus and purpose. Any switch in scheduling that results in an increase in class sizes where writing instruction is the primary content should not be made. Additionally, writing instruction is not unique to English departments. Many institutions have writing in the disciplines programs where classes where course content is writing are kept small. Writing Intensive courses are part of AAUP's LEAP initiative and are considered high impact practices. We cannot teach writing well without space and attention to what students actually write. As a TT faculty member, changes to course schedules impact me less than our NTT faculty who are required to teach 4 courses. Their opinions should weigh heavier than TT faculty.”

Associate Professor, English

“It has come to my attention that the new schedule format will put more pressure on multi-section workshop courses like the Composition courses I teach, both in terms of finding space for these courses and in terms of course caps. Finding acceptable rooms for my courses is becoming more of a challenge, already. Also, keeping course caps down in my sections is also vital, given the intense amount of interaction I have with my students (and they have with each other), all of which is of the very nature of quality writing instruction. So I would be opposed to the new schedule on these two counts, at least.”

Lecturer, English

“The students learn more when we meet more frequently. And I get to change course more frequently, as I get more opportunities to see when something is not working. I answer the above with an asterisk. It is an option, but I do not ever actually use the web "enhancements." The reason is that my job is to teach students how to be literate, and how to write clearly. How to present mathematical ideas clearly, how to set up and label diagrams, etc. This is laborious, but necessary in order to have students who don't go out into the world and embarrass themselves as being functionally illiterate. ALL web-based products do all of the formatting for the students, and become just rote fill-in-the-blanks exercises, thus undermining the very possibility of teaching the only thinking skills whose necessity justifies teaching the course at all.”

Senior Lecturer, English

Arguments in favor of alternative scheduling

"I care more about academic content than I do about the convenience of faculty only coming in twice a week, but I would say that it's not irrelevant that MWF people come in more frequently than T/Th people. I love the idea of MW and T/TH being identical schedules/75 minute timing both for pedagogical reasons and also for equity reasons (commuting, parking fees, etc.). I also would be very happy to teach 3-hour Friday courses, again for both pedagogical and commuting reasons. I understand some faculty use those 50-minute slots for other things unrelated to humanities-like coursework (e.g., language acquisition, maybe science stuff? dunno, but i have heard this claim made), and i respect that there may be a need for that option to remain available. That said, i think for 50 minutes to be a university-wide standard class time is, for fields like my own, really not a plausible or feasible model for college-level education and needs to be replaced with greater rigor and intensity which can only be accommodated (but not ensured, obviously) by longer time-blocks for classes. 50 minutes is simply insufficient to actually engage students in/with the faculty member and also the course material. you can't go into any depth; students can't ask questions that "derail" (i.e., pose interesting problems that are instructive for the class to think through and deal with together) the plan for that class period. i understand that one solution would be to put less on the syllabus, which i have also slowly done over the last 15 years. but that means that not only is depth sacrificed by this short time period, but so too is quantity of content. in the end i now teach extraordinarily little in my Intro to Political Theory class both because of the reduction of the amount of the material and also because of the short class periods which make it impossible to attend to students' real and legit questions about so many things related to the text both big and small that simply have to go unaddressed and, therefore, missed as learning opportunities. 50 mins 3 times per week does not give you enough time; the 2x a week schedule is PERFECT for undergraduate students and the 1x a week schedule is PERFECT for MA students. MWF courses have significantly lower rates of attendance. I use many different mechanisms to try to ensure attendance regardless of time slot - so i guess the answer is no! The only exception would be to say that i have regularly low attendance at the Fridays of my MWF classes, regardless of what time of day they are on Friday (although Friday afternoons are definitely the doldrums in terms of attendance.) I teach political theory. IMHO 50 minutes is pedagogically indefensible for college-level instruction, attention span, learning. this is at best high school level learning. i think 75 minutes is the MINIMUM length of time for college-level humanities classes and actually never want to teach classes that are less than that. I hate MWF and wish all my classes were 75 minute periods or longer (at my own undergrad institution, 75 minute classes were the "short" MWF classes and 105 minutes were the "long" T/Th classes)."

