

MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 27, 2015

FROM: Gary Perry, Provost and
Vice President of Academic Affairs 

TO: Deans, Chairs, Directors

SUBJECT: Office Hours Policy – (Supersedes all prior policies and memoranda)

University faculty traditionally have responsibilities for teaching, research, scholarship, and creative activities, and service. It is expected that a faculty member will spend their normal work week attending to these professional obligations and responsibilities on campus and, in some instances, away from campus as well.

Faculty-student interaction outside of the classroom is an extremely important part of the instructional assignment and a variable that contributes to student success. Faculty need to designate a portion of their office hours specifically for students to discuss class performance. Depending on the academic unit, office hours may also be used by students for academic advising, academic course and program selection, and career counseling.

Faculty members shall post a schedule of their office hours in a conspicuous place by their office and include this schedule in their course syllabi. Posting office hours is important for students who are enrolled in their classes so they are aware of the faculty member's availability. It is also important for staff who must answer questions about faculty availability. Office hours are to be held on each campus where the faculty member has a teaching assignment.

Office hour expectations may vary by the nature of the course, the number of students enrolled, the nature of the students, and individual academic unit guidelines. It is anticipated, however, that faculty will designate a minimum of two hours of office time per week for each course. Faculty members should be sensitive to the time constraints of non-traditional students and also be available to meet with students "by appointment" for those unable to come to campus during the regularly scheduled office hours. Faculty may also have designated office hours for meeting with students that are unrelated to the courses they are teaching.

A faculty member teaching a distance education course shall conduct the normally expected total number of office hours. In order to accommodate distance education student needs, faculty may need to provide assistance other than by face-to-face meetings. If it is deemed appropriate by the faculty member, normally expected office hours may be held utilizing technology to conduct business and consult with students on academic and technology issues. Faculty may designate specific times for e-mail, Skype (or other video chat), telephone or chat room consultation. The syllabus, Blackboard course homepage, and office door postings for the Summer semesters must designate the schedule for these consultations. The syllabus and office door postings for Fall and Spring semesters must, however, designate some time set aside for on-campus opportunities for consultation.

Adjunct faculty are an important component of our educational delivery system and must also designate times outside of the classroom when they will be available to meet with their students. Department Chairs/School Directors should assist adjunct faculty without an office to find a suitable space where they can meet with students and receive messages and mail.

cc: Provost's Leadership Team

Christopher Beetle, President
University Faculty Senate