

To: The Academic Program Group
From: Frances Mueller, Project Manager, Space Utilization Initiative, Office of the Provost
Cc: VPADG, BAG, Paul Robinson, Michael Thouless
Subject: 8-12 Shared Scheduling for Classrooms
Date: 6/29/09

Dear APG members,

As you may recall from the May APG meeting and follow-up message from Terry Sullivan, Tim Slottow, and Phil Hanlon, we will implement a new model of shared scheduling for all general purpose classrooms on the Ann Arbor campus between the hours of 8 a.m. and noon. Although the exact details of this model are still being planned, I would like to share some details and next steps with you, and to request your support as we move forward with this campus-wide change. We will continue to seek input from those who will be affected to ensure that school and college needs are carefully considered.

Please share this information with your department chairs, key administrators, and others within your units as needed so they are aware of the upcoming changes.

BACKGROUND

The 8-12 shared scheduling model is being implemented to address three critical institutional needs: improving the utilization of our general purpose classrooms, ensuring assignment of all classes in classrooms prior to registration, and supporting growth of activities without adding to the campus footprint.

Improving the utilization of our general purpose classrooms

As you are aware, classroom utilization across the Ann Arbor campus is well below the target goal of 70% established last year. Campus-wide classroom utilization is much lower between 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. and after 3 p.m. This indicates that, as a campus, we continue to dedicate valuable square footage and financial resources to support this underutilized space—space that could be repurposed for higher priority academic or research needs. This is of particular concern as we add more than 40 state-of-the-art classrooms to campus with new Museum of Art, North Quad, and Law facilities. These additions will lower the campus classroom utilization rate further. By sharing classrooms, we maximize the use of our most-needed classrooms and can identify those classrooms that could be repurposed for more critical needs.

Ensuring placement of all classes in classrooms prior to registration

Some departments do not have enough classrooms to meet their needs and are continually challenged to find available classrooms. Other departments have a surplus of classrooms, some of which could be used by other units. The 8-12 shared scheduling model will enable the Registrar's Office to place classes in any available general purpose classroom that meets the instructional requirements of the class between 8 a.m. and noon. This is a critical academic need. (Note: To date, the Registrar's Office is authorized to schedule classes in only about one-third of campus classrooms, making it difficult to place all classes prior to registration.)

Supporting growth of activities without adding to the campus footprint

The University spends more than \$6 million annually to lease space to support growth of activities. This money could be used for higher priority needs if existing, underutilized classrooms could be repurposed, resulting in overall cost savings.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 8-12 SHARED SCHEDULING MODEL

Although the details of the 8-12 shared scheduling model are still being planned, some key highlights are listed below. More information will be provided as the details of the shared scheduling model are finalized.

NOTE: A list of Frequently Asked Questions is attached to this message, providing additional information.

- The 8-12 shared scheduling model will be implemented in late February 2010, which is the end of the Fall 2010 curriculum planning period and point at which the Registrar's Office begins assigning classrooms to classes needing assignments.
- The 8-12 shared scheduling model will apply to every department, program, school or college with general purpose classrooms and auditoriums designated as room type 110 on the Ann Arbor campus. It will not apply to class labs, seminar rooms, or other specialized instructional spaces.
- Units may continue to schedule credit-bearing classes in classrooms throughout the day.
- All non-class events, such as faculty meetings, dissertation defenses, or events that are not directly related to a specific course may only be scheduled in classrooms after noon or must be scheduled in another type of space. Classes are our highest classroom scheduling priority.
- The Registrar's Office will be authorized to assign classes to any empty classrooms, as needed, between 8-12.
- Units will be asked to adhere to curriculum planning and classroom scheduling deadlines established by the Registrar's Office so the Registrar's Office can ensure that all classes are placed prior to registration.
- Units that currently have shared scheduling agreements with the Registrar's Office will continue with their existing agreements. They will not reduce their hours of shared scheduling to 8 to 12.

NEXT STEPS AND HELP NEEDED

Implementing an 8-12 shared scheduling model campus-wide requires support and participation from all units to ensure that the process goes smoothly. The following is a list of activities that will require involvement from your unit in the coming weeks and months.

1. Classroom Inventory

Over the next few months, we will contact your budget administrator to coordinate a tour of all general purpose classrooms and auditoriums (room type 110) managed by your unit. The purpose of the visit is to record the basic room characteristics and amenities of each classroom and to ensure that this information is recorded consistently campus-wide. Room characteristics and amenities include blackboards, whiteboards, overhead projectors, podiums, seating capacity, fixed vs. movable furniture, etc. Photos or 360-degree videos of each classroom may also be recorded for possible future use, so each classroom will need to be available for this activity. Every effort will be made to visit the classroom during non-peak times.

Information about room characteristics and amenities will be loaded into M-Pathways and used by the Registrar's Office and others to search for classrooms that meet specific instructional needs. Once the information is loaded into M-Pathways, units will be asked to update the information each term. A best practice is to formally tour and validate classroom space on a regular basis, so we will plan for this type of room inventory activity every few years.

2. Classroom Scheduling in M-Pathways

Classroom utilization statistics and reports produced from central M-Pathways systems do not reflect all non-class events (e.g., department meetings, dissertation defenses, guest lectures) that occur in classrooms. In most cases, this information is recorded locally through other types of unit systems (e.g., Outlook or paper calendars). With the move toward an 8-12 shared scheduling model for classrooms, it will be important to use the central M-Pathways system for curriculum scheduling and as a system to view and schedule classrooms. In the coming months, units will need to record or upload all non-class events that occur in classrooms into the central M-Pathways system on a regular basis and use the M-Pathways system as the authoritative source for classroom availability. This will enable the Registrar's Office and others to identify classrooms that are available, based on up-to-date scheduling information.

MAIS recently modified the M-Pathways system to enable units to record non-class events for classrooms and piloted the new functionality with select units. In general, feedback from the pilot has been positive, leading a few departments to stop using their existing Outlook and paper systems for classroom scheduling. We are currently assessing the pilot feedback in detail to determine next steps and timelines for implementing the enhancements to campus.

We recommend that your unit explore how this type of central classroom scheduling system will impact your internal business practices. If your unit would like to learn more about the M-Pathways enhancements or consider being an early adopter of the system, please email space.utilization@umich.edu.

3. Ad Hoc Registrar's Office Requests for Classrooms

Occasionally, the Registrar's Office may need to support last-minute class changes or institutional needs for classroom space. We request that all units accommodate these occasional, ad hoc requests from the Registrar's Office, whenever possible, even if the request is outside the 8-12 scheduling period.

4. Class Scheduling Policies/Guidelines

We currently do not have campus-wide policies or guidelines to provide greater structure or consistency in how classes are scheduled that would lead to more effective classroom utilization. As a result, inconsistent scheduling patterns and practices leave many classrooms unused for some hours each day. We plan to convene a group with broad unit representation to explore scheduling policies or guidelines that may be needed to improve classroom utilization.

We look forward to your input as we finalize the 8-12 shared scheduling model for campus and request your support and leadership to ensure its success. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at space.utilization@umich.edu.

As always, thank you for your help.

Best regards,
Frances Mueller