

**FACULTY SENATE BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE  
COURSE SCHEDULING SURVEY RESULTS**

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## Introduction

The following document is a brief synopsis of the results of data collected through an electronic questionnaire in the November, 2006. The purpose of this survey was to assess the opinions of the tenured and tenure-track faculty at ECU Richmond campus with: (1) the degree to which the current daytime, evening, and weekend course scheduling configurations meets students' educational needs and (2) its willingness to consider alternative daytime, evening, and weekend course scheduling configurations to better meet students' educational needs.

## Methodology, Response Rate, and Respondents' Profile

On November 8, 2006, employees in Institutional Research (IR) distributed the attached cover letter from Faculty Senate President, David Eakin electronically to all 564 tenure and tenure-track faculty on the Richmond campus inviting them to participate in the attached survey and directing them to the website that housed the electronic questionnaire developed by the Faculty Senate Subcommittee (attached). The website remained active until November 21, 2006; Institutional Research then tabulated the statistical data and members of the Senate Budget Subcommittee created summaries of all the open-ended comments.

Forty-eight percent of the sample (269) responded, a rate nearly twice the response rates of previously electronically distributed surveys (according to IR). This response rate suggests that there was significant faculty interest in the issue of course scheduling. As the following response profile suggests, the majority of respondents were tenured (77%) and part of the ECU faculty for more than ten years (52%). Moreover and not surprisingly given the size of the college, nearly half the respondents (48%) were faculty within the College of Arts and Sciences.

### Tenure Status

Tenure Track	23%
Tenured	77%

### Length of Service at ECU

0-5 years	26%
6-10 years	22%
More than 10 years	52%

### College

Arts & Sciences	48%
Health Sciences	23%
Business & Technology	12%
Education	10%
Justice & Safety	7%

## Results

### Objective 1: Satisfaction with Current Scheduling Configurations

Respondents were first asked to indicate their level of satisfaction (with response categories ranging from very satisfied to very dissatisfied) with the various configurations currently used at the EKU Richmond campus. The majority of respondents felt that the current scheduling configurations for the daytime, evening, and weekend classes met students' educational needs. The vast majority of respondents (86%) were satisfied with the current evening configuration; although the percentage of respondents indicating satisfaction with the weekend (77%) and daytime (69%) configurations were lower, at least two in three faculty were still satisfied with each configuration. These levels did not vary significantly by tenure status, length of service, or college.

	<u>Dissatisfied</u>	<u>Satisfied</u>
Current Daytime Configuration	31%	69%
Current Evening Configuration	14%	86%
Current Weekend Configuration	23%	77%

Respondents were also provided space to offer written comments for each of the closed-ended questions above. The following information reflects the comments submitted by faculty regarding the survey's open-ended questions regarding satisfaction with current scheduling configurations. Specific comments are provided and coded according to common themes/comments.

The open-ended comments offered some insight into why faculty appeared so satisfied with the current evening and weekend scheduling configuration but appeared less satisfied with the current daytime scheduling configuration. The open-ended comments presented in Table 1 suggest that the daytime class configuration received lower satisfaction rates because faculty perceived that a significant amount of students prefer a two-day course configurations (e.g., offering courses on Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday). Furthermore, a significant number of faculty members commented that they disliked 50-minute class periods or wanted to see consistent start and stop times for all classes. The categorized open-ended comments presented in Table 2 suggest that while a number of respondents felt that the 2 hour 45 minute, once a week evening class configuration currently being used was fatiguing, twice as many respondents felt that requiring students to come to campus only once a week was preferable to making students come to campus two or more times per week. Finally, the comments presented in Table 3 suggest that few faculty members had any suggestions for improvement to the current weekend scheduling configuration.

