

CSU CHANNEL ISLANDS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES | NON-FUNDED WORK

Block Scheduling

Strategic Initiatives and Actions

Student Success

2.1 Increase academic support for students in the first year (e.g., proactive advising, embedded tutors, peer mentors, block scheduling).

2.6 Ensure that students have the opportunity and structured support (including four-year degree maps for all programs) to complete 30 credits every year.

Project Summary

Block scheduling of incoming first-year students into at least two classes. Students self-place into a writing track. The quantitative reasoning (QR) track is determined by a student's declared major. Appropriate major tracks were determined by consulting with the department chairs. Estimates of seats needed and adjusted. Department chairs also identified alternate GE courses to enroll students into in case they cannot get a writing and QR course. Students will be advised at orientation to make sure they are in the correct track for their major. Undeclared students will be surveyed about what they are likely to major in, and then placed in a track based on their survey responses. There will be several points where student demand and number of seats available can be recalibrated and the number of seats may be adjusted. One major, chemistry, will pilot block scheduling for all classes.

All incoming first-year students will be block scheduled into at least two courses. Ideally, students will be pre-registered into one writing class and one quantitative reasoning (QR) class. Students use directed self-placement to select which writing class the students will register for. For the 2019 incoming class, department chairs identified the appropriate quantitative reasoning track for their majors. They also will advise students at orientation to ensure students are in the correct track. At orientation, it will be easier for student to change their major, hence getting the proper advice for their major. Students who enter undeclared were surveyed to determine their most likely major, and placed into the correct QR class based on their choices. The Chemistry major is block scheduling all classes for incoming students as a pilot. Other majors in Arts and Sciences have expressed interest in doing this in the future.

Block scheduling is identified in the strategic plan as a support structure used to increase student success. Block scheduling students helps ensure their having the opportunity to complete 30 units in their first year. Furthermore, it helps ensure students are taking the correct classes they need towards their declared degree. Students who do not complete 30 units in their first year are less likely to graduate in a timely manner. The placement of students into courses recommended by their major helps ensure students are on the correct track. Undeclared students are encouraged to select a likely track, similar to what one might find in a meta-major. Pre-registering the students also allows Arts and Sciences to offer classes in a more efficient manner as enrollment is better predicted.

Baseline Data

CI started pre-registering students into two courses in the summer of 2018. In that case, the QR courses students enrolled in were determined by the math department. When Arts and Science chairs were surveyed to determine which courses, they recommended their students to take, many chairs picked courses that were different from the ones they were being enrolled into by math. Most distinctly, less students need college algebra, a high DFW course, and could take a QR course with a lower DFW rate. Undeclared students have significantly longer time to degree, so finding out which majors these students are likely to major in allows them to be less disadvantaged. Orientation was also tweaked so that these students would meet a faculty member in their likely major at orientation, like the declared students do. Underrepresented students that come in undeclared have a 4-year graduation rate of about 7%, which is half the already low 4-year rate for all undeclared students. Students who enter with a declared major have a 4-year graduation rate that is over 4 times larger than underrepresented students who come in undeclared.