



UNIVERSITY OF
REGINA



VSB at the University of Regina: simplifying registration, alleviating stress



Before the start of each term, University of Regina students are faced with the important task of finding courses that not only meet core requirements but also work around extra-curricular activities and commitments. Student schedules play an integral role in each student's happiness, progress and success at university.

Prior to University of Regina's adoption of Visual Schedule Builder (VSB), students spent considerable swathes of time penciling in potential schedule opportunities and double- and triple-checking different classes against each other for conflicts – a laborious process that frequently required the aid of academic advisors.

According to Kevin O'Brien, Academic Program Coordinator for the Faculty of Arts, feedback from students was overwhelmingly negative. "Student leaders lamented it, saying it was complicated," he said.

Student scheduling difficulties complicated and strained advisors' workloads, given that significant portions of advising sessions had to be devoted to painstakingly walking through the scheduling process with overwhelmed students.

Moreover, because registration for the following semester falls during mid-terms, schedule frustrations and worries erupted at a pivotal time for students.

Aware of the problems caused by the previous system, the Registrar's Office at the university spearheaded the move to shake up the institution's approach to schedule planning and registration by bringing on VSB. The university licensed VSB after gaining the support of the student association, who unequivocally voted in favor of the software.

"I'd happily recommend VSB to my peers. It's very easy to use, and it gives students all the options. I am very happy with the product."

Kevin O'Brien
Academic Program Coordinator, Faculty of Arts

Associate Registrar Susan Husum said that she has "thoroughly enjoyed" working with VSB, adding that it was a "pleasure, right from when we were considering the purchase of the product, through implementation and continuing each semester since then. [The VSB team] respond quickly, are very open to suggested enhancements and are always quick to trouble shoot any issues that occur."



VSB was released to students for the winter term of 2017 and staff across all faculties are in agreement that it has significantly alleviated schedule planning and registration-related stress.

Taebry Chupik, who takes on several advisory roles as Program Coordinator for the Faculty of Science, said that the software has facilitated group advising sessions, with all students working on their schedule at the same time.

Chupik also emphasized the positive impact the software has had on the university's large international student community who, unlike their local counterparts, are not able to come on campus before term starts to meet with an advisor. Because VSB can be accessed at home and is easy to navigate, international students can now pick their classes prior to arrival at the university, instead of hurriedly having to pull a timetable on campus the day they arrive.

"VSB makes first year students think 'this isn't so bad, this isn't so hard, I can get myself registered' whereas the old way of doing things may have scared students away who had trouble coming for help and were frustrated by doing it online."
Taebry Chupik, Program Coordinator, Faculty of Science

Jennifer Love Green, Academic Program Coordinator for the Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies, said that University of Regina's athletes are likely to benefit from VSB's time-blocking feature, which allows users to block out times that are consistently unavailable for them and see only schedules that fit around their commitments.



She believes that the software "increases in value through years in school," given that students in their final two years have less prescribed schedules and are under more pressure to pick electives while prioritizing outstanding course requirements. VSB meticulously lists all elements of a course in its search function, from course codes, professors' names, to pre- and co-requisites.

"Visual Schedule Builder has provided impeccable value to students who have a handful of classes they know they need to take, and have to fill in the final pieces."
Jennifer Love Green, Academic Program Coordinator, Faculty of Kinesiology and Health Studies