*Table 1. Summary of Open-Ended Comments Regarding Current Daytime Scheduling*  
# of responses

<u>Satisfied</u>	
• Fine as is/enough flexibility built in	25
<u>Comments Regarding 2-day Configuration</u>	
• Should move to 2-day configuration	30
• Students prefer T/R; more classes now offered than M/W/F	18
• Increasing # of students not showing up on Fridays	7
<u>Class Length</u>	
• 50 minute classes too short	13
• Consistent start and stop times needed between M/W/F and T/R	7
<u>Greater Flexibility Needed</u>	
• Why not let content of course determine schedule, 1-5 times per week as needed, length each day as needed	10
• Current configuration doesn't work well for graduate students, those working full time or long distance commuters	8
<u>Flip Fridays</u>	
Prefer flip Friday	4
• Anything but flip Fridays	2
<u>Other</u>	
• Classrooms are underutilized in early morning and/or afternoon	4
• All across the university need to use similar scheduling (M/W vs M/W/F)	2
• Cut time between classes to 10 minutes	2
• All full-time undergraduates be required to attend 5 days a week	1
• Have a January term	1
• Need more sections with less students	1
• Not sure, ask students	1

Table 2. Summary of Open-Ended Comments Regarding Current Evening Scheduling

<u>Satisfied</u>	<u># of responses</u>
• Fine as is given student body for evening classes	30
• Fine as is, but acknowledge length exhausting	6
• Current schedule flexible enough to meet student needs	6
<u>Course length</u>	
• 2 hours 45 minutes too long, unproductive, fatiguing	15
• Prefer 2 times per week to eliminate fatigue	3
<u>Start-Stop Time</u>	
• Start offering earlier than 6	6
• 7 p.m. start time too late	3
• Need more flexibility in courses start and stop times	3
• Courses ending after 8:30 too late	2
• Too many start and stop times, need more uniformity	1
• KTLN offering classes beginning at 7 too late	1
• 6 p.m. good start time for commuters	1
<u>Other</u>	
• Spread evening course load among faculty or pay those who consistently having to teach evening classes more	1
• Teach either day or evening, not both	1
• Evening classes conflict with required department events	1
• Monday evening classes are disaster because of all Mon. holidays	1
• Need more evening classes	1

Table 3. Summary of Open-Ended Comments Regarding Current Weekend Scheduling  
# of responses

Positive Comments

- work well for field trips and all day classes 2
- ideal for nontraditional students 2
- Our Sat. programming is flexible 2
- Students love weekend classes 2
- Like Sat. only 1
- Work well when done 5 Sat. throughout semester 1

Critical Comments

- Need more weekend classes, but insufficient faculty to cover this 2
- Banner will not accommodate Sat/Sun classes 1
- Weekend classes only work for self-directed students 1
- Need BIO classes on weekend once a year or so 1
- Weekend classes make faculty work 6-day weeks; requires dedicated 1
- Faculty and appropriate compensation 1
- No faculty incentive to cover in terms of comp. time or pay 1

## Objective 2: Willingness to Examine Alternative Scheduling Configurations

Respondents were then asked to indicate their willingness (with response categories ranging from very willing to very unwilling) to examine alternative scheduling configurations to better meet students' educational needs. The majority of respondents expressed willingness to examine alternative course scheduling configurations to better meet students' educational needs. While 85% were willing to examine daytime alternatives, less than two-thirds were willing to examine either alternative weekend (61%) or evening (58%) configurations. As with satisfaction with the current scheduling configurations, willingness to consider alternatives did not vary significantly by tenure, length of service, or college.

	<u>Unwilling</u>	<u>Willing</u>
Alternative Daytime Configurations	15%	85%
Alternative Evening Configurations	43%	58%
Alternative Weekend Configuration	39%	61%

Respondents were again provided space to offer written comments for each of the closed-ended questions above. The following information reflects the comments submitted by faculty as a response to the survey's open-ended questions regarding their willingness to consider alternative scheduling formats. Specific comments are provided and coded according to common themes/comments.

The open-ended comments offer some insight into why faculty members appeared so willing to consider daytime scheduling alternatives but were significantly less enthusiastic about considering either alternative evening or weekend scheduling configurations. Comments regarding willingness to consider alternatives were strikingly similar to those given in regard to satisfaction. These categories of responses are presented in Table 4-6.

The general sentiment of the open-ended comments was that the majority of faculty members were open to considering alternative daytime scheduling options if these alternatives better met student needs. This sentiment did not extend to evening and weekend class configurations, as the open-ended comments suggested that most faculty members felt the current evening and weekend class configurations were sufficient for student and faculty needs.

