

TO: Amanda Nolen, President UA Little Rock Faculty Senate

FROM: René A. Shroat-Lewis, Chair of Academic Calendar and Schedules Committee

DATE: April 15, 2021

RE: MW Class Block Issue and SGA “Dead Hour” Proposal

Monday/Wednesday Class Block Issue

In October 2020, the Faculty Senate Executive Committee requested that the ACSC examine the Monday/Wednesday Class Block issue. With the dead hour proposal and regular calendar business, the committee did not have time to consider this question. The class schedules have just been reconfigured after 30+ years of use with new rubrics being implemented. The ACSC recommends that the class block issue be examined in the 2021-2022 Academic Year.

SGA “Dead Hour” Proposal

In 2021, the ACSC continues to **not support** the proposal and adds the following points to the 2020 recommendation by the ACSC (see “History of Proposal” below):

- Faculty advisors and students have become more familiar with the use of online meeting technology during the past year as a result of Covid-19 protocols. The ACSC recommends that student groups, such as the SGA, receive a dedicated Zoom account to facilitate their meetings.
- UA Little Rock is unsure of the student-preferred course modalities (i.e. face-to-face, hybrid, online) going into Academic Years 2022 and 2023. The ACSC recommends that the dead hour proposal be revisited in two years once data can be collected that will provide clarification for student-preferred course modalities.
- As of Spring 2021, the SGA has not surveyed the student body to assess interest, likely use of a dead hour, and the preferred time of the dead hour, or if they have, has not provided those data to the ACSC. Given this, it is not clear that the student body supports and would use the dead hour in the way proposed by the SGA.

History of “Dead Hour” Proposal

In 2019, the UA Little Rock Student Government Association (SGA) requested that the Faculty Senate consider their request for a “dead hour” in which students could attend student organization meetings and social gatherings. At the request of the Faculty Senate, the Academic Calendar and Schedules Committee (ACSC) was charged with making a recommendation regarding the dead hour proposal, identifying a time for a “dead hour” that would minimize disruption to the current class schedule, and surveying the chairs of the academic departments for their feedback on the use of the “dead hour.”

In 2020, the ACSC recommended that the Faculty Senate **reject** the SGA proposal for a dead hour. In considering the SGA proposal, the ACSC considered the following information:

- The time of 1:30 - 2:30 on Tuesdays and Thursdays proposed by the SGA overlaps with two class periods and will thus require a complete overhaul of the schedule for those two class days.
- Regardless of when the dead hour is held, creating a block of time in which **NO** classes are scheduled will require rescheduling classes and disrupt current scheduling practices, many of which have been in place for several years.
- Eliminating any class periods from being used for classes will force classes to be rescheduled into existing class periods. Given current challenges in scheduling classes due to limited space on campus, being forced to reschedule classes into existing class periods would create additional scheduling problems.
- Implementation of a dead hour at the requested time will affect numerous classes, buildings, students, faculty, and departments. See breakdown table below:

DEAD HOUR ANALYSIS		12:00 Noon to 1:30 p.m.					SPRING 2020				
	DAY	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI					
Classes		49	44	42	49	13					
Buildings		14	12	12	13	7					
Students		1396	1250	1261	1285	388					
Faculty		40	40	38	45	11					
Dept		32	28	28	31	10					

- Although the ACSC supports the *intent* of the proposal, the SGA proposal indicates that they have not surveyed the student body to assess interest, likely use of a dead hour, and the preferred time of the dead hour. Given this, it is not clear that the student body supports and would use the dead hour in the way proposed by the SGA.
- The addition of the dead hour may not achieve the outcomes the students hope for while consuming significant resources to implement the changes. Moreover, as an increasing number of classes are offered online, it is not realistic to expect students to come to campus for student organization meetings. We suggest that student organizations and leaders work with their faculty advisors and constituents to use this technology to facilitate communication with students.

In sum, the ACSC **did not support** the SGA proposal for a dead hour as it would compound existing scheduling challenges and lead to increased work for faculty and staff in order to implement the proposal. Moreover, there was little evidence that the student body supported the use of the dead hour and would use it in the way that SGA suggests.