

Quarters to Semesters Team Meeting  
October 1, 2008  
Baker 230

Present: Adeyanju, Benton, Bible, Calcamuggio, Carpenter, Cheripko, Conrath, Cornell, Day, Descutner, Downs, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Flaherty, Jeff Giesey (EPSA), Leinbaugh, Lombardi, Lopez-Permouth, Miles, Noftz, Ruff, Scanlan, Sealover, Thomas, Tuck, Smith, Watts, Webster, Willan, Williford

**Updates to the Quarters to Semesters Conversion Document:**

Descutner: Changes to this document are intended to keep current with suggested refinements as we move forward. They should not be seen as final.

Constraint 3: Heading revised to “Conversion Should be Faculty Workload Neutral *Consistent with the Specific College’s Workload Policy*”

1. Colleges are currently developing workload policies consistent with department/school program needs and these policies will still need to exist in converted form under the semester system

Constraint 4: Language added, “Recommendations on options for flexibly scheduled semester courses meeting for fewer than 15 weeks will be informed by scheduling practices at other institutions on the semester system.”

**Request: Benton asked that a week for final exams after each term be added to the calendar.**

Constraint 7: Language has been added to acknowledge that there will be alternative scheduling patterns within the uniform weekly schedule.

1. Question: Should we think about a questionnaire to faculty for feedback on how many classes are expected to deviate from the standard block? Answer: If it’s just a small handful, it won’t be a problem. Moreover, requests for alternate scheduling should come from departments/schools and should be justified on pedagogical grounds.
2. Scheduling Flexibility: Conversion offers opportunities to schedule and use space more efficiently than we do now.
3. Regional campus students are commuters; the majority of students want classes scheduled two-days per week. Regional campuses likely will request more flexibility.
  - a. Question: Giesey asked how the classroom situation is currently constrained. Answer: Benton says we are completely full now; no extra classroom space is available. Evening graduate course time blocks are also completely full.

Note: Descutner and Carpenter are consulting weekly with Faculty Senate (Thomas, Lopez-Permouth) and EPSA to keep communication open regarding where recommendations from the transition team will need to go for approval. EPSA/UCC will need to determine hours to graduation and should consider the concept of the majority of courses being 3 hours under semesters. In addition, the conversion of general education will have to be coordinated by EPSA/UCC in parallel with the work of departments/schools as they convert their majors. Some comments related to this area include:

4. Reasons to deviate from the 3 SH standard should be pedagogically based.
5. All deans support the constraints and will ask schools/departments to work within them.
6. Day noted that as this committee makes recommendations, it will need to be aware of how implementation actually occurs in the majors.

## **Document Discussion**

### **Conversion Principle 2: The Majority of Semester Courses Must be 3 Hours**

1. The standard conversion will be 4 QHs (quarters) to 3 SHs (semesters).
2. If we had predominately 4 hour courses under semesters, we would have to accept three transfer hours from other schools for what would be a four quarter hour course here
3. Should we decide to maintain the majority of coursework in 4 hour SH (which is possible) pressure on faculty resources would lessen but major requirements would need to be packaged into fewer, larger units which could constrain variety to reach neutrality. Example: Using a 4 SH standard, within 128 hours to graduation, sections would go from 43 (3SH) to 32 sections (4SH). We would find that for students to meet all their major and general education requirements we might be forced to focus those requirements in fewer areas or change the balance between these two areas. .
  - a. Three hour courses provide more flexibility and are more consistent with what other schools offer. EPSA will take this issue under discussion.
  - b. Rather than thinking about credit hour standards, we ought to reframe the discussion around how many hours of a particular requirement we want students to complete.
4. Descutner noted that 60% of our quarter hour offerings are in 4 hours. A survey of Ohio semester schools shows their standard is 3 SH.

### **Conversion Principle 3: Conversion Should Be Faculty Workload Neutral Consistent with the Specific College's Workload Policy**

1. The current quarter teaching load is expressed as 12 QH per 3 terms; when other schools have converted to semesters, the semester load is expressed as 12 SH per 2 terms. The conversion also changes the effect of faculty release time on the ability of a unit to offer its curriculum. A release will have a greater impact since it is now 50% of the academic year as opposed to 33%. To maintain neutrality, we have to deliver a four-year degree with the same instructional and staff resources that we have today.

