January 14, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

We hope your winter quarter is off to a fine start. In this January, 2010, edition of the QSU newsletter we want to update you on the latest work being done to ensure a smooth conversion from the quarter to the semester system.

---

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

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

A subcommittee on graduate education is now meeting on a regular basis. Co-convened by Associate Dean of the Graduate School Elliot Slotnick and Professor of Physics Robert Perry, it is made up of members from the Graduate School, the Graduate Council, and the graduate faculty campus wide. This subcommittee also includes student representatives from the Council of Graduate Students and the Inter-Professional Council. It is addressing the conversion issues that will affect graduate and professional students and programs. It has divided these issues into credit hour/temporal concerns (as detailed in the Graduate School Handbook), graduate education opportunities (the May semester, for example), and challenges. Graduate Associate workload issues would be an example of the latter.

Subgroups will be working on these concerns, and the subcommittee anticipates reporting its preliminary recommendations during winter quarter.

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

---

**Subcommittee updates:**

**Curriculum Subcommittee.** The Curriculum Subcommittee’s primary
discussions thus far have focused on the templates for program and course submission for the university-level approval process. The most recent version of these templates has also been considered by the Semester Conversion Coordinating committee, the Arts and Sciences Committee on Curriculum and Instruction, and the Council on Academic Affairs. The Curriculum Subcommittee is also discussing other items of general interest, including total program hours on the semester system, proposed weekly schedule of classes, the recommendation by the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress to begin the semester calendar in summer 2012, and issues related to graduate education. Future topics for this subcommittee will include the framework for general education on the semester system, May semester courses, and bridge (transition) courses.

The **University-Level Advisory Committee** for the General Education Curriculum (ULAC), a subcommittee of the University Senate Council on Academic Affairs, met weekly during autumn quarter to formulate a recommendation about the form and structure of the semester successor to the current GEC. The group has completed an overall descriptive statement entitled the “Curricular Experience at Ohio State University,” which reaffirms the overall goals for the general education program and links that portion of the curriculum to majors, minors, and other specialized study programs. The current draft of the semester General Education program suggests a 14-course requirement of 44 to 56 units. This represents a “shell” of 36 percent to 46 percent of the anticipated 120-unit semester-based graduation requirement.

The fully developed proposal will be reviewed by appropriate curricular committees and posted on the [calendar conversion website](#) later this month.

**Information Technology (IT) and Core Business Processes Subcommittees.**

The IT Subcommittee is convened by Andy Jackson, Senior Director of Enterprise Applications within the Office of the CIO. It is focused on identifying the system issues associated with the calendar conversion process, developing responses, and coordinating plans for addressing these needs. The issues to be tackled by this subcommittee include the curricular development and approval process; enterprise-level applications for the student, finance, and human resources areas; and local systems in the colleges and business offices.

The closely related **Core Business Processes Subcommittee** is charged with recommending business process solutions across all business office areas affected by the conversion of the academic calendar. It is convened by Leslie Flesch, Associate Vice President of Business and Finance. As the IT subcommittee identifies issues requiring business process decisions, it will coordinate with the Core Business Processes Subcommittee to bring those issues forward for discussion and recommendation of appropriate solutions. Both subcommittees will then interact with university-level committees to develop responses and recommendations on these issues. The recommendations will be sent to the
Semester Conversion Coordinating Committee for discussion and action.

Both subcommittees will begin their work in earnest this winter quarter.

**Quarter-to-Semester Curriculum Guide**

Academic units have begun work on the curriculum conversion process. To help, a guide has been developed that outlines the basic parameters of the shift from quarters to semesters, including the following:

- A minimum of 120 semester credit hours will be required for undergraduate degree completion.
- The three-to-two ratio for quarters to semesters will generally apply at the course level as well; e.g., five credit hours on the quarter system will generally equal three credit hours on the semester system.
- Classes will vary in length, from 55 minutes to 165 minutes. Breaks between classes will be 15 minutes.
- Semester courses will have four-digit call numbers (details yet to be determined).

In addition, the guide describes the process — and provides templates — for converting programs and courses to the semester format. It also includes specific timelines for submission, and it contains a list of the faculty across campus who serve as their unit’s representative for calendar conversion issues. We are grateful to the members of the Semester Conversion Curriculum Subcommittee, the Council on Academic Affairs, the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress, and many other groups and individuals for their advice about the various components of this guide.

The guide will be distributed to every academic unit on campus and will be available at the [calendar conversion website](#). It will be updated periodically as additional parameters are confirmed.

**The May Semester**

One of the most promising components of our coming semester calendar is the four-week May semester. Many of you have asked questions about how to think about using this short term to best advantage. To help ensure that Ohio State’s short semester is as effective as possible, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) is partnering with the Office of Academic Affairs to tap other institutions’ experiences with such a term. Over the next few months, faculty members representing a range of disciplines and coming from a number of universities with short terms similar to our May semester will be invited to Ohio State. Discussions about their approaches to this term should help us generate interesting and effective ways to use this term to enhance our students’ academic experiences.
Upcoming issues of QSU will contain details, which will also be available at both the UCAT website and the calendar conversion website.

**Town Meetings**
The calendar conversion website will also contain details of the town meetings that we will host during winter and spring quarters to provide you with opportunities for general discussion of the calendar conversion. These meetings will be organized by college clusters: the arts and sciences; the health sciences; the professional colleges; and the regional campuses.

As you can see, much is happening, and much more will be happening — and ever more quickly — as we approach our semester implementation date of autumn 2012. We hope you will begin to consult the calendar conversion website, on a regular basis between our monthly issues of QSU to keep yourself informed about the calendar conversion.

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