

Quarters to Semesters Transition Team
Baker Center 230
February 18, 2009

Present: Adeyanju, Benton, Carpenter, Cheripko, Day, Descutner, Downs, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Flaherty, Leinbaugh, Lombardi, Munhall, Neiman, Noftz, Scanlan, Sealover, Thomas, Tuck, Webster, Willan, Williford

Descutner reported that both Wright State University and the University of Cincinnati have indicated interest in a 14 week calendar. This calendar seems to conflict with the policy of 75 class days mandated by current Ohio law. UC and WSU intend to make up the difference between a 14 week semester and the 75 class day requirement by extending each class meeting by 5 minutes throughout the academic year.

Our thinking has been around a 15 week calendar structure. Carpenter commented that the assumption on the part of WSU and UC that an extra five minutes added on to each class is equivalent to an additional week each semester is fundamentally flawed. UC has justified the 14 week calendar with a desire to coordinate with student co-op programs. Four state universities built their academic calendar on 15 weeks (Miami, Bowling Green, Shawnee State, Toledo), and four others have 14 week calendars. Day added we currently have variability in the number of minutes classes meet each week when they meet four versus two days per week, so adding five minutes is not very logical. Carpenter has asked Teri Geiger, Director of Government Relations, to clarify the 75 day requirement with the Chancellor.

Draft Statement for Endorsement

Descutner distributed the Draft Statement for Endorsement to the Quarters to Semesters Transition Team for discussion and approval. The statement is:

1. Ohio University would have a 17 week fall semester that includes 75 days of instruction, a week for final exams, and time off for Thanksgiving and national holidays.
2. Ohio University would have a 17 week spring semester that includes 74 days of instruction, a week for final exams, and time off for national holidays and spring break.
3. Ohio University would have either a 3 week break or a 4 week break between fall and spring semesters. Advantages of each option would be shared with deans, who will make the final decision on this and all other calendar options.
4. Ohio University would have 2 six week summer sessions. The first session would begin at least one week after the end of spring semester. The second session would end at least one week before the beginning of fall semester. Flexibly scheduled courses within either summer session would continue to be an option for departments and schools.

Discussion:

- Giesey pointed out that spring semester will be only 74 days due to MLK day.
- We should add a statement to #4 that flexibly scheduled classes will still be an accepted practice during the summer as it is now.
- Descutner will ask Chairs Michael Adeyanju (Undergraduate Student Senate) and Pete Wickman (Graduate Student Senate) to provide him with language on the benefits associated with their preferences for a 3 or 4 week winter intersession.

Thomas moved to approve the Draft Statement. While no vote was taken, the group expressed unanimous agreement with the statement as amended (point 4).

EPSA Resolutions:

EPSA has approved and will be forwarding three resolutions to Faculty Senate for first reading and approval by vote. They are:

1. Resolution of the transition of General Education Requirements from quarters to semesters
2. Giesey reported on changes in Tier requirements. Students will be required to take a minimum of two credit hours in each of the six subject areas in Tier II and a total of at least 21 hours.
3. Resolution on the number of semester hours per course (3 will be the norm) and course meeting times (MWF and TTH) for the transition from quarters to semesters
4. Resolution specifying the minimum number of hours to graduate after the transition from quarters to semesters
 - a. The normal minimum hours to graduate is expected to be 120. It was suggested that if a program is currently at 192 quarter hours, a reduction to 128 semester hours could be acceptable. However, semester hours above 128 will require justification.
 - i. Scanlan said that science departments in particular need to know that 128 semester hours is considered neutral.
 - ii. Leinbaugh suggested specifying these parameters in the guidelines. Graduate programs will need to be held to degree completion in a timely fashion.
 1. EPSA did discuss graduate hours but is waiting for an opportunity to work with Graduate Council to draft that resolution together.

