



**MISSISSIPPI STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

FOUNDED: 1878

LOCATED: Mississippi State, MS

ENROLLMENT: 17,824

OFFERING: Undergraduate and graduate degrees in 102 fields of study

“With our academic scheduling policy, we are working toward the understanding that all of the instructional space on the university campus belongs to the university—not just one college or department. Having a policy such as this is vital for success, because you can’t overcome the problems associated with building and room ownership issues without it.”

—Butch Stokes, University Registrar

## MISSISSIPPI STATE INCREASES STUDENT CAPACITY WITHOUT CONSTRUCTION

A few years ago, the provost at Mississippi State University asked Butch Stokes, University Registrar, a question that leaves schools of every size perplexed: when will we run out of space?

Mississippi State had been challenged to support annual enrollment growth of three to five percent through 2015, increasing total enrollment from 17,000 to 22,000. In order to accommodate nearly 5,000 more students, Stokes knew they would need to reassess how they were using their facilities and obtain buy-in from the top. “You first have to gain the support of higher administration. Our executive council and president signed off on the project, which is what got the ball rolling for us,” he says.

### Capacity Management Study

Mississippi State University engaged Ad Astra Information Systems for a Capacity Management Study to identify space bottlenecks and examine how MSU’s existing space could support the planned growth.

The most glaring bottleneck identified was technology classrooms with an average of 83.08 percent utilization, leaving MSU virtually no room to grow. “We put all the technology in the 100 and 200+ seat rooms thinking we were getting the most bang for our buck,” Stokes says. “We didn’t realize that we really needed it in our 30, 40 and 50 seat rooms.” As a result, smaller classes that needed technology were taking up the large rooms.

“The study told us that if we have the right kind of academic scheduling policy and we’re focusing on seat fill as well as classroom utilization, then we have the potential for moderate growth without a new building,” he reports.

### Data-driven Changes

Based on recommendations from the study, MSU immediately added technology to six classrooms for the Fall 2008 term, with plans to add technology to 10 more classrooms. Additionally, MSU now regularly scrutinizes room inventory for changes and is implementing an academic scheduling policy by 2010 to enforce better utilization practices. Stokes plans to update findings, scenarios and policies periodically to reflect new issues.





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