



First completed TDCPs bring University one step closer to semesters



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By Monica Chapman

As one of the first OHIO students to go through the transition degree completion planning process, junior political science major Tom Pinney trudged into his quarters-to-semester (Q2S) transition meeting expecting the worst. He feared the University's calendar conversion would require additional coursework – extending his graduation and postponing future plans.

Pinney was in for a pleasant surprise.

"When (my Q2S advisor) pulled up my DARS and the new semester requirements and did a little math, we found out I'm actually on track to graduate a semester early. So in my case, the whole transition process made my life about 10 times easier," he said.

Pinney's Transition Degree Completion Plan (TDCP) was among the first batch added to student records by staff in the Office of the University Registrar during Ohio University's winter intercession. According to University Registrar Debra Benton, the process has been very smooth thus far.

"Fortunately we weren't overwhelmed with a large number at first so that we could work through the kinks of the system to scan the documents, update the student system, and make the TDCPs available for viewing by students and faculty," said Benton, adding that work provided by the Office of Information Technology helped make the processing go smoothly.

Each OHIO undergraduate student who transitions from quarters to semesters will be expected to meet with an adviser to formulate a plan of study, in preparation for the University's conversion to a semester-based academic calendar in fall 2012. TDCPs serve as individualized student navigation plans, detailing course requirements en route to a timely graduation.

Not all students will have the luxury of graduating early, but, as Pinney



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experienced, the process will result in each student knowing exactly what must be completed and when.

"Given that the University reduced the required minimum number of hours to graduate, I fully expect that all students will be able to graduate on time or early, as in the case of Pinney," Benton said. "There are a lot of TDCPs to be completed, and we know this quarter will be a busy one for students and advisers."

The road to semesters

Semester conversion began with the University's commitment to transition in 2008. Since then, OHIO faculty members have been preparing their curricula for conversion, while administrators have worked to streamline processes and information so that students can be advised effectively in the process.

Among the tools developed is a [Q2S course conversion web app](http://webapps.ohio.edu/q2scourse/) [<http://webapps.ohio.edu/q2scourse/>] which enables students and faculty members to look up a semester course based on its quarter equivalent, and a [Q2S calculator](http://ohioq2s.info/calc/q2scalculator.php) [<http://ohioq2s.info/calc/q2scalculator.php>], which converts quarter hours to semester hours.

OHIO recently entered a new phase of the conversion process, during which transition plans should be created for every Ohio University undergraduate student by May 1, 2012. It is imperative that all undergraduate students take the initiative to work with their advisers to complete the TDCPs.

Student advising is of utmost importance in the process to ensure that the University can fulfill its [Q2S transition pledge](http://www.ohio.edu/q2s/pledge.cfm) [<http://www.ohio.edu/q2s/pledge.cfm>]. The commitment to students promises that the transition will not delay their degree completion or result in their incurring additional costs, provided that they make acceptable progress toward a degree.

Extra miles of necessity

For students, Pinney said the TDCP process was easier than expected.

"I thought there would be a lot of paperwork to go through ... The entire transition process was so simple that it made me question why we hadn't done it before," he said.

According to Executive Vice President and Provost Pam Benoit, the hard work of faculty, Q2S coordinators, and assistant deans has made the transition to semesters successful to date.

"You can't help but be impressed with the effort that has been made by every

campus, school, and department during the past three years," said Benoit. "But now we are moving into another critical stage. In order to reap the benefits of the time already invested, we need to ensure that all students are advised well."

From the beginning of the transition, Benoit noted, funding was earmarked for colleges to use in extending their advising capacity during this critical year.

"Each college submitted a plan detailing how it would assist its students in making the transition. My office provided the resources necessary to put those plans in motion, and as a result, we have the ability to provide excellent transition advising to every student," she said.

Benoit pointed out that in a Q2S advising session, students not only have the opportunity to learn how they can finish on time but to receive information about new academic opportunities.

"A good adviser will make sure that students understand what they must do to stay on track and will draw attention to innovative programs or courses that have come about as a result of the change to a semester calendar," Benoit said.

For semester skeptics like Pinney, good advising can change their minds.

"Before this whole process, I was convinced that the benefits of changing to semesters would be far outweighed by the consequences. I thought it was a waste of money, waste of time ... I thought it was a bad idea altogether. Before, I hated the entire idea. But I'm actually really looking forward to it right now," Pinney said.

Throughout winter quarter, Compass will feature tips and information on advising students through the Q2S transition, based on input from top student advisers. Check back next Monday to learn how academic departments on the Athens campus are partnering with their regional counterparts to ensure a seamless transition for students.

For more information...

OHIO is one of 17 public universities and community colleges across the state converting to semesters in accordance with the University System of Ohio's strategic plan. Questions about the quarters-to-semester transition at Ohio University can be directed to q2s@ohio.edu.

Related Links

Q2S Website [<http://www.ohio.edu/q2s/>]

Ohio Higher Ed* [<http://www.ohiohighered.org/calendar-conversion>]

Additional Info *Following this link takes you outside of Ohio University's website.

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