September 2013: Guidelines Governing Timetabling

The current Senate Guidelines Governing Timetabling read as follows:

1. Departments must fully use the timetable within the constraints of their discipline, e.g., science departments with 3 hour labs are expected not to hold courses in the afternoon. Departments using 1.5 hr slots should have courses distributed among them all.

2. Departments must make reasonable efforts to avoid conflicts for students who require their courses for their programs.

3. All courses must be offered within the slots approved by Senate. Any request to offer a course at another time will be considered after all other courses have been assigned.

4. Discussion groups, required tutorials, and studios must be advertised and scheduled as part of the timetable so that students can plan their schedules more accurately and so that classrooms can be assigned.

5. Senior seminar courses within a department should be evenly distributed across the week.

The following addendum to the existing Guidelines was approved in September 2013:

In applying these Guidelines in the timetabling planning process, the following principles should be considered. The timetabling planning process should:

a) Support pedagogical principles (e.g., seminar vs. lecture in assignment of appropriate space, matching classroom size to course enrolment);

b) Maximize choice for students (e.g., increase total number of courses available by minimizing scheduling overlap);

c) Ensure that disciplinary interdependencies have priority in timetabling (i.e., service courses (e.g., math, languages) that cross programs);

d) Ensure that required or core courses have priority in timetabling.

The following features flow from these principles and should guide the timetabling planning process more directly:

a) The process should adopt iterative timetabling: large and/or required courses should be programmed first, with smaller and/or elective courses second;

b) The process should incorporate a standard ('family-friendly') meeting time;

c) The process should incorporate a standard testing time;
d) The process should endeavor to support the whole student and the whole faculty member in timetabling practices.