



# Cornell University Student Assembly

Originally Presented on:	03/30/2017
Type of Action:	Investigation
Status/Result:	New Business

## S.A. Resolution #40

### A Comprehensive Investigation into Cornell Exam Scheduling

ABSTRACT: This resolution recommends the formation of an ad-hoc committee of faculty and students, charged with exploring inter-departmental exam-scheduling coordination, increased student consultation, increased faculty communication, a reconsideration of the 24-hour rule for final exams, and general transparency concerning exam scheduling procedures.

#### **Sponsored by: Justin Selig '17**

**Whereas**, the process of exam scheduling has varied widely across departments, relying mostly on discussion between faculty, students remain passive stakeholders in arguably one of the most important components of their academic pursuits;

**Whereas**, 'exams' shall be herein defined as Tuesday/Thursday registrar-scheduled prelims, registrar-scheduled final exams, and in-class exams occurring at any other times determined by the course instructor;

**Whereas**, faculty whose exams are not scheduled by the university registrar generally consult directly with their students to schedule alternative exam dates. These unilaterally-determined exam dates are typically decided by majority vote without deference to the registrar;

**Whereas**, while faculty may try to mitigate exam overlap by considering other courses in that faculty member's major or department, students often take many courses across departments, schools, and colleges of which individual faculty members cannot have extensive knowledge;

**Whereas**, the university registrar strongly urges faculty to "grant student requests for a make-up examination" in the case that a student has more than two exams in one 24-hour period. The registrar defines "more than two exams in one 24-hour period" as:

- More than two exams in one day (9:00 AM, 2:00 PM, and 7:00 PM).
- An evening exam followed by morning and afternoon exams (7:00 PM, 9:00 AM, and 2:00 PM).
- Afternoon and evening exams followed by a morning exam (2:00 PM, 7:00 PM, and 9:00 AM).

**Whereas**, it is possible for students to have more than three final exams in a 48-hour, two-day period, thereby negating the perceived spirit and efficacy of the current 24-hour rule. For example:

Exam 1: 9am, Day 1  
Exam 2: 7pm, Day 1  
Exam 3: 2pm, Day 2  
Exam 4: 7pm, Day 2;



## Cornell University Student Assembly

- 45  
46 **Whereas**, as a result of disjoint exam-scheduling methods, students are limited in their course choices as  
47 they are discouraged from taking classes with conflicting exam times. These times are typically  
48 released on syllabi in the first few days of a course;  
49
- 50 **Whereas**, students following similar course tracks who experience clustered exam schedules should be  
51 easily identified by their respective departments;  
52
- 53 **Whereas**, prelim exam scheduling is handled by the registrar for T/TH exams based mostly on room-  
54 availability, however, there is no explicit policy for rescheduling MWF exams or in-class exams;  
55
- 56 **Whereas**, while the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) of the Faculty Senate is charged with  
57 considering “matters of general educational policies relating to the instruction that concern more  
58 than one college, school or separate academic unit... [including] Preliminary and Final  
59 Examination Policies,” the EPC focuses on a broad range of policy concerns;  
60
- 61 **Whereas**, the Academic Policy Committee performed an initial investigation into inter-departmental  
62 procedures for exam scheduling, (including CHEM, ECE, CS, ILR, ECON, PSYCH, HDD,  
63 MATH, PAM) and received responses by department chairs validating mixed procedures and  
64 minimizing the stressfulness of exam-taking in favor of current procedures;  
65
- 66 **Whereas**, exams are arguably the broadest and most universal university-imposed source of student  
67 stress;  
68
- 69 **Be it therefore resolved**, that the Student Assembly recommends the Faculty Senate, in consultation  
70 with Cornell Health, form a committee with members of the faculty and undergraduate student  
71 body to investigate possible solutions to the problems tied to exam-scheduling outlined above;  
72
- 73 **Be it further resolved**, that the proposed committee look into extending the 24-hour rule to a longer 30  
74 or 36-hour rule that prevents the possibility of a student having more than three exams in a two-  
75 day, 48-hour period;  
76
- 77 **Be it further resolved**, the Academic Policy Committee recommends other potential topics to be  
78 investigated, including:  
79
- 80 • Scheduling of exams during religious holidays.
  - 81 • Exam conflicts with other forms of evaluation including group projects, essays, and labs;  
82
- 83 **Be it further resolved**, that the Student Assembly acknowledges and respects the autonomy given to  
84 faculty in crafting their course syllabi and recommends the proposed committee look into the  
85 feasibility of the following solutions:  
86
- 87 • Including language in the faculty handbook to suggest consulting students to set exam  
88 dates.
  - 89 • Consulting the EPC on ideas for conflict mitigation;



## Cornell University Student Assembly

90  
91 **Be it further resolved**, that the proposed committee work with undergraduate university departments to  
92 seek solutions applicable to the problems determined relevant by the proposed committee;  
93  
94 **Be it finally resolved**, that this resolution be forwarded to the Dean of Faculty, the Dean of Students,  
95 and the Educational Policy Committee of the Faculty Senate;  
96  
97 **Respectfully Submitted,**  
98  
99 Justin Selig '17  
100 *College of Engineering Representative, Student Assembly*  
101  
102 Samir Durvasula '17  
103 *Member, Student Assembly Academic Policy Committee*  
104  
105 *With Support from:*  
106  
107 Noah Chovanec '18  
108 Alexis Pollitto '18  
109 Shreya Mantrala '18  
110 Caleb Sturman '19  
111 Christine Amenechi '19  
112 *Members, Student Assembly Academic Policy Committee*  
113  
114 Dale Barbara '19  
115 *Chair, Student Assembly Academic Policy Committee*  
116  
117 Gabe Kaufman '18  
118 *Former Chair, Student Assembly Academic Policy Committee*  
119  
120 *Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 15-0-1, 03/27/2017*  
121 *Reviewed by: Academic Policy Committee, 12-0-1, 03/30/2017*