



Arapahoe Community College

Course Schedule Refinement Impacts Students and Generates ROI

Led by their mission, Arapahoe Community College partnered with Ad Astra in 2016. At that time, enrollment had been declining and student retention had been lagging. Ready to combat these challenges, they sought a scheduling solution that could better facilitate student course access and generate a more efficient use of resources. In four years, these efforts have yielded a data-driven scheduling process that is collaborative, student friendly, and resource efficient. We'll let you be the judge as you read their story.

“Not only has Ad Astra been a pleasure to work with, the data we have access to has completely shifted our scheduling process to a more data-informed system. Additionally, I can review enrollment on the fly and make schedule adjustments quickly in order to open additional courses to meet student demand.”

-Rebecca Woulfe, Vice President for Instruction and Provost of Arapahoe Community College

Meet Arapahoe Community College

Location: Littleton, Colorado

Institution Size: 8,409 (2017–18)

Arapahoe Community College’s Mission: To provide innovative and responsive educational and economic opportunities in an accessible, inclusive environment that promotes success for students, employees, and the communities we serve.

The Impact



Aside from student success due to available seats, Arapahoe Community College’s work is creating a more efficient, student-friendly schedule and has generated close to \$349,000 in ROI. Additionally, they are using the schedule to their advantage by providing classes to increase retention of minority students.



Tackling Challenges to Thoroughly Support Students

When Arapahoe Community College began their work, they identified areas of opportunity for improvement. Discover how they've improved each challenge.



Improving enrollment ratios and balanced course ratios

Balanced course ratios have increased as overloaded course ratios have decreased. This has helped Arapahoe Community College improve its percentage of full-time students by 11% in Fall 2019.



Increasing student credit hour load and retention

Overall, there's been a 3% uptick in retention for enrolled students since 2015, the year partnership between Arapahoe Community College and Ad Astra began. Age group specific data reveals even stronger retention gains (10.5%) for 18-34-year-old students, a growing population for this community college.



Overcoming structural barriers to equity

Changes to the schedule not only positively impacted credit hour load, it also has been linked to retention rates for minority students. From the time this scheduling work began, American Indian and Alaskan, Asian, Black or African American, and Hispanic students have all shown retention gains. Asian and African American students have shown the most improvement as their rates have increased by 19%.



Reducing course cancellations

Overall, course cancellations continue to decrease. In total, Arapahoe Community College has reduced late-term cancellations by 50% since 2017, impacting 28% fewer registrations.



Building a annual scheduling process that is data-informed and not overly taxing on personnel

ACC transitioned recently to an annual scheduling model to help students plan their courses in advance. This planning approach requires ACC to lean heavily on student enrollment trends and pathway course sequence assessment to proactively design schedules that meet anticipated demand two or three terms out. Their partnership with Ad Astra is key to making these informed decisions. In their first fall after adopting this process, their balanced course ratio continued to improve.

Interesting in learning more? Connect with an expert.