



Research Brief

Fall 2014 Pilot Final Exam Schedule Survey Results

Prepared by Keith Wurtz

Purpose of Brief

The results from the Fall 2014 Final Exam Pilot are summarized in this brief.

Summary of Findings

- Percent of respondents who preferred the Fall 2014 Final Exam Schedule
 - 94% of students
 - 85% of FT Faculty
 - 100% of PT Faculty
 - 93% overall
- Most of the comments from students, FT faculty, and PT faculty supported the Fall 2014 Pilot Final Exam Schedule
 - Student: "I think this worked very well and should be kept as policy!"
 - Faculty: "I had no problems splitting my final into two parts and proctoring them on two days of that week. Additionally, I believe that the students performed better (on average) than previous semesters."
- Two themes identified in the comments by those who do not want to transition to the pilot final exam schedule included concerns about students having enough time to complete the final and not preparing students for four-year institutions:
 - "I am afraid that not having a finals schedule is misleading to students and does not help them to prepare for transfer to a 4 year institution."
 - "Compared to previous years, I had more students come into class for their final exam late with the excuse that they had just finished an exam in a class scheduled in the period before mine."

Overview

In the 2013-2014 academic year the campus had informal discussions about changing the final exam schedule so that finals were identical to the weekly class schedule. In Spring 2014 the Crafton Academic Senate agreed to pilot this new final exam schedule in Fall 2014 and assess whether or not the schedule was easier to understand and helpful to faculty and students. This brief summarizes the results from the Final Exam Survey.

Methodology

On December 19, 2014 the survey was emailed to 172 part-time (PT) faculty and 78 full-time (FT) faculty. On the same date the survey was emailed to 5,639 CHC students who were currently enrolled on December 19, 2014. The survey was available from December 19, 2014 to January 12, 2015.

Sample

The survey was completed by 149 students, 45 FT Faculty, and 29 PT Faculty. The response rate for FT was 63%, 19% for PT Faculty, and 3% for students.

Table 1: Response Rate by Crafton Position.

CHC Position	Responses	Total	Response Rate
Student	149	5,639	2.6%
Full-Time	45	71*	63.4%
Part-Time	29	157*	18.5%
Total	223	5,867	3.8%

*Total number of full-time and part-time faculty was identified in the CCCO DataMart for Fall 2013.

Findings

Survey respondents were first asked if they were a student, or a full-time or part-time faculty. Students were then asked if this was their first semester that they had completed a course at Crafton. Forty-four percent (n = 66) of the student respondents completing their first course at Crafton were automatically directed to Q8. Conversely, 56% (n = 83) of the students who had completed a course prior to Fall 2014 were directed to answer questions comparing the Fall 2014 piloted final exam schedule with the traditional final exam schedule. Of the Crafton students who completed a course prior to Fall 2014:

- 87% were able to complete their final exam in a single class meeting
- 89% agreed or strongly agreed that they had enough time to clearly and concisely answer all of the questions

- 90% agreed or strongly agreed that they had enough time to think about each question presented on the exam
- 31% of students took more than one class meeting to complete the final exam

Students who took their final exam in two or more class sessions (n = 26) were asked four additional questions.

- 85% felt that they had enough time to clearly and concisely answer all of the questions
- 85% felt that they had enough time to think about each question presented on the exam
- 65% understood the directions for completing the final exam over two or more class sessions well enough to feel prepared to take each part of the exam on separate days
- 50% would have preferred to take the final exam in one session
- 81% felt that it was easier to attend finals because it was held on the same days and times during the semester
- 62% preferred the new final exam schedule

All respondents were asked if the final exam schedule was easy to understand and whether they experienced schedule conflicts with other classes. Overall, 89% of the respondents felt that it was easier to attend the final exam this semester because it was held on the same days and times during the semester. In addition, 93% of the respondents preferred the new final exam schedule.

Table 2: Percent of Respondents who Agreed or Strongly Agreed that they Preferred the Piloted Fall 2014 Final Exam Schedule.

