



Accelerating Student Completions

Creating Student-Centered Schedules to Accelerate Completions

Fast Facts

- Improved six-year graduation rates by approximately 6%
- Raised First Time In College rates from 32.9 to 38.5
- Boosted revenue \$500,000 in one semester by adding more seats

37% of college students are 25 and older

64% are estimated to work and attend school

24% have children or other dependents

Ad Astra Products

Align

Astra Schedule

Momentum Year Analytics

Monitor

Predict

The Challenge:

First-Generation College Students are Juggling Family and School

Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, serves a growing number of first-generation college students. In addition to changing demographics, Lamar University, like many other institutions, struggled with declining enrollments and hard-to-predict modality demands.

With many already facing incredible expectations on their time and money, it's important students clearly understand the path toward degree completion. Students need the assurance classes will be available when and how they need them. Those without scheduling flexibility are often left with the choice of either switching majors or stopping out altogether.

But such a promise requires a centralized scheduling solution. Lamar University's process of decentralized scheduling made it hard for stakeholders to coordinate in order to meet the needs of its student body of 17,000+. The institution knew an adjustment its scheduling approach could help students and positively impact the university's bottom line. Seeking better alignment between course schedules and student demand, Lamar University sought out Ad Astra's assistance in accelerating student completions.



LAMAR UNIVERSITY



I define student success as students graduating on time,” said David Short, Registrar, Lamar University. “With Ad Astra data, we are now able to get to the deep granular level of student need as individuals, not just the student body.”

The Solution:

Selling a Degree and a Future to Students

Working with Lamar University Registrar David Short and Dr. Katrina Brent, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management and Marketing, Ad Astra assisted the institution in creating a Student Advising and Retention Council to help centralize scheduling. The strategic scheduling team helped leadership understand the need for change and how to apply data to tell the story.

Using Ad Astra’s Monitor, Align and Predict, and Astra Schedule, Lamar University was able to see in real-time when classes started to fill. In one instance, Short used Monitor to determine that 400+ seats needed to be added in one term. When multiplied by tuition cost, the institution earned \$500,000 in additional revenue in one semester – just by adding seats through Ad Astra’s Monitor program.

Lamar University has also seen a decrease in the number of hours to graduation. This is accomplished by ensuring courses are available in the right sequence for students, something that is appreciated by those who are also juggling work and family commitments. The ability to increase the contact hours for students has boosted student credit hour production, which in turn increases formula funding.

Real-time data and analytics that predict year-over-year demand is informing student-centered decision-making to keep Lamar University in sync with its evolving student population. Students stay on track and on-time, ensuring Degree Velocity®. With this foundation, the Student Advising and Retention Council at Lamar University continues to work toward a goal of creating a schedule that allows students to clearly see a four-year path to graduation.

School Background:

Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas, offers Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral degrees with five undergraduate colleges, one graduate college, and an honors college. The institution has been a member of the Texas State University System since 1995 and was a flagship institution of the former Lamar University System. Lamar University is one of 29 public universities recognized as a Carnegie Doctoral Research University by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.



We want and need to be better stewards for the students we have, especially in a time of decreasing enrollments,” Short said. “We need to grab additional students wherever we can. We cannot afford not to.”

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