Date: November 7, 2017

To: Veena P. Prabhu
Chair, Academic Senate

From: Sharon Ulanoff, Chair
Faculty Policy Committee

Copies: M. Caldwell, V. Salcido, R. Roquemore

Subject: Proposed Policy Modification for Chapter VI of the Faculty Handbook
FPC 17-5.1: Office Hours

A concern about the current Office Hours policy being out of sync with the increasing variety of instructional modes was raised on the Academic Senate floor December 1, 2016 and forwarded by the Executive Committee (Exec) to the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) for consideration on February 8, 2016. The EPC responded to the Exec on September 21, 2017 that “a review of this matter rightly belongs in the hands of the Faculty Policy Committee” (FPC 17-5).

During its meetings on October 9, 16, 23, and 30, 2017, Faculty Policy Committee (FPC) discussed the proposed policy modification for Chapter VI of the Faculty Handbook, FPC 17-5.1: Office Hours. FPC worked on making the policy flexible enough to accommodate the proliferation of instructional modes alternative to the traditional, face-to-face instruction and provide faculty and students with the structured opportunities to interact outside the classroom through venues consistent with the mode of instruction. The Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) does not mandate the manner in which office hours shall be held and does not prescribe (e.g., quantify) such hours.

During our deliberations, we have considered examples of current practices at different Colleges and reviewed a variety of documents, including a list of Office Hours policies from other CSU campuses posted on the CSU website and, specifically, the CSULB Office Hours policy.

After considerable deliberation, FPC voted to approve policy modification FPC 17-5.6: Office Hours at its meeting on October 30, 2017. The following points outline the specifics changes in 17-5.6: Office Hours.

Line 3: Consistent with the “reasonable workload” CBA language, we qualified the opportunities for student-faculty interaction to be “reasonable” and included reasonable “access.”

Lines 4-7: This language is replaced with a more streamlined version to accommodate different modes of instruction as well as reduce confusion between the existing policy mentioning of four office hours, quarter-system practices of scheduling 15 minutes per unit of teaching, current interpretation of scheduling 20 minutes per unit of semester-based teaching, and
the interpreting of “pro-rata” scheduling of office hours for faculty with reassigned time, etc.

Lines 7-11: This language acknowledges different venues in which faculty interact with students during office hours, according to the main mode of instruction, and establishes unambiguous minimum requirements for such structured interaction while recognizing that faculty and students also interact in various ways outside of office hours.
Office Hours

(Senate: 2/28/89, 5/13/08; President: 8/31/89, 6/12/08; Editorial Amendment: 8/01)

The purpose of office hours is to provide REASONABLE opportunities AND ACCESS for student-faculty interaction outside the classroom. Faculty members must schedule no fewer than four office hours per week at times convenient to themselves, their students, and their department/division/school. Tenured and tenure-track faculty with reassigned or released time and temporary faculty shall schedule office hours on a pro-rata basis. FACULTY MEMBERS WHO TEACH SIX UNITS OR FEWER WILL SCHEDULE A MINIMUM OF ONE OFFICE HOUR PER WEEK. FACULTY MEMBERS WHO TEACH MORE THAN SIX UNITS WILL SCHEDULE A MINIMUM OF TWO OFFICE HOURS PER WEEK. FACULTY MEMBERS WHO TEACH USING DIFFERENT INSTRUCTIONAL MODES, E.G., FACE-TO-FACE, ONLINE, HYBRID, OR FIELD-BASED MODES, SHALL SCHEDULE OFFICE HOURS CONSISTENT WITH THE MODE OF INSTRUCTION.