

Best Practices for Quarterly Course Staffing - August 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to create a set of consistent guidelines that can be used by Program Chairs and Deans across campus to ensure that scheduling and staffing is fair and equitable for all faculty, and that decisions are transparent and communicated in a timely manner.

Recommended Best Practices for Course Staffing

Scheduling & Staffing

General Information

Quarterly scheduling is delegated to the Program Chair from the Dean and AVP of Academic Affairs, and follows a timeline that is set by the Office of Academic Affairs. The AVP and Deans have final approval authority on schedules and staffing.

After the quarterly schedule is created by the Program Chair, staffing proceeds as follows:

- Full time faculty will be provided the schedule and asked to select their top choices and alternates for the classes they wish to teach. They will also let the chair know of their interest in any moonlight sections
 - Adjunct faculty (including affiliated, lecturers and base) will be provided the schedule and asked to provide their choices and alternatives for what they would like to teach.
 - Staffing should be conducted using one of the two following scenarios:
 - (1) Staffing is conducted for all faculty (full and part time) at the same time, with equal input provided to both groups. This is currently the practice in some programs, and is highly recommended for smaller programs where it is logistically possible. OR
 - (2) Staffing will be conducted in the following order:
 - Full time faculty staffed for load
 - Affiliated Faculty are scheduled for basic or historical load*
 - All Adjunct Faculty staffed for basic or historical load* / Faculty with annual contracts offered enough sections to fulfill any contract obligations
 - A collaborative method will be used to staff any remaining classes with a preference for Lecture I/II adjunct faculty to receive the first additional class, followed by “moonlight sections”.
- *Basic load generally means at least 50% FTE. Historical means the typical load taught in the past (up to 100% FTE) by Lecture I and II faculty.*
- If there are enough sections available, adjunct faculty with an annual contract (or those that are still on the pre-2008 Affiliation agreement) must be offered the number of sections defined in their contract. Offers should be extended for classes that they are qualified to teach. Annual contracts do not, by definition, provide priority selection of sections.
 - The seniority of Lecture II faculty (6+ years of service) should be a significant factor in assigning classes, and care should be taken not to reduce the historic load of long-term adjunct faculty. These faculty have been evaluated and have a proven track record.
 - Wherever possible, existing adjunct faculty should be scheduled before hiring new adjunct faculty. Retired faculty returning to the adjunct pool are considered new adjunct faculty.
 - Staffing (within each step of the process) will be conducted by the program chair under the direction and authority of the Dean, and will be based on several factors emphasizing what is best for the students and the program. Factors that play a role in this decision include:
 - Seniority (How long has the instructor been teaching at Bellevue?)

- Instructor availability and experience (Can the instructor teach at the times needed - especially in the case of night classes? Can the instructor teach a particular class, and/or in a particular format (online, hybrid, etc.))
 - Quality of Instruction (Does the faculty have expertise and ability to effectively deliver instruction based on the College and Career Readiness Standards and course outcomes? What has the instructor taught before? Have valid concerns been raised about ability to teach particular courses? (We recognize there is still a need for an unbiased way to assess concerns, and until that time, evaluations/student issues need to be considered with care in assessing quality.))
 - Need of the program to distribute instructors (e.g., if there is a class we have to offer and only one person who can teach it, someone has special needs due to an approved medical accommodation). This is a major factor in programs that cover several disciplines and have to take into account who can teach in each sub-discipline.
- To teach online, instructors must have taken the Canvas tutorial.
 - Adjunct staffing offers should take into account the number of course preps (ideally no more than 2) and range of hours offered to each faculty. Fewer preps and a narrower range of hours is typically better for both the faculty and students in those classes.
 - Once staffing decisions are made and approved by the Dean, program chairs should extend a teaching offer (in writing or by email) to all adjunct faculty.
 - Once confirmed, all faculty will be informed of their teaching schedule (via email or in writing) as soon as possible.
 - Divisional Deans (and the AVP) are the final approval for scheduling and staffing.

Moonlights and Large Teaching Loads

- Note – For the purposes of this section - any classes above 100% FTE for adjunct faculty should be treated in the same way as full-time moonlights.
- Moonlights will be staffed after all full time and adjunct faculty have been staffed as described above, with Lecture I/II adjunct faculty having first preference for an extra class.
- As a general rule the following approval is required for moonlights:
 - 1 or 2 moonlights – Dean approval
 - 3+ moonlights – AVP approval
- For the purposes of determining moonlights, release time should be considered part of a faculty's load.
- Moonlighting may not be approved if a faculty member is (1) not fulfilling other contractual duties (e.g. governance, holding office hours) or (2) is performing poorly as a result of moonlight work. Except for extreme cases, the issue will be brought to the faculty ahead of time so that they have a chance to make improvements.
- Program chairs must have any of their own moonlights approved by the Dean. It is an ethics violation for anyone to assign themselves extra pay.

Summary of Timelines

- Quarterly schedules are completed by the due date provided by the Office of Academic Affairs.
- Staffing should be completed before the schedule “goes live”. (However, it is understood that there are sometimes reasons why this is not possible.)

- Faculty should be informed (in writing or by email) of their final teaching assignments at least 2 weeks prior to the start of registration, or earlier when possible. (In cases where staffing needs to happen later, faculty will be made aware of the late-staffing situation in advance.)
- Faculty at risk of losing a class to cancellation or “bumping” should be informed of the risk as soon as possible, and contacted immediately if they will no longer be teaching a course that they are scheduled to teach.

