

**From:** [Office of the MSU Provost](#)  
**Subject:** Fall 2020 Section Scheduling  
**Date:** Thursday, June 25, 2020 7:57:39 AM  
**Attachments:** [Fall 2020 Section Summary for Distribution June 24.xlsx](#)

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Dear Colleagues,

Thank you all for your ongoing efforts to thrive in the midst of the many COVID-19 necessitated adjustments to academic programs at MSU. Your cooperation with course section relocations and your innovation in adaptive pedagogies are the crucial elements of making the fall semester a success, as we seek to maximize the face-to-face educational experiences, subject to the constraints imposed by social distancing requirements.

The magnitude of the problem that we face should not go unappreciated. Social distancing requirements lowered the number of classroom seats available for instruction from 7,449 to 2,872. To help bridge that gap, the Classroom and Space Management Committees working along with the Academic Continuity and Contingency Planning Task Force and the Tactical Enrollment Team (formerly SWAT) and many others at MSU are cooperating in reallocating and outfitting additional space for instruction this Fall. These spaces include SUB Ballroom A, SUB Ballroom B&C, the Procrastinator Theater, NAH 360 and Shroyer Gymnasium. We are grateful to our partners in Athletics, Auxiliary Services, and the Office of Research, Economic Development, and Graduate Education who have made these spaces available for temporary instructional use. With these additions, we have secured some space for large sections. Nonetheless, with these additions, our aggregate seating capacity is still slightly less than half of what it was at the start of the Spring 2020 semester.

With the broad institutional goal of providing as many face-to-face instructional opportunities as possible within the space and distancing constraints, consistent with the priorities articulated in the Provost's message of April 29, 2020, the Tactical Enrollment Team and Registrar's course-scheduling group has been working over the past weeks on our shared, continuing, iterative process for course scheduling. Specifically, we have been:

- moving large section CORE courses into the new classroom spaces on campus,
- moving Writ 101 and University Seminar courses into rooms that will accommodate face to face instruction,
- moving lower division math classes into a blended modality with substantial face to face instructional time,
- moving departmentally prioritized courses into an online format,
- identifying other courses that may be offered face to face when considering current enrollment and previous fall-term enrollment,
- moving courses into classrooms that better fit enrollment projections (for both blended and face-to-face modalities),
- updating course caps when appropriate to allow for face to face or blended course delivery (given current and historic enrollment) within the current room assignment.
- examining the face-to-face "duty-factor" in blended courses, with aim of ensuring that

students enjoy as many face-to-face sessions as possible and *at least one, full* face-to-face session, per course, weekly.

At this time, we are reaching out to ask you to examine your units' courses in the attached spreadsheet, which summarizes both changes that have been made, and changes that we recommend on the basis of the institutional priorities. We ask that you help us check the contents of the spreadsheet and let us know if changes need to be made.

### **General Instructions**

1. Please begin by reading the “Definitions” on the first Tab of the spreadsheet and all of the instructions here.
2. On the Full List tab, please filter the list to display only information about courses delivered by your department by clicking the small arrow at the top of Column C, uncheck “(Select All)”, and place a check by your department’s name.
3. Please also apply a filter on Column H “Schedule Type”, to remove “Lab” and “Studio” from consideration. Courses of such Types will be treated in a separate request.
4. As you consider the need for changes in the courses delivered by your department, please be sure to also refer to the five “Flag” columns (AB, through AF) on the right-hand side of the spreadsheet; these flags are designed to draw your attention to potentially problematic room assignments and modalities.
5. **Please make a brief note of the changes that you deem necessary in Column N.** Please do not otherwise alter the information in the spreadsheet.
6. Please arrange to have all Column N corrections/updates ready for the Colleges to send to [coursescheduling@montana.edu](mailto:coursescheduling@montana.edu) **by Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Change requests made prior to June 12<sup>th</sup> need to be re-assessed and resubmitted via this process. Change requests after June 11<sup>th</sup> are still under review for implementation.

### **Particular Instructions**

1. Please review the “Expected Modality” (Column K) for all sections delivered by your unit. If changes are necessary, *please write the update in Column N*.
2. Please verify the proper coding of online course sections delivered synchronously or asynchronously.
  - Check that there is no room currently assigned to fully online sections (Column R or flagged in Column AF). If there is a room we can use for another section, *please make a note in Column N*.
  - If the course is synchronous, days and times should be listed in Columns O and Q.
  - If the course is asynchronous, no days or times should be listed in Columns O and Q.
  - *If changes are necessary, please write the update in Column N.*

3. Please review the physical distancing room capacities (Column W) to ensure that the assigned room works for your intended modality.

- F2F classes should meet in a room that accommodates the enrollment, bounded by the cap in Column T. Those that *cannot* accommodate an enrollment equal to the cap are flagged by a value in Column AB that is greater than zero. Please check that the cap in Column T is realistically informed by the actual enrollment in Fall 2019 (Column V); if not, the latter might provide a better sense of the number of students that we need to accommodate. But please also check Column U to see the current enrollment in the course for Fall 2020.
- Blended courses need to meet in a room that accommodates an appropriate fraction of the enrollment. That “appropriate fraction” depends on how many days per week that the course meets. For example, in a class that meets MWF, blended such that each student can attend class in-person once per week – i.e., with a face-to-face duty factor of 1/3 – the number of students accommodated in the room, must be at least 1/3 the size of the enrollment. The difference between the number of students, course cap (Column T) enrollment, that can be accommodated, under the assumption of the minimum of one day in the classroom and the physical distancing room capacity (Column W), is calculated and flagged in Column AC. This number should be less than or equal to zero, and, ideally small in magnitude.
  - If the magnitude of the negative number is large, please consider a blending pattern that increases the face-to face duty factor.
  - If the difference is positive please check to see that an adjustment of the course cap (Column T), consistent with last year’s enrollment (Column V) and this year’s current enrollment (Column U) can eliminate the problem.
  - If the positive difference cannot be resolved by a sensible adjustment of the course cap, then please note in Column N the need for a new room with appropriate capacity *for students to meet at least one full face-to-face period per week*.

The team will then work with you to either change the room, if possible, or to discuss changes in delivery modality. Your forbearance in light of the reduction of overall seat capacity is appreciated. Please also note: we recognize there are some odd combinations of non-standard schedules and/or multiple room assignments, so your careful review of room assignments for courses offered in blended mode is greatly appreciated.

4. Other change requests. While our resources are severely limited, we want to work with you and your faculty to ensure that we have properly documented our course offerings. This documentation helps us to inform and manage the expectations of students (and their parents) for their fall schedule. We are unlikely to be able to accommodate specific room requests.

Please note that changes will be made to this spreadsheet on an ongoing basis throughout this iterative process. MyInfo may not show the most current information, as certain changes there (e.g., modality and stop dates) will be deferred until they can be made automatically by streamlined

process that is being implemented.

Information on this spreadsheet supersedes all previously executed or pending section change requests. Any prior request should be reconsidered in light of the information. We are asking that you examine your entire suite of courses, independent of any prior requests or discussion. Please use this spreadsheet as a reflection of your current status, and make your change requests in Column N. All changes will be routed from Department and Schools through the Colleges, each of which will send one consolidated spreadsheet for further consideration.

We appreciate your patience and continued commitment to making the Fall semester successful!

Sincerely,

David Singel  
Senior Vice Provost

Tony Campeau  
Registrar

Tactical Enrollment Team

Beth Burroughs

Tony Campeau

David Cherry

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