



FACULTY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

17-18 FAC 3 revised
April 4, 2018

TO: The Executive Committee

FROM: James Murray, Chair, Faculty Affairs Committee

SUBJECT: 17-18 FAC 3 revised: Revisions to the Faculty Office Hour Policy and proposal for a new policy on Office Hours and Faculty Availability Outside of the Classroom

PURPOSE: Action by the Academic Senate

ACTION REQUESTED: That the Academic Senate approve these revisions; effective Fall 2018 upon signature of the President

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Faculty Affairs Committee received a referral from Semester Conversion Directors (SCD) 15-16 ASCD 8: FAC Policy or Procedures documents that require revisions for semester conversion that merit careful consideration [<http://www.csueastbay.edu/faculty/senate/files/docs/semester-conversion/sem-conv-15-16/15-16-ascd-8-policy-doc-referral-for-fac.pdf>]. The referral was received in January 2016 but FAC re-considered and postponed the proposed semester changes of the office hour policy to AY17-18 after receiving feedback from our Lecturer Subcommittee that a simple revision might result in an unfair workload for some part-time lecturers. Subsequently, FAC discussed the general issue of “student contact time (or hours)” and decided that in-person office hours may not serve students or faculty well in all cases. A revised policy was discussed at Senate Jan 23 & Feb 6, 2018 and after feedback was sent back to FAC for revision. We here propose a revised and flexible policy consistent with the existing Collective Bargaining Agreement [and copied in part from a policy at SJSU] that adjusts the minimum number of scheduled office hours required to account for the fact that faculty do a considerable amount of advising and consultation through email and other electronic media.

In the past, contact between students and an instructor was limited to in-class time, physical office hours, and phone calls. Today’s teaching and learning dynamics have changed dramatically for both students and faculty, with a much greater reliance on electronically mediated methods for communication. Faculty may now spend many hours in “unofficial” office hour time (including evenings and weekends) responding to students’ instructional needs. These consultations are frequently held outside of the physical “official” office hours, but nonetheless constitute instructional and advising time.

The goal in updating this policy is to provide greater flexibility to both students and faculty. Modes of student-faculty communication have expanded to include various forms of electronic communication including email, chat, and videoconference. Such technology is effective and expedient in responding to

student needs. The Faculty Office Hours Policy is being made more flexible to allow faculty to communicate with students using the entire range of types of communication rather than being overly reliant on scheduled, in-person office hours.

All additions noted by **bold red text**; deletions by ~~**bold black strikethrough**~~. Language taken verbatim from the SJSU policy is shown in ***bold red italics***.



FACULTY OFFICE HOURS AND FACULTY AVAILABILITY OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

History:

09-10 cFAC 3: Senate approved April 6, 2010

11-12 FAC 3: Senate approved April 24, 2012

17-18 FAC

Paragraph 20.1.b of the CBA provides that faculty members' professional responsibilities include: "advising students, participation in campus and system-wide committees, maintaining office hours, working collaboratively and productively with colleagues, and participation in traditional academic functions." **Pursuant to this paragraph the minimum number of hours and days for office hours are given below:**

The policy below is intended to replace the [previous policy](#) (11-12 FAC 3) on Faculty Office Hours. Pursuant to this paragraph, guidelines for how departments ensure that faculty are available to students are given below:

Faculty members are expected to be available to their students for instruction-related support, and advising. To achieve this availability faculty members are expected to schedule office hours during which they will be available to their students for consultation.

Full-time faculty members who are teaching are expected to hold a minimum of two (2) regularly scheduled office hours per week. The way in which office hours are held should be congruent with the mode(s) of instruction. For example, faculty teaching online courses may hold office hours online. In addition to regularly scheduled office hours, faculty are ~~expected~~ encouraged to meet with students by appointment (in-person or electronically) at mutually convenient times to a reasonable extent. For faculty members who are teaching less than a full load, the minimum number of scheduled office hours may be prorated, but the number of scheduled hours may not be less than one hour per week.

Individual departments may develop guidelines on office hours that differ from this policy (e.g., additional office hours may be required for faculty who receive assigned time for advising). Departmental guidelines should be developed collaboratively and approved by a faculty vote. The guidelines must include a rationale explaining the reason for divergence from the University policy and must be approved by the appropriate dean.

The times, locations, and contact information for availability are to be posted outside each faculty office, at the faculty member's department, on the department website, and on the faculty

member's course syllabi. The faculty member will inform the department of their schedule before the first day of classes each semester.

It is important that established office hours be kept and responses to student communications be timely. Faculty members are responsible for these obligations as a part of their instructional assignment.

~~If, for any reason, a faculty member cannot meet the posted office hours, be available during the scheduled times, the faculty member will inform the department chair. If possible, the department will note the absence on the faculty office door.~~

If, for any reason, a faculty member cannot be available during the scheduled times, the faculty member will inform their students, and also the department chair(s) or administrative office. If possible, the department will note the absence on the faculty office door.

~~Normal office hours are~~ **The normal schedule of availability is** to be maintained during the Final Examination period, **but may be rearranged to facilitate meeting students before exams.** If a final examination conflicts with a posted ~~office hour~~ **time of availability**, an alternative hour is to be posted for that week alone.

It is in the best interests of students and faculty that the policy be reviewed to make sure that it is effective and workable, particularly in the context of changing educational technologies. Review of this policy should take place in Fall 2020 and then every five years thereafter by the Faculty Affairs committee of the Academic Senate.