Table 4. Willingness to Examine Daytime Scheduling Alternatives

	<u># of responses</u>
<u>Positive Comments</u>	
• Meet student and faculty scheduling and academic needs better	17
• Sounds acceptable/reasonable	7
• Department already does this & really likes it	5
	<u># of responses</u>
• Better learning facilitation	2
• Longer classes more conducive in certain fields	2
• Would reduce energy consumption among commuters	1
• Ok, but what exists is fine too	1
<u>Critical Comments</u>	
• Wouldn't work in my area	9
• My students need repetition 3 times per week	7
• Compromises academic integrity, need 5 days per week	6
• May increase poor student performance	4
• Might give "political/Frankfort types" notion work only 4 days per week	1
• Will hurt accreditation, not enough classroom time	1
• Increase students' scheduling problems and extend time required for graduating	1
• Won't work, too limited facilities, will have to cut classes and Therefore, not reach enrollment goals	1
• No scheduling changes—fewer students per section	1
• Enough changes already	1
<u>Questions/General Observations</u>	
• What ever is done, must be faculty and student friendly	2
• What about classes worth more than 3 credits?	1
• Willing to consider as long as not increasing workload and making faculty availability 24/7	1
<u>Comments regarding all possible options</u>	
• Need to explore all possible options	10
• Make Friday be the "off" day	9
• Faculty can pick "off" day for themselves	2
• Do more web-based courses	2
• Do flip Friday	2
• Use Blackboard for one formal meeting day for MWF classes	1
• Make Wed. the "off" day	1
• Anything but flip Fridays	1
• All classes 50 min. long give students' attention spans	1
• All classes meet only 1 time per week	1

Table 5. Willingness to Examine Evening Scheduling Alternatives

	<u># of responses</u>
<u>Positive Comments</u>	
• Two times per week pedagogically superior	9
• Prefer option to teach 1 or more than 1 night, flexibility	8
• 6:00-8:45 too fatiguing, need shorter classes	6
• Would reduce night required on campus if taking more than 2 evening Classes	1
	<u># of responses</u>
• Only do if sound academic reason for	1
<u>Critical Comments</u>	
• Disastrous, bad idea for community, graduate, working, and/or Non-traditional students	38
• Would tie up too much of my already limited time	8
• Such options already available	6
• Scheduling becomes even more difficult	5
• What exists is fine, no changes needed	5
• Start earlier, 2 courses available at night, not one	4
• Work only if more classes/programs offered online or 1 time in Classroom and 1 time online	2
• Would make it difficult to be full-time student only taking night classes	1
• Might be difficult to find adjuncts will to teach 2 evenings per week	1

Table 6. Willingness to Examine Weekend Scheduling Alternatives

	<u># of responses</u>
<u>Positive Comments</u>	
• Good for non-traditional students	8
• Willing to consider	4
• Great for field trips, intensive workshops	2
• Ideal for courses combining classroom and online	1
• If department has need, fine; be flexible enough to permit such	1
• Need to offer BIO 100-300 classes Sat. at least once per year	1
<u>Critical Comments</u>	
• Prefer not to do; interferes with family life and/or community service	10
• We already work weekends, inhibits scholarly/research/creative Activities and keeping up with teaching related duties	6
• Might lead to faculty being expected to work 6 days a week	2
• Not sure students desire this	2
• Will need additional faculty to cover	1
• Question if faculty willing to take this on	1
• Will make scheduling even more difficult	1
<u>Questions/Observations</u>	
• What about T/R/S option?	1

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The survey results presented here suggest no immediate need to change EKV's current course configurations. In light of these results and the institution's apparent future enrollment goals, however, the only change to the current configuration that might merit further consideration is the current daytime course-scheduling configuration. Should alternative daytime scheduling be considered, the committee recommends that current and prospective students be surveyed regarding possible daytime course scheduling alternatives. Nevertheless, the committee also strongly urges that because such a survey would likely suggest to students that an alternative course scheduling was under consideration, the survey should not be conducted until all possibly affected administrative areas have determined that the proposed daytime scheduling alternatives are logistically and financially feasible and are willing to implement such changes should students indicate their preference for change.