



Time Use & Scheduling (WG4)

Executive Summary: Spring 2024 Progress Update¹

CU Denver students often need to work while attending college, which predictably conflicts with and imposes hardship on the affected learners and instructors. Given CU Denver’s aspiration to make education work for all, it is imperative that we rethink and adapt the inherited Carnegie-inspired academic calendar cycles and instructional time grids to meet the multitasking needs of our student populations, in ways that are financially affordable, flexible, and work-life-balance-friendly to all our learners without compromising academic rigor and quality.

This working group will explore the following:

- Is the organization of classes that we currently have meeting learner needs?
- Are there ways to better utilize summer, evening, and weekend schedules to better support our learners’ schedules and time to graduation?
- What does data on classroom availability tell us about students’ current scheduling needs?
- What does data regarding online course engagement tell us about our students’ needs for flexibility in course scheduling?

[Read full charge here.](#)

Key Work Completed

- Engaged in an extensive study (in collaboration across departments, with academic services, faculty, and student representatives) of CU Denver’s academic schedule and its impact on the predominantly commuter and working student population. The team aimed to align the academic calendar with the needs of diverse learners, emphasizing flexibility, affordability, and work-life balance without compromising academic rigor.
- Collected data utilizing insights from the Office of Institutional Research & Effectiveness (OIRE), Registrar’s Office, student and faculty surveys, and a webinar on course scheduling.
- Conducted survey focused on capturing student and faculty experiences regarding scheduling needs and course engagement.

Data Findings

- **Regarding class modalities:** 47% of undergraduates preferred mixed modality (online and in-person), 36% opted for only in-person, and 17% exclusively enrolled in online courses. Graduate students were less likely to mix modalities.
- **Regarding classroom utilization:** Current priority for large classrooms limits flexibility, and midsize classrooms are underutilized.

¹ This update does not incorporate valuable feedback received in meetings and surveys since August 2024. Prepared Oct. 21, 2024 for Nov. 6 Community Conversations event.

Preliminary Recommendations

1. Alignment of Classes with Learner Needs:

- Increase in-person and hybrid course availability for international students (due to Visa requirements) and veterans (for VA benefits).
- Revise the academic calendar to address the imbalance between weekday classes and ensure alignment with federal holidays and other schedules.
- Coordinate spring breaks with local school districts to better serve students with families.

2. Enhanced Summer, Evening, and Weekend Course Offerings:

- Expand core and required course offerings during the summer to expedite graduation.
- Collaborate with departments to offer more 8-week courses during summer, fall, and spring semesters for better flexibility.
- Review faculty contracts to align with expanded course offerings.

3. Classroom Availability:

- Increase flexibility in room configurations to offer more sections of courses with preferred class sizes (25-50 students).
- Establish a “no-bumping” policy to ensure non-class events do not disrupt scheduled classes.

4. Flexibility in Course Scheduling:

- Introduce diverse course delivery methods (in-person, online, hybrid) and improve clarity on course modalities in descriptions.
- Implement a system to improve course planning, using predictive analytics to prevent scheduling conflicts and better meet student demand.

Additional Insights and Future Considerations

- Build structured course schedules for freshmen to improve course selection and forecasting.
- Enhance course planning with a focus on responsiveness, equity, and on-time graduation.

The work underlines the importance of flexibility, efficiency, and student-centered scheduling to better support CU Denver’s diverse student body.