Statement	Agree or Strongly Agree							
	Students		FT Faculty		PT Faculty		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
It was easier for me to attend the final exam this semester because it was held on the same days and times during the semester.	133	91.7	33	73.4	27	96.4	193	88.6
I prefer the new final exam schedule.	136	93.8	38	84.5	27	100.0	201	92.6

Students, FT, and PT Faculty were asked to provide comments and/or suggestions about the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule. Table 3 summarizes the comments provided by students. Twenty-three of the students provided comments in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule, and nine provided comments in support of the traditional schedule. As an illustration, a student in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule stated the following: “As a non-traditional working student it is important to me that the final exam be scheduled on the same day and time as regular classes because I set up my work schedule months in advance to accommodate school. I would not have been happy to have to miss extra work to go to my final exam. However, my instructor was confused about the final exam schedule and I wasn't sure that I needed to attend the class during finals week until the week prior to finals. It all worked out.” On the other hand, a common theme among students who did not support transitioning to the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule was the difficulty in having finals scheduled back-to-back: “Although I understand the logic behind the final schedule for this semester, as a student I prefer the old schedule. I had 3 finals back to back this semester and by the time I reached my last final; it was extremely difficult for me to focus. I know that a majority or my classmates felt the same way.”

Table 3: Open-Ended Student Comments about the Fall 2014 Piloted Final Exam Schedule.

Preferred Fall 2014 Pilot Final Exam Schedule (n = 24)
As a non-traditional working student it is important to me that the final exam be scheduled on the same day and time as regular classes because I set up my work schedule months in advance to accommodate school. I would not have been happy to have to miss extra work to go to my final exam. However, my instructor was confused about the final exam schedule and I wasn't sure that I needed to attend the class during finals week until the week prior to finals. It all worked out.
Classes are set up a certain way for a reason, students register for classes according to their schedule. In semesters past, finals schedule was hard to work around. This semester was easier I did not have to plan around it. The way it should be.
Having the exams be at the same time as regular schedule worked well with my work schedule as well as the overall school schedule.
I appreciated the final schedule matching my class schedule. Having the exam this way allowed me to keep the schedule of the rest of my responsibilities intact.
I believe that a class that meets for 50 minutes at a time shouldn't have enough content for a final that takes longer than that. Besides, there can only be so many class that meet more than twice a week for less than an hour. I believe these handfuls of classes can be accommodated around the schedules of the other classes. It is my belief that if my class meets at 9, the tests should all be at 9.
I had my last and only class this semester. Our final exam was group presentations that took over 4 class periods. Even if we were the first presentation we were required to be there for all. It was very good to know our schedule was the same through finals. People in my class had a discussion actually, that it was so much easier not to have to change schedules for work, child care, etc. and just continue with our class schedule.
1. It does not conflict with other classes 2. It does not conflict with other schedules such as work.
I plan my academic schedule around work and other obligations so this pilot program is much better for me.
I prefer the new finals scheduling where it is identical with class from weeks prior.
I really liked it! A lot less stressful than previous semesters!
I really liked the final exam schedule.
I strongly urge Crafton to stick with the new schedule.
I think that the that the final exams should be scheduled exactly like the regular schedule as that is what we have all planned for and arranged our schedules for already. When the day or times are changed, it creates a hardship for many who work and have to ask for time off or to rearrange their schedules and it may conflict with other responsibilities they have. I think it's a great inconvenience to the students and faculty who may have other jobs to change the schedules just for the final. And it's more work for your staff to have to coordinate a different schedule just for one week. That seems like a waste of time.
I think that we should keep our class schedule the same for our final exam schedules. It is less confusing and more convenient.
I think this worked very well and should be kept as policy!
I thought it was great, easy to understand and nice that there was no overlap between classes.
I thought it was much more convenient than changing the schedule just for a final. That way, students and professors didn't have to make time for finals.
I work days and attend class at night. If I had to alter my schedule it would have been an inconvenience.
I would like to take my finals when my classes are scheduled. I find that extremely easier for my work schedule. It would be a huge hassle to have my final at a different time than my normal class schedule
I've been to other institutions and when I saw the schedule for finals I was pleased. I hope this continues
If a student feels that they will need more than 1 class period to complete a final exam that option should be available to them. Other than that, a single block for a final exam is sufficient.
If students can't grasp the simple concept of having finals at a slightly different time, then we have a much larger problem.
Keep it! So much easier!!!
The new schedule works very well, it is especially helpful for students who are working along with attending school.
Preferred Traditional Final Exam Schedule (n = 9)
Although I understand the logic behind the final schedule for this semester, as a student I prefer the old schedule. I had 3 finals back to back this semester and by the time I reached my last final; it was extremely difficult for me to focus. I know that a majority of my classmates felt the same way.
Completely unnecessary. Stick to traditional. Half of the professors will excuse us for the extra day once the final has been given & completed. Half my professors for (Mon/Weds) or (Tues/Thurs) courses had us take the final on the former day, and excused us on the latter. My other professor that did require us to show up the next lecture after we completed the final basically made us sat there for the entire lecture time. So again, stick to the traditional. I've never encountered a situation with my time at Crafton where I was strapped for time and needed more than the time given to take finals (which is what, 3 hours?) overkill
For the classes I had this semester this final exam schedule did not bother me, but I know of quite a few other students where there was a problem. Stretching out the final over two class period is stressful and for some classes like math or a science class it would be a huge pain. I prefer to take my final and be done with it, so I can work on the next final I have coming up, This final schedule does not allow the students to do that.
However, I didn't find it fair that with my chemistry final the days the class took it were separated due to our lab day. Monday lab had less than a week to prepare while Friday lab had over a week to prepare. Extremely unfair and could possibly effect my scores.
I thought it was easier to understand the final schedule this semester; however it was somewhat of a conflict. I felt rushed through out my exams because the class after mine kept interrupting. I feel like it stresses the student out because of limited time.
The downfall is taking some finals in two parts but the outweighing advantage is having an identical schedule to normal classes. Thus, eliminating the chance for missing and/or arriving late to the final exam. It seemed to ease the stress a bit.

