

**REPORT ON THE ACADEMIC SEMESTER CALENDAR FOR 2012-2013**

**COUNCIL ON ENROLLMENT AND STUDENT PROGRESS**

**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

**MAY 2009**

**Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) Membership**

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Andy Schreiber, Undergraduate Student Government

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Martha Garland, Vice Provost and Dean; Office of Academic Affairs

## INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 2009 University Senate of The Ohio State University voted 91-19 to approve the following resolution to convert from quarters to semesters:

### **THE RESOLUTION TO CONVERT FROM QUARTERS TO SEMESTERS:**

WHEREAS the Ohio *Strategic Plan for Higher Education, 2008-2017* establishes a University System of Ohio that facilitates the Ohio Credit Transfer System initiated by the Ohio General Assembly; and

WHEREAS the Ohio *Strategic Plan for Higher Education* states that "the success of students, the integration of institutions, and opportunities to improve efficiencies and trim costs would be bolstered by a move toward a common academic calendar across all of the universities in the state;" and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University supports an integrated system of higher education in Ohio whose member institutions share common academic calendars; and

WHEREAS the three higher education institutions in Ohio that currently remain on a quarter calendar (Ohio University, The University of Cincinnati, and Wright State University) have declared plans to convert to a semester calendar; and

WHEREAS converting from quarters to semesters would serve to eliminate the competitive disadvantage now experienced by The Ohio State University students who fall behind most other college and university students in the United States in securing and beginning summer internships and job opportunities; and

WHEREAS a flexible semester calendar would facilitate and enhance opportunities for undergraduate and graduate student research, international study, internships, service learning, and other specialized learning experiences; and

WHEREAS The Ohio State University has studied and widely discussed the feasibility of a conversion from quarters to semesters in 1990-91 and 2000-01 prior to the investigation of such a conversion in 2008-09; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Ohio State University adopt a semester calendar with no fewer than 65 and, with the exception of professional colleges or academic disciplines whose accreditation standards require a longer term, no more than 70 days of instruction in each semester, to take effect no earlier than Autumn, 2012; and**

**NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress bring the precise 2012 academic calendar to the University Senate for review and approval; and**

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the axioms and recommendations presented in the final report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Semesters guide the process of implementing the semester conversion, and that other semester models be considered in addition to the sole model presented in the final report.**

In response to the resolution which was adopted by the University's Board of Trustees in April, the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) embraced their role in developing the precise semester calendar for 2012-2013 that will meet the needs of students and the responsibilities of faculty. The conversion of The Ohio State University calendar to semesters will impact every aspect of university life. Academic impacts are of primary interest but the University is a very complex institution with many non-academic departments, offices, and general functions that will be affected. We bring forward the academic calendar for 2012-2013, but have strived to be forward thinking in considering calendar attributes that will be meaningful long into the future.

## **THE PROCESS**

Following the approval of the resolution to convert to semesters, a subcommittee (the Semester Calendar Working Group) of CESP began working in March 2009. Several members of this group were members of the Semester Models subcommittee of the Ad Hoc Committee on Semesters which began working in October 2008. Its members (Anne Smith, CESP Chair, Martha Garland, Bob Gustafson, Don Haurin, Sarah Kernan, Brad Myers, Andy Schreiber, and Carl Zulauf,) have met at least weekly and gathered and discussed information from numerous interested university constituents and benchmark institutions. Attributes of semester calendars currently in use in Ohio and across the U.S. have been considered, as well as ideas that would complement the Ohio State Strategic Plan.

During March and April discussions related to semester conversion took place between the Working Group and many specific groups including: Council on Academic Affairs regarding curricular issues; the Office of Admissions and First Year Experience regarding orientation, move-in, convocation, and welcome week for freshman and transfer students; Department of Athletics regarding NCAA compliance issues related to recruitment, enrollment, academic progress and eligibility; Classroom Readiness Committee regarding classroom space utilization and availability; Ohio Department of Education regarding coordination of summer calendars to facilitate continuing education for Ohio teachers; Council of Graduate Students regarding coordination of research, coursework and graduate associate responsibilities; Office of International Affairs regarding international experiences including study abroad and exchange programs; Special Events and Commencement regarding the number and timing of commencements and the end of final exams; Office of Student Life-Office of Campus Dining Services and University Housing regarding move-in and housing demand; Undergraduate Student Government regarding coordination of fees for semesters and short terms, curricular offerings during short terms, and timing of final exams and breaks. In addition, all Ohio State students and instructional staff were surveyed in April on issues related to the structure of the final exam period and the use of reading days. General comments were also requested and received on this survey.