The Advising Plans

Advising Plan Statement:

Each college will develop an advising plan. Since the approach that the colleges take to advising varies, it is expected that each advising plan will be different. An Advising Plan format will be devised. The Advising Taskforce, which is soon to be formed, will have the task of developing the format for the advising plans that the colleges will submit in year two. This Taskforce will set minimal standards for the advising plans and will recommend establishing central advising structures and functions to support the Q2S transition. College advising plans would include the following:

1. Description of how the college does advising
2. Budget for transitional advising needs
3. Description of how transitional advising will be done

All advising plans will ensure that advisors are familiar with the semesters curricula and competent to advise students; that all students will have an individual meeting with an advisor and be supplied with a document outlining the courses they should take to complete their degrees under the semester system; and that the majority of advising funds will be used in a way to provide value to the university after the transition.

The Advising Plan's focus is on needs of the students during transition.

- Descutner said a central point where students from any major can have their questions answered is desirable.
- Faculty and staff will need quality training on advising for the transition.
- We will respect the differences among the colleges in their advising cultures.
 - Lombardi was asked to talk with residence life staff about how they will manage students with questions on the transition.

Questions and discussion:

Advising funds (last sentence of last paragraph):

- Day asked for clarification on the statement that funds would provide value after the transition given that funding is one time. The answer was that this was meant to reflect the idea that, to the extent possible, we should invest funds in training people that would still be here after the transition. Faculty Advising
 - Neiman's recollection (of his experience from the transition at Kent State) is that advising was the most time consuming aspect of the transition aside from activities involved in actual conversion. If a college requires Group I faculty to do the advising, it will take considerable time when they need to be focusing on their scholarship. A solution may be to employ more staff in the college offices rather than place the entire advising burden on Group I faculty.
 - College of Business: Day said they use staff to advise students on the core and faculty to advise on each major.

- Using that funding for temporary staff will not have a long-term benefit. This funding is OTO to be directed for use in a finite period of time.
 - Williford asked why funding could not be base instead of OTO since we're expecting advising to extend well beyond the transition, i.e., cohort 1, then 2, then 3.
 - Neiman said base funding is not needed because advisers are expected to learn the programs within a short period of time. The first few years will be a challenge but once expertise is developed faculty should be able to continue advising without assistance.
 - Day cautioned that we can't claim the OTO funding will result in a major change in structure or systemic improvement to advising.
 - Sealover suggested requiring a statement about how the plan will continue once OTO money has been expended.

Training:

- Current staff should be trained to handle transition advising rather than hiring short-term employees to handle the required additional advising load.
- Tuck said the Advising Plan should include advising training.
 - Jorgensen said that Toledo did not hire people off the street but instead trained their own staff to do the advising effectively.
- As an example, Scanlan mentioned that several years ago student advising was not consistent in A&S. Training was offered to increase the skill level of faculty advisors until they felt more comfortable with this task.

Communication:

- Scanlan said that we ought to ask for statements on how colleges intend to communicate their advising plans.

Targets and Guidelines

- Scanlan suggested giving chairs/directors targets and letting each department/school do what they think is needed to meet the target.

The Advising Taskforce

- Thomas asked why each college is being asked to develop an advising plan to forward to the Advising Taskforce before the Advising Taskforce has formats and guidelines developed for the colleges to use for their submissions?
 - Thomas also suggested adding milestones to the Advising Taskforce format.
- Descutner said that the Taskforce will set minimal standards for advising plans and recommend establishing central advising structures.

Curriculum conversion and advising considerations

- Benton suggested that faculty think about the transition students at the same time as they are creating the new curriculum. The registrar must have a transition degree audit program in place to implement the conversion. Encoding programs during transition will be critical and time-consuming.

- Giesey said faculty have not been working on the transition yet. They were advised to focus exclusively on designing the best curriculum possible in their program areas and then tackle how to get from quarters to semesters.
- Benton added that college staff should think about how they will handle exceptions to the DARS as part of their Advising Plans.
 - Advisors should create contracts for students that facilitate a mutual and clear understanding of courses needed to graduate.
- Descutner added that statements to this effect need to be included in the report.

Calendar Examples: Benton circulated two calendars; one with a three week winter intersession and one with a four week winter intersession that show summer sessions on both.

Descutner asked team members to review the Advising Plan and the calendars for next week. The meeting was adjourned.