July 7, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

With spring Commencement behind us and summer quarter now officially launched, we want to keep you abreast of the many efforts that are steadily moving us toward a semester system.

As just one example, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) is offering two programs to assist faculty with the transition to semesters. Both programs will take place at 300 Younkin Success Center, 1640 Neil Ave.

- A Curriculum Design Institute, with sessions from 12:00 noon to 3:00 p.m. on July 7 and again on July 21, is intended for those involved in leading, facilitating, and/or organizing the conversion from quarters to semesters within their units or programs. The institute will provide participants with the tools to design/redesign a semester-based curriculum. To request more information or register for the institute, contact Jerry Nelms at nelms.1@osu.edu or at 292-3644.

- A Course Design Institute will be held from August 2 through 6 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. each day. This institute will help faculty who want to prepare a new course or revise an existing course for the semester-based calendar. Enrollment is limited to 12, so please email ucat@osu.edu or check the UCAT website for information about registering for this event. For those interested in participating but unable to attend in August, UCAT will be offering the Course Design Institute several times throughout the coming academic year.

- UCAT continues to offer one-on-one support for the calendar conversion. Please email ucat@osu.edu or call 292-3644 for information about tailored departmental workshops and other assistance with the calendar conversion.

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

By Peter Koltak, former USG President  
Member, Semester Conversion Communications Subcommittee
Ohio State is committed to protecting the academic progress of its students during the transition to semesters. A pledge to that effect has been developed by students, faculty, advisors, and advising administrators. The pledge is the university's promise to students that they should see no disruption towards earning their degrees if they:

1. Decide on their major and degree within a time compatible with four-year graduation;
2. Meet the standards for progress defined by their academic unit and continue to complete appropriate course loads successfully; and
3. Actively develop and follow academic plans in consultation with their academic advisors.

Academic advisors will understand how the changes in courses and curricula may affect students' degree programs, will know where and how programs can be flexible, and will be prepared to assist students in planning for on-time graduation. Students will be responsible for getting and using this advice, which will be essential to their progress toward their degree.

To see the full text of the semester conversion pledge to students, [click here](#).

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

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**New electronic course and program templates.** The pledge to students that Peter describes above is among the defining documents of the conversion process. Many other documents are likewise being developed to ensure a smooth transition to our new academic calendar. Among the most important of these is the course conversion template that presents the information that must be submitted to and reviewed by the Office of Academic Affairs for the conversion of quarter-based courses to a semester format. The template, built on completely new technology, addresses user concerns about the existing course approval tool and is a better match with the electronic version of the course entry form.

The program template is now also available electronically. This template presents the information that must be submitted to the Office of Academic Affairs and reviewed by the Council on Academic Affairs for quarter to semester conversion of programs.

Both the electronic course and program entry systems have undergone pilot study and are available to any college that is ready to use them.

The associated electronic approval workflow system will be activated soon. Watch
for more details in next month’s QSU.

**College of Engineering: Leading the Transition to Semester Coursework**

By the end of spring quarter, semester-based proposals for every degree offered by the College of Engineering were ready for college-level review. Five of those proposals are now ready for review by the Council on Academic Affairs.

Professor David Tomasko, Engineering’s Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education and Student Services, attributes his college’s rapid progress to an environment in which colleagues were encouraged to think broadly about the curriculum, freeing themselves from the constraints of process — and earlier ways of doing things — in order to come up with the very best in coursework for Engineering students.

Kick-starting Engineering’s semester conversion process, explains Professor Tomasko, was a series of discussions begun in autumn 2009 with units like the Department of Mathematics that provide prerequisites for Engineering students. Bringing all the right voices together for discussions like these are crucial in planning for a semester-based curriculum, he stresses, especially for colleges whose curriculum is multidisciplinary.

