Reshaping Our Scheduling Guidelines: Lessons in Collaboration, Outreach and Education

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AACRAO 2010
Who We Are

• State public flagship institution
• 41,918 enrollment
• Office of the Registrar function
  – Hybrid scheduling model
  – Responsible for approx. 400 general use classrooms
  – Schedule classrooms, events, and exams
  – Production of the official *Class Schedule* and *Courses Catalog*
How We Got Here

2004-2005: White Paper

2006-2007: Instructional Space Advisory Group (ISAG)

2007-2008: Instructional Space Implementation Team (ISIT)

2008-2009: Introduction of Provost’s Scheduling Guidelines
The White Paper
2004-2005

• Raised campus awareness regarding instructional space use and scheduling practice
• Identified challenges and obstacles in regard to effective scheduling
• Led to the creation of the Instructional Space Advisory Group (ISAG)
Instructional Space Advisory Group (ISAG) 2006-2007

- Appointed by the Provost’s Office
- Faculty membership important
- Charged to review current facility use and scheduling needs and make long-term recommendations
Instructional Space Advisory Group (ISAG) Recommendations

1. **Standing Committee**
   - All classrooms should be managed by the Office of the Registrar.

2. **Class scheduling**
   - Class scheduling should be standardized.

3. **Recurring funds/support**
   - Recurring funds/support for technology in the classroom and identifying future needs.
Instructional Space Implementation Team (ISIT) 2007-2008

Comprised of:

- Provost Office
- CITES/Classroom Technologies
- Office of the Registrar
- Faculty
- University Librarian
- College Facility Administrators

Charged with prioritizing ISAG recommendations and advising the Provost on matters related to classroom use and scheduling
ISIT Focus: Classroom Scheduling

• **Education**
  - What policies do we have?
  - What is our process?
  - What are the standards (ex. use and utilization)?
  - How does the data inform our decisions?

• **Contributing Factors**
  - Class scheduling patterns
  - Decentralized scheduling and departmental space
  - Inventory does not meet demand
  - Increase in demand for instructional technology (ITS)
  - Ability to accommodate when buildings are “offline”
ISIT: Classroom Scheduling

- Analyzed classroom data
- **Recognized need for standard meeting patterns and scheduling guidelines**
- **Biggest challenges:**
  - Cultural shift
  - Need for organizational “buy-in”
  - Need for faculty and administrative support
  - Accountability and consistency

Where do we go from here?
ISIT Plan of Action: Incremental Change

- **Fall 2007**
  - Provost’s Recommendations #1

- **Spring 2008**
  - Departmental Survey of Space Usage

- **Summer/Early Fall 2008**
  - College Town Hall Meetings
  - College specific data/educational materials

- **Fall 2008**
  - Provost’s Standardized Scheduling Guidelines
Departmental Survey
Spring 2008

• Online, 87% of surveyed units responded
• 56% of courses are scheduled based on instructor preference
• 30% of units avoid scheduling on specific days (Friday)
• 63% of units have course enrollments constrained by classroom size

Most requested meeting times fell between 10-12, TTH
Provost’s Recommendations #1
Fall 2007

• Effective Fall 2008

• Provided a “soft-start” for campus scheduling guidelines

• Opportunity to gauge departmental uptake of scheduling standards
Departmental Survey Outcomes
Spring 2008

Dept. concerns are the same as what OR knew
anecdotally

Feedback from dept. on concerns and practices

Ability to tailor college discussions

College Town Hall Meetings
College Town Hall Meetings
Summer/Early Fall 2008

- Request from ISIT Chair to college deans
- Standard email was developed for college deans to share with invited staff/faculty, specifically including departmental schedulers
- Approx. 2 hours in length (“on location”)
College Town Hall Meetings

• Facilitated by ISIT Chair (tenured faculty)
• 5 months from start to finish
• Direct dialogue= awareness, education and feedback from Provost’s Recommendations #1
• Educational materials and data provided to each attendee
College Town Hall Meetings: The Importance of Data

- Use and Utilization information
- Number of Students in the Classroom by Time of Day

Number of Students by Hour Each Day Spring 2008
The Importance of Data
Campus Use

Percentage Room Use
Spring 2008

Mean (.54)
67% Good Use

-1 STD
+1 STD

Room Use %

Number of Rooms

0.05 0.1 0.15 0.2 0.25 0.3 0.35 0.4 0.45 0.5 0.55 0.6 0.65 0.7 0.75 0.8 0.85 0.9 0.95 1

Frequency
### Importance of Data (con’t.)

#### College Specific Use

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<th>Bdg-Room</th>
<th>DEPT</th>
<th>ROOM CAP</th>
<th>M (hpd)</th>
<th>T (hpd)</th>
<th>W (hpd)</th>
<th>R (hpd)</th>
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College Town Hall Meetings

Outcomes

• Reinforced survey findings, identified program specific pedagogical issues, ancillary issues, unanticipated arguments/concerns

• Elevated scheduling to the level of the Provost ("College of the Classrooms")

• Garnered support for "black and white" guidelines

• Committed to improving student experience and time to degree

• Provided the framework for implementable guidelines developed by ISIT
Provost’s Scheduling Guidelines Implemented for Fall 2009

• Email communication from the Provost to entire campus and sent 2 weeks prior to the start of the Fall allocation/scheduling period.

• Defined structured scheduling patterns

• OR has the right to change allocations, ask classes to change times, and schedule those meeting scheduling pattern first.
Provost’s Scheduling Guidelines
Fall 2009

Key Points

“Scheduling should support (1) the pedagogical requirements of teaching and learning, (2) efficient use of campus resources, (3) student access to and choice among courses.”

“Classes taught within the campus standard teaching schedule as noted above will have priority and be scheduled first.”

“The Office of the Registrar reserves the right to review the distribution of courses, and when necessary (most often, due to lack of available space), ask the unit to provide alternate times for specific courses. Additionally, class enrollments will be reviewed regularly to ensure efficient classroom utilization. Allocations of general campus classrooms may change from semester to semester.”
Implementation and Data Collection
Fall 2009/Spring 2010

• Incremental Implementation
  – Focus on large classrooms
  – Communication to departments
• Early anecdotal improvements
• Ability to respond to:
  – Graduate student organized strike
  – Security threat
  – Operations emergencies
  – Capital construction projects
Implementation and Data Collection
Fall 2009/Spring 2010

• What does the data show?
• Use and Utilization are slowly rising
• Small changes add up to big gains...

Use by Classroom (room capacity)
Fall 2008 v. Fall 2009
Spring 2010 and Beyond

- Data collection
- Implementation in small classrooms
- Expansion of technology in classrooms
- Large capital project underway
- Ability to respond to budget cuts
- ISIT future uncertain
Resources

• Office of the Registrar, Facility Management and Scheduling: www.fms.illinois.edu

• Office of the Provost, Ad Hoc Committees: http://www.provost.illinois.edu/committees/IS_implementation.html