

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME
MEETING OF APRIL 23, 2001**

Members Present: Rev. Edward Malloy, C.S.C., Nathan Hatch, Rev. Timothy Scully, C.S.C., Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., Jeffrey Kantor, Carol Mooney, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Eilleen Kolman, Patricia O'Hara, Mark Roche, Jean Porter, Susan Roberts, Thomas Blantz, Rev. Patrick Gaffney, C.S.C., Naomi Meara, Sonia Gernes, Lionel Jensen, Joan Aldous, Hilary Radner, Teresa Ghilarducci, W. Robert Scheidt, Umesh Garg, Joseph Powers, Panos Antsaklis, Rick Mendenhall, Edward Conlon, Jay Tidmarsh, Kenneth DeBoer, Ava Preacher, Andrew Olejnik, Patrick Shea, Sarah Bassler

Members Absent: Francis Castellino, Jennifer Younger, Dino Marcantonio, Alan Krieger

Members Excused: Frank Incropera, Carolyn Woo, Ikaros Bigi

Observers Present: Mary Hendriksen, Michael Garvey (for Dennis Moore), Capt. Patrick Casey, Barbara Walvoord, Omar Munoz

Observers Absent: Harold Pace, Dan Saracino

Invited Guests: Don Steinke, Rachel Milliman - Registrar's Office

Fr. Malloy called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. Fr. Jenkins offered a prayer.

1. Minutes approved. The minutes of the Academic Council meeting of February 16, 2001, were approved with one amendment. In connection with the discussion of establishing a Ph.D. program in literature, Dean Roche asked that the sentence beginning, "In addition, the University has hired a Language Director. . ." be changed to: "In addition, the University has hired Language Directors. . ."

2. Amendment of the Resolution on Dean's List Requirements passed at the February 16, 2001, meeting. A resolution was passed at the last meeting to amend Section 21.1 of the *Academic Code* to restrict dean's list awards to students who carry at least 12 graded credit hours and have a grade point average (GPA) set so that the list includes approximately 30% of the students in the college or school. Prof. Mooney explained that the intent of the amendment was to affect dean's list honors only for undergraduates and to leave dean's honors list requirements for graduate and professional students unchanged. That was made clear by an exchange between Prof. Tidmarsh, who inquired about the effect of the change on the Law School, and Prof. Powers. Prof. Powers, believing that the Law School operated differently than it

actually does, said the proposed amendment would not change current practice there.

Upon later review it became apparent that, in fact, the amendment would change current practice in the Law School. The Law School's standard for dean's list honors is a 3.6 GPA. Also, because there are a number of important ungraded courses (e.g., practicums, clinical offerings, journal activities) law students take, the number of graded credit hours required for eligibility on the dean's list is 10 per semester rather than 12.

Thus, the Executive Committee unanimously recommended that the Council strike the language passed at the last meeting concerning graduate and professional programs and replace it with: "In the Law School eligibility for the dean's list is governed by the Hoynes Code." The Hoynes Code is the Law School's long-standing internal code. There are other references in the *Academic Code* to the Hoynes Code. For instance, the *Academic Code* states that the grading scale in the Law School is governed by the Hoynes Code (Sec. 18.3).

Prof. Mooney said the Executive Committee believed that establishing rules for other graduate or professional programs is unnecessary because, currently, there are no other graduate or professional programs that maintain a dean's honor list.

Given that a recommendation from the Executive Committee has the standing of a motion before the Academic Council, Fr. Malloy called for a vote to amend Section 21.1 of the *Academic Code* by striking the language concerning graduate and professional programs passed at the last meeting and replacing it with the statement that, in the Law School, eligibility for the dean's honor list should be governed by the Hoynes Code. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Proposal from the Undergraduate Studies Committee concerning Course Scheduling. Dean Roche, chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, explained that committee members have spent considerable time during the current academic year discussing the distribution of classes across available class times. Discussion has included attention to the so-called "Friday problem," i.e., a lower percentage of classes being offered on Fridays vis-a-vis the remainder of the week. The committee has identified three types of problems related to course scheduling.

First, the University is not maximizing its use of classroom space across the full calendar of available slots. The current system is fairly inefficient. On some days and at some times all classrooms are used to full capacity; on other days and at other times there are many classrooms not in use. Demand is especially high for "technology classrooms." If left unchecked, this inefficient use of space will require the University to add more classrooms to accommodate peak periods of use. Current levels of demand during peak periods also impact any consideration of converting existing classrooms to faculty offices, space for research activities, or space for informal conversations

between faculty and students.

