

# MOVING MOUNTAINS

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IMPLEMENTING A NEW TIME BLOCK SCHEDULE AT HARVARD FAS

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# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

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- Do your research
- Plan
- Be flexible
- Engage stakeholders
- Best methods to communicate a change



# TIME FOR A CHANGE

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## Old Schedule

- No change in over a century
- No passing time
- Majority of classes scheduled between 10am – 2pm
- Class conflicts

## New Schedule

- Built in pass times
- Decompress students' schedules
- Travel time between campuses
- Even distribution of classes throughout the days/times
- Optimize classroom space

# MUSICAL CHAIRS

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- ❑ Departments are responsible for scheduling their classes.
- ❑ The FAS Registrar's Office controls less than 25% of the available rooms across campus.
- ❑ The FAS Registrar's Office schedules approximately 1,350 classes per term.
- ❑ 30-40% of courses change locations during the first week of classes.



# THE MOUNTAIN

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- ❑ Old Schedule
  - ❑ "Harvard Time"
  - ❑ Non-compliant times
- ❑ Limited space availability
- ❑ Faculty priority: ideal teaching space vs. desired time block
- ❑ 12 Harvard schools
- ❑ New Harvard campus in Allston, MA



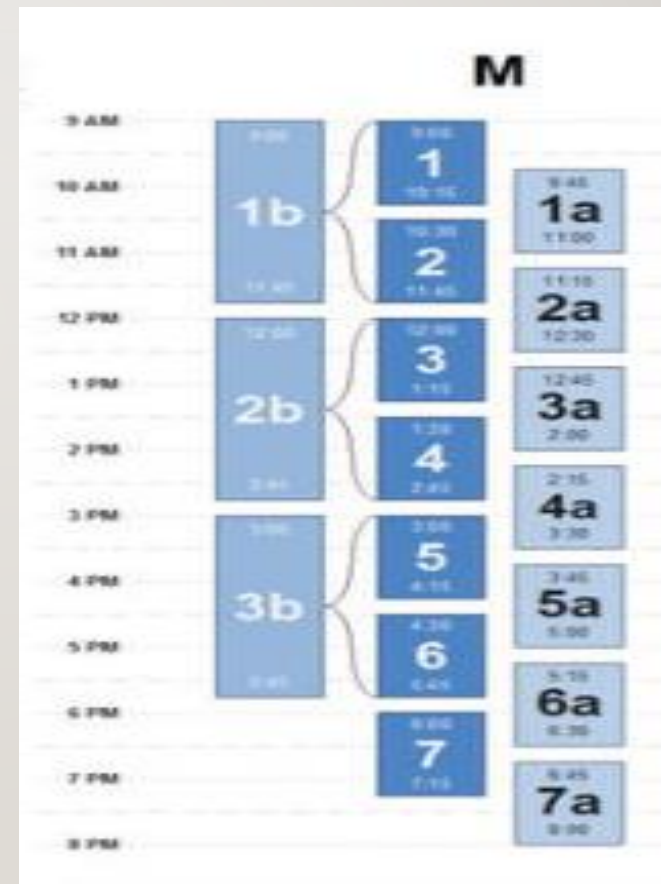
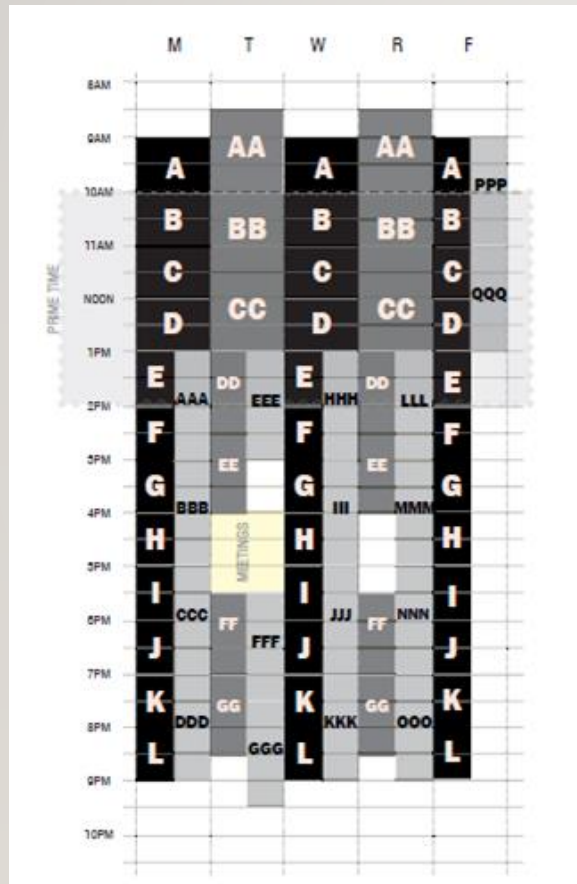
# MOVING THE MOUNTAIN

