

Block Schedules at
Austin Community College (ACC):
A Step toward Guided Pathways
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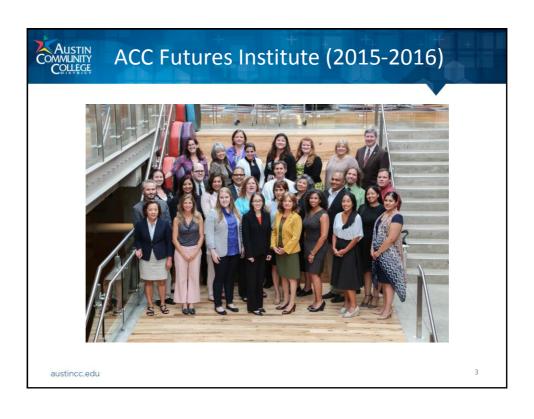
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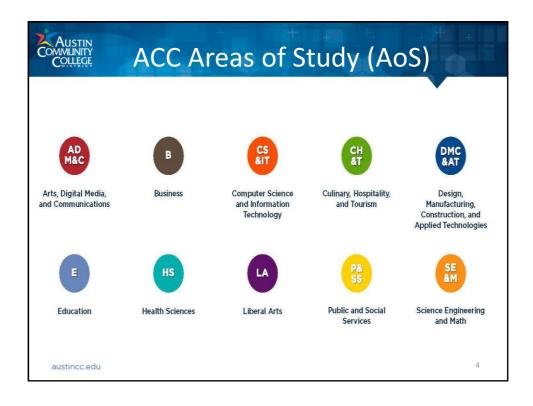


# Background/Context

- Redesigning America's Community Colleges (2015) by Thomas R. Bailey, Shanna Smith Jaggars, and Davis Jenkins
- Community colleges have provided expanded access, but not enough success for students (low completion rates)
- Needed change from "cafeteria-style" structure and operations to one of "guided pathways"
- Too many options can cause decision paralysis, arbitrary choices, dissatisfaction, too many credits, too much debt

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### Advantages of "Block Schedules"

- Improve options based on interests/goals
- Create a cohort or "learning community"
- Provide assurance of class schedule around which work and life may be planned
- Group needed courses into "block" of morning, afternoon, evening, or weekend times
- Offer evidence of improved student outcomes

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## Challenges in implementation

- Work best for cohorts, but not all students starting from the same place
- Easier to implement for technical as opposed to academic programs
- Difficult to get the word out to students and advisers
- Current registration software and processes are not easily customized to support blocks

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## Results – technical programs

- Success with technical programs:
  - LAN Administrator
  - Automotive Technology
  - Building Construction Technology
  - Heating, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Tech
  - Welding Technology
  - Pharmacy Technology
  - Criminal Justice

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#### Results - Academic Programs

- Success with Academic "paired" classes:
  - Co-requisite Developmental Math with College Algebra (74% success rate v. 55% in trad courses)
  - Integrated Reading and Writing with College gateway courses as English, History, etc.
  - ACC's ACCelerator is a substantial shift in dev math pedagogy, resulting in increased semester persistence (8% higher), dev ed course success rates (15%), and college readiness w/in 1 yr (14%)
  - Dev math reform efforts have reduced institutional costs/completer by 37%

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#### Austin Community College

# Going Forward (2018-2019)

- Significant increases in co-requisite and paired classes
- Creation of First Year Institutes for First Time/Full Time students:
  - Liberal Arts (with theme Identity and Citizenship)
  - Electronics and Advanced Technology (in partnership with Samsung)
  - Pre-Health Sciences
  - Business Studies
  - Career ACCelerator Local Area Networking
  - Education
  - Pre-Engineering
- Creation of Second Year Blocks for degree completion

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