(Table 3 continues!)

(Table 3 continued)

The majority of my courses were online, and therefore had a more flexible final exam schedule than a brick & Mortar course. However, My final exam for the class I attended at Crafton was at the same time as the regular class, which made it very convenient as my schedule is very tight otherwise.
Therefore this was my first semester here at Crafton; i do not understand how the exam process was in the previous years. As for myself this had worked out splendid. I thoroughly enjoyed having my exams being the times i would have classes.
All the classes I had were about 3 hours per session last semester, which I think is a good amount of time for final exams. However, I could see there could possibly be some problems with classes that are shorter.
Other (n = 6)
Actually I did not have any instructions on what the schedule was like. I asked the instructor and he said he believed it was the same time as classes. Since there were no instructions I defaulted to class times.
Do your job
Merry Christmas
My first semester at Crafton, I was confused about the final schedule being slightly different than the normal class meetings, however, every professor I have had made the final exam date and time extremely clear in both the syllabus and mentioning it several times in class. Whether Crafton decides to adopt this new final exam schedule wouldn't make a difference because I think the professors are doing an excellent job making the exact time and date clear to students. The only students who would be confused are those not showing up or not paying attention when they should be.
The class I was a part of noticeably prejudice. The instructor made several comments during class about black face. A lot of data was not placed and some documentations showed to be bias
We should always be given enough time to complete our finals no matter what!!!

Table 4 summarizes the comments provided by FT Faculty. Thirteen of the FT Faculty provided comments in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule, and eight provided comments in support of the traditional schedule. As an illustration, a FT Faculty in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule stated the following: “The new schedule implemented for the final exam this semester was a bit more comfortable for our students to handle. They didn't have to take multiple exams in one day. We were able to spread the testing days apart and this was better for the students.” On the other hand, two common themes among FT Faculty who did not support transitioning to the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule was students having enough time to complete the final and not preparing students for four-year institutions: “I am afraid that not having a finals schedule is misleading to students and does not help them to prepare for transfer to a 4 year institution.” “Compared to previous years, I had more students come into class for their final exam late with the excuse that they had just finished an exam in a class scheduled in the period before mine.”

Table 4: Open-Ended Full-Time Faculty Comments about the Fall 2014 Piloted Final Exam Schedule.

