



April 6, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

We want to start this April issue of QSU with some very important news.

On March 11 the University Senate voted overwhelmingly to change the start date of the conversion to semesters. Pending action by the Board of Trustees, Senate approval of the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress [resolution](#) to move the start date means that the semester calendar will commence in summer 2012 rather than autumn 2012 as originally planned. This change will eliminate scheduling conflicts and allow the conversion to take place within the work environment of the summer term, ensuring a more seamless transition to semesters.

As we now anticipate that accelerated start date, here are some additional updates on plans and progress toward the semester conversion.

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### **QSU and You: The Quarter-to-Semester Update for Students**

*By Peter Koltak, former USG President  
Member, Semester Conversion Communications Subcommittee*

The Subcommittee on Graduate Education, which includes three graduate student representatives from the Council of Graduate Students, has been working to revise the Graduate School Handbook, including developing expectations for Graduate Appointments in a semester system. The Handbook changes are currently under joint review by the Subcommittee and the Graduate Council. A primary concern of the Subcommittee—advocated strongly by its student members—is the maintenance of academic rigor and reasonable time-to-degree standards without overburdening graduate students who have heavy workloads associated with their courses and assistantships.

Additional concerns include terms of appointments and fee authorizations matters. The Handbook revisions under consideration will establish guidelines and minimum requirements only. Programs may differ, as they do now, in the

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application of these rules.

The CGS appointments to the committee are currently filled by [Mark Williams](#), [Liza Toher](#), and [Melissah Pawlikowski](#). If you have any questions or concerns that they can address, please contact one of them directly.

Questions? Thoughts? Concerns? We want to know what is on your mind. Please e-mail Assistant Provost [Jay Johnson](#).

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**May Session Working Group.** Provost Alutto has formed an ad hoc working group to study issues particular to the May session and make recommendations that will inform the development of that short term.

The Working Group is made up of Leslie Flesch, Associate Vice President of Business and Finance; Donna Hobart, Assistant Vice President for Fiscal and Human Resources, Office of Academic Affairs; Pat Osmer, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and Dean of the Graduate School; and Susan Williams, Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Faculty Resources. It is convened by Wayne Carlson, Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Dean for Undergraduate Education.

The first issue taken up by the Working Group has been the appropriate alignment of the May session—specifically, whether it should be attached to the spring or the summer semester. This is of considerable importance for students receiving financial aid. The Group’s research has revealed that the original plan to attach the May session to the spring semester would create an academic term at odds with the federally defined standard-length term for determination of financial aid availability.

The Group has therefore recommended attaching the May session to the summer semester. By doing so, Ohio State can remain a standard-length term institution while maintaining the intent of the May session as an opportunity for innovative programmatic content, either curricular or co-curricular, and retaining the original principle of tuition-free May session classes for students enrolled full time in the spring semester. The recommendation would mean that the 19-day May session would start the day following spring commencement, followed by a break, followed by the remainder of the summer semester. Credit hours taken in the May and summer sessions would be added together to determine full-time enrollment status during the summer semester.

The Working Group has presented this recommendation to the Provost, the Curricular and Advising Subcommittees of the Calendar Conversion Committee,

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representatives from student government, and the Steering Committee of the University Senate. With feedback from these entities, the recommendation will go forward and will be important in discussions about such issues as the financial and pedagogical implications of course offerings in May.

**Workshop on the May Session: An Update.** Next month, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) will host a workshop to provide Ohio State faculty members and departments with hands-on help in conceptualizing, designing, and implementing classes for Ohio State's coming "mini-mester." This four-week May session will be inaugurated in May 2013.

The workshop, co-sponsored by the Office of Academic Affairs, will take place on Friday, May 7, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. in Room 150 of the Younkin Success Center, 1640 Neil Avenue.

Workshop presenters will include Katherine Fusco, Department of English, Vanderbilt University; Michael Kenney, Department of Chemistry, Case Western Reserve University; Jean Koster, Department of Aerospace Engineering Sciences, University of Colorado; and Nancy Peterson, Department of English, Purdue University.

These colleagues, all at institutions with short terms similar to our coming May session, will present their experiences with this accelerated format. They will discuss the types of content that have worked well for them, as well as appropriate course designs and pedagogies to maximize student learning. UCAT Director Alan Kalish will facilitate their discussions.

The workshop is open to the entire University community. Faculty envisioning May session courses are especially encouraged to attend.

This event is but the first in a series of UCAT activities focused on the May session. Next year, UCAT, the Office of Academic Affairs, and the Academy of Teaching will host a series of roundtable conversations among Ohio State faculty on teaching during the May session. Please watch QSU for updates about these activities.

**Town Meetings and Other Conversations.** Last month two town meetings were held to provide opportunities for colleagues in the Health Sciences and the Professional Colleges to learn more about the calendar conversion. Topics discussed included the availability of classrooms, the evaluation of programs and revisions to the curriculum in anticipation of semesters, and possible uses of the May term.

Two additional town meetings are scheduled, these for colleagues in the Arts and Sciences:

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- April 6, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in the Psychology Building, Room 035
- April 7, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. in the Physics Research Building Smith Seminar Room (Room 90).

Town meetings for the regional campuses will be scheduled in the near future.

The [calendar conversion website](#) contains all of the town meeting details. Please routinely check the website to stay fully up to date about the conversion to semesters.

In addition to these open meetings, together with Curriculum Subcommittee Co-Convener and Faculty Fellow Ann Christy, Associate Provost Alexis Collier, Assistant Provost Jay Johnson, and University Center for the Advancement of Teaching Director Alan Kalish, we have also met with all of the college deans and all the designated conversion representatives (the “point people”) in the Arts and Sciences; Education and Human Ecology; Engineering; and Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences. Meetings with the point people in the remaining colleges will take place over the next several weeks. These more targeted meetings allow us to delve into unit-specific conversion issues, especially those concerning curricular change.

In future issues of QSU we will report on any of these issues having University-wide impact or application.

Sincerely,

W. Randy Smith  
Vice Provost for Academic Programs and Co-Chair,

Semester Conversion Coordinating Committee

Steven S. Fink  
Associate Professor of English and Co-Chair,  
Semester Conversion Coordinating Committee



*Questions or comments about the transition to the semester calendar?*  
Contact Assistant Provost Jay Johnson, [johnson.1043@osu.edu](mailto:johnson.1043@osu.edu)

