

Quarters to Semesters Transition Team Meeting
March 11, 2009
Baker 230

Present: Adeyanju, Bulow for Benton, Carpenter, Cheripko, Conrath, Descutner, Elliott, Esmond-Kiger, Giesey, Leinbaugh, Lopez-Permouth, Miles, Munhall, Scanlan, Sealover, Thomas, Tuck, Watts, Webster, Wickman, Willan, Williford

AGENDA

1. Development of a coordinated approach that schools and departments would take to convert their majors, their major-specific courses, and their general education courses.
2. Implementation of a comprehensive advising program that would focus on the needs of “transition” students
3. Establishment of a semester system academic calendar (specifying when the year begins and ends, and the timing of breaks and final exams) which will consist of two regular 15 week semesters along with summer sessions.

Starting in reverse order with number 3, **we have endorsed** the academic calendar that includes two 15 week semesters (with 2 weeks added for final exams and breaks in each semester) and two 6 week summer terms. We also endorsed sending two models of that calendar to the deans: one with a 3 week intersession and one with a 4 week intersession. Both will be forwarded to the deans for their decision, and the preference of the undergraduates and the graduate students for the 4 week option will be explained. Specifically, undergraduates prefer the 4 week option because some schools in Ohio use this option, because it allows more time to work and make money, and because it allows students more time to relax and recharge their intellectual batteries. Graduate students prefer the 4 week option because it allows more time for research and creative activity. Deans will be apprised, as well, that the majority of faculty who responded to the survey prefer the 3 week option to allow maximum time in the summer for research and creative activity, which is best achieved with a 3 week intersession. Some faculty do prefer the 4 week option because of successful intersession programs and the ability to complete research projects for winter submission deadlines.

In relation to number 2, we discussed last week the “Quarters to Semester Advising Plan”, and **I would like to seek endorsement of that plan this week**. The single change recommended last week would be to have the one sentence say: “that all students will have the opportunity for an individual meeting.” Please be prepared to identify other changes in the plan.

In relation to number 3, we have identified coordinators and met once with them; a second meeting is set for early in spring quarter with the coordinators, who will continue to collaborate with the implementation co-directors—Jeff Giesey and Gary Neiman—after winter quarter. Also relevant here is the work of David Thomas and Jeff Giesey and their Friday UCC colleagues, who have

produced a draft of guidelines that will contribute directly to the “coordinated approach” mentioned in the charge. **My hope is that we can endorse their effort** this week and report that endorsement as part of our final report.

We also thought it would be wise to revisit our discussion of the “assumptions, principles, and constraints” document, which we discussed intensively in fall quarter. You will recall that EPSA determined in the fall that two constraints (Use 120 hours as the minimum number of hours to graduate, and uniform weekly schedule), one conversion principle (the majority of semester courses must be 3 hours), and the conversion of general education to a semester format fall within its purview. As of last night, EPSA advanced for first reading three resolutions that are fundamentally congruent with the original document. **My hope is that we can endorse the document as an effective “blueprint” to guide departments/schools as they work on revising their curricula.**

DISCUSSION:

Descutner mentioned the Faculty Senate did a first reading on the move to semesters. Guidelines up for approval would:

1. Set three hours as the standard semester course (one hour on MWF; and one and one-half hour on T,Th);
2. Set 120 semester hours as the minimum needed for a bachelor’s degree and 60 semester hours as the minimum needed for an associate’s degree;
3. Outline general education requirements under a semester format.

Descutner affirmed that the 120 hours is a minimum, that we will reinforce that, and that there is no maximum. Many faculty would like to see a rule of three hours, however we know there will be exceptions. EPSA has good grounds for approving exceptions.

Conversions, Assumptions, Constraints and Principles

1. Descutner described this document as the **tool** for faculty to work through curriculum conversions.
 - a. Dr. Titsworth (EPSA) will work with Giesey to add language providing for flexibility in course offerings and days for regional campuses. Giesey said that the current document will be clarified as applying to the Athens campus in this regard.
 - b. Graduate education will be dealt with more flexibly as well.
 - c. Descutner thanked EPSA and Jeff Giesey for their work on these tasks within deadline. Descutner thanked the Transition Team as well.
2. Regarding adoption of the Conversions, Assumptions, Constraints and Principles document:
 - a. Carpenter recommended formally adopting the document.
 - i. Wickman introduced reservations on adoption of this document because it does not now have a statement on how major increases in graduate program

hours toward completion would be handled. Currently graduate program scaling is held to a 2/3 model of undergraduate programs. Wickman wants to know what would happen to students whose programs have been expanded well beyond their expectations. Transitional students could be adversely affected if course requirements were significantly increased.