Preferred Fall 2014 Pilot Final Exam Schedule (n = 13)
As a faculty member and a chair, I like the fact that finals were on the regular day and time of our normal class. It made it much easier on my part-time faculty that have different day jobs on a variety of campus, some of which are K-12 settings, and they cannot change their schedules. However, I would like to see some sort of "set schedule" to avoid having most finals on Monday and Tuesday just so people can be done earlier in the week. This will also make reservations for computer labs easier so they do not continue to double book one room (which was a problem multiple times this past week). I also think it is beneficial for students so they can spread out their studying and not be overwhelmed. Furthermore, I also have the ability to look at a schedule and know when the rest of my department will be having their finals.
I had no problems splitting my final into two parts and proctoring them on two days of that week. Additionally, I believe that the students performed better (on average) than previous semesters.
I liked having the flexibility about which day to do the exam.
I liked it
I liked it.
I love this semester's final exam schedule! Let's keep it this way forever!
I really liked the new schedule--it was easy to understand and the student traffic in our area was much more consistent and easier to plan for. If we continue with this new finals schedule, I anticipate that it will be easier to anticipate student need and address it appropriately in the Tutoring Center. While I did not teach classes this term, this kind of finals schedule would be easy to use for my own final exams and simple for students to understand.
I think this schedule makes a lot of sense and is easier for the students to plan.
It worked out fine.
Much more logical like this. Not a single student complained to me of a schedule conflict. In the past it would average one per class.
The new schedule implemented for the final exam this semester was a bit more comfortable for our students to handle. They didn't have to take multiple exams in one day. We were able to spread the testing days apart and this was better for the students.
The problem with the new schedule is that many instructors put their exams on Monday and Tuesday, so students have multiple exams all on the same days. I like, however, having the final at the same time as the class meets normally.
Preferred Traditional Final Exam Schedule (n = 8)
Although I did not have any conflicts with other classes my students in the past have not had conflicts. I think that the schedule was more confusing as there was no reference for students or faculty to refer to. Most other schools high schools and colleges have a finals schedule which anyone can refer to see when finals are and to plan accordingly at the beginning of the semester. I am afraid that not having a finals schedule is misleading to students and does not help them to prepare for transfer to a 4 year institution. Most of my students ended up having their finals on the same day as well. Depending on the course hours configuration the finals were not equitable as breaking a final up over two meetings is not the same as taking the entire final during one sitting. With some sections meeting for 2 hours some for 1.5 hours and some for 1 hour the final exam experience was significantly different I think that a revised finals schedule would serve both students and faculty much better as there were problems with the old schedule. A simple schedule using the two hour blocks as set up for the classes would allow for a set schedule and allow the finals to be generally during the regular class times.
First, there was always a disconnect with the day (2.5 hrs) and night (2hrs) finals. Second, they should all be in 2 hour blocks, the classes that meet at 3pm should have finals scheduled at 3pm and not at 1pm as in the past. Third, if there is worry about overlap, especially at night you could arrange the final schedule thusly; M/W classes 3pm, 7pm classes have finals the first Monday and on Wednesday the 5pm classes, same for T/Th the 4pm, 8pm classes have the first Tuesday and the 6pm class on Thursday. In Fact I don't see why that can't be scheduled like that throughout the day. I found that regardless of any finessing of the finals schedule there will ultimately be problems for the students. But I feel that the students should take some responsibility in their educational program, we can't do it all for them.
I don't know of a university or college without a formal final exam schedule. I suggest we go back to the old schedule which worked. Many of my students were very confused about how the final week would be conducted; I got many emails about this matter event though it had been discussed in class and I had posted it in class. Several of them did not show up and I have to give make up finals next week.

(Table 4 continues!)

(Table 4 continued)

<p>I felt frustrated by the differences between the impact of my standard final exam on two identical but differently-scheduled classes. To maintain equity, my choice was to make a simplified final exam that would work for the MWF class (50 minute class period) or stick with my more rigorous exam that would work fine for T/Th (hour and twenty minute class period). That extra 30 minutes is huge. Maybe half the MWF class could do the standard exam in 50 minutes, but the slower test takers would go into overtime, potentially conflicting with an exam given by another instructor's exam immediately following mine. Compared to previous years, I had more students come into class for their final exam late with the excuse that they had just finished an exam in a class scheduled in the period before mine. One student who worked right until the end of the period came up to my desk, slapped his test down, and seemed nearly in tears as he cursed and muttered about having another test in just a few minutes and no time to pee or breathe or eat. I wonder how many faculty gave their exams on M or Tu, who would have previously been scheduled for W or Th, so that they and the students could finish up the semester sooner? I wonder how many faculty might have done the reverse, to allow students more time to study? If we keep the idea of final exams in the usual time block, we maybe should consider keeping the part of the old method in that there is an attempt to alternate blocks so that the first time block of the day has its exam on Monday, the second time block on Wednesday, the third time block on Monday, the fourth time block on Wednesday. I've got no solution for 50-minute classes except that I think we should avoid MWF scheduling (students don't like the extra day of commute, unless their day is full). Friday can be reserved for special courses such as extra lab sections, or Friday only courses.</p>
<p>I prefer the traditional schedule. Was there really only two questions on this survey? My screen only showed questions 8 & 9.</p>
<p>Students seemed to find this confusing - as they do the regular Final's Week schedule used in the past. The difference here was that faculty could pick the day if more than a once a week class and faculty took inconsistent options. Much more importantly, in my opinion, is that this new format is another way in which we do not help students make the transition from high school to the university. It seems it is so much easier to teach students to adjust to the realities of a Final Week in a small environment before moving to a larger arena where other students already understand the system.</p>
<p>The exam schedule did not work well for me. My final was on Wednesday and we still had class on Monday. So on Monday we were still covering new material that was covered on the final exam. This did not allow enough time to process the new information while still studying the old information from eighteen weeks ago. Usually having a week, or so, between the last class and the final provides adequate time for studying and reviewing material. The pilot program did not allow for the extra time to study.</p>
<p>This didn't work out for 50 minute classes. In order to have enough time to give a final exam of the proper length, it had to be done in lab sections which gave the Friday lab students quite a bit longer to study than the Monday lab students, not to mention that I had to then proctor 6 separate tests for 2.5 hours throughout the week. The traditional schedule works better for my class.</p>
<p>Other (n = 4)</p>
<p>Are these the only options that will be discussed? I have heard from some faculty that we may want to at least discuss a revision of the Traditional Schedule.</p>
<p>I understand it was a pilot, but too many conflicting issues on meeting dates at the different levels (VPI and Dean's levels). Therefore it was difficult to understand and continuously changes from one authoritative personnel and sometimes the same personnel on a different date when asked.</p>
<p>I would like our final exam schedule similar to UCR or Cal-State San Bernardino.</p>
<p>I'm curious why virtually every college in the country can manage to develop a final exam schedule that works, but we cannot. Perhaps we should quit trying to be the end-all, cure-all college and actually spend time devoted to making our core business - teaching CHC students - a priority again.</p>

