



27TH ANNUAL AACRAO
**Strategic Enrollment
Management Conference**



Academic Scheduling Study: Aligning Class Schedules with Student Completion

Presented by: Nate Southerland, SLCC

Monday, 10/30/17, 1:30 – 3:00 pm

Session ID: 6950



2017 AACRAO SEM Conference
Phoenix , Arizona
Session ID: 6950





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Important Reminders

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- Please silence your cell phone/mobile device
- If you must leave the session early, please do so as discreetly as possible
- Please avoid side conversation during the session

Thank you for your cooperation!





Session Outcomes

- Identify critical stakeholders and how their needs shape academic scheduling.
- Explore connections between program design, schedule construction, and registration practices.
- Consider how best practices identified in the SLCC Scheduling Study apply to your home institution.





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Academic Scheduling Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Primary Need / Value
Students	The right class at the right time
Faculty	Work schedule
Executive Leadership	Institutional strategic priorities
Academic Administrators	Staffing classes
Advisors	Schedule predictability (help students plan program)
Retention/Completion Office	Timey completion, sequencing of courses
Budget Office	Revenues = Expenditures
Facilities	Meet & forecast space needs
Information Technology	Support institutional goals
Employers	Skills (content & soft skills)
Public / Legislators	Accessibility, affordability, and cost to taxpayers

Whose needs do you prioritize at your institution? How does that impact your academic scheduling decisions and processes?





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- Only comprehensive community college in Utah System of Higher Education.
- Serves approximately 27,000 credit students and 34,000 noncredit and workforce training students each year.
- Perennial Top 10 college nationally for total associate degrees awarded.
- Utah's leading provider of workforce development programs.
- Largest supplier of transfer students to Utah's four-year institutions.
- One of the top concurrent enrollment / dual credit providers in Utah.
- Average class size of 20; adjuncts deliver 60% of instruction.
- Approximately 350 full-time and over 1000 part-time faculty (non-union).
- 10 campuses and satellite sites plus a robust online campus.
- Single institutional administration (not campus-centered administration)

Salt Lake Community College





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Academic Scheduling at SLCC

Scheduling Past:

- Faculty needs prioritized
- Academic departments decided what to offer, when to offer it, where to offer it, and how to deliver it

Scheduling Present:

- Enrollment boom of the recession forced us to prioritize efficiency because of availability of faculty and classroom space
- Declining enrollments have created budget shortfalls, which lead us to prioritize maximizing enrollments and minimizing instructional costs

Scheduling Future:

- Maximizing student completion is our new priority





Academic Scheduling at SLCC

Our Current Process:

- Each semester at SLCC, we put together a class schedule that includes nearly 6,000 credit, noncredit, and competency-based classes.
- We begin by rolling the schedule forward after the third week census and debriefing with each academic unit about what is working and not working in the current schedule.
- We send the schedule out for editing along with the [longitudinal class-by-class analysis](#), which indicates how many sections are needed of each class to maintain optimal efficiency.





Academic Scheduling at SLCC

Our Current Process:

- Academic departments submit their first-round edits to the Scheduling Office using information provided by the Scheduling Office together with their personal experiences about what has worked in the past and their current goals and priorities.
- The Scheduling Office works with the academic department to identify any problems with the edit requests: over-scheduling, misalignment with standard start/end times, overlaps of required classes, orphan classes, etc.
- The academic department revises the schedule and submits a second round of edits.





Academic Scheduling at SLCC

Our Current Process:

- The Scheduling Office assigns rooms based on class size, instructional needs, and faculty preferences (where possible).
- Academic departments assign faculty to each class (this actually happens throughout the editing process).
- The schedule is released to students and registration begins.
- Daily [Class Status Reports](#) are sent to the academic departments. Section fill rates are displayed.
- Classes are added or cancelled as needed to meet enrollment demand, minimum class sizes, and faculty availability. Course fill rates are analyzed weekly in the [FTE Analysis](#). Campus [simultaneous counts](#) are also studied.





Academic Scheduling at SLCC

Challenges with our current process:

- Academic departments don't often work with each other to schedule general education / support courses for their students.
- Departments and faculty tend to migrate classes toward preferred times and days (everyone wants to teach at 10 am).
- Students can't always get the classes they need because of overlaps in required classes or because not all classes they need are offered at the same campus and time of day as their other classes.
- Classes are sometimes cancelled very late because of low fill rates or inability to find a qualified instructor.





Reframing Academic Scheduling at SLCC

We are shifting our academic scheduling priorities to achieve SLCC's strategic goals.

- **SLCC Pathways** (based on *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* by Bailey, Jaggars, & Jenkins, 2015).
- **SLCC Promise** (gap funding for full-time students who are eligible for a partial Pell grant)

SLCC students take an average of just under 9 credits each semester. If students are able to sign up for more classes each semester, they can receive Promise funding, finish faster, and are much more likely to complete a degree or certificate at SLCC.





SLCC Academic Scheduling Study

Project Goal:

Increase average semester and annual credit loads for students, and by inference, improve time to completion and completion rates.

Project components:

- Funded in part by a Utah System of Higher Education grant in AY17
- Research with students (surveys, focus groups, forums)
- Discussion forums with SLCC faculty, staff, and leadership
- Peer site visits to review effective scheduling practices
- Historical analysis of SLCC course offerings by AAIS consultant
- Scheduling business process analysis by AACRAO consultant
- Review of SIS practices by Ellucian consultant
- Recommendations to SLCC leadership
- Implementation of recommendations





SLCC Academic Scheduling Study

Findings / Recommendations for Schedule Construction:

- Change default meeting patterns to MW/TTh/FS.
- Shift resources to balance overloaded and underutilized courses.
- Spread out schedule offerings.
- Schedule programs at specific campuses and times of day.
- Roll schedule midway through term and hold academic school debriefings.
- Release entire year schedule for students to view.
- Ensure that schedule construction is a shared activity.
- Establish an institutional Academic Scheduling Committee.
- Provide dynamic scheduling reports for academics to slice-and-dice their schedule data.





SLCC Academic Scheduling Study

Findings / Recommendations for Registration Practices:

- Make class cancellation decisions no later than one week prior to term start.
- Reduce maximum student registration credits to 18.
- Disable class waitlists prior to the start of the term.
- End add period earlier.
- Establish a 12-week part of term for students who drop courses after the add period ends and for late admits.
- Conduct an internal marketing campaign to students regarding changes.
- Study administrative drop policies and practices and late fees.
- Provide additional course information early on for students.
- Explore block registration for cohort programs.





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SLCC Academic Scheduling Study

Additional Observations:

Student life cycle management is extremely important.

Students don't always choose classes the way we think they do.

Getting students into an appropriate program of study early is critical.

Do not forget to allow for an evaluation period when making major changes.





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SLCC Academic Scheduling Study



Discussion

What are the top stakeholder priorities at your institution?

How can the findings from this study apply to your academic scheduling efforts?





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Thank You!

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