Release Time

- Whenever possible, release time should be taken as part of full-time load. Duties, such as Program Chair work, should be considered primary duties and therefore be reflected in primary load. Those on release time should be available for at least 1 hour per day per 0.333 FTE release to interact with colleagues and students or perform the work of the release.
- In the event that the release time is paid as a stipend (e.g., when a release occurs in the summer), it should be paid at the instructor’s part-time rate (e.g., Base, Lecture I or II).

Use of “Per Head” payment

- Per head payment for an entire standard class section should be used minimally. If it is determined the course is required for students and something we need to offer for the program, the course should be paid in full. Program Chairs should ensure their scheduling limits the number of low enrolled sections.
- Per head payment may be appropriate when a course is set up that way from the start. This is often the case for Independent Study courses, mentorships or clinical supervision.
- In the event that offering per head (per capita) payment is an option, the decision should be made in consultation with the Dean.
- Reasons of the decision to offer per head payment, and the potential impacts, should be discussed with the instructor as early as possible. Faculty have the right to not accept per head payment.
- A faculty who chooses not to accept a section per head will not be penalized for this decision.
- For classes that are offered paid per head in lieu of cancellation will be paid based on the 10th day enrollment.

Procedures and Communication Regarding Cancellations and Bumping

Cancellations

- Every effort should be made to make cancellations and additions as early as possible, however, we sometimes may want to give courses as long as possible to try and gain enough enrollment to run.
- Program chairs will inform any instructors whose classes are at risk of cancellation by at least 2-3 weeks before the quarter starts. When possible, chairs will work with instructors to find alternate sections.
- Whenever possible program chairs should work with advising, marketing etc. to work to raise enrollment in classes at risk of cancellation. It is the programs responsibility to advocate, not the faculty member.
- There is no magic number for cancellations, however, a number of factors come into play when considering whether or not a class will be canceled, including:

- Is the class the second or third part of a required sequence? (we tend to let these run smaller if necessary to complete the sequence)
- What has the class enrollment trend been over the last couple of weeks? (is it creeping up or has it dropped)
- How does enrollment compare to this time in previous quarters/years and how much does it typically change in the weeks leading up to the start of the quarter? (does it historically fill early or late?)
- How often is this class offered? (once a year vs many times)
- Is this the first time running a new class, or is this a class in a relatively new program (i.e. a 400-level class in a new bachelor's degree program whose enrollments at the 400-level are still small)?
- How many sections are being offered? (if it is the only sections with space vs if there are several small sections of that class)
- What is the whole Division (or specific Program) enrollment like? (if everything else is full, we can "absorb" a couple of smaller sections)
- If the class is not run, will there be adverse impact on students who need it to graduate (i.e. will it cause such students to remain at BC longer than might be considered timely for degree/credential completion)?
- How would the cancelation impact other programs that depend on this course?
- If a class is canceled within 7 days of the start of the quarter, adjunct faculty are paid rate defined in the faculty contract in recognition of preparation work already completed (currently \$100).

"Bumpin"g to Meet Load

- Contractually fulltime faculty are required to meet their load during the year, and adjuncts with affiliation or an annual contract also have a minimum number of courses they are contracted to teach. If a cancellation causes these to dip below load (or the annual contract), those instructors will need to be offered another class to meet their load/contract. If this offer requires replacing another instructor, it is referred to as "bumping".
 - Bumping should only ever be used as a last resort – other options should be considered first (e.g., are there unstaffed or new sections available, can a full-time faculty absorb an extra class in a different quarter, etc.).
 - A full-time instructor cannot bump to fill a moonlight. If they are teaching a moonlight, they must take that as part of their load first (i.e., "bump" their own class).
 - What class is bumped will be decided by the Dean in consultation with the Program Chair. A review of all possible sections that an instructor is eligible to teach should be undertaken, and a choice made that would have the least impact on students and other faculty. Faculty do not get to choose which section to bump.
 - Careful scheduling precludes the need for most bumping.

Changes to schedules

- Changes (other than additions and cancelations) made to schedule after it has been published should be avoided, except under special extenuating circumstance and in consultation with the Dean.
- Book orders cannot be changed after class has been published, except under special extenuating circumstance and in consultation with the Dean.

Additional Advice for Program Chairs

- Know your adjunct faculty in what they can or like to teach. Are they specialize in a field where that is all they can teach?
- Know your enrollment history. Know student demands, wants and needs.
- Have quarterly (more or less) program meetings to discuss expectations or philosophy of the program. When possible, establish common standards for a course and share these (as well as course outcomes) with faculty teaching the course for the first time.
- Involve all faculty (fulltime and adjunct) in discussions about curriculum, processes and procedures.
- Find ways to encourage professional development and growth for adjunct faculty so that they are able to teach a larger variety of classes.
- Be aware that uncertainty can be difficult – try to keep faculty informed about staffing decisions, or any changes, as early as possible.
- Treat adjunct faculty with the same respect as full-time faculty – many have been successfully teaching at BC longer than most full-time faculty, and they are a great asset to our students.
- Work closely with the Division Operations Director (or Division scheduling designee) and be aware of quarterly scheduling deadlines set by the Office of Academic Affairs.