March 4, 2010

Dear Colleagues,

We—and you—are striving to assure a seamless transition from quarters to semesters in 2012. In his 2010 State of Academic Affairs address to the University Senate, Provost Alutto took note of these efforts, acknowledging the time, energy, and good will that the faculty is devoting to the semester conversion. He pointed out the responsibility that we share, saying that “the decisions that emerge from [our] conversations will organize our professional lives in new ways and will set the university’s academic course for the foreseeable future.” In this March edition of QSU, we want to bring you up to date on the latest of those conversations.

Semesters and the Nine-Month Faculty Appointments Task Force Report. Last summer, Provost Alutto appointed a Nine-Month Faculty Appointments Task Force to develop a framework for setting workload policies and practices as the University moves to semesters. This work is well timed, since recent on-campus discussion about the semester conversion has revealed considerable confusion about the meaning of “off duty” and “on duty” in relation to faculty work and compensation. The task force, led by Professor James Beatty, Chair of the Department of Physics, has now submitted its report.

Recommendations with greatest bearing on the semester conversion include the following:

- that the on-duty period and payment of extra compensation be based on the principle of 19 working days per month, defined as weekdays that are not designated as University holidays;
- that on-duty days be defined as those days on which faculty are available and accountable for meeting the formal and informal obligations associated with teaching, research, and service;
- that the normal on-duty period include the autumn and spring semesters and the May term under the semester calendar; and
- that a cap on the maximum number of credit hours that students can earn during a single academic term should apply in some form to the aggregate of credits earned in the spring and May terms.

It is anticipated that faculty workloads in many units will be restructured so that the teaching activities now accomplished over three quarters are accomplished with a similar level of effort over two semesters. In some cases—consonant with a unit’s mission and circumstances, it may be appropriate for a faculty member to teach during the May term with a reduction of teaching duties in one semester, or
as an adjustment in other parts of his or her workload. Any changes to the definition of “on duty” periods will require modification of Faculty Rule 3335-5-07. The Office of Academic Affairs (OAA) will work closely with committees of the University Senate to consider this recommendation of the Task Force.

OAA also wants to study the report’s recommendation of a cap on the credit hours that may be earned in a single term. The provost has asked Vice Provosts Wayne Carlson and Pat Osmer to take the lead in considering this issue.

These and other report findings will be broadly discussed and further refined by both individuals and groups, including deans, department chairs, and appropriate University Senate bodies. If you have comments on the report, please let us hear from you by contacting Assistant Provost Jay Johnson. Watch QSU for updates on decisions and actions on the report’s recommendations.

**Proposal to Revise the Semester Start Date.** On February 4 the Faculty Council of the University Senate gave overwhelming support to a proposal by the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress to change the start date of the conversion to semesters.

If confirmed by the Senate, the proposal would initiate the semester calendar in summer 2012, one term earlier than the autumn 2012 start date stipulated in the official resolution to convert from quarters to semesters. This step would eliminate the scheduling conflicts presented by the overlap of a summer 2012 quarter, which would end with a summer commencement on August 26, and an autumn 2012 semester, whose classes would start on August 22. This change would also allow the conversion to take place within the work environment of the summer term, ensuring a more seamless transition to semesters.

Watch for further details in the April issue of QSU.

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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*

Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies and Dean for Undergraduate Education Wayne Carlson is convening an Advising Subcommittee on the Calendar Conversion Process.

Made up of faculty, staff, and students, this group will assist in identifying and recommending solutions to student advising issues for the semester conversion.

Subcommittee members are representatives of advising groups in such units as the Arts and Sciences, the professional colleges, Honors, and Exploration. There will also
be representatives of the faculty, Student Life, Undergraduate Student Government, the Inter-Professional Council, the regional campuses, and the Office of Instructional Technology.

The subcommittee is asked to

1) Identify the full set of advising issues related to calendar conversion;
2) Bundle and prioritize these issues; and
3) Develop responses/recommendations to address those issues.

After the conversion process, subcommittee members will be asked to continue their service as the Undergraduate Dean's Advisory Committee for Academic Advising. In that role, it will

1. Provide a means of gathering feedback on advising services across the university.
2. Advise the Undergraduate Dean on proposals and initiate recommendations related to all areas of undergraduate academic advising, including policies, procedures, processes, systems, and information technology.
3. Monitor college and departmental processes and systems for delivery, student satisfaction, and national trends related to advising.

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

Subcommittee updates:

Graduate Education Subcommittee. The two working groups of the Graduate Education Subcommittee have been meeting weekly since the start of winter quarter, and each group has formulated its draft recommendations regarding the “general principles” that should govern semester conversion in graduate education. In addition, specific recommendations have been fashioned regarding all of the existing rules, regulations, and requirements presently found in the Graduate Handbook. The working groups have now reconvened as a “committee of the whole” and are in the process of revisiting the working group recommendations. The Subcommittee hopes to bring its full set of recommendations to the Graduate Council by the end of the quarter. In due course, the Graduate Council will be forwarding all endorsed recommendations to the Council on Academic Affairs for the next round of review.

Information Technology (IT) and Core Business Processes Subcommittees. The IT Subcommittee is working to identify all systems-related changes required to support the move to the semesters. It is the central collection point for questions and issues that will guide the design of changes to core and local systems.

The Core Business Processes Subcommittee works closely with the IT Subcommittee to identify options and recommendations for solutions to these
questions. Its initial activities have focused on identifying the key processes affected by the semester conversion. Some process issues can be resolved within the responsible business unit; others will require coordination across multiple areas, while still others will have institution-wide impact. To manage the needed process changes, a master grid of systems requiring changes across the university is being prepared. This grid will serve as a central tracking mechanism for changes and the status of those changes.

A project charter has been developed and approved for the scope confirmation and planning phase for changes to the Enterprise SIS, HR, Finance, and Carmen systems. This phase will be completed by the end of April, and will lead to a plan for the design, build, and implement phase, which will incorporate the semester-driven changes across these major applications. Required changes in departmental processes will be incorporated into individual unit plans.

The IT Subcommittee will be following a similar approach for planning and implementing changes to systems in their respective areas.

**What to do with the May term?** This spring, the University Center for the Advancement of Teaching (UCAT) is hosting a workshop to help Ohio State faculty members and departments conceptualize, design, and implement appropriate and successful short-term classes for the four-week May term, beginning in May 2013. At the workshop faculty members from several large universities having similar short terms 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.

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. It will be facilitated by UCAT Director Alan Kalish.

This event will be the first in a series of UCAT activities focused on the May term. QSU will provide you with ongoing updates about all such activities.

**Town Meetings Update.** Last month we mentioned that town meetings have been scheduled so that several communities may discuss the calendar conversion. The meetings are organized by college cluster.

- March 4, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m. we will host a meeting for the Health Sciences in Room 112 Meiling Hall.
- March 4, 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. we will host a meeting for the Professional Colleges in Room 054 Scott Lab.
- Two town meetings are scheduled for the Arts and Sciences:
  -- April 6, 9:00 to 10:00 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. We look forward to seeing you at one of the meetings and discussing the calendar conversion with you. Meanwhile, please get in the habit of checking the website on a regular basis to stay fully up to date about the conversion to semesters.

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