- a. If the curriculum a department/school builds is very large, then contact hours to deliver it are increased. Departments/schools can't focus on just one variable at a time—they must understand how a change in one variable affects all others.
  - i. Colleges will define their own workload policies but they should still arrive at a neutral position, which means that they must approach the workload question in conjunction with the conversion of the curriculum

#### **Conversion Principle 4: The Conversion Should be Neutral with Section Staffing and Seat Availability**

1. When repackaging the curriculum departments/schools should:
  - a. Be concerned with the number of sections they need to deliver the new curriculum to the same number of students. Electives may be reduced under semesters.
    - i. Departments/schools will create a curriculum with the faculty and sections they have to allow them to instruct the same number of students.  
Example: If you have 100 seats per quarter in a particular course, you teach 300 students every year. Under semesters you would still need to teach 300 students so the number of sections offered would increase. The additional sections would still fit within the classroom capacity since they drop from 4 to 3 hours per week, creating room for additional sections as long as we schedule efficiently.
  - b. Another consideration is how workload would impact the ability to offer the sections required to deliver the new curriculum. For example, the Calendar Study Committee report includes a concern that courses supported by GAs would have a problem if you converted a one-course per quarter teaching assignment to a one course per semester teaching assignment. This would be true in terms of classes but if the sections dropped to 3 hours per week, a GA would actually have fewer contact hours per year even if the teaching assignment changed to 2-1. The point is that you cannot evaluate the impact of the conversion by looking only at one variable. An increase in one dimension might simultaneously be connected to an offsetting decrease in another.
  - c. Departments/schools always should consider the larger pattern, keeping in mind that we will repackage the curriculum with same number of faculty for the same number of students.
    - i. We do not want to arbitrarily increase section sizes across the board and should not need to if other variables are kept within the neutrality principle.
    - ii. We do not want to decrease quality.
      1. Adeyanju said that student concerns regarding the move to semesters center on 1) maintenance of the liberal arts core, and 2)

retention of OU's unique offerings. Students are wary of cuts to our curriculum to accommodate semesters. Descutner encouraged Adeyanju to assist us with constructing a principle on retaining the liberal arts core and uniqueness of our offerings.

- iii. The use of partial semester courses could be used to increase variety.
- d. It is likely that the Summer Term will become more important to maintain a variety of electives and to provide more trailing sections to assist students with degree completion. Question: Cornell asked if we should make a principle on what summer ought to be as there is no consistency across the state. Answer: Day said summer will be a focus of one of our future meetings.
  - i. The proposition is on the table for making summer a third full term.
    - 1. This possibility will constrain break times and make it harder on facilities to refresh dorms and classrooms.
  - ii. Question: Could summer become "on load" for faculty if we offer three full service terms? Right now summer term is run through Lifelong and Distance Learning which brings in considerable revenue.
    - 1. Everything is still up for discussion, including this issue. We will ultimately need to include an opinion on this in our recommendations.
    - 2. Cornell noted that the recent Higher Education Act created a new 12 month Pell grant to provide students with financial aid throughout the year rather than requiring them to spread dollars over previously unsupported terms.

#### **Discussion of Special Case: Conversion of General Education Requirements:**

- 1. Tier I courses average 4 or 5 QHs and do not convert exactly within the 3 to 2 ratio. To begin work on General Education, we need to first determine what the Math and English requirements will be. Then we can build the remaining general education and major curricular conversions on that basis.
  - a. Examples on page 8 of this document provide various conversion scenarios for Math and English in Tier I
  - b. Tier II would be constructed somewhere between 18 and 21 semester hours depending on conversion choices for Tiers I and III. If you go with 3 SH for Math and 3 SH in English then 21 hours of Tier II becomes seven 3SH courses.
- 2. Sealover's suggestion is to stay away from increasing the size of Gen Ed and to use rounding down to help maintain neutrality and provide some flexibility.
  - a. Offerings in Mathematics and Natural Sciences as well as popular Tier II courses in psychology and sociology/anthropology usually have 5 QHs, including labs, and may convert to 4 hours under semesters.

- b. Sealover suggested rounding down any fractions when converting to the new Gen. Ed. requirements. Since they have just been implemented with this incoming class, we don't know how long students will really need to graduate depending on their major requirements. Rounding up might hurt students' ability to graduate in four years.
  - i. UCC and EPSA will need to manage these policy decisions. They will need to decide what an Ohio University degree needs to encompass. When we have a group of faculty and UCC working together on conversions, the details of implementation will become clearer.
- c. Departments/Schools, Colleges, and UCC/ESPA will need to work in parallel and iteratively to balance changes with majors and service courses with the conversion of college-level and Gen. Ed. requirements.
- d. Question: Do we have a calculation for the upper limit on the comprehensive fee? Do we know the equivalent under semesters to the current cutoff of 20 hours under semesters? What is the variability on these fees across the state?
  - i. Scanlan said that if we pressure units to keep to a minimum of 120 SH, it should be understood that this is just a minimum. No student should have to pay more for a program that requires more hours to complete.
  - ii. We should be thinking in terms of educational requirements, not minimum hours to graduate but units also should not go beyond the minimum without sound academic reasons.

Descutner adjourned at 8:56 a.m. noting that there is a Board meeting this week and that we should follow the news. (The Board will act on the proposal to convert to a semester system at the October 2 meeting.)