

**FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE COMMUNITY TIME TASK FORCE**

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Community Time Task Force (CTTF) recommends unanimously that the following two proposals be brought to the faculty:

**Proposal 1:** Community Time will be a one-hour period following the second class period on the first Thursday classes are in session during the months of October, November, December, February, March, April, and May. The first two class periods will be shortened five minutes and there will be no Daily Chapel these days. Most class and lab periods following Community Time will begin and end 25 minutes later. Thursdays without Community Time will follow the Tuesday schedule.

**Proposal 2:** Community Time will be held every Thursday that classes are in session. The daily schedule on these days will be as it is currently except that the Daily Chapel period will be 20 minutes, from 11:00 to 11:20, and Community Time will be from 11:30 to 12:35.

<b>Proposal 1 Thursday Schedule</b>		
8-8:55	8-9:20	8-11
9:55-10:50	9:30-10:50	
Community Time 11-12		
12:10-1:05	12:10-1:35	12:10-3:10
2:15-3:10	1:45-3:10	
3:20-4:15		3:20-5:55

<b>Proposal 2 Thursday Schedule</b>		
8-8:55	8-9:20	8-11
9:55-10:50	9:30-10:50	
Daily Chapel: 11-11:20		
Community Time 11:30-12:35		
12:45-1:40	12:45-2:05	12:45-3:45
2:40-3:35	2:15-3:35	
3:55-4:50		4-5:30

## **GENERAL DISCUSSION:**

The CTTF met during the summer and fall of 2003. In addition to the appointed members, the meetings included Jo Beld, Director of Academic Research and Planning (ARP), and Susan Canon, Director of Institutional Research and Planning (IRP). ARP and IRP collaborated on the research and data analysis supporting this report.

The CTTF identified three constituencies from whom it collected information: students, faculty, and staff. For all three groups, the principal method of information collection was a survey prepared and administered by ARP and IRP. In addition, members of the CTTF engaged in informal discussions with faculty colleagues about Community Time.

From the survey results and discussions it is the conclusion of the CTTF that there is no clear mandate either for or against the continuation of CT. In general, the students like the break during the class day but only a small percentage attend CT events. Most students report using CT for lunch, resting, or talking with friends.

Like the students, few faculty members report attending CT events with the exception of the monthly faculty meeting. In general, faculty see more benefit to CT than do the students. However, on average they are less likely to support its continuation. A result that motivates Proposal 1 is that a clear majority of faculty find CT faculty meetings more convenient than evening meetings.

The response rate among staff was so low as to prevent any meaningful analysis of staff opinions.

### **Proposal 1:**

Proposal 1 provides a time during each month for daytime faculty meetings but otherwise eliminates CT. Some *advantages* of this proposal are:

- it provides time for a daytime faculty meeting,
- the Thursday schedule would be disrupted only once each month,
- the late lab period on Thursdays could be restored, and
- even when there is a faculty meeting, Thursday classes would end by 3:10 providing more time for co-curricular and extracurricular activities.

The *disadvantages* of this proposal are:

- it eliminates CT as a regular part of the week,
- it eliminates Daily Chapel once each month,<sup>1</sup>

### **Proposal 2:**

Proposal 2 preserves the advantages and disadvantages of the current schedule. However, it does expand the time for Daily Chapel to 20 minutes on Thursdays.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> It would be possible to have Daily Chapel or other observance but without faculty participation on these days.

**PROCESS:**

The CTF recommends that a process be devised so that the faculty can select among three options: the two proposals presented here and complete discontinuance of CT (i.e., a return to evening faculty meetings). The process should not give preference to any one option. Should the faculty adopt one of the proposals, CEPC and the Registrar, in consultation with affected departments, should determine the times of the Thursday 55-minute classes and lab periods.

**APPENDICES:**

1. "Community Time Surveys: Summary of Numeric Results"
2. Comments on and interpretation of survey results

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<sup>2</sup> Starting times for Community Time events and faculty meetings have been such that a twenty-minute chapel period would not have caused conflict with these events.