The second problem with course scheduling is that students face far too many scheduling conflicts. During the DART process, students find that many classes are concentrated into too small a number of time slots. This occurs both with general education courses and courses in a student's major. Conflicts for students are particularly severe in the case of Tuesday-Thursday slots at 9:30, 11:00, and 2:00. Nearly 100% of available classroom space is used during those times.

Dean Roche continued by stating that the third issue with course scheduling relates to the "Friday problem," which has been described by Fr. Malloy on various occasions. More than 15% fewer classes are offered at Notre Dame on Fridays compared to Mondays through Thursdays. The drop-off in Friday classes – and the three-day weekend it creates – has been related to the high incidence of student drinking at Notre Dame. While the issue of student drinking needs to be addressed with a number of strategies, the committee believes one strategy should involve increasing the number of Friday classes at the University.

Dean Roche said the committee recognizes that if adjustments are made to course scheduling procedures and practices, teaching schedules may be slightly less convenient for individual faculty members. Nevertheless, the committee believes that the three overarching considerations he has described should be balanced against the convenience of individual faculty members.

The committee presented for discussion two proposals to remedy the class distribution problem. Neither proposal was in final form. Rather, the committee presented them to gain feedback from Academic Council members so that the committee would be able to construct a more formal proposal to bring to the Academic Council next year.

The first proposal -- called the "organic change" model -- would retain the current class scheduling system with some enforced changes. Under this plan, no department could offer more than 65% of its classes in "prime time" – defined as Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes between 9:35 a.m. and 1:40 p.m.; Tuesday-Thursday classes between 9:30 a.m. and 3:15 p.m.; and Monday-Wednesday, Monday-Friday, and Wednesday-Friday classes between 11:45 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The plan would govern both undergraduate and graduate classes, with the exception of the Law School, which operates on its own calendar, and the graduate programs in Business, which have their own classrooms. It would produce an almost 2:1 ratio of prime time classes to non-prime time classes, an adjustment that struck the committee members as not overly harsh. The 65% figure was determined by analysis of various percentages with Harold Pace, University Registrar.

In addition, under the organic change model:

- 20% of each department's classes must include meeting times on Friday;
- the number of 75-minute classes offered on Monday-Friday and Wednesday-Friday must equal the number offered on Monday-Wednesday;
- an appeal would be made to departments to spread classes across the weekly calendar as widely as possible for each course level. (Students have expressed the concern that courses at a particular level are offered by the same department at the same time, making it very difficult for majors to take two desired courses in a particular department or discipline in a given semester.)

If this proposal were adopted, it would not go into effect until computer programs are developed to permit departments to easily calculate the required percentages. The committee would also recommend that the Registrar compile data each semester to indicate how the University as a whole, as well as each college or school, has met the prescribed standards and that the Registrar report the data to the appropriate administrators.

Dean Roche said the second proposal presented for discussion has been referred to as the "thoroughly revised calendar." This option, developed by Prof. Sam Gaglio of the Mendoza College of Business, would increase the ratio and number of two-day-a-week classes by introducing a schedule with a plan of Monday-Thursday and Tuesday-Friday classes as its centerpiece. Two-day-a-week courses are the classes in greatest demand in the University as a whole, and especially in the colleges of Arts and Letters and Business. Those two colleges have the highest enrollments at the University and both have indicated that there are certain pedagogical considerations that justify the demand for two-day-a-week courses.

While the thoroughly revised calendar would represent a more significant change in Notre Dame's culture, it would free the University from the necessity of introducing scheduling formulas. It would also likely increase the percentage of Friday classes. Prof. Gaglio and the committee investigated institutions – particularly, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York – with a similar calendar. While there could be adjustments to it, the point of the plan is to dramatically increase the number of two-day-a-week courses.

Dean Roche reiterated that the proposals were on the table solely for purposes of gathering feedback from the whole Council. The Undergraduate Studies Committee has addressed the issue of scheduling on at least three occasions this year and members decided to come forward with these two proposals to hear arguments for and against change as well as arguments for and against each of the two proposals. After the Academic Council discussion, the committee will ask the deans to air the issue of

course scheduling in the college councils. It will also ask the Registrar's Office to test one of the two models to examine how it would work concretely in a given semester.

Before continuing the discussion, Dean Roche introduced Mr. Don Steinke, Assistant Registrar, and Ms. Rachel Milliman, the coordinator of academic facilities scheduling, who attended the meeting to respond to members' questions.

