

## EXTENDED RATIONALE AND DATA, OSU SEMESTER CALENDAR

Council on Student Enrollment and Progress (CESP)

June 5, 2009

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### **70 DAY SEMESTER was chosen because:**

1. A number of faculty and programs prefer a calendar that is at least 70 days. These programs include food, agricultural, and environmental sciences; engineering; math and physical sciences; and the professional schools. The principal argument is the amount of time needed to teach and absorb information taught in their disciplines.
2. A number of faculty and programs prefer a calendar that is less than 70 days, often expressed as 65 days. These programs include education and human ecology; the humanities; social work; and social and behavioral sciences. A primary argument is uninterrupted time for other faculty responsibilities, such as research. In addition, they argued that less than 70 days is sufficient time to cover their material.
3. Seventy days provides a natural semi-semester of 7 weeks. At least business, agriculture, and professional schools have discussed using 7-week semester modules. The 7-week period is also aligned with the proposed length of the summer session.
4. CESP felt the combination of 7-week semester modules, 14-week full term semesters, 3-week May term, and 7-week summer session provided substantial flexibility to faculty and departments to best configure their courses and programs to meet student needs. In addition, CESP felt this configuration would provide faculty innovative ways to satisfy their teaching, research, and service responsibilities.

### **START AND END DATES:**

1. Autumn semester classes start Wednesday to accommodate welcome week activities.
2. Given a 70 day semester and the decision to hold Autumn semester graduation no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of December, classes must start before Labor Day. In addition, the preponderance of semester schools start before Labor Day, including most Big 10 universities and other Ohio public universities. (See table on page 6.)
3. Autumn semester graduation no later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of December to accommodate a widely-held wish by faculty, staff, and students to finish Autumn Semester prior to the end-of-year holiday period. Strong statements were made that not ending Autumn Quarter prior to the end of the year would ruin the holiday for all.
4. Spring semester classes start on Monday but no earlier than January 7. Thus, at least a 3 week period exists from the last day of finals for Autumn semester and the start of

Spring semester so that faculty can manage their non-teaching activities. Results from the University survey found preferences for the January start that leaned toward “starting as early as possible” or “with at least a 3-week break.” Please note, that in half of all years, OSU will start Spring semester on January 10 or later (see table on page 7).

5. Spring semester should end so that OSU students are not put at a disadvantage in the job market relative to other schools. This was a guiding principle of the conversion to semesters and from all accounts an important reason for student support of the conversion to semesters. A review of calendars from Big 10 schools and other Ohio public schools reveals that almost all these universities have commencement no later than the middle of May (see table on page 6). The implication is that Spring semester final exams should end no later than the middle of May.
6. May term starts the Monday following Spring Commencement so that May term ends before the end of May. This provides a longer period of time for summer employment for students who want to enroll in the May term.
7. Summer session start is coordinated with calendars of central Ohio primary and secondary schools. Specifically, the earliest start of Summer session is June 9. A significant share of students who enroll in summer courses are primary and secondary teachers who are pursuing graduate degrees and certification requirements.
8. In order to facilitate physical plant activities, at least 2 weeks are provided between the end of summer session and the beginning of Autumn semester. It also provides faculty with a longer time to finalize preparation for Autumn semester courses and activities.

#### **FINAL EXAM WEEK – COMMENCEMENT PATTERN OF**

- ▶ **1 OR 2 READING DAYS BETWEEN END OF CLASSES AND BEGINNING OF FINALS,**
- ▶ **5 DAYS OF FINAL EXAMS,**
- ▶ **EXAMS ENDING WEDNESDAY, AUTUMN, AND TUESDAY, SPRING, AND**
- ▶ **GRADUATION ON THE SUNDAY ATTACHED TO FINALS WEEK**

1. Ohio State has a tradition of giving signed diplomas at graduation. This tradition has strong institutional support. Surveys of parents and graduates reveal that the University garners substantial good will from providing signed diplomas at graduation, a tradition uncommon at most large universities.
2. Sunday graduation has proven to be convenient for graduates and their families.
3. Holding graduation on the Sunday attached to finals week enhances the ability of graduates to attend graduation ceremonies.
4. To currently accommodate Sunday graduation, few finals are held after Thursday noon. Even with this deadline, it is common for some college staff to work late into the night, if not all night, to verify and certify eligibility for graduation.
5. Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarter graduations will be consolidated into Autumn and Spring semester graduations. Spring graduation numbers in particular are expected to be much larger. Combined with point 4, this argues for a longer break between the end of exams and commencement.
6. It is expected that students will be taking more courses in semesters than quarters. A commonly-made comparison is 5 semester courses is taken compared with 3 quarter courses. This point argues for more exam days. It is worth noting that the shortest number of exam days that could be found at a semester school was 4.5 days.
7. In working backwards from graduation Sunday and given the parameters determined above, exams would start during the middle of the week. CESP felt that providing a reading day between the end of classes and the beginning of finals would help students and faculty prepare for finals. In addition, as with the current quarter system, a weekend would be available to students and faculty to help them prepare for finals.