The curricular conversion process in Engineering was led by a task force made up of students, advisors, and representatives from every program that offers degrees as well as the First-Year Engineering Program. The task force will continue its work during the coming year to address advising issues. The college expects that by autumn 2010 its advisors will have information on curricular changes and will be able to answer students’ questions about new requirements.

**End-of-year updates on subcommittee major accomplishments/upcoming milestones.**

- **Advising Subcommittee**
  - Completed draft of Pledge to Students (May 2010)
  - Developed and disseminated “best practices” for colleges to consider in redesigning their survey courses (June 2010)
  - Draft a work plan for supporting advising over the transition (July 2010)
  - Decide what technological resources can best support advising and communication and develop plans to get those in place (July 2010)
  - Develop, in consultation with the Communication Subcommittee, a plan to communicate information about the conversion effectively to students and advisors (July 2010)

- **IT Subcommittee**
  - Completed a plan for the design/build/implement phase of the IT Semesters project for the Office of the CIO (May 2010)
- Compiled the master grid of all systems that may be impacted in all local units/collages (May 2010)
- Rolled out the Course Entry form (May 2010)
- Roll out of Program Entry and Approval process (July 2010)
- Roll out of Admissions functionality (March 2011)
- Complete Semesters capabilities implementation (June 2012)

• Curriculum Subcommittee
  - Established, with Registrar, weekly schedule of classes (December 2009)
  - Finalized course numbering system (May 2010)
  - Developed curriculum conversion parameters and templates (January 2010-June 2010)
  - Develop May term course recommendations (summer 2010)
  - Develop recommendations for using assessment data to inform semester conversion (summer 2010)
  - Develop electronic program and course entry and approval system (June 2010-spring 2011)

• Graduate Subcommittee
  - Completed recommendations for Graduate Handbook revision
  - Developed recommendations for graduate program proposal review process

• Space Subcommittee
  - Submitted summer semester meeting pattern (March 2010)
  - Drafted Space and Scheduling Guidelines (March 2010)
  - Reviewed existing capacity of large lecture spaces and teaching laboratories and estimated demand (March-April 2010)
  - Develop scenarios based on program/course conversion proposals (spring 2010-winter 2011)
  - Revise Space and Scheduling Guidelines based on submitted college proposals (spring 2010-winter-2011)
  - Distribute revised Space and Scheduling Guidelines to inform college proposals (spring 2010-winter 2011)
  - Based on scenarios developed from college proposals, provide recommendations for instructional space gaps (spring 2010-winter 2011)

• Core Business Processes Subcommittee
  - This subcommittee does all of its work in conjunction with other subcommittees by assessing process impacts prior to decision-making and/or developing processes for implementing decisions.

Regional campus town meetings. Town meetings were held early in June at Ohio State Mansfield, Marion, and Lima to give colleagues there the opportunity to learn more about the calendar conversion and raise issues of special importance to the regional campuses. As co-chairs of the Semester Conversion Coordinating Committee, we led the discussions, which focused on such issues as faculty workload, links between faculty and their Columbus-based tenure initiating units, and student advising. We were joined by Professor Ann Christy, co-convener of
the Curriculum Subcommittee, and by either Brad Myers or Jack Miner from the Office of the University Registrar.

Town meetings will be held at Ohio State Newark and the Agricultural Technical Institute in the near future. Watch QSU for details.

**Fall semester summit to be held at Ohio State.** In October 2009 Wright State University hosted a semester summit to explore calendar conversion issues, solutions, and best practices. More than 400 faculty and administrators from Ohio’s 17 public colleges and universities and at least two private colleges attended that meeting.

To continue that conversation, Ohio State will host a second summit in late October or early November. During that meeting we expect to learn much from our colleagues at institutions throughout the state that are also converting to semesters. They are sure to learn as well from our experiences and from the demonstrable progress Ohio State is making towards a semester calendar, thanks to the concerted efforts of countless faculty, staff, and students. Upcoming issues of QSU will feature additional information about the fall summit.

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