Associate Professor, Political Science

"Teaching twice a week gives me a longer timeframe in which to cover mini-lessons on writing as well as class discussions on literature. With a 50 minute schedule, I often have to resort to teaching either writing or literature, depending on the week. Additionally, coming to campus twice a week allows me the space I need to maintain a productive research agenda while also offering high-quality teaching. There are more absences on a MWF schedule. Also, many students work Friday-Sunday, so coursework affects their ability to work. I'm leaning towards the additional 75 minute blocks on M/W with the mornings at 50 min blocks. I think a 50 min block could make sense for

intro classes, but 75 minutes is really need for upper-division courses. Would it be possible for people teaching on Fridays to teach two 3-hour blocks? I ask because the motivation behind a M/W switch is to reduce our time on campus, but if Friday is still an option, then both people on a M/W and Tu/Th would be forced to come in an additional day. This raises concerns because of parking fees (for both students and instructors). Plus, I'm still not convinced 50 minutes is enough time to cover course material. Finally, my sense is that there are significantly less classes offered after 2pm, so I recommend offering more classes at later times (for example, using 2pm-8pm to schedule if space is an issue)."

Assistant Professor, English

"50 minutes doesn't take into account the fact that students commute and if they are coming in for only one class of 50 minutes, they spend twice as long in transit than in the classroom, and are less likely to come. Same with instructors. It's expensive to spend 2+ hours commuting for 50 minutes when it's so hard to make any pedagogical progress in that time. Given the reality of where we live and teach, 50 minutes just doesn't make sense. Friday is the least attended day of classes--students too often are already engaged in weekend family caretaking and the like, and if it's the only class they have to come in for, they aren't going to drive all the way from Fall River or New Hampshire just for that. It would negatively impact professor conference schedules and their active research agendas as a result. For grad students in our department, we offer too many 3 hour courses to lump them all on Friday. That wouldn't work. Eliminate 50 minute classes and make them 75. Launching full-scale hybrid courses across the curriculum is also a terrible idea."

Assistant Professor, English

"It is high time the campus moved away from 3 day teaching which is more suited to a community college. We have to ask ourselves do we aspire to be a research university or a community college? We cannot have the teaching model of a community college and expect to be recognized as a research university. It simply does not make sense! We have been talking about course scheduling and moving to 2 day teaching forever and it seems there is a big problem of a lack of will on the part of the administration in making this happen. The short class period does no good to students or to faculty who are serious about their teaching and research. By the time students settle down in class, they are ready to leave. Faculty cannot get deeply into the subject matter, show films or documentaries or schedule guest lectures, and at the end of the day the student suffers. Students have told me they hate classes that meet 3 days a week as it interferes with their work schedule (many do 2-3 jobs to pay for college), and with their childcare and family responsibilities. They have also told me that they organize their schedule based on being on campus fewer times in the week and so put off taking courses that meet 3 days a week even if those courses are required. Ultimately a university is for its students and its faculty. We have spent an inordinate amount of time deliberating parking for instance. Yet we are not here to 'park', we are here to learn, to teach and to do research. That message needs to reach the decision-makers."

Assistant Professor, Sociology

"The campus has grown considerably over the past 12 years, and distances between classrooms have grown, too. The ten minute break between MWF classes just isn't working. Students start to become nervous five minutes ahead of time, wondering how they're going to make it from the 4th floor of University Hall down to the Clark Athletic center, or even to the 3rd floor of McCormack. Students are frequently late for the MWF classes because of this. It also creates enormous tension

between faculty to have to negotiate the ten minutes, when faculty have to set up, or pack up, and students are crowded around asking questions. The fifteen minute break is more reasonable.”