Prof. Hatch asked Dean Roche to provide a fuller explanation of the thoroughly revised calendar.

Dean Roche responded that, essentially, this option doubles the amount of two-day-a-week classes at the University. As he has said, classroom usage during peak times on Tuesdays and Thursdays has now reached the saturation point. (While the University now offers one other two-day-a-week option, a Monday-Wednesday time slot, classes offered then are relatively few in number and available only at the 400 level and above.) If the University adopted the thoroughly revised calendar, the Registrar would most likely require departments to divide their classes between the Monday-Thursday and Tuesday-Friday time slots relatively equally so that there will be a significant number of Friday classes. The thoroughly revised calendar retains the possibility of 50-minute, three-day-a-week classes (either on a Monday-Wednesday-Thursday or a Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday schedule) it also retains 90-minute examination blocks on Wednesdays.

Dean Roche said the committee originally thought that faculty in Science and Engineering would not favor this model because it reduces the options for three-day-a-week courses; however, the associate deans of those colleges have conveyed to Prof. Powers that they are somewhat supportive of it.

Ms. Bassler commented that with the thoroughly revised calendar students might face the prospect of two departmental examinations on one day. That is problematic for students – particularly, first-year students. Two departmental exams in one week are stressful enough when students are trying to balance full course loads. Two exams in one day would be even more stressful and inhibit students' ability to perform well academically.

Prof. Scheidt asked if there had been any thought to moving the examination periods to a later time. The most frequent complaint he hears from students is that the current 8:00 a.m. start time for departmental exams is too early in the day. Did the subcommittee consider moving the examination time to the early evening?

Prof. Jenkins responded that the subcommittee considered doing so, but decided against it when they discovered that it would cause too many conflicts with student-athletes' practices.

Prof. Antsaklis asked if the committee had looked into the issue of scheduling

labs. Page 4 of the committee's document states that his department, Electrical Engineering, schedules 92% of its classes during prime time. He imagines this is due to the fact that trying to fit three-hour labs into the students' schedules forces the department to schedule almost all regular course meetings during prime time. If the University is to take a hard look at scheduling, it must face the issue of whether to keep labs in the afternoon, move them to slots in the evening, or move them to some other time.

Prof. Powers said the scheduling of labs is a fine-scale detail that the committee has not yet worked out – which is why it is not now presenting a final proposal. There are problems in the current schedule with labs. Most likely, labs will always present challenges. Prof. Powers reiterated that the committee was seeking the “big picture” guidance in solving the problem it has identified.

Given that, Prof. Antsaklis said, he favors the thoroughly revised calendar option.

Prof. Scheidt commented that, especially at the freshman and sophomore levels, the Chemistry Department has difficulty finding slots for labs which are not in conflict with classes. This year, some labs have begun as late as 4:30 p.m. on Monday afternoons because there are no other times available.

Prof. Preacher said, as a college, Science uses the calendar more broadly than do the colleges of Arts and Letters and Business. Most courses in the College of Science are Monday-Wednesday-Friday. Generally, the University's scheduling problem lies with the tendency of Arts and Letters and Business to prefer Tuesday-Thursday time slots.

Prof. Powers directed members' attention to the charts in the committee's document showing the level of classroom usage at the University. With 162 classrooms, total saturation occurs on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The afternoons, when Science generally schedules labs, are not the problem now. He reiterated that classroom saturation leads to faculty members becoming upset because they cannot have their room assignment changed and students becoming upset because they cannot schedule classes they want or need.

Prof. Scheidt said his concern in any scheduling plan is that conflicts will be created for labs. He is perfectly happy to teach Friday afternoon classes. That is not an issue for him. A serious problem for students, though, is finding times to fit labs into their schedules.

Dean Roche responded that the committee would look into conflicts with labs and examination schedules. There may be a way to play with the two-day-a-week calendar to avoid problems with both.

Fr. Malloy asked if anyone has done a history – anecdotal or formal – of the

evolution of the class-week schedule. The impression he has is that, nationwide, at some point in the past, Friday became a time for consultation and other purposes and the class week was reduced to four days. That trend happened to coincide with the trend, on both the part of faculty and students, to prefer 75-minute class slots. Some colleges still seem to prefer 50-minute slots for classes three times a week — whether out of custom or serious pedagogical reasons. One could question whether a 75-minute time slot is better than a 50-minute slot. If, in fact, the majority of faculty and students prefer to eliminate 50-minute classes altogether, then a different reality exists than if the University is trying to mix two different systems.

