

Quarters to Semesters Transition Team Meeting Notes

October 8, 2008

Ellis Hall 113

Present: Benton, Calcamuggio, Carpenter, Cheripko, Connavino, Michelle (for Miles), Conrath, Conry, Cornell, Day, Descutner, Downs, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Flaherty, Giesey (EPSA), Leary, Robert (for Adeyanju), Leinbaugh, Lombardi, Lopez, Nofzt, Ruff, Sealover, Smith, Thomas, Tuck, Watts, Webster, Wickman, Willan

Announcement: Ohio University Board of Trustees approved the transition to semesters at the October 2-3 meeting

Descutner reviewed two changes to the Quarters to Semesters Conversion document:

Conversion Principle 4...required and elective courses, section size, and the workload of faculty. Addition: A particularly important consideration will be the availability of trailer sections for course sequences which might require scheduling sections in the summer.

New Conversion Principle 5: Maintaining Academic Quality

As departments/schools work to convert their curricula, they should adhere to the principle of (1) maintaining the academic quality of general education courses to ensure that the university's commitment to liberal education is not compromised, and (2) the academic quality of their major courses to ensure that the university's commitment to intensive, discipline-based education is not compromised.

Descutner shared a press release from Ohio State University Provost Joseph Alutto wherein it was reported to OSU faculty that the university must switch to semesters by 2012. Descutner pointed out two statements:

- ...because most schools are on the semester system officials are concerned about transferability, and
- Despite having successfully led the opposition to a semester system in the past, Gunther (Dick Gunther, chair, Faculty Council) would not oppose the move this time.

Descutner added that when Chancellor Fingerhut visited our Faculty Senate, he affirmed his preference for semesters.

We are initiating conversations with Washington State Community College and Hocking College so that they are partners as we plan our transitions to semesters together.

Academic calendars at other universities, Carpenter

- Carpenter shared information on his review of academic calendars at 15 institutions, including our aspirational peers.
- This information is relevant to Constraint 4: Same Number of Weeks Per Year
 - Thirteen of the 15 institutions use a standard three 10-week quarter conversion to two 15 week semesters, typically with additional days for final exams.
 - Two universities, Indiana and Tennessee, have 15 week semesters but also have 8 week courses (1st and 2nd session arrangement at Tennessee).
 - There is a wide variety of summer course packages.
 - The committee should review this material for more discussion next week.
 - Descutner believes a 15 week semester format will be the simplest. He recommended endorsing that format and building flexibility into the calendar later.
 - Thomas wants to review these options in terms of their impact on Gen. Ed.

General Education Course Enrollment Report: Benton

Benton provided a spreadsheet listing General Education coursework by Tier from 2003-04 through 2007-08 showing annual quarter hours and enrollments. Courses not taught in the last five years were not included. Day noted that Tier calculations dropped by .333 across the board by adding the Tier I J course as suggested last meeting. General Education coursework, as the spreadsheet shows, is predominantly in 4 QHs.

Consultant Dr. Andrew Jorgensen, University of Toledo: Tuck

Andy Jorgensen, Consultant for Transition Conversion, will be coming to campus November 6 (evening) and November 7. We may arrange a dinner with him on the 6th. Dr. Jorgensen will meet with this group and EPSA on Friday, Nov. 7. Please hold 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. on the 7th for this additional Transition Team Meeting.

Jorgensen has been reviewing our documents and receives meeting summaries. He noted that semester hours to graduate at 120 SH could affect subsidy. However, the impact of 120 hours versus 128 is not limited to subsidy only, though that may happen at some point. There are other factors, such as:

- If many students do drop their total number of hours, the enrollment in classes would concomitantly drop. This could be a good thing if many of your classes, especially large lectures, are at capacity. But it could be negative if some small classes drop below an acceptable enrollment minimum.
- If the overall hours are scaled back in most programs, either the percent of hours in general education needs to drop (which is generally unpalatable), or the number of hours in other areas (the major, related areas) will need to drop. Reducing overall hours is a negative sum game, so the 3 to 2 ratio does not hold. That does not mean you should

abandon the plan if that is really what you want to do, but you want to consider all consequences.

Tuck said that at this time, however, the subsidy formula is not being used and is to be replaced with one that is based on course completion and degrees granted rather than enrollment as it is now. So it will be difficult to quantify the effect on subsidy if there is to be any. The advantages of the 120 minimum SH to graduate is that it potentially takes some of the pressure off time to graduation and faculty workload.

Memo from Joe Shields, Chair of Physics and Astronomy to his faculty regarding the conversion to semesters:

- Descutner shared this memo to illustrate the process in use in Physics because it can be adapted to other undergraduate programs.
- Physics has dedicated faculty work groups to begin conversion of course sequences and major requirements.
- Timeline plan:
 - April 2009, work group recommendations shared with department
 - Fall 2009, outline of curriculum revision
 - Winter 2010, complete and submit paperwork to the College for approval
 - Review faculty team work across disciplines to ensure curriculum works as a whole

Question: Day asked who will review the General Education portion of the curriculum and how soon those recommendations can be made available to provide a basis for remaining major/minor coursework revision. **Answer:** Thomas recommended forming two work groups to address the General Education conversion.

