

## **Recommendation for Working Group on Course Scheduling Policies and Procedures and the Retention of Relevant External Experts**

May 14, 2025 - approved by the University Senate

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The University Senate recommends:

- I. the establishment of a broad-based Working Group, to include front-line Faculty and Staff, with a clear charge and mandate; and
- II. retention of suitable external expert support

in order to support further development and revision of the policies and procedures for the development of the schedule of courses for each academic term, including assignment of meeting times for course sections, design of the weekly class-meeting grid, and the setting of the annual academic academic calendar.

The charge for the Working Group should be developed in collaboration with the University Senate. The Working Group itself should include members appointed by, and serving as liaisons with, the Senate and its Councils, and should also include the Registrar and other key administrative professionals.

Any policies proposed by the Working Group should be reviewed by relevant shared-governance and administrative bodies according to the specific content of such proposals and an orderly policy-review process.

External experts retained by the University should work closely with the Working Group and have significant, demonstrated technical expertise and experience in the systematic analysis and development of academic scheduling systems and procedures for higher-education institutions of the scale and scope of Montclair State University, and larger.

### **Rationale**

Classroom-assignment problems for the Spring 2025 Term revealed weaknesses in the procedures for setting the schedule of course-section meetings. Moreover, the overall challenge of setting the schedule, and the resulting problems, may have been exacerbated by the new weekly meeting grid and academic calendar. Hence, in order to substantially advance the core education mission of the University, these shortcomings must be addressed.

A suitably constructed, focused Working Group will enable the University to understand and address these challenges in an organized and effective manner.

While the operations of Montclair State University, not least the core academic functions including instruction, are large-scale and complex, similar, and larger, institutions face and address similar

challenges. Therefore, experienced experts can support the alignment of the University policies, procedures, and operations with 'best practices' developed through careful analysis and research. The University is sufficiently unique that 'off the shelf' solutions are likely not sufficient to address operational challenges. Effective adoption of best practices in a manner most appropriate for the University will require a combination of internal knowledge and professional expertise.