Dean Roche suggested that taking a straw vote would help the committee refine its proposal. He asked, first, how many members would favor *some* change to the current class scheduling system. He reminded members that a change would call for certain adjustments – for example, faculty members might not receive their first choice for class times. The straw vote was unanimous in favor of some change.

Dean Roche said, given members' vote, there are two scenarios on the table for further discussion. He first explained, however, that the committee had explored a third scenario under which the Registrar would not permit a department to have a third class in one-time slot until it had scheduled at least one class in every available slot. The more draconian version of this option would be a prohibition against a second class in any one time slot until every slot has at least one course. The committee decided not to advance either version of that proposal because members believe there is a certain logic to having a defined percentage of classes in prime time. In addition, it was thought that even if an option mandated more early morning or late afternoon classes, students would not necessarily sign up for those classes. The committee arrived at the two options placed on the table because they seemed the most reasonable. Dean Roche said that if Science and Engineering could work with a modest restriction of the number of three-day-a-week slots, that the thoroughly revised calendar would probably be the best scenario. The Registrar could introduce some rules, such as ratio rules, and then the committee could bring it back to the Council for a vote.

Dean Roche asked how many members would be in favor of the thoroughly revised calendar option if the committee could address the issue of holding departmental examinations on the same day. Twenty-one members indicated their support of this option.

He then asked how many would support the “organic change” proposal, which would employ a formula to restrict departments to a certain percentage of classes in prime time.

Prof. O'Hara asked if that option contained the possibility of increasing the number of two-day-a-week classes.

Dean Roche answered: “Modestly, yes.”

Ten members were supportive of the organic change option.

Prof. Kantor said that at this point he is not comfortable with an either/or vote. While he understands the main points of both options, the “devil is in the details.” Significantly more investigation is required so that members can truly understand the impact of each option.

Dean Roche responded that Mr. Pace had said it would be an enormous amount of work to actually put together a whole schedule for either option. Thus, the Registrar would like the Council to provide him with as much direction as possible before either option is tested.

Prof. Kantor said it is worth pointing out that putting together the University’s class schedule is a bit of an art. Elements of tradition and custom go into every schedule’s construction. Knowing, for example, that a popular introductory biology class is always at 9:00 a.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays causes the other colleges to construct their offerings in a certain way. There are many such assumptions in Notre Dame’s current calendar, and he is not sure how the current assumptions would translate into a revised schedule. A new schedule might come out even better, but there would be a great deal of work involved in putting together a schedule at least as good as the one the University now has.

Dean Kolman said that she believes the problem raised about exam blocks is small compared to the problem Prof. Scheidt raised about labs. If much of the class time available is used up in two-day-a-week slots – whether they are Tuesday-Thursday, Monday-Thursday, or Tuesday-Friday – fitting in a large number of three-hour blocks for labs will be problematic. She perceives that as the largest flaw of the thoroughly revised calendar. The difficulty with examination blocks can be more easily solved.

Mr. Steinke agreed with Prof. Kantor that there is an organic component of the schedule. The interconnectedness of the schedule was demonstrated this past year when, for pedagogical reasons, Engineering 111 and 112 were scheduled for nonstandard meeting times. First Year of Studies and Engineering needed to do a great deal of work to accommodate that change. Mr. Steinke also agreed with Dean Kolman that scheduling labs is problematic. He said the number of labs at the University continues to increase, particularly for Chemistry courses.

Ms. Roberts said she believes neither option presented by the committee addresses what she perceives to be the primary issue with scheduling. Particularly for 300 and 400-upper level courses, which, from the students’ viewpoint, all seem to be scheduled Tuesday-Thursday at 11:00 a.m., it is extremely difficult for students to put together a schedule. Personally, she has had the experience of looking at the DART

book and seeing five classes she would like to take, but finding that all five are offered in the same time slot. She doubts the problem will be solved by merely continuing to ask colleges, deans, and chairs to be aware of the students' scheduling problems. She wants to emphasize that the problems created by the current saturated course calendar loom large for students. Whatever option is chosen, though, there will undoubtedly continue to be a flood of registration requests for certain prime time classes, particularly for upper-level courses. In a student's first few years at the University, required classes are often offered in earlier, less popular times of the day.

Prof. Powers said, although he supported the thoroughly revised calendar option in the straw vote, he can also see the advantages of the organic change option. Imposing a limit of 65% – or some other number – of classes in prime time is more of a “tree trimming exercise” than implementation of the thoroughly revised calendar would be. Whatever number is chosen for the percentage of classes in prime time, there will be a good deal of arbitrariness to it. It would, however, impose a certain discipline on colleges. He likes the fact that the option provides for some sort of committee with faculty membership that would work out scheduling issues in advance with the Registrar.

