

Quarters to Semesters Transition Team Meeting
October 15, 2008
Baker 230

Present: Adeyanju, Benton, Carpenter, Conrath, Conry, Cornell, Day, Descutner, Downs, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Flaherty, Giesey, Lombardi, Lopez-Permouth, Noftz, Ruff, Scanlan, Sealover, Thomas, Tuck, Watts, Webster, Wickman, Willan, Williford

Carpenter Report:

- Faculty Senate presentation went well and faculty had good questions.
- Chairs and Directors meeting
 - Provided an overview of the *Quarters to Semesters Conversion: Assumptions, Constraints, and Principles* document and emphasized that materials are located on the provost's website.
- Connor, Descutner, Giesey, James, Ingram, Lopez, Leinbaugh, Scanlan, and Thomas met to define areas under the purview of EPSA. These three areas were identified as within EPSA purview.
 - Minimum hours to graduate
 - Uniform weekly schedule
 - Majority of semester hours should be three.
- In addition EPSA and UCC will consider conversion of GenEd.
- The implementation committee needs to be appointed soon. This committee will have a minimum of one representative from each department/school to coordinate the conversion to ensure that conversion of various components do not create obstacles for others.

Descutner Report:

The Deans have been providing input on the funds that the colleges will need to compensate faculty for serving as coordinators and to support the additional advising for students impacted by the conversion. This information will be shared with the transition team at the next meeting.

Calendar Discussion:

The committee reviewed the semester calendars of 15 institutions including our aspirational peers and key Ohio semester schools.

1. Options were discussed for a variety of arrangements including split semesters, two 8-week courses, etc.
 - a. U. of Tennessee: split semesters run concurrently with the full semester. Courses offered in split semesters are often in physical education and for one credit only.
 - b. U. of Indiana: Also runs split semesters concurrently with the full semester. Split courses are intensive 8-weeks for 3SH.

- i. Indiana noted that running split semesters concurrently with the full semester works if the splits are back to back. Scheduling problems arise when students select the second week of a split.
2. Winter/Summer Sessions
 - a. U of Delaware has a five week optional winter session, not required for graduation. Winter sessions increase options for adding variety to the curriculum but can also push spring term to a later start and completion.
 - b. **Question:** Tuck asked if this would negate the opportunity to increase internships. **Answer:** Williford said that Winter Term options can be taken for study abroad, internships etc.
 - i. Tuck likes concept of two fall mini-breaks (Clemson, UT); one in October, one Thanksgiving week.
 - ii. **Question:** Cornell asked about using Winter/Summer sessions to help transition students to semesters. **Answer:** Perhaps a summer term prior to the fall implementation would assist transitioning students.
 - iii. Scanlan liked the mini-break and suggested using a fall break to shut down campus during Halloween. Other campuses have done this successfully by requiring students living within a 500 mile radius to return home that week. This would help to reduce the party school image.
 - iv. Since we are recruiting as many high achieving students as we can, we should remember that they and their parents do look at rankings.
 - c. Thomas noted that whatever we decide about the calendar structure, the primary motivation must be to transform the curriculum to achieve academic excellence.
3. Winter Session would also contribute to the community by keeping faculty and students in Athens during the holidays. This helps to attract new business to the community by enhancing possible holiday sales opportunities.
 - a. Esmond-Kiger would like to be able to offer winter internships. Some internships run well into the semester and she would like the ability to offer an 8 week course following such an internship.
 - b. Tuck said we could accommodate an 8 week course without having to build it into the calendar. Scanlan agreed that departments ought to have a choice; 6-8 week field experiences followed a variety of short terms could be accommodated without mandating such a structure.
4. Regarding a Thanksgiving break of only two additional days, Esmond-Kiger said students need an additional day to travel. Trying to hold classes on Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week is often counter productive.

Models:

Thomas summarized the discussion into three models:

1. Straight 15 week semester plan; no intersessions, no short courses, no splits
2. Split 8-week session offerings

3. 15 week semesters with intersessions (see Clemson, Delaware, U. Conn., UVA)

Model Discussion:

1. **Question**, Adeyanju: Would a four-six week intersession allow students to work during the holiday season? Our current break provides enough time for students to earn more money. Wickman suggested researching winter intersessions regarding the advantage/disadvantage to students.
2. Summer Session
 - a. Carpenter: Lots of semester schools have two summer terms. The whole month of January for a break would curtail summer. U-Conn starts Aug 15 and finishes by Dec. 15. Spring starts Jan. 20. The winter intersession is only two weeks.
 - b. We are going to have 15 week semesters. Do we want ½ terms as well?
 - i. Tuck thought that would be difficult to manage.
 - ii. Thomas thinks too much flexibility would be difficult.
 - iii. Scanlan said to call schools that are currently running 8 week terms and ask how they work. In reference to Clemson's Maymester, Thomas suggested contacting them to see how they like it.
 - c. Benton added that we have flexibly scheduled classes now but we need an understanding that grades would not come out until the end of the semester; degree confirmations would not be done in a mid-term framework.
 - d. A fifteen week semester with shorter 7.5 week terms should be available.

Decision:

A fifteen week semester calendar with an additional exam week (16 weeks) was adopted by the Transition Team. Additional arrangements for short terms can be accommodated within this framework. Grades and graduation confirmations will be done following each semester. Descutner and Carpenter will write language to this effect.

Continued Winter Intersession Discussion:

1. Scanlan: Keeping a winter intersession is good for study abroad and other innovative programming, something like the UConn model. Two weeks is too short; four weeks would be better (Esmond-Kiger).
 - a. Thomas does teach on a two week model; it's very intensive and his students work well in that setting.
2. **Question**, Tuck: If we had a four-week winter block, people could do two weeks within that. Does a full month open opportunities? **Answer**, Adeyanju: Yes, this is better for study abroad and provides time to shut down dorms for cleaning and to save POM. Adeyanju offered the following calendar suggestion:
 - a. **Fall Semester, August 18 through November 28**
 - i. Thanksgiving Recess, November 19 through November 23
 - ii. Exam week: November 24 through November 28

- b. **Intersession** all of December
- c. **Spring Semester, January 5 through May 4**
 - i. Spring Break, March 16 through March 20
 - ii. Exam week: April 27 through May 1
- d. **Summer session**, May 19 through August 3
 - i. 1st Session, May 19 through June 19
 - ii. 2nd Session, June 19 through August 3
 - iii. Full Summer Session, May 19 through August 3

U of Delaware provides high flexibility in the winter break, Dec. 19 through Feb. 9. **Question:** Lombardi asked what the advantage is for academics. **Ideas:** Williford attended a private college with a 4-1-4 calendar. The Winter Session was mandatory; expectation was that everyone does something different for that time, for example, study abroad, internships, or special coursework. Students looked forward to it because it was a refreshing change. Consequently their spring semester didn't end until late May. Flaherty said we could put high demand coursework in a winter session.

Process for decision-making:

1. The Team concluded that the three semester models followed by a series of questions regarding preferences on the following be sent in a survey to faculty and students.
 - a. Summer Term—how many weeks?
 - b. Winter Intersession—how many weeks?
 - i. Time for searches, research?
 - c. Internship Opportunities
2. Questions would be arranged to relate to a particular model. Faculty and students would rank order preferences. Lopez pointed out that some answers have already been provided in various Calendar Committee reports.
3. Esmond-Kiger offered the College of Business online survey instrument for use in this project. The survey should be designed to yield concrete data averaging preferences resulting in percentages for each question. It was also suggested that Institutional Research handle the survey.

Adjourned, 9:05 by David Descutner