

Quarters to Semesters
September 24, 2008
Baker 230

Present: Michael Adeyanju, Patrick Beatty, Brice Bible, Gina Calcamuggio, Tom Carpenter, George Cheripko, John Day, David Descutner, Sherry Downs, Casey Elliott, Connie Esmond-Kiger, Steve Flaherty, Tracy Leinbaugh, Ryan Lombardi, Sergio Lopez-Permouth, Bailey Miles, Brenda Noftz, Shelley Ruff, Tom Scanlan, Pam Sealover, David Thomas, Martin Tuck, Becky Watts, Jeremy Webster, Pete Wickman, Bill Willan, Michael Williford

Descutner opened the discussion with a review of recommendations for changes in the Quarters to Semesters Conversion documents.

1. The statement “aligned with the goals of Vision OHIO” has been added to the end of Assumption 1.
2. The recommendation that departments/schools finish their work by 2008-09 may not yield the best result. Recommendation is to move the timetable back to spring 2009-10 to allow departments/schools more time to complete curricular revisions.
3. Constraint 3 will be reworded from “one-third reduction” to 3 to 2 conversion to capture more accurately the intention of the constraint.
4. Constraint 5 on cost/revenue neutrality has been revised as follows. “It is recognized that there will be one-time costs for conversion of the curriculum and student advising needs.”
5. In Constraint 7 on uniform weekly schedule, the Tuesday/Thursday time slot has been corrected from 80 to 75 minutes.

Descutner reminded the Team that the Board of Trustees must approve the change from quarters to semesters. The Board’s University Academics Committee will consider the Quarters to Semesters resolution on October 2.

Document discussion Constraint 7 - Thomas noted a concern with the Uniform Weekly Schedule regarding the need for flexibility to allow majors to work in longer units than 55 minutes or even 110 minutes. Descutner said a statement will be added to Constraint 7 to acknowledge the need for flexibility in the scheduling of classes. Discussion continued on this topic:

1. Are we really just trying to build a 40 slot week? If so there are alternative ways to do that.
2. How do we maximize classroom use so as to alleviate ½ hour downtime in classrooms for three-hour courses? Answer: Scanlan said that you can leave afternoons more flexible to allow for longer seminars. He recognized that some classes will meet longer than 55 minutes or 110 minutes and that we can accommodate that by using afternoons, particularly on Monday and Wednesday. Fridays are not as popular with faculty or students for this purpose.

3. Day noted that there is no single answer or formula for most of the aspects of the conversion; this is why principles have been devised to help departments understand the interconnections among the different variables and the way decisions relative to one variable will constrain degrees of freedom relative to others in order to maintain a neutral conversion.

Principle 1 – Proportional Conversion

- a. Assuming majors have sets of required courses, these sets should retain the same percentage of the curriculum under semesters as currently exists under quarters.
 - i. For example, a three course semester sequence could be converted to a two semester course sequence that would cover the same material.
 - ii. Single courses will be harder to convert. Groups of 3 hour courses can be reduced with the 3-2 ratio easier than four or five hour courses. Four hours to three is a 75% reduction rather than the 1/3 needed for neutrality.
- b. Page 4 provides examples of various conversions.
 - i. Note that the example at the bottom needs to be corrected by adding an additional 4 credit/40 contact hours line to reach 36 credit/360 contact hours. This is simply a typo. This should show that a group of 9 4-credit courses under quarters will be reduced to eight 3-credit courses under semesters to retain the same ratio. That change will be made to the document.
 - ii. The illustration on Page 5 provides an example of conversion of five hour courses to four hours to retain the same amount of credit/contact hours in semesters. Conversions of each program must stay in the same ratio so as not to disadvantage students.

Principle 2 - Majority of courses under quarters are four hours; under semesters, the proposal is that the majority will be three hours. The starting point for course conversion should be three if possible.

- a. Sealover said that their nursing students take a lot of science coursework that must remain in proportion with nursing (major) coursework as required by their accreditation agency. Scanlan recommended that all this work has been done before by other institutions and that we should look to their work for answers to such questions. For specific questions on how conversions were balanced, faculty can go on line to see how their programs were converted to a semester system. Descutner said that Minnesota did a good job of conversion, based on their own report and the report prepared by the visitor from UCLA.
- b. Question: Will departments/schools be held to the same rules? Example: In the English Department, majors can not occupy more than 72 CHs (80 for graduate level). If a decision was made to increase hours within a major to enhance various courses, would this rule circumvent that possibility? Answer: Ultimately the conversion must balance at the university level, and to avoid shifting of

faculty resources we should probably require neutrality at the college level. It may be more difficult to have an exactly neutral conversion at the department/school level, and a college might consciously desire to make some shifts between college and department/school requirements or between departments as long as they achieve neutrality at the college level. Our consultant, Andy Jorgensen, can explain how Toledo handled this balancing of requirements and credit hours.

- c. Question: How will general education requirements, which have recently increased relative to the hours to graduation, be impacted by the possible 120 minimum hours to graduation under semesters? Answer: It should be roughly the same proportion of whatever is the total number of hours to graduate. There are several options for building the curriculum to accommodate various requirements.
 - i. Part of it will depend on limits on how many major courses can also count for Tier requirements. Example: The Tier III Capstone could become a department/school requirement to allow capstones to count within a major as well as meeting Tier III, creating some slack in general education.
 - ii. Sealover commented that, in her experience, the addition of the new general education requirements can increase hours to graduate by at least one or two courses under the current quarter system.
 - iii. We also have to consider how many courses will be needed to fulfill Tier II requirements. If most courses become 3 hours, then it would be more efficient if the area requirements were evenly divisible by three.
 - iv. Sealover noted that various accreditation agency requirements are not flexible concerning the ratio between hours in the major and hours in general education. These agencies have percentages of major/general education that need to be met as well. Such requirements will complicate conversion.
 - v. Scanlan described distribution requirements for Arts and Science as 18 CH in three divisions; Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Students currently end up taking five rather than four courses to accommodate the requirement in each area. If they convert this to 12 SH and courses become 3 hours, the requirement could be met with four courses.

Other considerations:

Thomas mentioned that Ohio University's general education requirements are the best in Ohio and we are not marketing the program very well. The name alone is boring—Miami markets their general education requirements as the "Miami Plan." We need to focus on and sell our excellent program.

Lopez-Permouth asked about the process for approval of the work of the Q2S Transition Team. At this time we do not have a decision on where the work goes when finalized. This will require future discussion but various changes will no doubt require decisions by different constituents such the provost, UCC, EPSA and academic units depending on the element involved

Descutner adjourned at 9:00 a.m.