Mr. Steinke said Rensselaer's registrar told him that in the first year of that institution's experience with a schedule similar to the thoroughly revised calendar option, 75% of classes were offered on a Monday-Thursday schedule, which did not help that school's “Friday problem” very much. They have since instituted a schedule review committee that includes a representative from their provost's office. That committee must approve any nonstandard meeting times, as well as review the entire schedule before it is approved. Mr. Steinke said that whatever option is chosen, the presence of a similar review committee at Notre Dame would be important. In the past, Notre Dame has had situations when the Registrar was literally unable to schedule some large classes – for instance, when ten departments have requested the same time slot for large introductory classes and only eight classrooms exist with adequate capacity for any of them. In such situations, members of the Registrar's office have met with the assistant or associate deans to adjust schedules and work out the conflict. It would be far better to have a committee in place to watch over the whole schedule and know earlier in the process when adjustments need to be made.

Mr. Olejnik commented that a significant problem with the thoroughly revised calendar option is that for classes that meet three times per week, two of the sessions would be back-to-back (e.g., Wednesday and Thursday classes in the Monday-Wednesday-Thursday slot or Tuesday and Wednesday in the Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday slot.) Now, with either the three-day-a-week courses or the two-day-a-week courses, there are at least 48 hours between meeting times to complete assigned work and prepare for class. Under the proposed scheme, professors would not be able to teach the same amount of material or expect the students to do the same amount of work with only 24 hours between classes rather than a minimum of 48. Also, allowing only one day for class preparation could impose a tremendous crunch on students

when there is a major test, a large group meeting, or some other campus activity important to them.

A second problem with this option from the student perspective is beginning the day at 8:00 a.m. He imagines that the current 8:30 a.m. classes already have a fair number of drowsy students. If the thoroughly revised option were to be approved, then dining halls would need to open earlier so that students could eat breakfast before an 8:00 a.m. class.

Finally, Mr. Olejnik said, he does not believe that even such a radical change as the thoroughly revised calendar will do much to solve Notre Dame's Friday problem. There are many reasons other than a drop-off in the number of Friday classes for the prevalence of student drinking at Notre Dame.

Prof. Meara commended the committee for the progress it has made on the class scheduling problem and its clear presentation of the options. To help decide which option would be best, she suggested that the next step should be to ask departments which of their offerings are best suited for 50-minute time slots and which for 75-minute slots. For example, in her department, Introductory Psychology should probably occupy 50 minutes, but senior seminars are better suited for a 75-minute class. When departments provide information on their ideal schedules to the committee, it can then capture the actual demand, work out the proper formula, and give departments target numbers – for example, that between 45% and 55% of each department's classes need to be offered in slots other than prime time. The more the committee could minimize the percentage of classes in prime time, the better. This would help solve the problem of students having to choose, particularly when they are juniors, between a number of classes all offered in the same time slot. Prof. Meara said that departments could provide the percentages as part of their review of their undergraduate curricula. If they fail to do so, or if scheduling problems come creeping back, then the proposed Registrar's Office/Faculty committee could impose percentages on departments. A mandate might not be necessary, however, if a formula of target percentages could be devised by working with the numbers departments provide.

Fr. Gaffney said one of the reasons he supports the organic change proposal is that he does not believe that the University has experimented enough with possible changes to the status quo. He notes that the 8:00 to 9:15 a.m. time slot on Tuesdays and Thursdays is not used at all. In contrast, while the Monday-Wednesday-Friday 8:00 a.m. time slot is not up to the saturation level of mid-morning or late-morning classes, there are still a substantial number of classes offered at that time. It was his impression that the Tuesday-Thursday 8:00 a.m. slot was originally left open to provide a time for faculty meetings and the like, but he is not aware of its use for that purpose. Opening up that time slot for classes would take some of the heat off the 9:30-11:00 a.m. Tuesday-Thursday slot.

Dean Roche commented that even though Arts and Letters does not use the 8:00 a.m. Tuesday-Thursday time slot, it is the officially designated time for departmental examinations. Thus, Arts and Letters cannot schedule classes during that period because some of its students are enrolled in courses in other colleges that schedule exams during that time.

