Additional Clarification

From: Provost at WCU <PROVOST@wcupa.edu>
Date: Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 3:46 PM
Subject: Clarification: 2020-21 Academic Year Faculty Office Hour Policy
To: All Faculty
   From: Margaret Ervin, WCU-APSCUF President
   Mark Rimple, WCU-APSCUF Past President
   Jeff Osgood, Deputy Provost & Vice President for Academic Operations
   Re: 2020-21 Faculty Office Hours (clarification)

We have received some requests to provide clarification on the attached policy. The background section and points one (1) and two (2) allow for faculty to conduct all of their office hours as technology enhanced as long as they are meeting the minimum number of days on campus. For example: A faculty member can choose to conduct their office hours on Zoom while alone in their office or at another location on campus. We hope this clarification is helpful.

From: "Osgood, Jeffery L" <JOsgood@wcupa.edu>
Date: Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 10:30 AM
To: "Hurwitz, Allison S." <AHurwitz@wcupa.edu>
Subject: 2020-21 Academic Year Faculty Office Hour Policy
Send to all faculty and deans from Provost@wcupa.edu
   To: All Faculty
   From: Margaret Ervin, WCU-APSCUF President
   Jeff Osgood, Deputy Provost & Vice President for Academic Operations
   Re: 2020-21 Faculty Office Hours

Based on feedback from the faculty and the recently issued guidance from state APSCUF and the Office of the Chancellor (please see the attached letters), we have agreed to the following modifications to the office hour policy for the fall semester with the potential for renewal for the spring semester:
1. In addition the clarification below, faculty with teaching loads that are not exclusively comprised of distance education courses may reduce the number of days a week they are required to be on campus when conducting office hours from three to two days per week.
2. For those faculty whose teaching assignments are exclusively comprised of distance education courses, they may conduct all three days of office hours at a location other than campus.

Please let us know if you have any questions.
TO: President Jamie Martin, APSCUF
    Assistant Vice Chancellor Brian Mbuu, PASSHE Office of the Chancellor

FROM: Chancellor Dan Greenstein

DATE: August 20, 2021

RE: Permitting universities to make local agreements about virtual faculty office hours

Thanks for your letter dated August 19, 2020, confirming our discussion permitting universities and APSCUF to establish local agreements about virtual faculty office hours for the academic year for the academic year 2021/2022.

Please communicate the direction with APSCUF campus leadership and I will cascade to presidents and their staff.
August 19, 2021

Daniel Greenstein, Chancellor
State System
Dixon University Center
2986 North 2nd Street
Harrisburg, PA 17110

Dear Chancellor Greenstein:

I am writing to confirm our recent conversations concerning the establishment of local agreements regarding virtual office hours for academic year 2021-2022. As we discussed, due to the unique circumstances presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 on campus, APSCUF agrees that the Universities and Local APSCUF chapters may negotiate local agreements for the 2021-2022 academic year concerning the use of virtual office hours. This agreement is limited to the 2021-2022 academic year, and to the specific issue of the manner in which office hours may be held, in order to safeguard the health of faculty and students. It is not to be considered precedent setting, and is not to be construed as a waiver of State APSCUF’s rights under the collective bargaining agreement or as the exclusive representative of the APSCUF bargaining units.

Sincerely,

Jamie S. Martin, Ph.D.
President

JSM:klj

Cc: Executive Council
   Amy Rosenberger, Esq.
   Mary Rita DuVall, Labor Relations
   Brian Mbuu, Labor Relations
Faculty Office Hours Policy for the 2021-22 Academic Year

Background
The APSCUF CBA requires teaching faculty to “maintain a minimum of five (5) office hours per week on no fewer than three (3) different days at such times and locations as will accommodate the needs of the students.” During the COVID-19 pandemic, West Chester University has gained considerable experience with offering faculty office hours in “alternative locations,” which have largely proved to be a positive experience for both faculty and students. Furthermore, as the Commonwealth and the university continues to monitor the efficacy of infectious disease control guidelines and the extant vaccinations against the COVID-19 virus, continuing to permit faculty and management to allow for a broader definition of “locations” during the 2021-22 academic year not only supports the safety of faculty and students but also is a student success strategy.

Proposal
1. Faculty seeking to offer office hours in locations other than their assigned office, including using technology enabled interactions remotely, will have the option to meet their minimum office hour requirement by identifying in advance and posting conspicuously (including in the signatures of their e-mails, the department’s website, and syllabi) the times, methods, and locations of their office hours each semester.
2. Faculty offering technology enhanced office hours can include the option of being available to respond to emails within the period of the office hour or conducting a face-to-face or voice-to-voice session with one or more student(s) through D2L or using some other technology announced in the syllabus.
3. All faculty members are still required to hold office hours on three different days, as per CBA Article 21.A.1.c.
4. Faculty members who teach at least one CAPC-approved DE course must conduct two of the five required office hours on two separate days in their office or at a convenient location on their assigned campus, and these hours must be given at an announced time. These faculty may deliver the remaining three required office hours at an announced time as described in 2 above from any physical location.
5. Full-time faculty members who do not teach CAPC-approved DE courses must conduct at least three of the five required office hours on three separate days in their office or at a convenient location on their assigned campus, and these hours must be given at an announced time. These faculty may deliver up to two required office hours at an announced time as described in 2 above from any physical location.
6. A faculty member must accommodate any student wishing to have technology enhanced office hours during their posted office hours. If they are providing in-person office hours only, they must provide technology enhanced sessions upon student request.
7. If a faculty member finds that the office hours at a location other than their assigned office is not working for them, they can make modifications to their offerings after the course ends (so as not to change the syllabus on students). Faculty will still need to accommodate any technology enhanced meeting requested by a student under #7 above if they have time available during their posted hours.

8. Faculty members who selected locations other than their assigned office must agree to participate in an outcomes assessment process at the end of the academic year. The assessment process will include a review of the effectiveness of the broadened definition of “location” by participating faculty, their department chair, and by their students from the respective semester. Local APSCUF and Management will agree in advance on the evaluation instrument to be used in the assessment. Assessment data would be collected from students, faculty, and department chairs during the week following submission of grades. The data would be analyzed in the Summer following the end of this agreement.

9. Faculty names will be de-identified in the assessment data, and faculty will not be disciplined as a result of the assessment data. Problems with online office hours will be resolved by examining and amending the mechanism of virtual office hours as described in this pilot, not on an individual faculty basis.

Based on the results of the assessment APSCUF and Management will determine whether to renew, modify, or discontinue this local agreement depending on the outcome of contract negotiations for the next CBA. Best practices in office hours will be agreed upon by Management and APSCUF if the pilot leads to a future policy. There is no presumption by APSCUF or Management that this agreement will become a permanent feature of the WCU campus.

The above policy has been approved by West Chester University management and local APSCUF.

Mark Rimple
President, West Chester University APSCUF

Jeffery L. Osgood, Jr.
VP for Academic Operations & Deputy Provost

7/29/21
Date

7/29/21
Date