

Quarters to Semesters Transition Team Meeting  
January 21, 2009  
Baker 230

Present: Adeyanju, Benton, Calcamuggio, Carpenter, Conrath, Cornell, Day, Descutner, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Flaherty, Giesey, Leinbaugh, Lombardi, Miles, Munhall, Neiman, Noftz, Scanlan, Sealover, Thomas, Tuck, Webster, Wickman, Willan, Williford

Guest: Yvonne Nice, Office of the Registrar

Descutner called the meeting to order and shared a list of possible start/end dates for Maymesters and summer sessions for discussion.

Giesey attended a faculty meeting at Wright State University at which their transition team presented their current progress toward moving to semesters. Giesey reported that Wright State has done more work on details and less on structures than we have to date. Their trustees are voting in March on a commitment to move to semesters. They had a good meeting and a cooperative spirit was much in evidence.

Giesey asked for comments on the transition structural organization that he presented last week. There were no comments and so for now it is assumed that this structure is sound.

Neiman shared the draft academic calendar with Carl Martin, superintendent of Athens city schools. Martin will forward the draft calendar to area school superintendents. He recognizes the importance of dovetailing with the OU start, end and break dates and will draft school calendars following receipt of our final calendar.

Benton introduced Yvonne Nice who annually constructs the academic calendar for publication.

**The calendar:**

- **Winter Break**
  - The draft provides a four week winter break for all years with one exception in year 2014-15. Benton suggests adjusting this outlier year by moving the start date forward to August 18 to allow a close on Dec. 13, giving us a three week break and no adjustment for summer start.
    - Leinbaugh said that pushing grading into breaks should be avoided.
  - A four week winter break pushes the second semester closing date further into May, with some commencements falling on Mother's day. Miami U. is backing away from earlier expressed concerns about commencements on Mother's day and is sticking with their current calendar.

- There was a question on how a four week break would function. Could that time be programmed? If we go with a four week break, we need a compelling argument for how it could be used academically.
  - A January start after MLK day causes custodial staff to work on the holiday, incurring overtime costs and morale issues. The same thing happens in fall if we require custodial staff to work on Labor Day.
  - Wickman reported that Graduate Student Senate passed a resolution to commit the academic calendar to a four week winter break. Wickman cited graduate students' desire for a standard four weeks to allow more time to do research. Because they lose a week to the holidays they need a little more time for research, paper writing etc.
    - Adeyanju noted that undergraduates also seem to prefer a four week break. They want the extra time to earn money, to relax and prepare for the next semester, for travel and holiday visits.
    - Scanlan asked if students are not aware of the longer summer resulting from a shorter winter break.
  - Cornell asked how our draft compares with other Ohio schools and our peers. Benton said other schools are all over the board.
    - Carpenter's review of calendars at peer institutions revealed that most held to a three week winter break.
  - USO is emphasizing transferability; Cornell said it might be advantageous to align with the other state schools to enhance relocate/transfer enrollments. Williford's survey of faculty preferences on start/end dates and breaks showed the greatest preference is for finishing earlier in the year and having a long summer.
    - Adeyanju asked how the commencement in the second week in May aligns with others in the state.
      - A three week break moves graduation earlier than most other schools; a four week break aligns graduation with most other schools.
    - Scanlan noted that surveying faculty, staff, and students on the single winter break issue could result in a 50-50 split, making the Transition Team's decision one way or the other unpopular with half of our constituents.
- **Maymester:**
  - The Maymester idea provides another 3-4 week break for research, rest or renewal.
    - Carpenter discussed the Maymester option with Gar Rothwell, chair, Environmental and Plant Biology, who saw it as a possible solution to his department's problem with a short fall-spring break