Professor, Philosophy

“Longer courses increase student focus. In 50mn sessions, you have to cram in facts and move rapidly through material. In longer sessions, students have more time to focus on fewer subjects and can explore them in greater details and depth. There is also more time to take questions. In 50mn sessions, students never get engrossed in the subject matter. When I give a 20 mn test in a 50mn session, I barely have another 25 mn for a lecture. (1) Longer sessions allow students to be engrossed in the subject matter. That's my experience. (2) In longer sessions, students have also more time to develop interpersonal relationships with their peers and their teachers. That I believe, is key to student retention. (3) With stronger interpersonal relationships, students are also less likely to miss classes. (4) Weekend and Friday courses would allow working students to take courses. (5) In shorter sessions, there is too much fragmentation. In a 50mn session, after taking attendance, organizing the class, and calling for focus, already 10-15 mn have passed, leaving only 25 mn for a lecture. That's counter-productive. My experience: in longer sessions, students have more time to develop interpersonal relationships with their peers and teachers. The more I know my students, the more I can "shape" the lessons around their interests. In 50mn sessions, I have to rush and can almost never give personal attention.”

Associate Professor, LAIS

“I think removing the MWF 50-minute classes entirely would be preferable because I prefer the longer class periods. I also think that the Friday 3 hour classes would allow NTT's to teach two of those on that one day if they are employed at other universities.”

Senior Lecturer, English

“I prefer your first option; I like to teach in the mornings usually, and I would prefer longer classes that can go more in depth.”

Professor, Philosophy

“I would prefer either of those. I use a hybrid format where we convert T/Thu to once a week every other week, and same for the M/Wed/Fri where we meet twice a week ever so often. It is easier on students as they don't worry about commute, attendance, leaving work, and instead focus on the class work.”

Lecturer I, Africana Studies

“Moving to M/W and Tu/Th would benefit my students and me by giving us an optimal length and frequency of meeting time to maximize attendance and depth of engagement during class. It would reduce "overhead" from the MWF schedule--the need to go over administrative and logistical details at each meeting, to remind students of what was covered in the last class, etc.--while keeping course time to a duration that would allow students to concentrate. It would also reduce instructor preparation overhead and allow for more scholarship and service to be completed during the semester.”

Assistant Professor, Anthropology

“I'm concerned that Friday 3 hours classes would mean faculty would need to be on campus three days a week; I'm also worried about these higher caps. I'm in a cohort of Mellon grant recipients who are working together to do 1xWeek 3 hour classes instead of both 2xWeek classes; finding a way to make longer class time once a week is the best option. Travel time for students is ridiculous

and it's so hard and it's so expensive to get to class, it's stupid to do it 3xWeek for 50 minute classes. Students are often like "I knew i'd be late so I just didn't come to class" and that's heartbreaking. Encouraging faculty to replace class time with online and out-of-class exercises, to point out that it's good teaching, not just a way to reduce costs and travel time, would be a simple way to let faculty make some of these decisions informally. I gave myself permission to structure classes as I thought best a long time ago, but most faculty, particularly NTT faculty, need explicit permission to change it up, maybe some examples of classroom alternatives: students can go to museums or other venues on their own time, and document their visits with a selfie and do an assignment based on the experience, for example, or email with a partner to do a task together and then turn in their email exchange along with the work."

Associate Professor, English

"I taught at Tufts Univ in the past and I liked their creative scheduling which included varied types and was created by the professor: I created a teaching rubric with a Tu/Wed schedule; At UMB, I prefer longer courses in the two day: M/W; Tu/Th or the 3 hour single block. I think the morning 50 minutes classes should be restricted to certain disciplines like the Foreign Languages or maybe science labs. 50 minutes is NOT enough time to teach a lesson since the first 10 minutes is loss with attendance, questions, other minutiae and thus the course is only 40 min., with students packing up 5 minutes before it ends: hence-it's really a 35 minute class. I like Tufts creative rubrics of Mon/Tu; Tu/W; W/Th. Yes: it was in the 1990s when I taught at Tufts University but I would seek their consultation on the effectiveness of this eccentric type of scheduling and its faculty's reaction to it. I am not sure if they still are unique like this in their scheduling but it is a format that I have never forgotten and always appreciated since it gave me control on when I wanted to be on campus!"

