

Appendix A — Guiding Principles

Below, each guiding principle is paired directly with its justification. This structure allows the task force to show not only what the principles are, but why they matter for students, faculty, and the college.

Student-Centered Flexibility

Guiding Principle

Design scheduling patterns that ensure predictable access to high-demand, degree-applicable and transfer-critical courses so that students can plan clear, achievable academic pathways.

Justification

Time-block scheduling gives students predictable patterns of instructional time that are easier to understand and plan around. Students who work, care for family members, or rely on public transit benefit significantly from schedules that follow consistent meeting times. This approach reduces avoidable barriers that can delay completion.

Predictable time blocks also make it easier to plan multi-term pathways and ensure that key courses and sequences do not overlap. By placing required courses into regular, stable patterns, students gain confidence that they can register for the classes needed to move forward without constant scheduling conflicts. This supports progress toward certificates, transfer, and degrees.

Equity and Inclusion

Guiding Principle

Structure the class schedule to support adult learners, working students, caregivers, and students who rely on public transit. The aim is to reduce barriers created by inconsistent or inaccessible meeting times.

Justification

Students arrive with diverse responsibilities, income pressures, and transportation limitations. Inconsistent or irregular class times can unintentionally exclude those who must fit school around work shifts, childcare arrangements, transportation, and extracurricular commitments.

Time-block scheduling helps reduce these barriers by simplifying when classes meet and offering more predictable options throughout the day. This structure contributes to an equitable learning environment where students do not have to choose between essential responsibilities and academic progress.

Operational Coherence

Guiding Principle

Align time blocks with required contact hours, reduce overlapping course and room needs, and improve the use of classrooms, labs, and other specialized spaces.

Justification

A coordinated schedule strengthens the college's overall functioning. Standardized blocks reduce mismatched class lengths that create unusable pockets of time in room schedules. This helps avoid bottlenecks in high-demand classrooms and ensures that specialized facilities such as labs, studios, and performance spaces are used efficiently.

Predictable patterns also support the many teams who keep the campus running. Custodial staff can plan work hours more effectively. Technology support can anticipate peak periods. Facilities teams can coordinate repairs and maintenance with fewer disruptions. Over time, these efficiencies contribute to better resource stewardship and more responsive campus operations.

Transparency and Predictability

Guiding Principle

Provide clear and consistent scheduling patterns from term to term to support better planning for students, faculty, and staff.

Justification

Consistent start times and meeting patterns make the schedule easier for everyone to navigate. Students can plan more effectively when they know that certain types of courses or sequences will appear in reliable time blocks each term. Faculty can design their teaching schedules with fewer conflicts. Counselors and advisors can create education plans with more accuracy.

For staff and administrators, predictable patterns simplify the process of staffing, course building, academic planning, and communication. This transparency strengthens coordination across the college and reduces last-minute adjustments that can disrupt student enrollment or instructional continuity.

Adaptability

Guiding Principle

Build a collegewide scheduling framework that provides consistency while still allowing for necessary exceptions based on instructional or operational needs.

Justification

Even the most consistent structure must support the flexibility needed for specialized programs, accreditation requirements, unique pedagogical models, and clinical or internship placements. Allowing intentional exceptions prevents standardization from becoming a barrier to learning.

Adaptability ensures the schedule can evolve as programs innovate, as new instructional formats emerge, and as student needs change. When exceptions are purposeful and coordinated, they strengthen the overall structure rather than undermining it.

Balanced Student Experience

Guiding Principle

Distribute classes and course sequences throughout the day to help students balance academic, work, and personal responsibilities.

Justification

Schedules that cluster too many essential classes into narrow time windows create unnecessary conflicts for students. Time-block scheduling helps the college distribute both individual courses and multi-course sequences more evenly across the day.

This balance supports student well-being by making it easier for students to manage work hours, commute times, study routines, and family commitments. When students can choose from a broader range of class times, they are more likely to persist and succeed.