Table 5 summarizes the comments provided by PT Faculty. Ten of the PT Faculty provided comments in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule, and two provided comments in support of the traditional schedule. As an illustration, a PT Faculty in support of the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule stated the following: "Huge improvement! I teach at another school which has always scheduled their final exams in the same time block that the class meets, so when Crafton was scheduling finals at different times than the regularly scheduled class, there were some conflicts with my teaching/finals schedule at the other school. Periodically, I have students who are taking courses at different institutions, as well, who would come to me with similar conflicts. For "freeway flyers" such as myself and a few of my students, the New Schedule works much better!" On the other hand, two common themes among PT Faculty who did not support transitioning to the Fall 2014 pilot final exam schedule was students having enough time to complete the final and not preparing students for four-year institutions: "Are we preparing students for the UC and other University systems?" "There is not enough time in one class for the exam, and splitting the exam into two parts is unworkable."

Table 5: Open-Ended Part-Time Faculty Comments about the Fall 2014 Piloted Final Exam Schedule.

Preferred Fall 2014 Pilot Final Exam Schedule (n = 10)
Change in itself causes some bit of confusion as students need to understand the change and adapt to it. A bonus side effect: a seventeen week semester of instruction. Students are done about week 12-14. So this helps in a way that was possibly not intended.
Huge improvement! I teach at another school which has always scheduled their final exams in the same time block that the class meets, so when Crafton was scheduling finals at different times than the regularly scheduled class, there were some conflicts with my teaching/finals schedule at the other school. Periodically, I have students who are taking courses at different institutions, as well, who would come to me with similar conflicts. For "freeway flyers" such as myself and a few of my students, the New Schedule works much better!
I like the new schedule better than the old.
I liked having my regular schedule hours. I give a written and practical. This allowed me to spread the test over two days. My students weren't confused with times.
I prefer this schedule. One advantage, although ignoring pedagogy, is that the finals will not conflict with other colleges where I teach (I am an adjunct in 3 districts).
It was convenient for me as part-time faculty because I teach at other institutions. My schedule is often an issue during finals week. I also thought it was very easy for my students to understand when/where they were required to take their final. I do think that this strongly disadvantages the short classes that are either 50- or 70-minute classes. Giving a final during those short times can rush the students and make it difficult to write a cumulative final within the time period. I think that, if this is the instance in the future, I may need to give a multiple-part final to balance this.
It worked excellent. No confusion.
Meeting on the same days as class normally met was great. Students, however, only wanted to come in one day, which made sense to me too.
Scheduling final exams for the same day/time as regular class sessions are scheduled is much more practical. On this new schedule students, as well as faculty, do not have to rearrange other priorities (such as work, other classes, family) which can cause undue stress and confusion. The new final exam schedule which was implemented this semester should stay.
This was a brilliant suggestion and not only made it easier for the faculty but also the students. I would like to see this at all schools. Thank you!!
Preferred Traditional Final Exam Schedule (n = 2)
Are we preparing students for the UC and other University systems? They have extended finals because they usually cover the entire semester of work and requires more time than one hour. Confusion over final schedules is a lack of administrative preparation, poor communication to students as well as poor student initiative to be aware of location and time of finals. I would not change the final schedule.
I disliked the new exam schedule. For classes meeting 2 or 3 times per week, it was confusing. There is not enough time in one class for the exam, and splitting the exam into two parts is unworkable.