Professor, African Studies

"Teaching 3xweek if you're a junior TT faculty member leaves very little time for research, and as UMB is now a research university, the expected research output on junior faculty is inconsistent with prior 3xweek teaching schedules. With the cost of living in Boston (and the low salaries given to junior faculty), most of us live outside of the city and commute in. In my case, my commute is 2hrs round trip (on a good day) each day I go to campus. If I can teach two days a week (or for graduate classes, one day a week) I can free up an additional day for research, giving me a significantly better chance of developing a strong research portfolio, attracting external grants, and eventually making tenure. I do take attendance and on 3x week classes attendance is lower on any given class then when the class meets less frequently. When I taught at another state university I taught the intro course (large lecture) 1xweek. It was an early evening class to enable students who worked to still keep up on foundational intro courses to move through the major in a timely way. Doing so required a modification in my teaching style (lecture 30 minutes, then 5-10 minute group activity, then lecture 30 minutes, repeat) to keep students engaged for a longer 3 hr block, but it worked and students performed equally well on assessments as when they broke the class into three 50 minute blocks. Many of your faculty (including myself) teach both undergraduate and graduate classes. Grad classes (MA and PhD) are often 1/week evening classes. Please DO NOT adopt a schedule that only allows 1/week classes to take place on a Friday. That would mean that even if my undergrad class met two days a week (MW or T/Th) I'd still have to be on campus three days a week to complete my normal slate of instruction. This would defeat the purpose entirely and make faculty more averse to being willing to teach both undergrad and

grad classes. I would recommend looking at Lowell's example. Faculty there are allowed to teach 1/week classes on any day of the week and most other classes can be two days a week (with options to either teach MW or T/TH). Departments should be allowed to schedule 1/week classes on any day and allow 2/week classes on either M/W or T/Th combos."

Assistant Professor, Political Science

"50 minutes can be too short for some lecture/discussion topics. Meeting 3x per week over the course of the semester can make end of semester class tedious for students. My undergraduate college used this alternative schedule (M/W, T/Th, with F reserved for labs and longer seminars), it worked very well. As an instructor, having consistent class meeting schedules would keep me from having to reorganize lecture material every semester depending on the class meeting schedule."

Lecturer, Anthropology

"Once or twice a week is better for everyone, students and faculty alike. It helps students who have to commute fewer days. It's better pedagogically, too. Gives longer periods of time to delve into issues, and have more productive, less rushed dialogue and debate in the classroom."

Professor, Anthropology

"In the types of course I teach, which are rich on interactive learning and multiple modes of delivery, 50 minutes is simply too short to get students to engage deeply and to cover enough material. While twice/week is preferred for undergraduate classes, once/week classes provide an opportunity for in-depth learning in which all students can fully participate, so I have taught those as well. I tend to have more problems with 3x/week classes, with students running into more problems with commuting and parking fees. My initial impulse is to say maybe, though 3-hour block classes for large enrollment would bring interesting opportunities for innovation. I could see the opportunity for more hybrid courses, with online content one/day week for 3x/week classes. However, University support for online teaching and innovation is insufficient and the University must commit more resources to it."

Associate Professor, LAIS

"My classes require class discussions and lectures: the 50 minute format is totally inadequate for it. My classes also require technology. Setting up in MacCormack takes time. Students need to rush to next class in other buildings, they arrive late, or cannot stay two more minutes. Classes are rushed, incomplete, truncated. Pedagogically inferior to the 75 minute format. The current teaching schedule is a function of the Registrar's distaste for change.... but pedagogy has changed, education has changed, and students needs have also changed. The Registrar's Office should not be allowed to impose bureaucratic concerns over pedagogical and educational goals and needs. Scheduling at the university should serve the needs of teachers and students, not the preferences of mid-administrators. Scheduling at the university should serve the needs of teachers and students, not the preferences of mid-administrators."

Professor, LAIS