After consideration of the numerous issues impacted by the conversion to the semester calendar, CESP discussions culminated in the design of three calendar options that were shared by email on May 7 with the entire university community for discussion and feedback. All options were based on parameters and anchors that were agreed upon by CESP and were tested with regard to the feasibility of achieving a comparable amount of class time as is achieved in a quarter calendar. The attributes of these calendar options were discussed during three 2-hour open forums held on May 12, 15 and 18. The options all had 2 semesters which varied in length from 65 to 70 days. Feedback on the attributes of these options was also solicited through email at [semesters@osu.edu](mailto:semesters@osu.edu). Both of these venues were successful in that CESP received hundreds of meaningful communications from a diverse group, including faculty, staff and student. Feedback and questions were thought provoking and instructional.

Our work was framed using the same principles that guided the *Ad-Hoc* Committee:

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES (from the Ad-Hoc Semester Committee on Semesters)**

**Axioms:** The Ad-hoc committee determined in its initial meetings that a set of guiding principles would helpfully inform all deliberations. The following list of axioms was subsequently developed and describes the qualities of both the product (a newly adopted semester calendar) and the process of making the transition (the implementation).

**The Product.** A successful conversion from quarters to semesters will yield the following results:

1. A semester calendar will protect and enhance the intellectual mission and content of all academic programs.
2. The commitment to a strong general education component in all undergraduate majors will be preserved.
3. The distribution of courses by credit hour will be justifiable as judged by the impact on faculty workload and on student progress toward a degree.
4. The total amount of instruction needed to meet degree and accreditation requirements offered in any major or minor program will be approximately the same in a semester calendar as in a quarter calendar.
5. The beneficial relationship among programs will be maintained and enhanced, particularly in the service of one program area to another and especially in inter-departmental and interdisciplinary course offerings.
6. A semester-based calendar will not require substantially greater financial resources when implemented than its quarter-based predecessor.
7. A semester-based calendar will be justifiable in terms of space requirements for classrooms, laboratories, offices, and other university resources.
8. A semester-based calendar will not alter faculty allocations of time devoted to teaching, research, and service.
9. A semester-based calendar will enable substantial flexibility in stimulating and accommodating innovative approaches to course length and scheduling.
10. A semester-based calendar will facilitate opportunities for specialized programs, internships, international study, research initiatives, and service learning projects.

**The Process.** A successful conversion from quarters to semesters will ensure consideration of the following concerns:

11. The conversion of academic programs should be carefully coordinated to preserve the integrity of programs, especially those with an interdisciplinary focus and involving the intellectual resources of more than one department.
12. The impact of the conversion to semesters on students should not disrupt the academic progress toward degrees.
13. Provisions should be made to minimize complications created in the transition year by providing for additional and intensive student advising that accommodates the transition with a liberal treatment of exceptions, course substitutions, and other requirements.
14. Non-instructional staff will not be expected to increase their workload or time commitments during the transition process.
15. It is recommended that each department select an individual who will be compensated to serve as the coordinator for the redesign of courses, majors, minors and related programs.
16. Special attention should be given to concerns of regional campus faculty as drafted by representatives of the Regional Campuses and approved by all four regional campus faculty assemblies, outlined in Appendix B (of the Report of the 2008-2009 Ad-hoc Semester Conversion Committee)

## THE PRODUCT

As directed by the March 12<sup>th</sup> University Senate resolution, CESP presents the Academic Calendar for 2012-2013 with two semesters, Autumn and Spring, each spanning 14 weeks with 70 days of instruction. In addition the calendar has a 4 week May term with 19 days of instruction, and a 7 week Summer Session with 34 days of instruction. The following is a list of the calendar attributes along with the rationale and background that shaped CESP's decisions.

### **Autumn and Spring Semesters of 14 Instructional Weeks.**

- Accommodates need for sufficient instructional time in technical and professional disciplines, especially those that integrate lecture and laboratory instruction.
- Allows adequate time for content to be “absorbed” by students.
- Provides needed flexibility for classroom space utilization.
- Can be divided easily into two 7-week terms for disciplines that teach content in shorter modules.
  - 7-week terms have the potential to capture some desirable features of the quarter system and enhance the flexibility of the semester system.
- Equivalent number of days in Autumn and Spring Semesters facilitates consistency in class preparation for instructors and class learning outcomes for students.

### **Semester Start and End Dates.**

- Autumn Semester Move-In Day occurs on Sunday to facilitate weekend travel and avoid football related activities on Saturdays.
- Autumn Classes begin on Wednesday to accommodate orientation and welcome week activities.
- Spring Semester classes end in late April to allow students, including graduates, to enter the job market early.
- Spring Semester end date allows for a 4-week May term that is linked fiscally to Spring Semester.
- *CESP recommends that in future calendars, Spring Semester begin Monday of the first full week of January but no earlier than January 4.*