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- Allston Scheduling Task Force Committee
  - FAS students
  - Faculty
  - Administrators
  - Deans
  - Athletics
  - Institutional Research
  - External consulting firm



# OLD SCHEDULE VS NEW SCHEDULE



# OFFICIAL LEGISLATION

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- "That courses meeting more than once per week shall be scheduled in the Monday-Wednesday-Friday sequence or the Tuesday-Thursday sequence. Courses meeting four or more times per week may schedule across the five days as the course head(s) deems best."
- Classes meeting 2-3x a week must be scheduled in the following sequence:
  - Monday, Wednesday, Friday
  - Monday, Wednesday
  - Monday, Friday
  - Tuesday, Thursday



# OFFICIAL LEGISLATION

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- ❑ "That each department shall schedule its courses that meet two or three times a week so that the number of these courses that meet Tuesday-Thursday is no more than two more or no less than two less than the total number that meet Monday-Wednesday-Friday. Courses that meet once per week (e.g., seminars) or that meet four or more times per week (e.g., language and math classes, among others) shall not be subject to this sequence-balancing rule."
- ❑ Classes meeting 2-3x a week are subject to the course balancing rules.
  - ❑ The difference between the number of classes scheduled on Monday, Wednesday, (Friday) and Tuesday, Thursday, shall be no greater or less than 2.

# OFFICIAL LEGISLATION

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- ❑ "That each department shall schedule its courses so that the difference between the most used start time and the least used start time for its courses is no greater than two courses in the period 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. inclusive. Courses that meet once per week or that meet four or more times per week are exempt from this time-balancing rule."
- ❑ Classes meeting 2-3x a week are subject to the course balancing rules.
  - ❑ The difference amongst used time blocks between 9am -4pm shall be no greater or less than 2.

# IMPLEMENTATION: IT TAKES A VILLAGE

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- ❑ Implementation led by the FAS Registrar's Office and Dean of Undergraduate Education
  - ❑ Faculty Chairs
  - ❑ Directors of Study-both undergrad and graduate
  - ❑ Office of the Vice Provost for Advances in Learning (VPAL)



# COMMUNICATING EXPECTATIONS

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- Departments manage scheduling
- Open House events
- Department visits
- Newsletters
- FAS Registrar's Office webpage
- External outlets
  - The Crimson

# IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

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- ❑ Faculty Vote: early spring 2017
- ❑ Development of Course Balance Tool software: winter 2017/spring 2018
- ❑ Meetings with depts: winter 2017/spring 2018
- ❑ Curriculum Development and Course Balancing for 2018/19: March—August
- ❑ Course Balancing Final Push: August 2018
- ❑ Registration: September 2018

# TOOLS AND SUPPORT

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- Course Balancing Tool
- Department analysis
- Reports
- Audits

# UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES

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- ❑ Gaming the system
- ❑ Departments out of compliance
- ❑ Trickle-down effects
  - ❑ Dining halls
  - ❑ Shuttle services
  - ❑ Extracurriculars and sports teams
- ❑ Changes in leadership

# CONCLUSIONS

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## OUTCOMES

- Optimized classroom space by 29%
- Only one major conflict for space
- Significant imbalance of time blocks
- Only 16 classes advertised non-compliant start times
- Department "non-course" events