8. The calendar for final exams has flexibility. This flexibility means that every effort will be made so that students will have at least 2 calendar days between the last day a class meets and the final exam day in that class.
9. A review of final examination periods at Ohio State's benchmark universities reveals considerable variation in the start date for final exams. Most of these universities start their exams on a date other than Monday. (See table on page 5)

**SPRING SEMESTER BREAK AFTER 7<sup>TH</sup> WEEK was chosen because:**

1. It splits the semester evenly into 2 continuous 7-week blocks. Thus, it is consistent with proposals to offer 7-week course modules during the semester. This possibility has been mentioned by several professional schools and the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences.
2. The University wide survey revealed a clear preference for the Spring semester break being in the middle of spring Semester.

**A SINGLE MAY TERM OF 3 WEEKS was chosen because:**

1. A survey of other universities offering short terms revealed an even split between January and May terms, a strong tendency toward 3-week terms, and a strong tendency to having only 1 term. (See table on page 4)
2. The OSU survey revealed a clear preference for having a short term but no clear preference for the January vs. May term or for a 3 vs. 4 week term.
3. The Office of University Housing had a clear preference for a May term over a January term. It would be much easier to ensure student safety and facilitate effective use of campus housing since most students would move out at the end of Spring semester. Students enrolled in the May term and needing on-campus housing could be consolidated into a few dorms.
4. Several disciplines saw both professional and graduate courses as potential offerings during a short term, but no preference was expressed between January and May term.
5. Short term study abroad programs can be accommodated in a May term. Most OSU study abroad programs are in the Northern hemisphere.
6. A guiding principle of OSU's conversion to semesters was to ensure that OSU students would no longer be disadvantaged in the job market. OSU students would get out earlier in a January term/Spring semester configuration than in the current quarter system, but they would still not get out until late May if a January term were offered. This is later than the preponderance of semester schools (see table on page 6).
7. Employment opportunities for students are likely to be limited over the period after the end of final exams for Autumn semester and over the period covered by a January term. In contrast, having the last day of final exams for Spring semester earlier in May extends the summer employment period. Jobs for students are more plentiful in the summer.
8. Faculty expressed a desire for having the longest extended period for uninterrupted research. The period of time between an early May end to Spring semester and late August start to Autumn semester is approximately the same length as the period of time that currently exists between the end of Spring Quarter and the start of Autumn quarter.

**Summary: When CESP examined these considerations as a group, it led us to decide on a May term of 3 weeks. Key considerations were competitiveness of our students in the job market, extended research time for faculty, the strong tendency of other universities who offer short terms to offer 3-week terms, and the preferences of the Office of University Housing.**

**SUMMARY OF DATA ON SHORT TERMS, SELECTED INSTITUTIONS,  
INFORMATION FROM UNIVERSITY'S REGISTRAR:**

<b>January</b>	<b>May</b>	<b>3 Weeks</b>	<b>4 Weeks</b>	<b>1 Offering</b>	<b>2 Offerings</b>
Cornell New York U. Rutgers U. Arizona U. Kansas U. Virginia	Case Western Purdue U. Arizona U. Colorado U. Minnesota U. Texas	Case Western Cornell New York U. Rutgers U. Arizona U. Colorado U. Kansas U. Minnesota U. Virginia	Purdue U. Texas	Case Western Cornell New York U. Purdue Rutgers U. Colorado U. Kansas U. Minnesota U. Texas U. Virginia	U. Arizona

Notes: Michigan State has an unofficial short term in Dec.-Jan.  
 Penn State has a 4-week term in May on some of its campuses (not on main campus).  
 Rutgers term is 12 days in length.  
 Kansas has an informal May term. Some courses are shorter and longer than 3 weeks.  
 U. of Texas at Austin courses can be as long as 5 weeks.  
 U. of Virginia short terms are approximately 2 weeks – require 40 contact hours.

