



TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY - CORPUS CHRISTI



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UTILIZING THE COURSE SCHEDULE TO DECREASE BOTTLENECKS AND EQUITY GAPS

“We need to make education an assumption for all,” emphasized Excelencia in Education co-founder, Sarita Brown, at Ad Astra’s annual conference, Aspire. Associate Registrar, Christie Roberts, at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi (TAMUCC), a Hispanic Serving Institution, took this to heart and immediately began optimizing the course schedule to serve underrepresented demographics.

At TAMUCC, 50.4% of undergraduates are classified as Hispanic or Latino. While some fit the traditional student mold, many are classified as post traditional students. For these students, scheduling has a large impact on their everyday lives. With this in mind, TAMUCC began to align the course schedule to guarantee access to courses required for academic completion.

In 2015, TAMUCC was ranked among the top 100 Colleges for Hispanics. The university ranked 16th in the state and 56th in the nation in granting

undergraduate degrees. How did they do it? A key change from 2014 to 2015 was implementing the Ad Astra product, Platinum Analytics, to optimize the course schedule.

Shortly after the initial implementation, course timing became a key discussion. General education course bottlenecks prevented students from accessing courses needed to graduate. In addition, the scheduling grid waste was hindering additional offerings. TAMUCC immediately took action to create a time grid that provided uniform course offerings. This small alteration allowed for new course offerings, leading to additional enrollments. When additional courses are present and more seats are offered, Hispanic students are able to get into the courses they need for graduation, when they need them. In turn, this has increased graduation rates.

This has proven to work for TAMUCC. Over the last year, there has been a gradual increase in Hispanic student graduations. From 2018 to 2019, graduation rates jumped from 33% to 36% for Hispanic students, thanks to additional course access in sections needed to graduate. This is a 12.27% increase in the aggregate.

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9:00 A.M.	WASTE		WASTE		WASTE
10:00 A.M.	WASTE		WASTE		WASTE

Theoretical example of how waste can be created on the scheduling grid.

This impact is especially significant as many of these additional graduates are first generation students who will be able to make a living wage or earn a more stable job due to having their diplomas.

Completion isn't the only success at TAMUCC. Retention rates have also increased. Before strategic scheduling changes were implemented, Hispanic retention rates were 58%. After these changes, they jumped to 62%. In 2018, their upward trajectory continued, rising to 63%.

In addition to scheduling, active leadership support has been crucial to these increases in graduation and retention. TAMUCC president and CEO, Dr. Flavius Killebrew stated, "We're proud to be recognized again for our commitment in ensuring the success of our Hispanic students. As a Hispanic-serving, doctoral-granting institution, our university is dedicated to providing the educational opportunities and the tools needed to help students reach their academic potential. We know one student's success can impact future generations and transform our community."

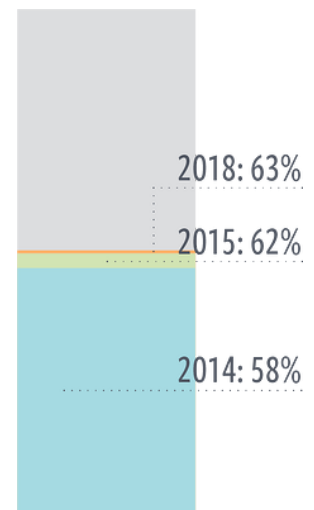
This sentiment for Hispanic service is not only from the president; students are also actively expressing

enthusiasm. When creating student friendly schedules, student support was also put in place. For students, the First Islander Scholars' Academy Program is an option. This opportunity allows students to get additional support and mentorship outside the classroom and has received great Hispanic student feedback.

"I have learned a lot about myself, [my] capabilities, [and that] I'm much smarter than I think," a student wrote.

This program's response highlights one of the most rewarding takeaways regarding TAMUCC supporting Hispanic students; students are discovering their worth and feeling empowered. Whether through the schedule, support programs, mentorship, or leadership involvement, TAMUCC is highlighting a focus on serving their largest demographic and showcasing actions that institutions can take to better support Hispanic students.

In Fall 2014, before making strategic scheduling changes, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi had a 58% Latino student retention rate. In 2015, at the start of the program, this retention rate increased to 62% Latino students. Today, that retention rate is at 63%, highlighting continuous improvement.



Interesting in learning more? Connect with an expert.