As to Mr. Olejnik's comment about having only 24 hours to prepare for some classes under the thoroughly revised calendar option, Dean Roche said the current option of Tuesday-Thursday classes also makes for a major asymmetry. Students have only one day between Tuesday and Thursday to prepare for class, but four days between Thursday and Tuesday. Teaching in that system is a bit bizarre because one does not normally compensate for the difference in preparation time between sessions when assigning the reading, which is unfortunate.

Dean Roche said a further refinement of the thoroughly revised calendar option is to take one of the 8 to 9:15 a.m. time slots, say, on Monday and Thursday, and make that the exam slot. Then, if the committee fiddled a bit with Wednesday, the University could either offer more three-day-a-week options or put two classes back-to-back and have a three-hour option. For instance, perhaps some senior seminars could meet one day a week for three hours. While he does not want to overly inflate that option, it is at least worth examining.

Further, either with the Registrar or the deans, the committee should follow up on Prof. Meara's suggestion. Departmental numbers will give the committee necessary guidance concerning whether to advance the thoroughly revised calendar option or some modification of the organic change option. In any case, if the thoroughly revised calendar is preferred, the numbers the departments submit will provide the necessary ratios to the Registrar's Office so that Notre Dame can avoid the problem Rensselaer experienced its first year with a similar schedule.

Prof. Powers outlined a variation of the thoroughly revised calendar suggested by a colleague. One of the problems with the thoroughly revised calendar is that there are conflicts between the 75-minute classes and the 50-minute Monday-Wednesday-Thursday and Tuesday-Wednesday-Friday classes. The 75-minute classes tend to "eat" the schedule by tying up two slots at once, which presents a problem both in terms of students' schedules and room conflicts.

His colleague's variation is to determine how many 75-minute classes departments want and schedule those for the beginning of the day. After the 75-minute classes are completed, the University could then transform the day into a Monday-Wednesday-Friday 50-minute schedule. Tuesday-Thursday classes would remain 75-minutes for the entire day. The appeal of this option is that it does not create any conflicts other than with outlying classes, such as three-hour seminars or labs.

Prof. Antsaklis commented that there are many, many options available for

solving the current scheduling problems. It is time to wipe the slate clean, look anew at all the options, and determine which is best. Of course, an evaluation must be made of how difficult it would be to implement what is thought to be the best option. In his view, though, it is time to start from scratch.

Dean O'Hara said that in the straw vote she indicated a preference for the organic change option because she believes the more radical option, the thoroughly revised calendar, is tilted more in favor of two-day-a-week courses rather than three-day-a-week, 50-minute classes. Like Prof. Meara, she is concerned about the relative distribution of 50-minute and 75-minute courses. She recognizes that the longer, 75-minute classes are attractive to both faculty and students from a convenience standpoint – and not purely personal convenience. They create blocks of time that can facilitate research or study. While some classes are best taught in 75-minute modules, there are others in which she would have some concerns about the level of concentration – given the nature of the material – if presented in 75 minutes rather than 50. In that regard, Dean O'Hara asked, is there any research about the pedagogical efficacy of long versus short classes tied to the content matter of the class? This has been a topic that has been surfacing within the Law School.

Prof. Walvoord said no research exists to give an absolute answer to that question. There are some kinds of classes better suited to shorter time frames, but characterizing them is difficult and any characterization would not hold even across a single discipline. The answer depends on how the instructor uses the time allotted and what he or she prefers. This area is so highly contextual that she thinks the decision on length of classes is one best left to skilled teachers themselves.

Prof. Meara reiterated her belief that if the committee received information from departments and looked at the ratios they submitted, it could provide the Registrar with more guidance. Without this kind of information, it is difficult to determine which option to prefer. Council members have agreed that, for the reasons given in the report, it is a good idea to make some changes in the current scheduling system. She also thinks that Mr. Olejnik's comments are well taken.

Fr. Malloy asked if any committee member wanted to comment about the social impact of possible schedule changes.

Fr. Poorman said he would be interested in hearing what occurred at Rensselaer in the social arena after its schedule change. Dean O'Hara has told him that in the 1970s Santa Clara experimented with leaving Wednesdays free, which only served to move social activities to Tuesday night. He said that whatever option is implemented, the result may be to simply shift social activities to a different day of the week. There is no question that Thursday night has become a weekend night at Notre Dame.

Fr. Jenkins asked if any research existed to show that a greater concentration of Friday classes decreases student drinking.

