

Optimizing Learning Spaces & Student Success: Common Bell and Coordinated Scheduling

In Fall 2018 the University launched an “optimizing learning spaces and student success: common bell and coordinated scheduling” initiative. The initiative is focused on ensuring that our students can get the courses they need, when they need them, and in high-quality spaces.

To move the conversation surrounding the development of a common bell schedule, course offering practices, and room scheduling procedures forward, a work group of 31 appointed representatives jointly led by Rick Straka, Vice President for Finance and Administration and Lynn Akey, Vice President for Student Success, Analytics and Integrated Planning convened. The work group determined the first area of work was the development of a common bell course framework. After six months of effort, and proposal revision following the collection of campus feedback, the following Common Bell Course Framework Proposal is provided by the work group for campus consultation.

Common Bell Course Framework Proposal

Mankato Campus

The University’s common bell course meeting framework applies to undergraduate and graduate full or half-term courses that have daytime demand during a fall or spring term. An undergraduate and graduate course is considered to have daytime demand if the course:

- meeting time begins between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday and/or Friday.
- meeting time begins between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday and/or Thursday.
- meets in a general purpose or telepresence classroom.
- meets in a face-to-face, telepresence, hybrid, or online synchronous format.

A course is not considered to have daytime demand if it meets any of the following criteria:

- The course does not have a consistent meeting pattern (days and/or times). For example, a course that meets once or twice (e.g., student away or study abroad).
- The course meeting time begins outside of the times of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on Monday, Wednesday, and/or Friday and 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday and/or Thursday.
- The course does not meet in a general purpose or telepresence classroom.
- The course is offered in an online asynchronous format.

Course Meeting Framework (see Full Campus Model).

Period	A Times M,T,W,TH,F	B Times T,TH	C Times MW,WF,M F	D Times T,TH	E Times	F Times M,T,W,TH,F
I	8:00-8:50	8:00-9:15	8:00-9:15	8:00-10:30	8:00-9:40	2:00
II	9:00-9:50	9:30-10:45	9:30-10:45	2:00-4:30	9:00-10:40	
III	10:00-10:50	11:00-12:15	2:00-3:15		2:00-3:40	
IV	11:00-11:50	12:30-1:45	3:30-4:45		3:00-4:40	
V	12:00-12:50	2:00-3:15	5:00-6:15		4:00-5:40	

VI	1:00-1:50	3:30-4:45				
VII	2:00-2:50					
VIII	3:00-3:50					
IX	4:00-4:50					
X	5:00-5:50					

The standard "A" class is 50 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 08:00 a.m. Classes meeting for two or more periods, must start according to this schedule.

The standard "B" class is 75 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 08:00 a.m. Such classes will be scheduled only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The standard "C" class is 75 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 08:00 a.m. Such classes will be scheduled only on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, or Monday/Friday.

The standard "D" class is 150 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 8:00 a.m. Such classes will only be scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The standard "E" class is 100 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 8:00 a.m. Such classes will be scheduled only on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, Monday/Friday, or Tuesday/Thursday.

The standard "F" class is 200 minutes. The first class of the day starts at 2:00 p.m.

Standard Scheduling Rules for Courses Carrying 1-5 Credits. Note: The following rules do not apply to the length of labs, clinics, a specialized performing arts class or specialized class components, but such classes must begin at a time that is in accordance with the common course framework.

One Credit Courses (One contact hour per week for a full-term course (750 min./term))

- Meet once per week, begin at a standard "A" class meeting time, and meet for one class period.
- Meet twice per week, and follow the rules for two-credit classes; or
- Meet three times per week, and follow the rules for three-credit classes.

Two Credit Courses (Two contact hours per week for a full-term course (1500 min./term))

- Meet twice per week, begin at a standard "A" class meeting time, and meet for one class period; or
- Meet once per week, begin at a standard "A" class meeting time, and meet for two class periods outside of the 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. core scheduling block.

