

**ACADEMIC COUNCIL  
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME  
MEETING OF APRIL 30, 2002**

**Members Present:** Rev. Edward Malloy, C.S.C., Nathan Hatch, Rev. Timothy Scully, C.S.C., John Affleck-Graves, Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., Maura Ryan, Jeffrey Kantor, Rev. Mark Poorman, C.S.C., Frank Incropera, Eileen Kolman, Mark Roche, Carolyn Woo, Jacqueline Brogan, Melissa Rauch, Sonia Gernes, J. Robert Wegs, Joan Aldous, Patricia Blanchette, Teresa Ghilarducci, Susan Blum, Vittorio Hosle, Umesh Garg, Mitchell Wayne, Panos Antsaklis, Robert Bretz, Jay Tidmarsh, Alan Krieger, Kenneth DeBoer, Ava Preacher, Samantha Schmid, Stephanie Arnett

**Members Excused:** Francis Castellino, Patricia O'Hara, Jennifer Younger, Ikaros Bigi, Joseph Powers, Edward Conlon, Dino Marcantonio, Sonja Mapes

**Observers Present:** Mary Hendriksen, Julie Flory (for Dennis K. Moore), Harold Pace, Tom Laughner, Julia Dayton

**Observers Excused:** Dennis K. Moore, Col. Mark Gehri, Dan Saracino

Prof. Bretz opened the meeting with a prayer.

**1. Course Scheduling.** Prof. Roche, chair of the Undergraduate Studies Committee, explained that the proposal on course scheduling presented to members today results from the discussion at the Academic Council meeting of April 23, 2001, concerning possible solutions to the high concentration of classes at the University in the mid-morning and mid-day hours relative to other segments of the day. The concentration is particularly high on Tuesday and Thursday. As discussed at that meeting and stated in the resolution presented to the Council today by the Committee, members believe that the current distribution of classes across the class day has an adverse effect on requirements for classroom space, course availability, and, consequently, tuition demands for students. (See Attachment A.) In addition, Fr. Malloy has cited the decline in Friday classes as a factor related to the high incidence of student drinking at Notre Dame. Prof. Roche said that the Committee decided on a proposal that is relatively modest in scope — primarily because the curriculum committee headed by Fr. John Jenkins, C.S.C. is now in the midst of its discussions. It would be foolish to formulate an elaborate restructuring of undergraduate course scheduling a year in advance of that report.

After noting that the title of the Committee's proposal should be amended to read "Proposed Resolution to the Academic Council on *Course Scheduling*" and distributing

copies of a proposed amendment to the Committee's motion, prepared by Dr. Harold Pace, University Registrar (See Attachment B), Prof. Roche explained that the proposal calls for the Council to abolish the present Monday/Wednesday 75-minute time slot and replace it with an equivalent Wednesday/Friday 75-minute slot. The Committee asks the Registrar to make the replacement in such a way that the number of Wednesday/Friday 75-minute classes is roughly equal to the present number of Monday/Wednesday 75-minute classes. The Committee's proposal also calls for: (1) the formation of a standing committee that will review classroom scheduling issues, continue efforts to allocate classroom resources in an efficient and equitable manner, and resolve disputes that arise in classroom scheduling; and (2) the Registrar to compile data each semester indicating how the University as a whole as well as each college and school has performed in allocating classroom resources. Dr. Pace said that the measures proposed will take effect in the Spring 2003 semester.

Prof. Roche said that the impetus for the main change — exchanging Monday/Wednesday classes for Wednesday/Friday classes — is that the smallest number of University courses are held on Friday. Thus, in the Fall 2000 semester the Registrar's data showed the distribution of total classrooms in use on each day of the week as: Monday - 698, Tuesday - 736, Wednesday - 710, Thursday - 716, and Friday - 644. (See footnote 1 of Attachment A) Shifting a segment of the University's current two-day-a-week classes to include Friday maximizes the University's use of classroom space as well as addressing the concern of many at the University that the lower number of classes on Friday contributes to the problem of students' alcohol abuse. While some have asked if the change would serve only to turn the "Friday problem" into a "Sunday problem," Prof. Roche said he does not think that will occur. The campus culture on Thursday night is quite different than that of Sunday night. On Sundays, there are dorm Masses and students tend to turn back to their books in anticipation of the week. Thus, Committee members feel that in a modest way and as an initial step the proposal addresses some of the complexity involved in creating better course scheduling opportunities for students.