**SOME MATH TO PUT SHORT TERM REGULAR CLASSES IN PERSPECTIVE:**

- ▶ STUDENT SEAT TIME – 5 hour quarter class: 48 min. X 49 days = 2,352 minutes
- ⇒ Seat time equivalence converted to hours per class – 19 day term: 2.06 hours per day
- ⇒ Seat time equivalence converted to hours per class – 14 day term: 2.80 hours per day
- ▶ STUDENT TOTAL EFFORT – 5 hour quarter class: 15 hours/week X 10 weeks = 150 hours  
 (assumes OSU rule of 3 hours total effort per week per credit hour to earn a C)
- ⇒ Total effort time converted to hours per day – 19 day term: 7.9 hours/day
- ⇒ Total effort time converted to hours per day – 14 day term: 10.7 hours/day
- ▶ This math suggests only a selected subset of regular type courses will be pedagogically viable and effective in a short term. It is possible that these courses will be 1 or 2 semester credit hour courses.

**TYPE OF SHORT TERM COURSES WE HAVE HEARD DISCUSSED BY OSU PERSONNEL:**

1. Study abroad experiences
2. Service learning projects
3. Instrumentation courses in the physical sciences
4. Intensive graduate and professional courses on a topic
5. Intensive performance courses in the performing arts
6. Remedial courses to get a student back into the normal sequence
7. Undergraduate course on a subject suited to presentation in an intensive block of time.

**LINKS TO INSTITUTIONS WHO USE ONE-COURSE-AT-A-TIME BLOCK PLAN:**

The most extensive use of short courses occurs in the One-Course-At-A-Time Block plan. It divides the academic year into 8 three-and-a-half week segments, or blocks. Students take one principal course at a time and professors teach one course at a time. Colorado College adopted it in 1970 (<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/welcome/>) and Cornell College Iowa adopted it in 1978. <http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academics/ocaat/>

**OHIO STATE'S BENCHMARK UNIVERSITIES**

<b>University</b>	<b>Instructional Days</b>	<b>Short Term</b>	<b>Exams Begin</b>	<b>Weekday Study Days</b>
Arizona	75/75	Yes (2)	Friday	1
Illinois	72/72	No	Friday	1
Michigan	69/69	No	Thursday	1
Minnesota	70/74	Yes (1)	Friday/Monday	1 (Au only)
Penn State	74/74	No	Monday	0
Texas - Austin	70/73	Yes (1)	Wednesday	2
Wisconsin	72/74	No	Sunday	0

Notes: Quarters: UCLA, Washington                      Short terms: Minnesota (May, 14 days)  
Average number of instructional days: 72.4 days

**SELECTED DATA FROM BIG 10, OHIO PUBLIC, AND SELECTED OTHER UNIVERSITIES**

University	Start End Fall 2009	Start End Spring 2010	Short Term	Observe Veterans Day	Vacation Days Thanksg.	Nos. Reading Days	Nos. Finals Days	Friday Finals	Sat Finals
<b><u>Big 10</u></b>									
Penn State	8/24-12/18	1/11-5/7	No	No	5	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Michigan	9/8-12/23	1/6-4/29	No	No	2	3(W,Sa,Su)	6	Yes	No
Michigan State	9/2-12/18	1/11-5/7	No	No	2	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Indiana (Spring 2009)	8/31-12/18	1/12-5/8	No	No	3	1(Su)	5	Yes	No
Purdue	8/24-12/19	1/11-5/8	No	No	3	1(Su)	6	Yes	Yes
Illinois	8/24-12/18	1/19-5/14	No	No	5	3(R,Sa,Su)	6	Yes	No
Wisconsin	9/2-12/23	1/19-5/15	No	No	2	1(W,Sa)	7	Yes	Yes
Iowa	8/24-12/18	1/19-5/14	Yes	No	5	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Minnesota	9/8-12/23	1/19-5/16	Yes	No	2	1/2(Su,Sa)	6	Yes	Yes
<b><u>Other</u></b>									
North Carolina-Chapel Hill	8/25-12/18	1/11-5/7	Yes	No	3	2(R,T)	6	Yes	Yes
Texas – Austin	8/26-12/15	1/19-5/18	No	No	2	4(Sa-T)	6	Yes	Yes
Vanderbilt	8/26-12/19	1/13-5/6	Yes	No	5	2(always Su)	7	Yes	Yes
Harvard	9/2-12/19	1/25-5/6	Yes	Yes	2	8(Sa-M/F-Sa)	6	Yes	Yes
<b><u>Ohio Publics</u></b>									
Toledo	8/24-12/18	1/11-5/7	No	Yes	3	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Bowling Green	8/24-12/18	1/11-5/7	No	Yes	3	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Miami	8/24-12/18	1/11-5/7	No	No	3	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Kent State (Spring 2009)	8/31-12/18	1/20-5/15	No	Yes	2.5	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Akron	8/24-12/11	1/11-5/8	No	Yes	2	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No
Cleveland State	8/24-12/11	1/19-5/14	No	Yes	2	2(Sa,Su)	5	Yes	No

Some of this information involves interpretation, so it may not be accurate, and transcription errors are possible.