### **May Term of 4 instructional weeks.**

- Allows study abroad experiences, unique learning activities that add value to the educational experience, and an intensive offering of semester courses if deemed appropriate by the curriculum unit.
- Placement of the short term in May is supported by the fact that campus housing accommodations are more easily addressed in May than in a January term.
- CESP envisions that the May Term could be linked programmatically to Spring Semester or Summer Session.
- *CESP recommends that the May Term be linked fiscally to Spring Semester to guarantee no additional tuition assessment and to encourage student participation.*

### **Summer Session of 7 Instructional Weeks.**

- Length of Summer Session is half the length of Autumn and Spring Semester allowing for semester courses to be offered in an intensive 7 week timeframe.
- *CESP recommends that start and end dates of Summer Session accommodate continuing education for primary and secondary school teachers and be coordinated with needs of incoming freshmen who will matriculate during Summer Session.*

### **Reading Days and Final Exams.**

- Academic calendar includes a Reading Day that separates the end of classes and final exams.
- In Autumn and Spring the final exam period is also divided by a weekend that provides additional study time.
- ***CESP recommends that a reading day be defined as a day after the end of classes but before final exams that is designated exclusively for study and preparation for final exams; and that Reading Days are not to be used as an additional day for class or exams.***
  
- Semester Final Exams occur over 5 Days and Summer Session Final Exams occur over 3 Days.
- Length of final exam period is necessitated by the expanded course load during a semester compared to a quarter.
- An important factor in determining the final exam schedule was the tradition of commencements with live diplomas on the Sunday attached to finals week.
- Final exams will end no later than the Wednesday before Autumn commencement to facilitate grading of exams by faculty and certification of degrees by college staff.
- Final exams will end no later than Tuesday in Spring Semester to facilitate the processing of diplomas from the large number of students who will graduate in Spring Semester.
- ***CESP recommends that exams for courses, meeting on the last day of regularly scheduled classes, not have its final exam on the first final exam day to allow students and instructors adequate preparation time.***

# The Ohio State University Academic Calendar 2012-2013

Academic Year: 2012-2013	Autumn Semester 2012
Housing Move-in Day	Aug 19 (Sun)
Classes begin	Aug 22 (W)
Labor Day – no classes	Sept 3 (M)
Veteran’s Day – no classes	Nov 12 (M)
Thanksgiving – no classes	Nov 21-23 (W,R,F)
Classes end (70 days)	Dec 4 (T)
Reading Day – no classes	Dec 5 (W)
Final examinations	Dec 6, 7, 10, 11, 12 (R,F,M,T,W)
Autumn commencement	Dec 16 (Sun)

Academic Year: 2012-2013	Spring Semester 2013
Classes begin	Jan 7 (M)
M L King Day - no classes	Jan 21 (M)
Spring break-no classes	Feb 25-March 1 (M-F)
Classes end (70 days)	April 22 (M)
Reading Day-no classes	April 23 (T)
Final examinations	April 24, 25, 26, 29,30 (W,R,F,M,T)
Spring commencement	May 5 (Sun)

Academic Year: 2012-2013	May Term 2013
Classes begin	May 6 (M)
Memorial Day - no classes	May 27 (M)
Classes end (19 days)	May 31 (F)

Academic Year: 2012-2013	Summer Session 2013
Classes begin	June 10 (M)
Independence Day-no classes	July 4 (R)
Classes end (34 days)	July 26 (F)
Final examinations	July 29-31 (M-W)
Summer commencement	Aug 4 (Sun)

<b>AUTUMN SEMESTER</b> 14 Weeks of Instruction (70 class days)	Aug 22-Dec 16
# Reading Days	1
# Final Exam Days	5
Autumn Commencement	Dec 16
<b>SPRING SEMESTER</b> 14 Weeks of Instruction (70 class days)	Jan 7-May 5
# Reading Days	1
# Final Exam Days	5
Spring Commencement	May 5
<b>May Term</b> 4 Weeks of Instruction (19 class days)	May 6-31
<b>Summer Session</b> 7 Weeks of Instruction (34 class days)	June 10 – July 26
# Final Exam Days	3
Summer Commencement	August 4

## Holidays:

New Year’s Day  
 Martin Luther King Day  
 Memorial Day  
 Independence Day  
 Labor Day  
 Veteran’s Day  
 Thanksgiving and Columbus Day (2 days at Thanksgiving)  
 Christmas and President’s Day (2 days at Christmas)

## Anchors and Parameters Used in Creating Calendar

Move-In Day for Au Semester on Sunday  
 No classes on Wednesday before Thanksgiving  
 Reading Day to Separate End of Classes and Exams  
 Commencement on Sunday Attached to Finals Week  
 Autumn Commencement on 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of December to avoid overlap with Holidays  
 Near Equivalent Number of Days in Semesters  
 Spring Semester Break near middle of Semester  
 Short Term No Fewer than 19 Instructional Days  
 Length of Full Semester: 70 days  
 Summer Session Start to Accommodate K-12 Teachers  
 Summer Session Half Length of Semesters