




Block Schedules at
Austin Community College (ACC):
A Step toward Guided Pathways
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Background/Context

- *Redesigning America's Community Colleges* (2015) by Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins
- Community colleges have provided expanded access, but not enough success for students (low completion rates)
- Needed change from “cafeteria-style” structure and operations to one of “guided pathways”
- Too many options can cause decision paralysis, arbitrary choices, dissatisfaction, too many credits, too much debt

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 **ACC Futures Institute (2015-2016)**



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 **ACC Areas of Study (AoS)**

 Arts, Digital Media, and Communications	 Business	 Computer Science and Information Technology	 Culinary, Hospitality, and Tourism	 Design, Manufacturing, Construction, and Applied Technologies
 Education	 Health Sciences	 Liberal Arts	 Public and Social Services	 Science Engineering and Math

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Advantages of “Block Schedules”

- Improve options based on interests/goals
- Create a cohort or “learning community”
- Provide assurance of class schedule around which work and life may be planned
- Group needed courses into “block” of morning, afternoon, evening, or weekend times
- Offer evidence of improved student outcomes

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Challenges in implementation

- Work best for cohorts, but not all students starting from the same place
- Easier to implement for technical as opposed to academic programs
- Difficult to get the word out – to students and advisers
- Current registration software and processes are not easily customized to support blocks

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Results – technical programs

- Success with technical programs:
 - LAN Administrator
 - Automotive Technology
 - Building Construction Technology
 - Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Tech
 - Welding Technology
 - Pharmacy Technology
 - Criminal Justice

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Results – Academic Programs

- Success with Academic “paired” classes:
 - Co-requisite Developmental Math with College Algebra (74% success rate v. 55% in trad courses)
 - Integrated Reading and Writing with College gateway courses as English, History, etc.
 - ACC’s ACCelerator is a substantial shift in dev math pedagogy, resulting in increased semester persistence (8% higher), dev ed course success rates (15%), and college readiness w/in 1 yr (14%)
 - Dev math reform efforts have reduced institutional costs/completer by 37%

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Going Forward (2018-2019)

- Significant increases in co-requisite and paired classes
- Creation of First Year Institutes for First Time/Full Time students:
 - Liberal Arts (with theme – Identity and Citizenship)
 - Electronics and Advanced Technology (in partnership with Samsung)
 - Pre-Health Sciences
 - Business Studies
 - Career ACCelerator – Local Area Networking
 - Education
 - Pre-Engineering
- Creation of Second Year Blocks for degree completion

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