

Schedule25 Takes the Disruption Out of Construction

Rescheduling in the Face of Two Building Closures is a 100% Success



Inside

Eastern Michigan University

Ypsilanti, Michigan

Products:

Schedule25® Optimized Class Placement, *R25*® Class and Event Management

Number of Sections:

3,600 active sections

Why Schedule25?

“Schedule25 quickly found space for every displaced course section and gave every department the time slots they requested, a feat we never could have accomplished with manual scheduling.”

– Wade Tornquist, Associate Dean

The Savings:

More than \$3 million in construction-related costs, and two years of construction time.



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Business Profile

Eastern Michigan University was founded in 1849, originally as Michigan State Normal School, an institution dedicated solely to preparing aspiring public school teachers. During its first 100 years, the institution certified thousands of teachers and developed the broad-based curricula that ultimately prepared it for university status. Today, EMU’s 800-plus acre campus serves nearly 23,000 students representing 45 states and 93 foreign countries and pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist, doctoral and certificate degrees in the arts, sciences and professions. More than 200 majors, minors and concentrations are

delivered through the University’s colleges of Arts and Sciences, Health and Human Services, Business, Education, and Technology, and its graduate school. Eastern Michigan’s faculty, students and alumni include CEOs from major businesses, a National Student Teacher of the Year, National Teacher of the Year, numerous Fulbright Scholars and Milken Family Foundation National Educators award winners, and several Michigan Teachers of the Year. EMU is regularly recognized by national publications for its excellence, diversity and commitment to applied education.

The Challenge

Shortly after Eastern Michigan University was awarded \$90 million in bond funds to renovate its Mark Jefferson Science Building, the state approved major funding for a second EMU renovation, the seven-floor Pray-Harrold classroom building. Together these two buildings comprised 20% of all general classrooms on campus, yet they hosted 40% of the school’s total course sections – rooms in these buildings were being used twice as heavily as others on campus. Closing either building for construction would have presented a major rescheduling challenge; the displacement of two buildings worth of classes seemed insurmountable. Yet neither opportunity was one the University could afford to pass up. The Administration also had to weigh the benefits of completing the renovation in several stages, one floor at a time, thereby limiting the number of unavailable classrooms at any one time, versus closing both buildings entirely and completing all construction without interruption. The first strategy would

require more time and expense for constructing safety walls, working around students, keeping movers on staff, and so on. A shorter construction time (one year versus three) and a cost difference of more than \$3 million made the second strategy the obvious choice. But how could the University sacrifice such a staggering number of classrooms without compromising course offerings and students' schedules?

The Solution

During summer, EMU Associate Academic Dean Wade Tornquist led an ad-hoc committee to identify all non-classroom space that could be repurposed during construction – the student center, library rooms, dorm lounges and other usable spaces throughout campus were entered as temporary classrooms into the R25 database. To begin scheduling for the fall term, all University departments were invited to submit their preferred times for their course sections, but were not permitted to specify location. Then Tornquist and his team loaded current data from R25 into Schedule25, excluding all classrooms slated to be closed for construction. They ran the automated scheduling program to place all core sections on campus, under several “what if” scenarios, to see what would happen if either or both of the buildings were unavailable. The results were surprising. Not only was Schedule25 able to place all courses – a total of 3,600 active sections – without using classrooms in either of the two buildings, but it was able to give all faculty the time slots they requested. The results of Schedule25 modeling showed that with efficient automated scheduling and

the use of temporary swing space, classes could be held during construction without interruption. By the time students returned in the fall, construction was underway, but classes commenced as usual.

The Benefits

- **Cost savings:** Using Schedule25 to relocate all course sections and enable simultaneous construction on two buildings saved the University more than \$3 million.
- **Shorter construction time:** Renovating both buildings at once cut construction time by two years.
- **Other improvements:** With the money saved, the University was also able to pay for a new roof and office upgrades, in addition to new classroom equipment such as digital data projectors.
- **Improved scheduling policy:** Once departments witnessed the success of Schedule25 automated scheduling, they have become more willing to relinquish department control of scheduling and adopt a more efficient, centralized system.
- **Budget flexibility:** With more efficient scheduling, EMU Administration can choose to invest in classroom enhancements instead of additional classrooms.

Want to Know More?

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