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

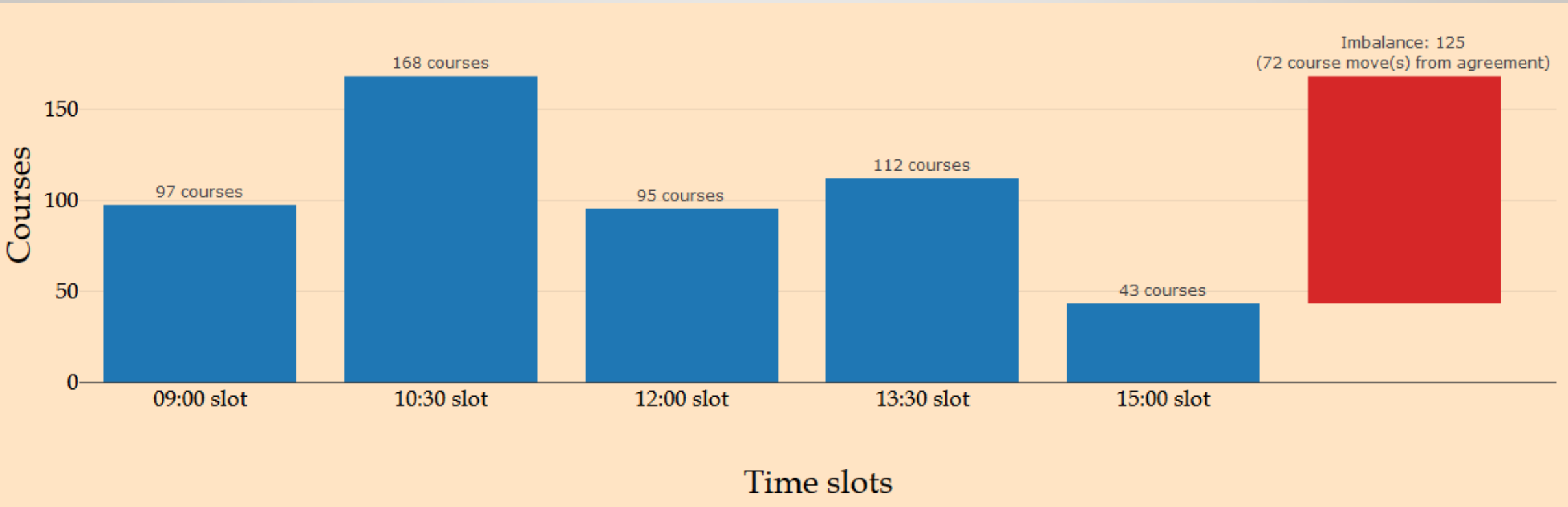
- Courses meeting once a week
- Analysis by academic division
- Maintain a list of non-compliant courses



# BALANCE OF TIME SLOTS

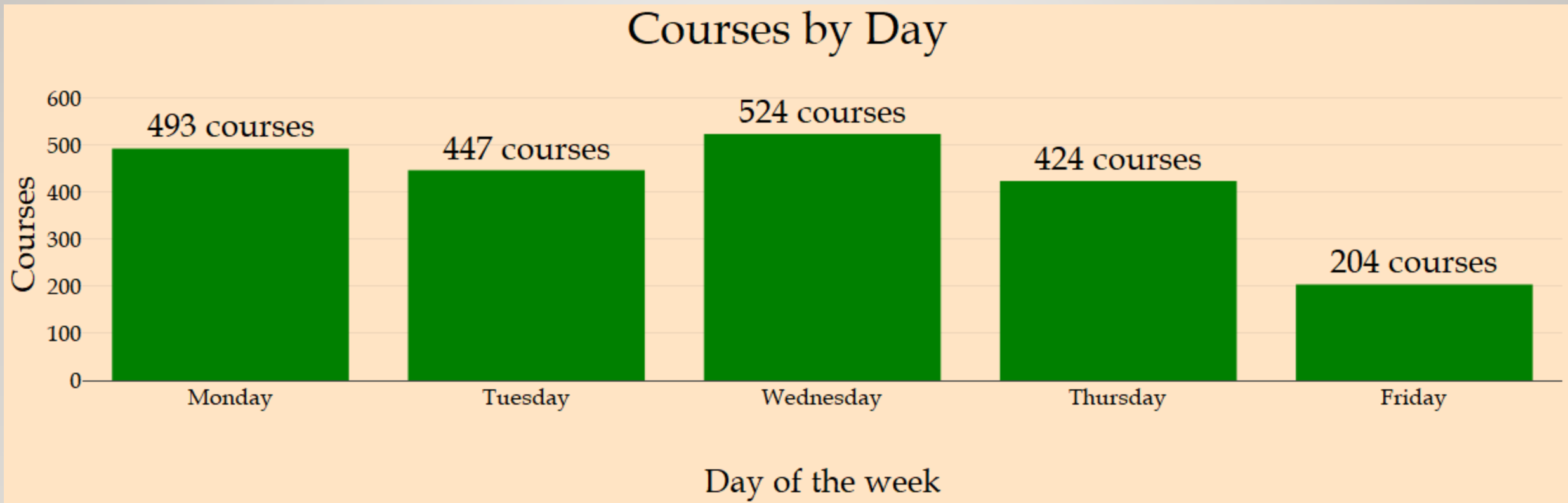
## FAS COURSES MEETING 2-3X A WEEK FROM 9AM -4PM

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# COURSES BY DAYS OF THE WEEK

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# NEXT STEPS

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- Evaluating feedback from fall 2018 term
- Implementing minor changes for the spring 2019 term
- Exhaustive evaluation will take place before fall 2019

# COURSE BALANCETOOL DEMO

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<https://hmdc.shinyapps.io/schedulecheck/>

# THANK YOU !

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Please provide feedback on this presentation at <https://neacrao.org/feedback/> .