Fr. Poorman responded that he does not think any definitive research exists on this subject. Nancy Haegel, a trustee of the University, has investigated the question at Fairfield University where she is a faculty member and she forwarded to Fr. Poorman all of her materials dealing with the issue of reclaiming Friday classes. Members must remember that the low number of Friday classes is not due only to social reasons. A faculty preference for longer weekends to do research and focus on other projects is also a factor. In his view, attempting to reduce student drinking on Thursday night is not the strongest reason to tackle the schedule. Stewardship of space and time is the better reason. Personally, he is convinced by Ms. Bassler's argument that when available classes are stacked into a four-hour period, students' options for choosing classes are too limited.

Prof. Aldous said first year students have been overlooked in the discussion of the options. It is important to think about Monday-Wednesday-Friday schedules for these students. They have just come from high school and need the opportunity to have shorter classes and become initiated into the demands of college. Most departments have introductory courses that could very well be scheduled for Monday-Wednesday-Friday so that students would not become bored or overwhelmed. Then, advanced courses could be held on a Tuesday-Thursday schedule.

Prof. Hatch said one factor in favor of a more organic or evolutionary change is his expectation that, in the next few years, the University will undertake a substantive review of the current curriculum. While Notre Dame's curriculum has undergone some tinkering over the years, there has not been a hard look at changing it substantively for many years. In fact, the last time the curriculum was examined, the provost, Prof. O'Meara, gave an explicit charge not to look at it substantively. It would be difficult on the entire University community to make a massive change to the schedule now because of the existing time constraints, and then, a few years later, be presented with recommendations that would require yet another massive change. While Notre Dame may back away from a fundamental curriculum change, which is a wrenching process for any institution to experience, Prof. Hatch said he thinks the University should at least examine that issue in the next few years.

Mr. Steinke noted that making a fundamental curriculum change is what drove Rensselaer to make the scheduling changes it did. Rensselaer changed almost 90% of its undergraduate courses to four-credit courses, so the two day-a-week, two-hour meeting times made much more sense for it.

Mr. DeBoer said one aspect of the thoroughly revised calendar that appeals to him is the Wednesday exam blocks, designated for 9:15-10:45 and 12:15-1:45. Student members of the Academic Council have cautioned against scheduling two exams on the same day, especially for first year students. He agrees with their reasons. The students have also said that 8:00 a.m. is too early a start time for exams. Right now, virtually the only thing that students do at 8 o'clock in the morning is get up and do the most important thing they do in a given week – take a departmental exam. For

some students, taking an exam at 8 a.m. is a handicap. While the 8 a.m. exam time may be convenient from a scheduling standpoint, it does not always make for good student performance.

Prof. Ghilarducci said some highly-rated undergraduate institutions, such as Swarthmore, have a calendar in which students enroll in two classes for every three-week period. This makes for a very intense course of study and completely changes the academic experience, especially the relationship between the teacher and the student. She asked if the committee had considered a change of that order.

Dean Roche responded that members had discussed similar plans as an option. At many peer institutions, such as Williams and Princeton, students take four courses rather than five. This, of course, lightens the demands on space and would presumably reduce the number of students per class. This type of schedule has been explored in other committees as well, particularly in regard to issues of academic and residential life. Some have thought it would create a more cerebral atmosphere at the University if students did not have the kind of high school mentality imposed by a pattern of one class following upon another. The counter argument here is that students would have less work in a four-class schedule and may actually find more time for the very activities the schedule change would be designed to discourage. In any event, in light of Prof. Hatch's comments about an imminent substantive review of Notre Dame's curriculum, he would not be supportive of such a wholesale change at this point.

Prof. Jensen agreed. Given the prospect on the horizon of a substantive look at the curriculum, it would make sense to attempt to garner voluntary departmental support for some type of percentage plan. That would commit faculty to staggering their classes appropriately until the University is ready to deal with the possibility of a more thorough revision of the calendar.

Dean Roche said one reason the committee felt it should address the issue of scheduling more rigorously than by exhortations to faculty is that for the past four years the suggestion to use the entire class day and week has been part of the orientation guide for Arts and Letters chairpersons; yet, Arts and Letters is one of the worst colleges at spreading classes throughout the calendar. It seems that more than a voluntary system will be required.

Dean Roche thanked Council members for their suggestions, and said that the general support of some kind of revision to the scheduling system says much to the committee. It will continue to explore options.

4. Committee reports.

(a) Faculty Affairs Committee. Prof. Mendenhall said a major accomplishment of this committee was the formulation of the Faculty Alcohol Policy approved by the Academic Council at the last meeting. Also, the committee has nearly finished a report on the

representation of library faculty on University committees.

