## The Higher Education Open-Source Conference Los Angeles, CA June 2-6



## Introducing UniTime

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## Agenda

- Short introduction to UniTime
- Demo
- Discussion

This presentation is available at www.unitime.org/present/apereo /9-intro.pdf

## Educational Timetabling

## What is educational timetabling?

- The process of assigning classes (or exams) in time and space
- A difficult optimization problem with many competing objectives
- Student conflicts, faculty requirements, space constraints


## Why is it needed?

- Minimize student conflicts, thus help students receive degrees on time
- Help use resources more effectively
- Makes process easier to manage (knowledge transfer and cooperation)
- Fairness and satisfaction with the timetable
- What-if scenarios
- Ability to adapt to changes
-...

Introducing UniTime

## There is a gap between research and practice

- Practice: timetables are created manually
- Often reuse prior timetable as much as possible
- Research: the problem has been extensively studied
- Subject of a lot of focus over the last two decades
- Numerous useful algorithms have been developed that can be applied
- Computers are becoming fast enough to solve large problems


## Here is where UniTime comes in place

- Began as a research project in 2000
- Goal of producing an automated course timetabling solution for a large university
- Became an enterprise system meeting many university timetabling needs


## Timeline

## UniTime at Purdue University



## $凶$ <br> MASARYKOVA UNIVERZITA

CHARLES
UNIVERSITY

## Introducing UniTime

## What is UniTime?

- Comprehensive academic scheduling solution
- Four components: course timetabling, examination timetabling, student scheduling and event management
- Open source, web-based, written in Java using modern technologies
- Using state-of-the-art optimization algorithms
- Distributed data entry and timetabling in multi-user environments
- Apereo project since March 2015


## Architecture

## Software Installation

- One or more web servers (Apache Tomcat / UniTime.war)
- One or more remote solver servers (Java)
- JGroups Clusters
- Hibernate L2 Cache (web servers only)
- Solver Cluster (RPCs)
- Online Student Scheduling Server replications (optional)



## Enables system to create timetable for entire university

- Ability to model all types of course structure and needs
- Intuitive data entry and display of classes and their requirements
- Helps to define how students can enroll into the course
- Additional relationships can be derived from the structure

Limit Date Pattern Minutes Per Week Time Pattern Time Room Distribution Instructor

| MA 170 STAT 170 | 40 | Statistic Introducto |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Lecture | 40 | Full Term | 50 | $1 \times 50$ |  | Classroom |  |  |
| Laboratory | 40 | Full Term | 150 | $3 \times 50$ |  | EDUC <br> CompPr | Same Room |  |
| Lec 1 | 40 | Full Term | 50 | $1 \times 50$ |  | ThtrSeat Classroom |  | G. Newman |
| Lab 1 | 20 | Full Term | 150 | $3 \times 50$ |  | EDUC <br> CompPr | Same Room | J. Smith |
| Lab 2 | 20 | Full Term | 150 | $3 \times 50$ |  | EDUC <br> CompPr | Same Room | J. Smith |

## Constraints

- Rooms sizes, equipment, and availability
- Faculty time, room requirements and preferences
- Structures of courses that are to be offered
- Student course demands
- Curricula, pre-registration, last-like course enrollments, etc.


## Goal

- Assign class times and locations such that
- All hard constraints and other requirements are met
- Desirable objectives are satisfied as much as possible
- Minimize student conflicts
- Accommodate time and room preferences
- Allow preferred class time distributions
- Fairness, minimize travel times


## Constraint-based solver

- Can be used anywhere between fully automated to manual
- State of the art
- We have published a number of research papers over the years
- Winner of the International Timetabling Competition 2007
- Easy to extend

| Suggestions |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Score | Class | Date | Time | Room | Students |
| +15.2 | POL 101 Lec 3 | Full Term | Th 12:00p $\rightarrow$ Th 7:30a | BRNG 2280 | +11 |
| +31.7 | POL 101 Lec 3 | Full Term | Th 12:00p $\rightarrow$ Th 10:30a | BRNG 2280 | +36 (h+3) |
|  | HIST 342 Lec 1 | Full Term | Th 10:30a $\rightarrow$ Th 1:30p | BRNG $2280 \rightarrow$ BRNG 2290 |  |
| +36.6 | POL 101 Lec 3 | Full Term | TTh 12:00p $\rightarrow$ TTh 10:30a | BRNG 2280 | +36 (h+4) |
|  | HIST 342 Lec 1 | Full Term | Th 10:30a $\rightarrow$ Th 7:30a | BRNG 2280 |  |
| +44.1 | POL 101 Lec 3 | Full Term | TTh 12:00p $\rightarrow$ TTh 10:30a | BRNG 2280 | +34 (h+2) |
|  | HIST 342 Lec 1 | Full Term | TTh 10:30a $\rightarrow$ TTh 3:00p | BRNG $2280 \rightarrow$ BRNG 2290 |  |
|  | OBHR 330 Lec 4 | Full Term | TTh 3:00p | BRNG $2290 \rightarrow$ LWSN B155 |  |

