



BAYLOR CREATES AN ACADEMIC SCHEDULING POLICY FROM STRATEGIC FINDINGS

When the Board of Regents of Baylor University inquired about classroom utilization on campus, no one knew the answer. However, Lois Ferguson, Facility Utilization Planner, knew that six years of classroom usage data were stored in Astra Schedule, just waiting to be analyzed. Baylor engaged Ad Astra Information Systems in 2010 to analyze its classroom and academic capacity management through a Strategic Scheduling Check-Up.

Space Utilization

Baylor's decentralized classroom scheduling process supported departmental room "ownership," which led to many rooms going unused. In addition, Baylor had one vacant building, filled with outdated labs, that needed to be renovated for use.

The results of the Check-Up showed that Baylor had 38 percent usage of classrooms and 23 percent usage of other room types. "This was a wake-up call for some people. We learned that we were not doing a good job of spreading our classes outside of our prime scheduling time," says Ferguson. They also discovered what types of space were creating bottlenecks, which would help guide renovation on the unused building and aid planning for space that may become available in the coming years.

Academic Scheduling Policy

A Utilization Task Force, comprised of two deans, a director of teaching and learning, facilities staff and members of the provost's office, was formed to create an academic scheduling policy to help reverse the undesirable findings. The task force has developed a policy that recommends opening departmentally owned spaces to general classes after the departments have had first pick – rather than letting the space go unused. Ferguson notes that moving to a policy that will enforce more centralized scheduling will allow them to spread their freshman and sophomore sections beyond prime time, giving juniors and seniors better access to courses needed to graduate.

Ferguson anticipates presenting the policy to the deans and the Board of Regents to show how they will use this data to improve Baylor's scheduling practices and classroom utilization. While she realizes that they will face some challenges, she is confident that having hard data to reinforce the Task Force's recommendations will assure the campus community that the changes are in the best interest of the University as a whole.



BAYLOR
UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED: 1845

LOCATED: Waco, Texas

ENROLLMENT: 14,614

OFFERING: 151 undergraduate degree programs, 76 master's programs, 30 doctoral programs, juris doctor

"The Strategic Scheduling Check-Up is helping us break the stranglehold on classroom usage due to decentralized scheduling, and a loosening of room ownership allows us better management and broader use of our classrooms."

—Lois Ferguson,
Facility Utilization Planner





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