Three Credit Courses (Three contact hours per week for a full-term course (2250 min./term) see Three Credit Course Model)

- Meet three times per week on MWF, begin at a standard "A" class meeting time, and meet for one class period; or

- Meet twice per week, use the standard “B” class meeting times, and meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays only; or
- Meet twice per week, use the standard “C” class meeting times, and meet on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, Monday/Friday only; or
- Meet once per week, use the standard “D” class meeting times, and meet on Tuesday or Thursday.

Four Credit Courses (Four contact hours per week for a full-term course (3000 min./term) see Four Credit Course Model)

- Meet four times per week, begin at a standard “A” class meeting time; or
- Meet twice per week, use the standard “E” class meeting times, and meet on Monday/Wednesday, Wednesday/Friday, Monday/Friday or Tuesday/Thursday; or
- Meet once per week, begin at standard “F” class meeting time.
- For lecture/laboratory or lecture/discussion courses with three hours of lecture time, the lecture component follows the schedule for three credit courses and the laboratory/discussion component follows the schedule for one credit courses.

Five Credit Courses (Five contact hours per week for a full-term course (3750 min./term))

- Meet five times per week, begin at a standard "A" class meeting time, meet for one class period, and meet Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.
- For lecture/laboratory or lecture/discussion courses with three hours of lecture time, the lecture component follows the schedule for three credit courses. For lecture/laboratory or lecture/discussion courses with four hours of lecture time, the lecture component follows the schedule for four credit courses and the laboratory/discussion component follows the corresponding one or two credit schedule.

Distribution Requirements

- 1. Distribution of Meeting Times.** Departments must be evenly distribute section offerings of a course throughout the day (no more than 30% between 8:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m., 30% between 11:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m., or 40% between 2:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.). Non-compliant departments must change section meeting times to meet distribution requirements.
- 2. Distribution of Meeting Patterns.** Departments must evenly distribute section offerings of a course throughout the week (Monday through Friday). Non-compliant departments must change section meeting times to meet distribution requirements.
- 3. Distribution of Enrollments.** Departments must evenly distribute course seat availability across sections of a course throughout the day and throughout the week. Non-compliant departments must change section meeting times to meet distribution requirements.

Additional Locations and Course Sites

Additional locations (i.e., Edina, Normandale Partnership Center, Mesabi Range) and Course sites (e.g., Hubbard Building) are expected to follow the Common Bell Course Framework for courses offered in general purpose and telepresence classrooms.

Exemptions from Course Meeting Framework

Departments are expected to schedule classes so that students have reasonable access to courses inside and outside their department. It is recognized that some programs offer courses in a unique course scheduling structure to meet the specific needs of the student population served (e.g., Friday-Saturday Cohort programs). Exemptions to the Common Bell Course Framework will be considered and made on a course-by-course basis requiring the review and approval of the College Dean and Office of the Provost. Exemptions for courses can be made for up to three years prior to requiring renewal of exemption status.

Definitions

Credit Hour

- Minnesota State University, Mankato's definition of a credit hour is based on the federal definition (34CFR 600.2) of a credit hour.
A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately 15 weeks for one semester hour of credit [...], or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or (2) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other activities as established by an institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading toward to the award of credit hours.
- One Hour of Classroom or Direct Faculty Instruction – a standard 50 minute instructional hour satisfies one hour of classroom time.