Issues in subcommittees that will be carried over for next year are a Faculty Senate resolution on adding 150 members to Notre Dame's faculty beyond that called for by the Colloquy, recommended changes to passages of the *Faculty Handbook* that refer to research faculty, and an examination of the status of women at Notre Dame.

Other issues that have surfaced for consideration in the committee but are not now in a subcommittee are: (1) whether the membership of the Academic Council should be more representative of non-administrative faculty; (2) whether the University should make retirement contributions on amounts paid to faculty as summer salary and for additional courses taught; (3) a Faculty Senate resolution on joint appointments in departments and institutes and centers; and (4) a Faculty Senate resolution from several years ago regarding adjunct faculty representation on the Faculty Senate. In regard to the fourth issue, Prof. Mendenhall said in a previous discussion Dean Roche pointed out that because, by definition, adjunct faculty members teach on a course-by-course basis, it is difficult to hold elections. Individuals may be here one semester but gone the next.

Prof. Porter commented that the history of the proposal on adjunct faculty representation is that a proposal originated in the Faculty Senate several years ago that was discussed and voted on by the Academic Council. As presented, the proposal would have provided two adjunct faculty representatives to the Senate. It was amended to provide for only one representative. At the actual vote, the motion was voted down, but either as an amendment or a separate motion, the Academic Council committed itself to finding other ways of increasing the participation of adjuncts in the Senate and the life of the University as a whole. That commitment is the proposal the Academic Council should be addressing now. Prof. Porter said, however, that she would recommend holding off a bit on any proposals involving structural changes to the Senate.

Prof. Porter then asked for more specifics on the proposal to adjust the composition of the Academic Council's membership.

Prof. Mendenhall replied that it is an issue that had recently been brought to the attention of the Faculty Affairs Committee. The faculty member who raised it advocates restructuring the membership of the Academic Council to increase the number of non-administrative, elected faculty members. No action has been taken on the suggestion.

(b) Undergraduate Affairs Committee. Dean Roche provided the report of the Undergraduate Affairs Committee. This committee presented to the full Council the proposals to amend the qualifications for dean's list honors and Latin honors at graduation, both of which were passed at the last two meetings. The committee is still working on a proposal concerning contextualized grading, which would add the relevant percentile in each class to students' transcripts. That proposal did not receive support

in the Executive Committee and committee members recognize it to be a difficult issue. There were several different scenarios presented – one to make contextualized grading obligatory and the other to make it optional – and there seemed to be problems with both. The issue has now been tabled.

Dean Roche continued that a committee chaired by Fr. Jenkins has made extraordinary progress on proposed honor code revisions. Some proposed revisions have been presented to the deans, who have provided feedback. The subcommittee's proposal is now being reviewed by the University's legal counsel. He anticipates that a proposal will be finalized in the fall and presented to the full Council.

A third subcommittee did some exploratory work on curriculum review. In addition, the Student Senate has asked the Undergraduate Studies Committee to take up some issues next year, including expanding students' opportunities for experiential learning. There is strong student support for that effort. While the subcommittee has not explored experiential learning proposals in a formal way, he does not believe a formal resolution will be required as much as energizing faculty support for the proposal. He will release the Student Senate's letter to the College Council tomorrow so that the College of Arts and Letters can consider increasing experiential learning opportunities. In addition, the Student Senate requested that the Undergraduate Studies Committee look into issues of academic freedom for students.

(c) Graduate Studies Committee. Prof. Garg reported that his committee studied issues concerning grade inflation and graduation honors. They have received the requested information from the Schools of Law and Business, but neither wants any changes to the status quo.

Prof. Garg explained that the Graduate Studies Committee functions now more as an advisory committee, or a "kitchen cabinet," for the Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research. In that spirit, committee members have met with administrators in the Graduate School to discuss issues important to them, such as web-based application procedures. Members will meet soon with the Graduate Student Union Executive Committee to hear its members' perspectives on graduate programs and what subjects the two groups might explore in the future.

(d) Provost's Review Committee. Prof. Meara reported that the committee has nearly completed its report and expects to submit it to the President within a day or two. Committee members interviewed over 40 people and reviewed 480 surveys and over 170 comments. Committee members found that their conversations were helpful and constructive. Prof. Meara thanked committee members Drew Ojejnuk and Profs. Bigi, Conlon, Ghilarducci and Powers for their hard work.

There being no further business, Fr. Malloy thanked Council members for their contributions this year and adjourned the meeting at 4:20 p.m.

Sincerely,

Carol Ann Mooney
Secretary