

From: Latimer, Margaret W.
Sent: Friday, October 27, 2017 12:13 AM
To: Veneruso, Samantha Streamer <samantha.veneruso@montgomerycollege.edu>; Nash, Milton H <milton.nash@montgomerycollege.edu>; Galen, Alexander N. <alexander.galen@montgomerycollege.edu>; Peery, Tammy S. <tammy.peery@montgomerycollege.edu>
Cc: Rai, Sanjay Kumar <sanjay.raai@montgomerycollege.edu>; Benjamin, Eric M. <eric.benjamin@montgomerycollege.edu>
Subject: Re: Scheduling Data for Middle States

Samantha,

Are you looking specifically for something in writing regarding why this was started? It was the confluence of two initiatives: fiscal sustainability and scheduling. The College has been, and continues to look for operational efficiencies - ways to save money - without compromising standards: access, success, excellence. Seat utilization is an issue being examined at many colleges and universities, 2- and 4- year. I do not recall if the first article I saw was CHE, Inside Higher Ed or a report from another institution. Dr. Rai was very aware of the issue. At about the same time the AMP work group was getting off the ground, Dr. Rai brought together a group to look at seat utilization at MC as a sustainability issue. I was part of that due to my role in the scheduling initiative. In addition to looking at average seat utilization, we tried to get data on cancellations. As you know from the white paper (and the opening meeting presentation), in Fall 2015, we offered 20,000 more seats than filled and the following fall, facing declining enrollment, 14,000 more seats were scheduled than filled the previous fall. I sent you the lasted version of the white paper. There is a version in a slightly different format that I can send in the morning.

I looked into a few specific cases. A history course that offered just over 300 seats in Fall 2014 had CW enrollment of 239. The following fall, again - just over 300 seats were offered and only 200 filled. In Fall 2016, with enrollment declining, 30 fewer seats were offered; 141 filled yielding a 51.6% seat utilization. This was not - is not sustainable.

In the weeks prior to the start of the semester, chairs and deans received daily reports on seat utilization, by campus, by discipline, and by course.

Looking at this data and considering the cost, it was determined that meeting an average seat utilization rate of 85% was fiscally sustainable. We were also sensitive to the need for flexibility to meet the needs of students who are juggling school-work-life schedules. Seat utilization rates increased - NOT class size. The goals is for Average seat utilization to be 85%.

A side story: There is a physics course required in the diagnostic sonography program. It has traditionally been offered at TPSS only because sonography is at TPSS. But students take classes at G and R. As part of the scheduling initiative - and aligned nicely with the 85% average seat utilization goal - we have offered the class at G and T this fall. It filled!. We will offer it at R and T in the spring. Students are informed and have the convenience of choosing a convenient campus. We have a fiscally sustainable solution.

As I am sure you are aware, this was discussed and presented as part of the implementation phase of the AMP. Dr. Rai met with Student Council (and taught a lesson on averages) and at College Council, he presented with Administrative and Fiscal Services (AFS). I met with faculty council and other groups to share and to get ideas about scheduling, including seat utilization. Simultaneously, course cancellations have been reduced: cancelled courses were those with very few students - and often had run with very low numbers the previous cycle. By offering the number of seats that we reasonably and rationally expect to fill - based on trends and numbers of students in programs/prereqs, etc, we reduce the number of cancellations. The data that I sent this morning is what has been presented, with the exception of the update for this fall that was in a separate email that followed.

Are you framing this discussion as a best practice - how it came about? or an issue? A process that had its practice in tradition, was examined through the lens of data to find cost reduction and efficiencies. Our tradition gave us 20,000 vacant seats. We have halved that (10,000) and will probably do better over time. This is one measurable outcome.

Where we could not add a section of a course that had 100% seat utilization in every section and wait lists, because there was no room available, we now have space. This is another measurable outcome.

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