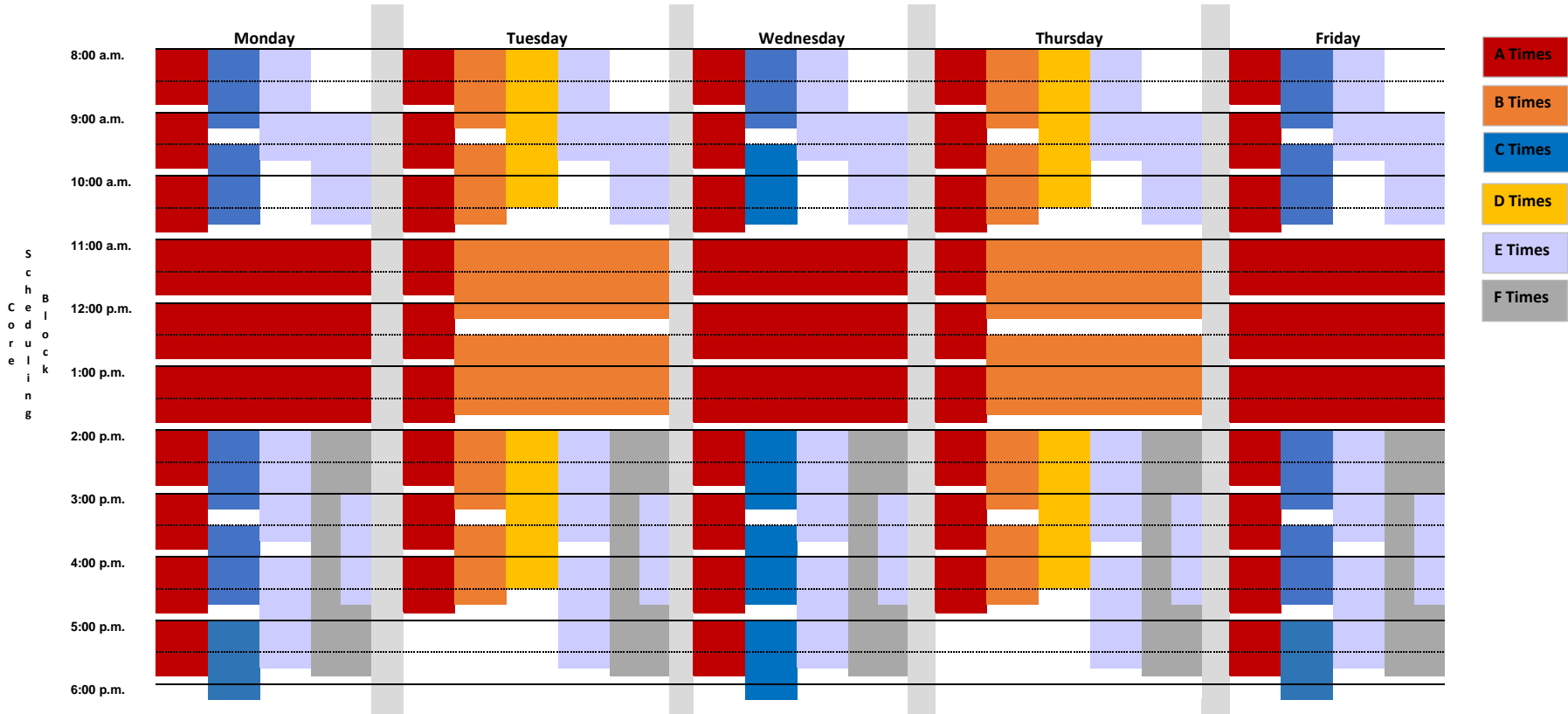
Types of Space

- General Purpose Classroom – a room that supports instructional/learning activity. The room configuration may vary widely to support various pedagogical methods and learning formats.
- Telepresence Classroom – a room designed to support instruction in multiple locations using telepresence technology.
- Specialized Use Classroom (i.e., labs, clinics, interview rooms) – a room with specialized equipment or scheduling requirements to meet specific course learning outcomes.
- Gymnasium - a room or space equipped for gymnastics, games, and other physical exercise.