Prof. Brogan asked why the Committee's proposal blocks out all classes from 9:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. in the Wednesday/Friday time slot.

Dr. Pace answered that there is a high concentration of Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes from 9:15 to 11:45. It would destroy the University's MWF schedule as a whole if either Monday/Wednesday or Wednesday/Friday classes were offered during that time period.

Prof. Incropera commented that the problem in addressing course scheduling issues is that any attempt must seek to maximize three objectives: (1) improving students' access to classes, (2) utilizing classroom space as effectively as possible, and (3) accommodating the faculty's interest in keeping open some large blocks of time.

Prof. Incropera said that he knows of many Engineering students who are shut out of classes they would like to take in philosophy or theology, for example, because of scheduling difficulties. He wonders if the issue of course scheduling could best be examined from a standpoint of seeking the most effective utilization of space.

Dr. Pace answered that while it is certainly possible to create a schedule that maximizes the use of classroom space, that objective has never been part of Notre Dame's culture. Some universities do use software that maximizes the use of classrooms to the highest level and creates the fewest potential conflicts in students' schedules. Building a schedule in this way, however, ignores the faculty's need to keep open some large blocks of time. Notre Dame builds its schedule differently. The problem the Committee has faced is how it can spread out classes over the class day and make departments stick to that schedule.

Prof. Roche said that at the April 23, 2001, meeting Academic Council members specifically articulated the conflict between the scheduling difficulties students now face from the current distribution of classes — primarily due to the overuse of certain time slots — and faculty members' need for large blocks of time for concentrated work on their research, writing, and class preparation. Council members said then that even though faculty might be modestly inconvenienced by an adjustment to Notre Dame's schedule, the Committee should continue to look at strategies to address maximizing classroom space and students' concern about difficulties in scheduling classes. He anticipates that when Fr. Jenkins' committee report is completed and the Committee is supplied with the data the motion asks the Registrar to provide each semester, it will advocate that the University move to a system that was discussed at length last year: setting a percentage of classes in "prime time" slots over which departments cannot offer courses. When this more final proposal is developed he expects that faculty members might be inconvenienced to some degree; however, the Committee is not planning to propose a scheme that would completely take off the table the need for faculty members to have blocks of concentrated time.

Prof. Incropera asked Prof. Roche to explain the nature of the inconvenience certain course schedules present to faculty.

Prof. Roche replied that most faculty members would prefer not to teach four or five days a week so that they have more options for giving lectures elsewhere and for concentrated work on their own projects. Many faculty members find that teaching one class that meets Tuesday and Thursday mornings and another that meets Tuesday and Thursday afternoons provides them with the necessary large blocks of time. There are other benefits to two-day-a-week courses. Many business and humanities courses at the 200-level and above are two-day-a-week courses because longer time slots offer more time for discussion.

Prof. Hosle asked why Monday/Wednesday time slots must be *replaced*. Why not add Wednesday/Friday slots but keep the current Monday/Wednesday option?

Prof. Roche replied that the current proposal is not a wholesale revision of the University's schedule but an attempt to shift some of the current two-day-a-week courses from Monday/Wednesday to Wednesday/Friday. Many faculty members in the Colleges of Science and Engineering, as well as many who teach language classes in the College of Arts and Letters, often prefer Monday/Wednesday/Friday classes. Thus, the proposal attempts to cause the least amount of disruption to and conflicts with the existing schedule by merely replacing the Monday/Wednesday time slot with a Wednesday/Friday slot.

Dr. Pace added that a primary goal of the scheduling change is to provide students with as much choice in their classes as possible. Having a variety of different schedules with Wednesday classes — Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, and Monday/Wednesday/Friday — causes too many conflicts for students.

Fr. Malloy asked if any student members of the Council wished to comment on the proposal.

