



One Silber Way
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
T 617-353-2230 F 617-353-6580
www.bu.edu/provost

TO: Boston University Faculty and Staff

FROM: Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer *JM*
Beth Loizeaux, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs *BL*

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SUBJECT: Policy on Course Scheduling for the Charles River Campus

Effective course and classroom scheduling is critical to the academic mission of the University. It enables students to take the classes they want and need in a timely manner, and helps ensure that faculty teach, and students learn, in classrooms suited to the size and pedagogical needs of the course.

We are pleased to announce that at its March 2016 meeting, the University Council approved a [Policy on Course Scheduling for the Charles River Campus](#), the result of a multi-year effort to develop solutions to a variety of course scheduling challenges on the Charles River campus. The policy will go into effect for the Spring 2017 semester. It is important to understand the cumulative efforts that have contributed to the establishment of this policy, and how the policy enables us to make further progress on our strategic goals for Boston University.

Over the years, a number of commissioned studies have looked at longstanding and emerging issues with Boston University classrooms and class scheduling practices, including a study by Dober, Lidsky, Craig & Associates in 1995, a Strategic Classroom Study by Rickes Associates in 2012, and a Capacity Management study by Ad Astra Information Systems in 2015. These studies identified a number of issues that the new policy is designed to address:

- Courses overlap with each other because there is no consistent set of University-wide class schedule meeting patterns, and students consequently have difficulty enrolling in courses, especially those outside their own schools or colleges. We are thus constrained in delivering fully on our promise that students can take advantage of the breadth of offerings across the University.
- Courses are scheduled disproportionately during peak periods of the day and week, making it difficult for students to develop a balanced schedule of desired courses and impeding efforts to schedule courses in the most appropriate rooms.
- The current 10-minute pass time between classes is insufficient and unrealistic. As a result, students often arrive late or leave early from classes. Such disruptions compromise teaching time.

- Many classrooms controlled by academic departments (proprietary classrooms) are highly underutilized. These rooms are not included in central planning for regular refurbishment and technology upgrades. Many are in need of attention.
- BU's antiquated classroom scheduling software results in inefficiencies, lack of data, and inability to model the impact of changes to the schedule.

Following the best practices of AAU peers, the new scheduling policy addresses the first three of these fundamental disadvantages to our students. New room scheduling software, being implemented simultaneously with the new policy, will save time (following a transitional period of adjustment and hands-on training in Spring and Summer 2016) and make scheduling increasingly more efficient and effective. Under guidelines to be developed, proprietary spaces would be included in the list of Registrar-scheduled rooms that receive regular renovation and technology upgrades. Proprietary classrooms will remain under the control of the relevant units which, following the scheduling policy, will continue to schedule courses in those rooms. If the 50% utilization target for classes scheduled in proprietary rooms is not met by the units, then the Office of the University Registrar, in consultation with the units, may schedule courses in those rooms *up to* the 50% target.

Your deans, associate deans and course schedulers have already consulted extensively with the Office of the University Registrar and the Office of the Provost to understand how the policy and its accompanying schedule of classes will work for your school or college. The Registrar plans a longer-than-usual schedule-building period beginning in June and running through the summer 2016, during which it will work individually with the schools and colleges on building the Spring 2017 schedule in accordance with the policies and using the new software. The new software has modeling capabilities that will aid implementation.

By helping us create the best possible learning environment for faculty and students alike, these important changes will advance our strategic goal to provide our students a high quality education that can take advantage of Boston University's varied and extensive course offerings.

In the coming weeks, you will hear more from the Office of the University Registrar and from your schools and colleges about next steps.