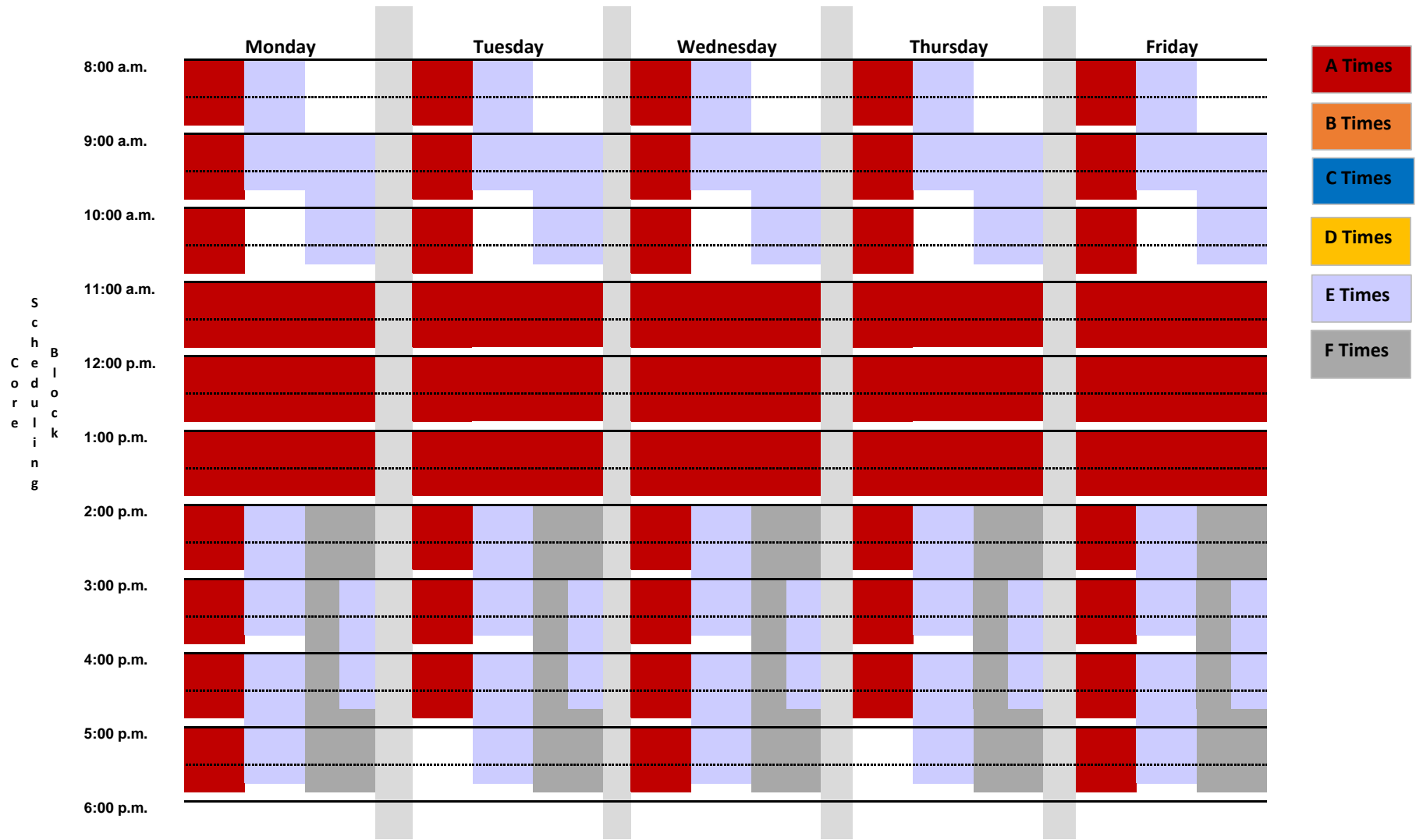
Types of Courses

- Lab - Course involving “hands-on” experience with specialized equipment, performing scientific testing/examination procedures and analysis.
- Clinic - Course involving applied learning with specialized equipment, performing scientific testing/examination procedures and analysis.
- Specialized Performing Arts Classes – courses that are participation based with minimal student outside of class work.
- Specialized Class Component – Component of a course involving unique and tailored activities to achieve curricular goals and student learning outcomes.