Ms. Rauch said that because the problem of a high concentration of classes on Tuesday and Thursday will be taken up at another time, it seems that the purpose of this proposal is solely to address the Thursday night partying problem. She doubts, however, that many students will choose to take a class that meets at 8 a.m. on Friday. The University would need to schedule very popular classes at 8 a.m. to persuade students to select that time slot. Even though the Council may choose to shift Monday/Wednesday classes to Wednesday/Friday, she thinks that students who are inclined to go out on Thursday night will continue to do so.

Ms. Schmid said she sees one very clear advantage of shifting Monday/Wednesday courses to Wednesday/Friday. Presently, many students leave for the weekend on Thursday afternoon, which can affect the quality of discussions in classes that meet on Friday afternoon. If Friday afternoon classes are one of two classes a week rather than one of three classes, she thinks students would be less likely to miss them. Moreover, she does expect that the schedule change will help with the "Friday problem." Students who have presentations on Friday will not go out on Thursday night.

Prof. Bretz asked whether adopting the proposal precludes discussion of future, more radical changes to the University's schedule.

Prof. Roche reiterated that adoption will not preclude further discussion. Committee members felt that it was not appropriate at this time to come forward with a

radical proposal. As Fr. Jenkins' committee finishes its work and the Council tackles other proposals it has considered, he anticipates that the Undergraduate Studies Committee will come to the Council with proposals that involve, at a minimum, setting a cap for the number of classes each department can offer in the "prime time" hours of the schedule. Such a proposal will address students' concerns about difficulties in putting together a schedule and issues of classroom allocation.

Prof. Bretz asked whether the options of Monday/Thursday or Tuesday/Friday were still on the table?

Dr. Pace said that they were.

Prof. Blum commented that the Anthropology department has often used Friday afternoons for departmental meetings. This is a time when faculty members have fewer time constraints than other days and conversations can spill over the allotted time. Changing the University's schedule so that meetings must now be held on Mondays could very well change this dynamic.

Fr. Malloy pointed out that the Theology department has long used a late Monday afternoon time for its departmental meetings. Most likely, departments across the University have become accustomed to holding their meetings on a variety of days.

Ms. Arnett asked if the statistics given on the distribution of classes across the class week include graduate and professional classes. She also asked how the proposal will affect tutorials and graduate students with teaching responsibilities.

Dr. Pace answered that the Registrar's Office gives more flexibility to graduate classes when putting together the University's schedule — for instance, in the Tuesday/Thursday 8-9:15 a.m. time period. It also schedules graduate-level classes later in the day or in the evenings. There is more flexibility for graduate-level courses because they do not normally require large classrooms. As for the effect of the proposal on tutorials, it would require holding the tutorial on Monday and lectures on Wednesday and Friday. Also, classes that met only on Friday would be shifted to Monday.

Fr. Malloy asked Dr. Pace to list his amendments to the Committee's proposal.

Dr. Pace said they were: (1) In the first paragraph, adding that all classes now taught on Friday only, or as a Friday tutorial, be changed to Monday; (2) responsibilities of the standing committee proposed in the second paragraph also include setting classroom physical and technical configuration standards, considering requests to upgrade a classroom, taking a classroom out of service, or otherwise altering the current use of a classroom; (3) the data the Registrar's Office compiles each semester

indicating how the University as a whole as well as each college and school has performed in scheduling classes that result in the allocation of classroom resources will be reported as well to the chair of the Classroom Committee; and (4) the changes proposed will take effect “for” rather than “in” the Spring 2003 semester so that the Registrar’s Office can consider them as it builds the Spring 2003 schedule. (See Attachment B.)

Prof. Roche said that it would be useful to him if in addition to statistics on each college’s and school’s allocation of classes, he also had a breakdown *by department* of class allocation.

Fr. Malloy said that could be included as a friendly amendment.

In response to a question by Prof. Kolman, Dr. Pace reiterated that the proposal replaces all Monday/Wednesday lectures now having Friday tutorials with Wednesday/Friday lectures and Monday tutorials. He also said that the only exceptions are labs and Physical Education classes, which meet on a different schedule.

Fr. Malloy asked for a vote on the Undergraduate Studies Committee’s proposal, as amended by Dr. Pace, regarding classroom scheduling. With only one “nay” vote, it was approved by the Academic Council.