## Multi-user environment

- Allows for distributed timetabling with sharing of resources
- Rooms, instructors, and students
- Typical use: distributed data entry + centralized timetabling
- Data are entered by schedule deputies at each academic unit
- Course timetable is produced at a central timetabling office



## Course Management

## Lifecycle of a Course Timetable

I. Data entry
2. Automated timetabling (solver is used to compute a timetable)
3. Timetabling adjustments (interactive changes)
4. Student scheduling, classes start
5. Additional, ad-hoc (mostly room) changes made throughout the term
6. Roll-forward of selected data into the next like term


## Student Scheduling

## Why is scheduling needed?

- To ensure that students will be able to get the courses they need in a multi-section environment
- Students who come early may block later students from being able to get the courses they need

STAT Lec I


BIOL Lec $I$
CHM Lec
CHM Lab (a)
CHMLab (b)

Students can no longer take math and chemistry combination

Class Time Periods

## Goal

Enroll students to classes in a way that maximizes the ability for students to get the courses they need

- Student fills in course requests
- Including priorities, alternatives, and their availabilities
- System suggests a schedule that best meets student needs
- Students have the ability to modify their schedule


## Student Scheduling


! You are not registered for any classes yet. Please click the Build Schedule button in order to complete your registration.

## Student Scheduling

## Option I: Batch (one time)

- All students are scheduled at one time after the timetable is produced based on student pre-registrations
- An optimization process, using the (student scheduling) solver


## Option 2: Online (real-time)

- Students without pre-registrations (e.g., incoming freshmen) can enroll online
- All students can make adjustments to their schedules
- Automatically hold space in sections based on expected student demand
- Reservations, automated wait-list, processing, instructor consents, advisor roles, etc.


## Option 3: Both

- Any combination of various batches and online scheduling



## Examination Timetabling

## What is Examination Timetabling?

- The process of assigning examinations to time periods and locations
- A difficult optimization problem with many competing objectives
- Student conflicts, faculty requirements, space constraints


## Why is it needed?

- The traditional process of mapping lecture times to examination periods does not really work
- More choices for courses mean more potential scheduling conflicts
- Make process easier to manage, fairness and satisfaction, what-ifs


## Many flavors

- Final examinations, evening examinations, mid-terms, ...
- Additional objectives


## Examination Data

Unitime

## Input Data

- Examinations (with students enrolled in them)
- Periods (not overlapping, can have various durations)
- Rooms (with capacities, availabilities, and period preferences)
- Individual examination requirements and preferences
- Distribution constraints (same/different room, same/different period, precedence)

| from: to: | $\left\lvert\, \begin{aligned} & \text { 8:00a } \\ & 10: 00 a \end{aligned}\right.$ | $\left\|\begin{array}{l} 10: 30 a \\ 12: 30 p \end{array}\right\|$ | $\left\|\begin{array}{l} 1: 00 p \\ 3: 00 p \end{array}\right\|$ | $\begin{aligned} & 3: 30 p \\ & 5: 30 p \end{aligned}$ | 7:00p |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \text { Mon } \\ 12 / 09 \end{array}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{array}{c\|} \hline \text { Tue } \\ 12 / 10 \end{array}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{aligned} & \text { Wed } \\ & 12 / 11 \end{aligned}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{gathered} \hline \text { Thu } \\ 12 / 12 \end{gathered}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{gathered} \text { Fri } \\ 12 / 13 \end{gathered}$ |  |  |  |  |  |
| $\begin{gathered} \text { Sat } \\ 12 / 14 \end{gathered}$ |  |  |  |  |  |


|  | Required |
| :--- | :--- |
| $\square$ | Strongly Preferred |
| $\square$ | Preferred |
| $\square$ | Neutral |
| $\square$ | Strongly Discouraged |
| $\square$ | Prohibited |
| $\square$ |  |

## Evening Examinations

- Mondays -Thursdays
-6:30p - 7:30p or 8p - 10p
- 3 days \& early / late
- 2-3 exams for a course
- Student availability


## Examination Problem

Unitime

## Hard Constraints

- No two exams in the same period and room
- Examination must fit the period and room (or rooms)
- Room must be available
- An exam cannot be placed in a period or a room that is prohibited
- Required (hard) distribution constraints must be satisfied


## Soft Constraints / Objectives

- Student conflicts: direct, more than two on a day, back-to-backs
- Period, room, and distribution penalties
... and a few others
- Minimize room splits (and the distance between these rooms, if an exam is split)
- Distance to original room (i.e., the room where the class took place)
- Large exams first
- Rotation (average period)


## Event Management

## Event management

- Management of the remaining classroom space
- Fully distributed, including an (optional) approval process
- Authenticated users can request events
- Faculty can request course-related events


## UNITIME

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## Instructor Scheduling

## Instructors

- Attributes: skills, qualifications, seniority, certifications, etc.
- Maximal teaching load
- Availability and preferences (on time and courses)
- Other: hiring cost, back-to-back / same day / same room preferences, ...