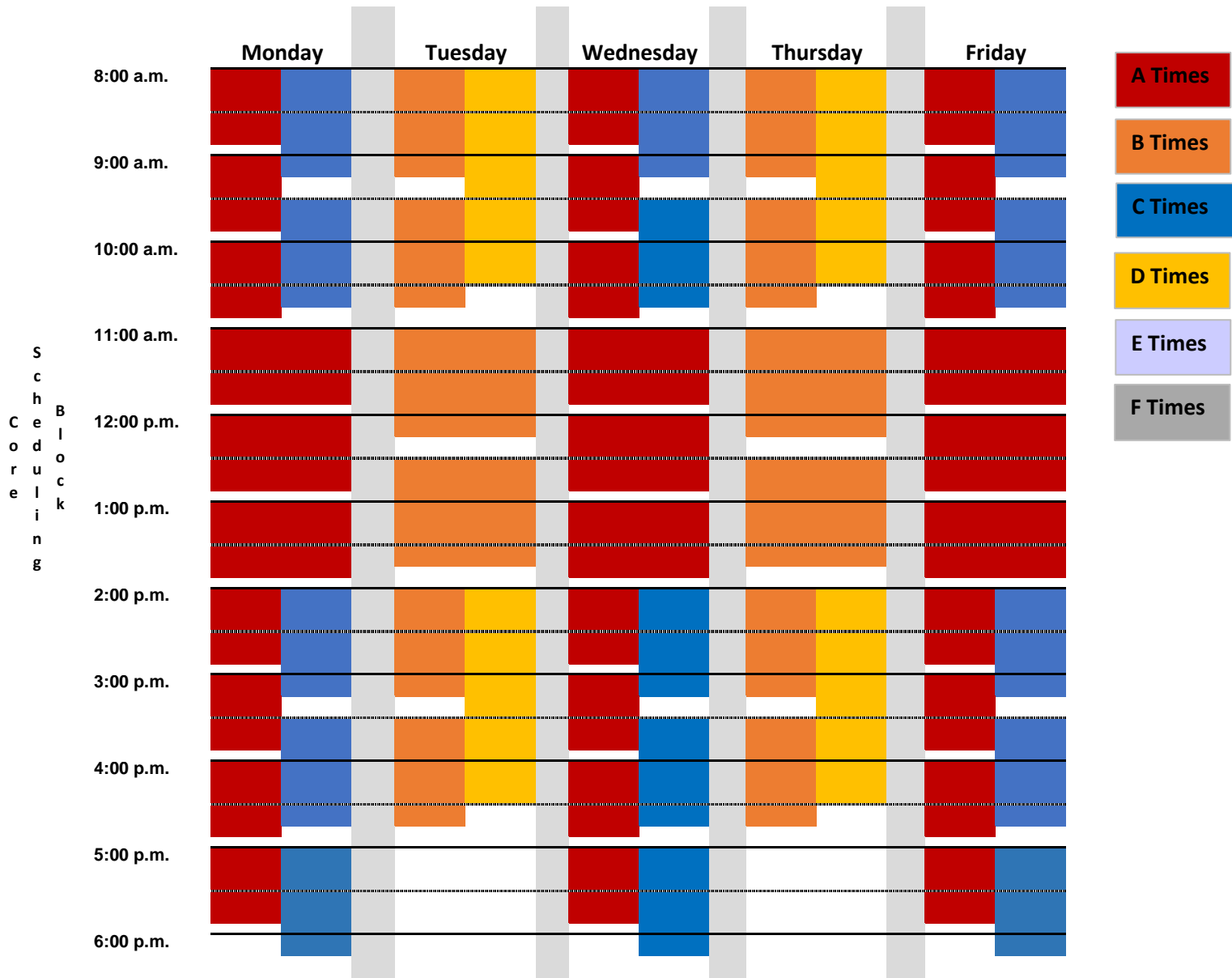
Full Campus Model



Four Credit Course Model



Three Credit Course Model



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