1. Descutner noted that program changes are the purview of schools and departments with oversight provided by EPSA. Course creation and changes are managed by faculty in their requisite committees.
- ii. The guarantee to students requiring reasonable hours to graduation applies to all students, graduates included.
 1. Scanlan suggested adding a statement that conversion logic applies to graduate and undergraduate programs.
- b. Williford confirmed that 128 hours is the mathematical equivalent to quarters. What will EPSA consider as the minimum of 120?
 - i. Straight conversions will not require much review; conversions that increase hours will require justification. **We are committed to the principle that undergraduate students be able to complete their degree in four years.** The spirit of 128 hours was constructed to not penalize students who have lab courses.
 - ii. We could adopt a minimum (120) and maximum (128). Courses taken is a better measure of ensuring that hours stay within bounds.
- c. Suggestion: Departments/Schools must submit a graduation plan for program hours exceeding 120. Descutner reminded the Team that this is an EPSA matter. We can make a recommendation. EPSA does not want to specify maximum hours.
- d. Giesey suggested that all faculty should create a “graduation plan” as part of their advising plan. Inclusion of such a plan would enhance advising.

Guidelines

Thomas report that the “Friday Group” hopes to have a summary of the Guidelines to provide faculty with simple steps to follow that would help result in a successful conversion. It will be a preamble to Giesey’s Guidelines.

Communication on Calendar Decision-making

It is thought that many faculty do not understand who will make decisions on the academic calendar structure. It was suggested that deans communicate to their faculty members that deans are making these decisions and that if they have a suggestion, it is time to put it forward.

The Quarters to Semesters Transition Team report will be published soon and will have senate resolutions attached detailing faculty and student preferences and justifications for either a 3- or 4-

week Winter Break. Our report will clearly elucidate the effects of each choice on the length of the summer sessions. Descutner noted that this process is iterative and changes will occur as needed.

Advising Statement

The following points were raised regarding the insertion that “all students will have an opportunity to meet with their advisor,” in the advising statement.

1. We should require a graduation plan in advising plans for each student.
2. Adeyanju would like to see advising sessions mandatory with cohorts exempted.
 - a. Leinbaugh added that in instances where classes are offered once per year, and there are no other choices, individual advising meetings are not needed.
 - b. Sealover said she can do a better job advising her program participants (135) as a group. While they are not a “cohort,” the program is lock step.
 - c. Descutner said we want to encourage individual advising sessions and discourage departments and schools from utilizing group sessions as a default. We understand the need for flexibility, particularly on regional campuses where students commute. Yet we need to affirm that individual advising sessions are important while acknowledging that there are programs that can be advised in a group setting effectively.
 - d. Adeyanju reaffirmed that transition students may need additional advising available.

Coordinated Approach to Course Approval

1. Giesey and Neiman will work directly with program coordinators.
2. We will endorse UCC and EPSA and the work that has been and will be done around the transition.
 - a. We want to say we are doing this well and in partnership with governance authorities such as UCC and their colleagues. This is critical to the semester transition.
3. Tuck added that we need to respect the work being done in the schools and departments. We should not encumber them with unnecessary additional work. The Guidelines need to be made as simple as possible. UCC has already approved the majority of the coursework being converted and if they are simple conversions, we need to streamline the process.
 - a. Thomas and Leinbaugh said they are working through huge amounts of work as quickly as possible.
 - b. Scanlan added that if we have a truly new program, and we have encouraged departments/schools to do that, then we do need to review those.
 - i. While simple conversions will not need much review, neither will programs close to simple conversion.
 - c. We are committed to providing quality programs without producing roadblocks.

4. Gieseey mentioned that we do need to operate within the tension of moving quickly, making things as easy as possible, and still providing rigorous review of those programs and courses that need it.

Descutner adjourned the meeting with the following information.

1. Noting that we have met our charge, we will endorse the documents that we will provide. The Friday Group is writing a narrative of what the team has completed for distribution Friday, March 13.
2. We may use the Spring Break to review the Assumptions/Constraints document and the Guidelines and schedule one more meeting to finalize everything in Spring Quarter.
3. C&M has created information on the calendar and transition for students and faculty. The communication product work is just beginning.