**2. Observer Status for Student Presidents.** Prof. Affleck-Graves said that the Executive Committee decided to recommend that the Council not grant observer status to the Student Government president and the Graduate Student Union president. The membership of the Council, already large, includes a number of observers. While some may believe that one or two more observers would seem to make little difference, the Executive Committee decided that including student presidents as observers could very well open the door to a proliferation of observers. Thus, it decided to abide by the principle that in cases when categories of people have elected representatives to the Council — establishing a direct reporting line back to those constituents — there is not a need for observer status. Prof. Affleck-Graves noted that in the reorganization of the Council and Faculty Senate undertaken this academic year, the Council increased its student members to six, with two graduate students and four undergraduate students.

Ms. Rauch said that even though Student Government raised the issue of including the student presidents as observers, it will not oppose the Executive Committee’s recommendation. She explained that the rationale of the request was to bring the presidents’ expertise to Council meetings.

Prof. Hatch said the point was raised at the Executive Committee meeting that the student presidents can always be invited to participate in a particular meeting when discussion of an agenda item would benefit from their presence.

Fr. Malloy called for a vote on the Executive Committee's recommendation not to grant observer status on the Academic Council to the president of Student Government and the president of the Graduate Student Union. By a voice vote, a majority of members supported the Executive Committee's recommendation.

### **3. Committee Reports**

**(a) Graduate Studies Committee.** Prof. Garg said that the committee's primary concentration this year has been quality-of-life issues for graduate students. He reported that several topics will be under consideration for further discussion in the fall of 2002, including tuition subsidies for spouses of married students, revisions of *du Lac*, opening hours of computer clusters during breaks, and discussion with Jennifer Younger on an e-dissertation project.

**(b) Undergraduate Studies Committee.** Prof. Roche said that during this academic year one subcommittee successfully completed work on revising the Honor Code and another developed the proposal voted on today regarding course scheduling. The latter will continue its work next year. A third subcommittee has been working on a number of issues: (1) Academic advising – while aspects of academic advising were addressed in the 1996-97 academic year, it has been suggested that the area needs to be revisited, with the purpose of highlighting a range of best practices; (2) Tutoring – tutoring is available in some colleges but not in others. While this may be due to the nature of the work in various departments, the subcommittee intends to look at the issue; (3) International study – the subcommittee has examined the impact of international study on the curriculum in some of the colleges and has maintained a file so that its work may be completed next year. Finally, committee members have been in touch with Fr. Jenkins' curriculum committee, since that committee's report will come to the Undergraduate Studies Committee before presentation to the full Academic Council. Committee members have also discussed University curricular issues that transcend colleges.

**(c) Faculty Affairs Committee.** Prof. Delaney said that the principal item on the agenda all year has been the reconstitution of the Faculty Senate and the integration of the Faculty Senate and the Academic Council. The joint committee was instrumental in the success of that endeavor. Another issue the committee discussed was University policies related to retirement, including the issue of offices for retirees. Members learned that the issue of office space was unique to every college and that the colleges were aware of the problem and trying to deal with it. Also, as a result of the committee's examination of the issue of participation of Library faculty on various University committees, it has asked Prof. Affleck-Graves to take a serious look at the structure and composition of all committees at the University.

Prof. Delaney continued that next year the committee would like the Council to

hold a discussion of the University's financial planning so that members could get a word in early in planning stages and make a case for the allotment of funds for certain purposes. Secondly, members would like to hear from Prof. Kantor, Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, so that they might provide input early enough in the strategic planning process to impact that process. Finally, under the general rubric of planning and restructuring, and following Prof. Affleck-Graves' completion of his study of various committee structures at the University and their function, it may be appropriate to have a general discussion at an Academic Council meeting of governance of the University.

Fr. Malloy thanked members for their participation in the Academic Council this year. He said that the restructuring of the Council and the Senate that occurred this year is intended to promote and facilitate a conversation that is healthy, oriented to the future, and directed to action. While committees must continue their conversations and work, this takes for granted that issues will percolate to the surface for action.

**4. Minutes Approved.** The minutes of the Academic Council meeting of February 26, 2002, were approved without amendment.

There being no further business, Fr. Malloy adjourned the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

John Affleck-Graves  
Secretary