## Courses

- Teaching requests (classes that need an instructor)
- Teaching load
- Number of instructors needed
- Requirements and preferences (instructor and attributes)
- Other: same course, same lecture preferences

Goal: assign instructors to classes in a way that maximizes satisfaction while all the constraints are met

## Instructor Scheduling

## 1. Teaching Request

Teaching Load:
Scheduling Subpart:
Classes:

Include Subparts:

| Instructional Type |
| :--- |
| $\nabla \quad$ CHM 11100 Lec (1 p |
| $\nabla$ CHM 11100 Pso (1 |
| $\nabla$ CHM 11100 Lab |
| Required |
| Preferred |

Same Course Preference
Same Common Part:
Qualification Preferences:

Role Preferences:

Skill Preferences:
Instructor Preferences:

| CHM 11100 | - |
| :--- | ---: |
| Select... | - |
| TA | - |
| Select... | - |
| Select... | - |
| Select... | $\mathbf{~}$ |



## Other Features

## Customization

- Many configuration properties, custom CSS, etc.
- Localization
- User roles \& permissions
- Authentication (CAS, LDAP, Spring Security)
- Custom reports
- JavaScript / Python scripts
- Automation


## Data Exchange

- XML imports and exports
- RESTful APIs (JSON)
- CSV/PDF/iCal exports


## Workshop Demo Instance

- A college with about 6,000 students
- 24 departments entering the data
- Distributed data entry, centralized timetabling
- Distance learning timetabled separately
- For this workshop, the timetabling has been decentralized
- Shared resources (especially rooms)
- Student demands based on curricula
- Loosely based on the College of Education, Masaryk University
- Web: demo.unitime.org/workshop
- Accounts: user00I/pwd00I ... user05I/pwd05 I


## demo.unitime.org/workshop

Unitime

| User | Department | Courses | Classes | Instructors |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 20, 26, 48 | Art | 57 | 154 | 43 |
| 38, 40 | Biology | 33 | 111 | 41 |
| 14,49 | Civics | 58 | 95 | 21 |
| 17, 18, 28, 42 | Czech | 114 | 225 | 32 |
| 15, 30, 36 | English | 157 | 250 | 50 |
| 1,22 | French | 56 | 81 | 18 |
| 24, 33 | Geography | 25 | 43 | 19 |
| 8, 12, 34 | German | 78 | 133 | 20 |
| 27, 47 | Health Ed | 21 | 39 | 17 |
| 6,32 | History | 39 | 93 | 49 |
| 4, 45 | IT | 49 | 95 | 20 |
| 9, 10 | Lanquage | 23 | 89 | 14 |
| 23, 25, 29 | Mathematics | 53 | 104 | 27 |
| 41, 51 | Music | 59 | 196 | 17 |
| 37, 46 | Pedagogy | 17 | 76 | 28 |
| 2, 7, 31, 35, 43 | Physics | 170 | 416 | 84 |
| 5,19 | Prime Ped | 34 | 99 | 16 |
| 16 | Psychology | 40 | 109 | 14 |
| 21, 39 | Physical Ed | 24 | 64 | 16 |
| 11, 50 | Russian | 83 | 156 | 18 |
| 13 | Social Ed | 89 | 136 | 75 |
| 3,44 | Special Ed | 135 | 231 | 74 |

## Username:

 user001Password: pwd001

## Username:

 user051Password: pwd051

## Introducing UniTime

- More resources at http://bit.ly/unitime43docs


## For more details, please see us at the conference

- Introducing UniTime (Sunday, I:30pm - 4:30pm in Crocker)
- UniTime: State of the Project (Monday, II:I5am - 12:00pm in Watercourt A)
- UniTime at Faculty of Medicine (Monday, I:30pm - 2:15 pm in Watercourt A)
- Student Scheduling at Purdue (Tuesday, II:I5am - 12:00pm in Watercourt A)
- Event Management in UniTime (Wed, II:00am - II:45am in Watercourt A)
- Or visit www.unitime.org

