



LeTourneau University Optimizes its Scheduling Process

SIS Integration

When Texas Rüegg, University Registrar, arrived at LeTourneau University in 2004, manual double data entry was an all-too-common practice. Although the institution had installed an automated scheduling tool, the system had never been completely implemented or used to its full ability.

Each semester schedulers would work for weeks to entering the course schedule into the institution's student information system, Jenzabar CX. While at the 2004 Astra Schedule Users' Conference, Rüegg attended a session dedicated to explaining Astra Schedule's pre-built, bi-directional interfaces with student information systems—including Jenzabar CX—which would completely eliminate double entry of data.

After the Users' Conference, Rüegg immediately started using the pre-built interface with Jenzabar CX to pull course information into Astra Schedule and push room assignments back automatically. This simple change drastically decreased the data transfer time, saving Rüegg weeks of manual entry.

Progressive Optimization

The interface was not the only tool available that was not being fully utilized. Even with an automated scheduling tool accessible, the institution was manually scheduling all courses one at a time by searching for open rooms. This added even more time to an already tedious schedule building process.

Rüegg was not satisfied by this procedure and began using the optimizer to schedule courses and provide administration and academic departments better service. "I started by throwing everything in the Optimizer together," he says. While it was a major step forward from manual scheduling, he still felt there was a better way to pre-assign hard-to-schedule sections.

At the next Astra Schedule Users' Conference, Rüegg learned how another

institution had used the Optimizer to layer multiple scenario runs, allowing them to schedule certain groups of sections in succession by department. "After seeing the Progressive Optimization session at the Users' Conference, a light bulb went off," he says, "I realized this would work perfectly for me."

Now, Rüegg starts each semester's schedule by assigning courses that must have specific rooms. Once those courses are assigned, he runs the first Optimizer scenario against one department's courses. Because of the number of students affected by its schedule, courses in the School of Engineering are optimized first.

When all engineering courses are scheduled, he uses the current engineering scenario as a foundation to build a new scenario, by optimizing an additional department onto his already scheduled courses. He continues the layering process until all courses have been scheduled, approximately 10 scenarios. Rüegg manually tweaks the schedule between each Optimizer run, but typically has a 85 percent or higher scheduling success rate.

After the schedule is finished, Rüegg sends a spreadsheet of the room assignments to the deans of each department. He gives them one week to request changes. After all the changes have been made, Rüegg uses the interface to publish the room assignments back to Jenzabar CX. Any faculty requests after the schedule has been published must be approved by the appropriate dean.

Time Saved

By automating the scheduling process and data transfer between Astra Schedule and Jenzabar CX, Rüegg has decreased the time he spends on scheduling dramatically. What once took him approximately four weeks to complete, can now be finished in about two hours—leaving him more time for other high-impact activities.



FOUNDED: 1946

LOCATED: Longview, TX

ENROLLMENT: 3,925

OFFERING: More than 60 academic majors.



Testimonial

"Astra's layered scenario optimization capabilities have brought an amazing amount of efficiency to my schedule process, turning several weeks into only a few hours."

Texas Rüegg
University Registrar
LeTourneau University



Benefit

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