- A core group of UCC/Transition Team members, such as Giesey, Webster, Thomas, Leinbaugh and others, could begin to work on General Education coursework. Descutner and Carpenter would like to be included in this work group.
- The UCC Program Committee and Graduate Council were recommended to work with the core group to address program promotion and the process for conversion work.

Question: Calcamuggio asked about how to promote this historic opportunity for curricular revision to internal and external audiences.

- We can begin messaging to our significant leadership in the region to ensure that they are informed about key steps we are taking in our transition to semesters.
- We can provide positive information to prospective students, parents, and community about the curriculum revision and how it will impact them.

Answer: Calcamuggio was asked to form a work group including Descutner, Carpenter, Thomas and others who are interested in creating positive messaging around this historic curricular and calendar revision.

- Carpenter mentioned that the faculty at other institutions (that moved to semesters) had a positive attitude toward the process employed to reinvent their curriculum. He would like to see that be the case here at OU. He recommended really pushing the idea out to the faculty about what a historic opportunity this is to renew and invigorate individual courses, general education, and majors through the transition to semesters.
- Day said that the 54 or so faculty representatives from each program who will coordinate the overall curricular revision can help to carry that message back to the faculty.
 - Vision Ohio references to strengthening undergraduate education and recruiting and retaining talented students and faculty could be included in these messages.
- Calcamuggio would like to locate an innovator among the faculty who understands what this moment means and has the passion and creativity to facilitate attitude change on the part of the faculty so that they embrace this opportunity for positive and exciting change. (Go Gina)

Marketing General Education: Thomas

Thomas introduced the topic of a more exciting name for our General Education program. He believes we have the best program in Ohio, particularly because of breadth of knowledge in Tier II. We do a remarkably poor job of marketing this distinction. He suggested taking a cue from our students and calling General Education the Ohio University Liberal Arts Core. Connavino is chair of the Liberal Arts Task Force for Undergraduate Senate. She will work with Thomas to properly promote General Education.

Budgetary Support for the Conversion

The Post made a records request for the budget plan for the transition/curricular change.

At present, no such plan exists. Our plan for a budget process will be discussed in the near future. In the meantime, the only estimate we have is the ballpark estimate Krendl reported to the Board of Trustees many months ago. That figure, approximately \$2M, is still preliminary as it was not based on the following information.

- Deans are currently formulating their conversion needs and assigning dollar amounts to them. Possible compensation to the units may include:
 - Compensation to designated faculty from each program to coordinate curriculum conversion; and
 - Costs associated with student advising.
 - The deans have said that advising costs would not be the same across colleges due to variations in programs.
 - Stipends for ICC, UCC, and EPSA members

- Lopez asked the committee to keep in mind that this extensive revision being added to the faculty workload will most likely come from research time unless we provide teaching relief. He sees hiring some people to teach while others revise the curriculum as a large, expensive item.
 - Day noted that curriculum revision will take place at two levels: overall curriculum revision and individual course updates, the latter of which will be each faculty member's responsibility.
 - Lopez added that faculty do make minor updates and changes in their courses annually but that this revision will require extensive scholarly thought and collegial discussion to adequately review and revise each course in each discipline.
 - Other factors under consideration include:
 - Cincinnati also published a ballpark figure without concrete analysis.
 - Minnesota only paid faculty during the summer.
 - At the University of Toledo, each department had one or two faculty members who were paid a stipend (or received 1 course release) for a quarter during the academic year. Then the faculty members of each college curriculum committee were paid (or released) for the next academic quarter. Summer stipends were provided to the university curriculum committee (approximately 1 person per college). As the notes state, in the bullet below, primary curriculum development cannot be in the summer. Even if the faculty involved were paid to be there, others might very well assume that something was slipped into the plan in their absence. Toledo's university committee only considered the curricula already passed in the department and in the respective college.
 - Quarterly stipends make more sense for us rather than trying to coordinate curricular revision during summer when too many faculty are away from campus.
 - Day will be creating a metric, most likely based on unit headcounts, to yield an amount to distribute to the colleges for advising to use as they see fit.
- *The Post* Records Request
 - Wickman recommended that *The Post* records request be handled through a meeting to clarify that no draft budget document exists and no cost estimates have been projected at this time.
 - Watts noted that because a cost estimate was published by a previous committee, we could remind *The Post* that this preliminary estimate should not be reported as final and explain why.
 - In the October 7 Strategic Planning Forum, Krendl said that the cost estimate for Transition to Semesters was a very preliminary estimate.

9:00 adjourn.

The next meeting will be 8:00 to 9:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 15 in 230 Baker Center.