

Lane College Finds New Strategies for Space Utilization and Sustainability

Colleges and universities committed to reducing their carbon footprints can save energy dollars and reduce carbon emissions by maximizing the utilization of existing space and avoiding new construction. On many campuses, inefficient space utilization is the norm; the most desirable spaces may be intensively utilized and fought over, while less desirable spaces remain unused. Changing this cycle will help higher education institutions to avoid bottlenecks and make better decisions campus-wide.

Lane Community College, located in the south hills of Eugene, Oregon, serves a 4,600 square mile area from the Cascade Mountains to the Pacific Ocean (this is an area larger than the states of Delaware and Rhode Island combined). The college has a number of locations including the main campus and Downtown Center in Eugene, centers in Cottage Grove and Florence, and a Flight Technology Center at the Eugene Airport. Like other higher education institutions, Lane decided to improve space utilization—and sustainability—over the sprawling campus.

In 2004, Lane Community College established a Sustainability Office to help develop policies and a long term plan for implementing sustainable practices, and to communicate and promote sustainable efforts to the campus population. Staff, volunteers and students at Lane continually work on projects through the Sustainability Office to reduce the college's energy use and to increase use of renewable energy.

Since campus buildings consume a lot of natural resources, eliminating waste is a simple way for higher education institutions such as Lane Community College to reduce their carbon footprints. As part of Lane's sustainability initiative, the institution has made it a priority to conserve energy usage throughout its on-campus facilities. This includes making sure that lighting and heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment is only operating when needed. During the past five years, the college has pinpointed enhanced technology classrooms as a staple need for instruction, and updated its scheduling software to accommodate.

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LANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

In response to these challenges, executive managers at Lane Community College decided to move toward a process involving more open scheduling of space. The process should be able to provide clear, consistent guidelines to equitably resolve competing demands on space; reduce the number of overlapping or redundant scheduling systems to an enterprise-wide scheduling environment; increase coordination between requestors, schedulers and service providers to better meet college needs; and offer a scheduling process to the college community that encourages advanced planning and use of a college-wide master calendar.

Using CollegeNET's Series 25 software — which provides insight into informed space construction, renovation and closure decisions — Lane Community College has made great progress in allocating campus space efficiently, managing workflow and discovering opportunities for cost savings and plan construction. The new software is able to:

- Increase room utilization rates while decreasing the amount of time required to book space;
- Distribute ad hoc booking capabilities across campus so that schedulers, service providers and sponsors have a single environment through which to manage workflow around upcoming events;
- Graphically analyze space and better evaluate renovation and construction projects; and
- Develop guidelines for consolidating classes and events so that additional building shut downs may occur.

Lane Community College reviewed seat and room utilization data obtained through X25 on its Main Campus, focusing on reviewing and resolving classroom demand issues during the prime time of 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The college's academic scheduler has had problems for the past several years in finding suitable space for classes on Main Campus during these peak hours. Lane was able to find several under-utilized spaces that had political blocks on them that kept utilization at a minimum. Scheduling priorities and assignment rights have been adjusted freeing up some very badly needed

instructional space.

To address the ongoing need for enhanced technology classrooms, Lane used the X25 SaaS application to create study lists looking at the demand and utilization of open scheduled technologically enhanced classrooms. The request from faculty to add more smart classrooms to the instructional inventory has been matched with room utilization data in . The research found the under-utilized space and that has changed scheduling policy to ensure that if the space can safely be used and equipment be secured, it should be open to all instructional requests.

Another research request of the X25 tool has focused on reviewing overall demand for space by capacity. Lane was successful in renewing its facility bond measure that provides approximately \$83 million dollars for facility renewal. The capacity research that the institution has completed has assisted with determining the number of classrooms — and what size — the campus needs.

With three different types of space categories for Schedule 25, "Pre-assigned/Blocked," "Pre-assigned/Not Blocked" and "Open," Lane has uncovered several spaces on campus that had previously been designated, pre-assigned and blocked for others to use that really did not meet the college's criteria of safety and/or security. These policy changes have opened up more space for classes relieving some pressure on Lane's academic scheduler.

Overall, Lane Community College has been able to create an institutional scheduling policy and procedure set that is now helping to analyze space and make important recommendations to executive managers about scheduling policy.

In a time where saving money and reducing carbon footprint is key, Lane Community College was able to use a Web-based graphical scheduling effectiveness, inventory fitness and space utilization system to obtain detailed, data-rich, easy-to-understand graphical views of its scheduling effectiveness, inventory fitness and space utilization. By examining and improving the effectiveness of its scheduling, Lane is happy to report more satisfied students and faculty, better retention and more on-time graduations.

The decision support and concrete analytics provided by X25 has helped Lane to make the best space planning decisions for the school—while striving toward its mission to transform lives through learning. ■