General Purpose Classroom Scheduling Guidelines

I. SCOPE

Classes held in general purpose (Registrar scheduled) classrooms on the Evanston campus during fall, winter and spring terms are subject to the scheduling policies contained herein. This includes classes meeting in GP classrooms traditionally scheduled or used by specific academic departments. Please see Appendix #1 for a list of classrooms currently designated as GP classrooms.

Classes held in other types of meeting spaces, such as departmentally scheduled conference rooms, meeting rooms, or laboratories are not required to adhere to these policies.

II. OBJECTIVES

- Provide sufficient classroom resources to meet instructional requirements as the pool of available GP classrooms is decreased, particularly during the renovation of Harris Hall.
- Maximize student scheduling options by employing standard class meeting patterns and encouraging more even distribution of classes throughout the week.
- Better match academic requirements with available classroom facilities (e.g., a specific classroom furniture configuration, technology, access to department instructional aids).
- Apply scheduling policies in a consistent and equitable manner.
- Achieve optimum classroom utilization.

III. PHILOSOPHY

A. Distribution of Classes. Efficiency of student and classroom scheduling is realized when class offerings are spread as evenly as possible throughout each day and week. Please see Appendix #2 for NU’s class distribution requirements. Classes offered by departments that fail to comply with class distribution requirements will be scheduled after compliant departments’ classes, and run the risk of not being assigned rooms or being assigned less desirable spaces.

B. Standard Class Meeting Patterns. Classroom scheduling practices are greatly enhanced with the use of standard hour and day patterns. Classes with non-standard meeting times tie up rooms across multiple meeting hours and decrease scheduling efficiency. In order to accommodate more classes in fewer classrooms, classes with non-standard times will be scheduled after those with standard meeting patterns, and run the risk of having no room available. Please see Appendix #3 for NU’s standard class meeting patterns which are included in the full GP classroom scheduling policy.

C. Geographical Location & Technology Enhanced Classrooms. To the extent that appropriate classroom facilities are available and scheduling guidelines are followed, classes will be assigned rooms with technology requested by the department in academic departments’ home
buildings or in buildings geographically close to the home building. Quarterly classroom assignment is not based on historical assignment.

D. Limited Classroom Resources. While every attempt will be made to assign classrooms as requested, the Office of the Registrar cannot guarantee assignments due to conflicting requests and limited classroom resources. The Office of the Registrar reserves the right to ask departments to change class meeting times as room scheduling difficulties warrant.

E. Classroom Utilization and Scheduling Policies. Classroom utilization statistics are reported to the Provost and Classroom Committee by Facilities Management and the Office of the Registrar each year for review. Class scheduling guidelines will be evaluated for efficacy and may be modified on a yearly basis.

IV. POLICIES

Please see Appendix #3 for a detailed reference sheet outlining Northwestern University’s standard class meeting patterns and distribution of classes policies.

There may be academic and pedagogical reasons for scheduling classes at non-standard hours and/or days. Such classes should be held in departmentally scheduled rooms. Departments should also evaluate such past offerings to determine if these types of meeting patterns continue to be necessary.

A. Distribution of classes. Departments may offer a maximum of 14% of their classes at each of the 4 prime hours: 10-11 AM, 11-12 PM, 2-3 PM, and 3-4 PM. Classes which cross two prime hours will be counted twice in distribution calculations. Remaining class offerings should be spread evenly over the rest of the day and week. Departments with schedules not in compliance with this policy will receive a low room assignment priority and risk not being assigned a room.

1. Class Distribution Calculation. Weekday classroom hours (8 AM – 10 PM) for all classes requesting GP classrooms (graduate and undergraduate, including discussions, labs, and seminars) are counted in a department’s class distribution calculation.

2. Departmental Planning and Calculations. Throughout the class scheduling process, departments are expected to run the crystal report “Class Distribution.rpt” to evaluate their own compliance with class distribution guidelines and make changes to their offerings where appropriate.

B. Distribution of Day Patterns. Departments are expected to distribute their offerings evenly between the MWF and TR day patterns.

C. Standard Class Meeting Patterns. Classes offered in GP classrooms on the Evanston campus are expected to meet in one of three standard patterns: one to five times per week for 50 minutes each day, twice a week for 80 minutes each day, or once a week for three hours. Standard start and end times for each meeting type have been established.