## Appendix 1: Community Time Surveys: Summary of Numeric Results

**Survey dates:** September 26 – October 17, 2003

### Survey participant information:

*Faculty:* 185 respondents (50.8% return rate)  
 91% full time  
 92% employed prior to institution of CT  
 21% FA; 24% Hum; 5% IGS; 24% NSM; 26% SAS

*Staff:* 153 respondents (28.2% return rate)  
 82% full time  
 90% employed prior to institution of CT

*Students:* 315 (52.5% return rate)  
 58% enrolled prior to institution of CT  
 39% sophomores; 27% juniors, 34% seniors

*In light of the modest return rate for faculty and students, and the very low return rate for staff, results should be interpreted with caution. They may not be representative of the entire population of St. Olaf faculty, staff, and students. However, the respondents represent a good mix of the five Faculties and the three classes surveyed.*

### Community Time event attendance:

	<i>Percent “almost never”</i>		
	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Students</b>
I attend scheduled CT events	<b>30%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>75%</b>

### Community Time faculty meeting attendance in comparison to evening faculty meetings:

More frequent: 36%      About the same: 49%      Less frequent: 14%

### Community Time opinions and experiences:

	<i>Percent “agree” or “strongly agree”</i>		
	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Students</b>
CT enhances campus connections	<b>62%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>57%</b>
CT enriches life of campus community	<b>49</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>48</b>
CT increases meeting opportunities for department, program, Faculty	<b>64</b>	-	-
CT increases meeting opportunities for student groups	-	-	<b>69</b>
Too busy or unable to attend scheduled events	<b>64</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>71</b>
Benefits outweigh disruption in administrative schedules	-	<b>47</b>	-
Benefits outweigh disruption in academic schedules	<b>43</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>34</b>
Benefits outweigh disruption in other activity schedules	<b>50</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>44</b>
Faculty meetings more convenient during CT than evenings	<b>66</b>	-	-
CT is long enough to accommodate faculty meeting agenda	<b>61</b>	-	-

### Opinions on continuation of Community Time:

	<i>Percent selecting each response option</i>		
	<b>Faculty</b>	<b>Staff</b>	<b>Students</b>
Discontinue	<b>27%</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>34%</b>
Continue as is	<b>40</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>51</b>
Continue with revised schedule	<b>26</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>

## Appendix 2: Comments on and interpretation of survey results prepared by ARP

Tentative conclusions from Community Time surveys, bearing in mind the low response rates:

**Community Time seems to be serving its primary intended purposes only for faculty, and even for faculty, it serves those purposes only modestly. Arguably, the principal benefit is that it increases attendance at faculty meetings. The faculty needs to decide if this benefit is worth the attendant costs.**

Some of the findings supporting this conclusion:

- 64% of faculty agree that CT increases faculty meeting opportunities
- 66% of faculty believe that faculty meetings during CT are more convenient than during evenings
- More than a third of the faculty indicated they attend faculty meetings during CT more often than they did during evenings; 84% overall attend at least as often or more often. [Note: this finding was not included in the summary table but was included in the faculty results.]

BUT:

- 64% of the faculty say they are too busy for other CT events
- only 40% of the faculty believe CT should continue as is

FURTHERMORE:

- 86% of the staff say they are too busy or otherwise unable to attend CT events (and arguably, most of the staff were too busy or too unaffected by CT to even complete the survey!)
- 71% of students say they are too busy to attend scheduled CT events, even though almost as many (69%) say that CT increases meeting opportunities for students.
- Those who believe that the benefits of CT outweigh disruptions in both academic and other schedules are in the minority among all three responding groups

The open-ended comments from students suggest that, among students who appreciate CT and think it should stay, their actual use of CT is mainly for a break, lunch, napping, doing homework, and/or socializing. These students like the schedule variety CT brings and the idea of enhanced community it conveys. But many of them, even though they are CT supporters, believe that it's underutilized and that events are poorly publicized.

Both supporters and opponents among the students find the schedule confusing and the longer days on Thursdays wearing.

Opponents see it as a waste of time, unnecessarily confusing and wearing, and disruptive of other commitments after classes (rehearsals, practices).

Suggestions for retaining a modified form of CT include having the same schedule on Tuesdays and Thursdays (i.e. two shorter CTs so T and Th schedules are the same), putting it at the beginning or end of the day, and having the same academic schedule M – Th with Fridays open for labs, meetings, rehearsals, etc.

*Jo Beld*  
11/15/03