End date is through the last final exam day.

Saturday Classes – Indiana, Purdue, Akron

Veterans Day celebrated by UCLA and Washington

Sunday Finals: Wisconsin

Fall Breaks: Michigan, Study Break, 10/19-20; Purdue, 10/12-13; North Carolina – Chapel Hill, 10/21-25; Vanderbilt, 10/22-25; Harvard, Columbus Day

Short Terms: Harvard, 3-week January; Iowa, 3-week January and May; Minnesota, North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Vanderbilt; 3-week May

Classes on Labor Day – Indiana

Indiana has free week last week of classes

Quarters: Northwestern, UCLA, Washington

CESP was charged with developing a specific calendar for the 2012/2013 academic year. However, we also strived to develop a template that would apply to all perpetual calendar patterns. **OHIO STATE PERPETUAL CALENDAR DATES** are below.

(NOTE: the academic year in the 2<sup>nd</sup> column goes with Autumn semester; the Academic year in the 6<sup>th</sup> column goes with the Spring semester, May term, and Summer Session)

<u>Calendar</u> (Start Day) (Leap Year?)	<u>Academic</u> <u>Years</u>	<u>Autumn Sem</u> <u>Start Date</u> (After 2-wk break; Wed)	<u>Autumn</u> <u>Sem</u> <u>Cmct</u> (No later than 12.21; Sun)		<u>Academic</u> <u>Years</u>	<u>Spring Sem</u> <u>Start Date</u> (No earlier than 1.7; Mon)	<u>Spring</u> <u>Break</u> (M-F)	<u>Spring</u> <u>Sem</u> <u>Cmct</u> (Sun)	<u>End May</u> <u>Short Term</u> (3-wk Term; Fri)	<u>Summer</u> <u>Session</u> <u>Start Date</u> (After 2-wk break; Mon)	<u>Summer</u> <u>Session</u> <u>Cmct</u> (Sun)
0-Sun: Non-Leap	2017-2018 2023-2024 2034-2035	8/23	12/17		2016-2017 2022-2023 2033-2034	1/9	2/25-3/3	5/7	5/26	6/12	8/6
1-Mon: Non-Leap	2018-2019 2029-2030 2035-2036	8/22	12/16		2017-2018 2028-2029 2034-2035	1/8	2/26-3/2	5/6	5/25	6/11	8/5
2-Tues: Non-Leap	2013-2014 2019-2020 2030-2031	8/21	12/15		<b>2012-2013</b> <b>2018-2019</b> <b>2029-2030</b>	1/7	2/25-3/1	5/5	5/24	6/10	8/4
3-Wed: Non-Leap	2014-2015 2025-2026 2031-2032	8/27	12/21		2013-2014 2024-2025 2030-2031	1/13	3/3-3/7	5/11	5/30	6/16	8/10
4-Thurs: Non-Leap	2015-2016 2026-2027 2037-2038	8/26	12/20		2014-2015 2025-2026 2036-2037	1/12	3/2-3/6	5/10	5/29	6/15	8/9
5-Fri: Non-Leap	2021-2022 2027-2028 2038-2039	8/25	12/19		2020-2021 2026-2027 2037-2038	1/11	3/1-3/5	5/9	5/28	6/14	8/8
6-Sat: Non-Leap	2022-2023 2033-2034 2039-2040	8/24	12/18		2021-2022 2032-2033 2038-2039	1/10	2/28-3/4	5/8	5/27	6/13	8/7
7-Sun: Leap	<b>2012-2013</b> <b>2040-2041</b>	8/22	12/16		2011-2012 2039-2040	1/9	2/27-3/2	5/6	5/25	6/11	8/5
8-Mon: Leap	2024-2025	8/21	12/15		2023-2024	1/8	2/26-3/1	5/5	5/24	6/10	8/4
9-Tues: Leap	2036-2037	8/27*	12/21		2035-2036	1/7	2/25-2/29	5/4	5/23	6/9	8/3
10-Wed: Leap	2020-2021	8/26	12/20		2019-2020	1/13	3/2-3/6	5/10	5/29	6/15	8/9
11-Thurs: Leap	2032-2033	8/25	12/19		2031-2032	1/12	3/1-3/5	5/9	5/28	6/14	8/8
12-Fri: Leap	2016-2017	8/24	12/18		2015-2016	1/11	2/29-3/4	5/8	5/27	6/13	8/7
13-Sat: Leap	2028-2029	8/23	12/17		2027-2028	1/10	2/28-3/3	5/7	5/26	6/12	8/6

Note: 3 week break occurs in 2036