- Benton said that most schools start a three week Maymester on May 11 or 12. Four week Maymesters are usually used for study abroad. While most Maymesters start at the same time, end dates vary for different academic reasons.
  - Neiman added that May provides lower cost for study abroad along with good weather. Scanlan will talk with Modern Languages about the Maymester advantages for study abroad.
- Sealover said that the additional Maymester would be attractive to commuter students. Regional campuses will have difficulty accommodating their curricular structure to semesters but intersession options will help them cover their curricular needs.
- Thomas added that the Maymester option would enhance faculty creativity in curricular redesign.
  - Cornell reminded the group to consider how dorms will be refreshed with the shorter winter break, and what will occur if students stay in the dorms through Maymester, thereby shortening summer dorm renewal time as well.
- Cornell will check with financial aid regarding how Maymesters would be financed. Financial aid may not cover additions intersessions.
- Descutner said that decisions will be needed soon on the length of winter break and Maymester. Education Abroad is very important to OU and to USO, and we should try to line up with other schools' formats to enhance our offerings.
- **Summer Session:**
  - With variations on the date commencement falls, most summers have an extra week which gives us flexibility.
  - Tuck cautioned everyone that as we discuss the calendar options with colleagues, we need to be clear about the consequences of each scenario.
  - Descutner noted that there are many ways to divide summer. We will focus on the variety of summer options at our next meeting.
  - Williford reminded everyone that with what ever schedule we adopt we will always have flexible scheduling options.
    - Esmond-Kiger said that weeks without regular classes can be used for special programs.
  - Descutner asked Noftz if administrative staff have issues with Maymester. Noftz indicated that the staff will adjust their priorities to the calendar we choose.
  - A four-week winter break does not necessarily eliminate the Maymester but would cause Maymester to overlap with the 1<sup>st</sup> summer session start.
    - Tuck asked how students would take summer courses with a one week overlap with Maymester. Maymesters need lengthy contact hours leaving little time to take an additional first summer term course.

- The 16 weeks of summer can be divided in a number of ways. Neiman suggested diagramming a variety of options to review next week.

Calcamuggio: **Communication Plan for the Transition**

Ideas for first steps in planning communication strategies to assist with informing and marketing:

- Establish a small communication work group to develop communication pieces for current and prospective students and their parents.
  - Calcamuggio will invite appropriate faculty, staff, and student representatives.
- Work with the community on informational pieces
- Provide alumni with print pieces to inform them and those (students) they recruit
- Additional media outlets to assist with information dissemination
- Create an identity (logo) for Q2S so that print and media pieces have a common look

Types of communication:

- Inspirational:
  - What big ideas and values shape the transition?
    - We are not just moving from 10 to 15 week curricular formats.
    - Is there a team of innovators, excellent teachers and others that are engaged in reimagining our process?
    - Should we create events around the transition; invite speakers/idea makers to inspire faculty with new concepts?
    - Review trends and best practices to inform our transition.
    - Create pieces for visitation programs that include statements such as:
      - The excellent education you have always expected from OHIO will only be enhanced and improved by moving to semesters.
        - Scanlan cautioned that statements such as this could indicate we weren't offering the very best education before this change. Calcamuggio said we would emphasize people, learning environments, things that are constants and advantages/challenges/opportunities presented by moving to 15 week semesters.
      - Create communication pieces for special Precollege sessions with take-aways.
- Perspiration:
  - How will the work be accomplished? What do we need to do?
    - Establish the frequency, content, and delivery of communications to stakeholders. She will create a common template for all print and media usage changing the content for each particular audience.
- Response to communication first steps:

- Cornell said this is excellent work and suggests forming a work group quickly because recruiting teams are getting questions now on how semesters will affect new/relocating students.
- Calcamuggio was asked to form a communications work group that she would chair as soon as possible. Cornell reminded the team that this is going to be a challenging year for enrollment and we need to address any and all issues effectively.
  - Calcamuggio was asked to form the work group and to begin developing a variety of print and media pieces. She will estimate costs and Descutner will work with the president and provost to support these projects. We need to be careful about costs but we also need to do a good job of communicating the change to the semester format.

Descutner reminded senate chairs that if they are doing surveys of their constituents they will most likely be asked to provide their results to *The Post* for publication.

The meeting was adjourned.