



FACULTY SENATE

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OFFICE HOURS

Ad Hoc Committee:

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Office Hours

The purpose of this ad-hoc committee is to conduct an analysis of faculty office hour policies at comparable Large Governmental Institutions (LGIs), particularly evaluating number of hours weekly, course modality, etc. The goal is to identify and recommend best practices that align with our institutional mission to support student success, faculty effectiveness, and academic rigor through accessible and meaningful student-faculty interaction outside of class time

What are Office Hours?

Faculty

- View it as a positive opportunity to connect with students.
- It represents a commitment to student-faculty interaction (Boyer, 1990; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Kuh, Kinzie, Shuh, & Whit, 2010).
- Students don't have to ask a question. They can just stop by to say hello.

Students

- Unfortunately, many students do not view office hours as something positive—feel intimidated or have scheduling conflicts.
- Office hours are “kind of weird” (research interview response, Smith et al., 2017).
- More likely to use this time during advising, mid-terms, or finals.

A Mismatch of the Meaning of Office Hours

- One study finds a mismatch between the institutional intention for office hours and student perceptions of them, a mismatch that gives rise to an underuse of office hours (Smith, et al., 2017).
- To correct this mismatch between students' perception of office hours and institutional intention, we argue that students need explicit guidance about what office hours are intended to do: they need accessible models of what office hours can offer and how to make use of this resource (Smith, et al., 2017)
- Scholars are deeply worried about the current younger generation's immersion into asynchronous communications such as emails and messages, and their corresponding flight away from real time conversations (Turkle, 2011).

Digital First Generation (Bhadbury, 2025)

- As of late 2025, digital adoption among adults aged 18–29 has reached near-saturation, with 99% using the internet, effectively making connectivity universal in this demographic. Smartphone ownership is now ubiquitous, and social media usage has evolved from general networking to high-frequency engagement with platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and TikTok.
- However,
 - 61% of Gen Z have experienced a miscommunication at work because of using email or another digital communication tool.
 - 48% of Gen Z find it difficult to speak up or contribute to video conference meetings.

Gen Z Values Human Connection (Bhadbury, 2025)

- Possibly because of the workplace challenges, 42% of Gen Z prefer face-to-face communication at work.
- This generation places high value on human connection, particularly when it comes to **mentorship** and getting ahead, with 80% choosing to discuss what is happening in person rather than via virtual channels.
- Can the APSU community support students by changing the meaning of office hours to create a more meaningful and purposeful connection?

What If We Reimagine and Redefine Office Hours?

- **1. Choose new language** to create more of a community, sharing common goals and interests
 - Visiting hours
 - Meeting minutes
 - Coffee chat
 - Office hours
- **2. Offer appointment times** instead of office hours
 - A recent Student Voice (2022) survey found one in five students could not attend office hours because the offered times conflicted with their schedule. Faculty could schedule times based on appointments rather than hold open hours (e.g., doctor's office).
- **3. Leave the office entirely**
 - Meet in the library, campus coffee shops, dining hall.....

Current Faculty Handbook Policy

Office Hours

Faculty are expected to maintain office hours appropriate for teaching and advisement. APSU policy requires faculty to devote a minimum of 37.5 hours per week to the institution and maintain appropriate office hours as determined by the president or the president's designee. Each college or department will have specific policies related to the scheduling of office hours. Faculty must post their scheduled class times and office hours each semester they are teaching. The scheduled hours must be carefully followed to provide an opportunity for students and others to confer with faculty when necessary. Adjunct faculty are expected to be available to students at appropriate times before and after the class period.

Office Hours Redefined

- **Mentorship Time**—provides faculty members an opportunity to support and build community with students and colleagues.
 - *“Formal or Informal connection sessions where students and faculty can engage in meaningful conversations, network, and build community.”*
- **Minimum Suggested In-Person Hours**—ensures equity across departments and colleges and emphasizes the importance of offering face-to-face interactions
- **Statement of Office Hour Location**—allows faculty the opportunity to meet students in less formal spaces across campus to mitigate feelings of intimidation while remaining accountable to the university

Proposed Faculty Handbook Policy Revision

Mentorship Time

Mentorship time provides faculty members an opportunity to support and build community with students and colleagues. Faculty are expected to maintain mentorship time on campus appropriate for teaching and advisement. APSU policy requires faculty to devote a minimum of 37.5 hours per week to the institution and maintain appropriate mentorship time as determined by the president or the president's designee. Each college or department will have specific policies related to the scheduling of mentorship time. It is recommended that department policies require a minimum of 1 hour of mentorship time for each class taught and that full-time faculty who teach a completely online course load dedicate a minimum of 1 hour per week on campus for face-to-face meetings. Faculty must post their scheduled class times and mentorship times each semester they teach. The location of mentorship time should be indicated. The scheduled hours must be carefully followed to provide an opportunity for students and others to confer with faculty when necessary. Adjunct faculty are expected to be available to students at appropriate times before and after the class period.

References

- Bhadury, A. (2025). Gen Z finds it difficult to have face-to-face conversations: study. *HealthandMe*. <https://www.healthandme.com/health-wellness/gen-z-finds-it-difficult-to-have-face-to-face-conversations-study-article-151395656>
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