Meeting of the University Senate, 12 March 2009
Gordon Aubrecht, Senate Scribe

The business of the Senate was to pass the Secretary's report #301; to consider a new BS degree in Construction System Management in the Food, Agriculture, and Biological Engineering Department of the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (FAES); to hear a report from the President's Council on Sustainability; and to consider the resolution to convert to semesters on or after 2012.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary of the Senate reported that in the Senate election just concluded, there was 40% voter participation by faculty, the highest in his records. The Secretary was asked from the floor whether he intended to fix Secretary's report #300 as corrected from the floor at the preceding Senate meeting. He replied that he would. The Secretary was asked from the floor how he intended to make the Senate more transparent. He replied that he would make greater use of electronic means and continue to be as open as possible.

Construction System Management degree

The new bachelor's degree in Construction System Management was moved and seconded. There was no discussion. There were unanimous ayes and no nays when the vote to approve was taken.

President's Council on Sustainability presentation

Three representatives of the President's Council on Sustainability, Bern Kohler (COPE Chair), Kate Wolford (Office of the President), and Laura Christobek (USG), noted that President Gee had signed on to the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's agenda to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Kohler said that OSU's main campus buildings collectively consumed over 5 MBTU last year and emit over 1 Gt of CO2 annually. In 1998, the cost was about $23M, but by 2009, it is about $64M. This is a big expense. Energy use in Btu per square foot went from 330 in 1973 to around 150 in 1984 to around 200 in 2009. The LEED-certified 4H building is much, much better. In a bad way, we are way above average. He said we can quantify the savings, but the results are priceless.

Wolford said that the slogan "Scarlet, Gray, and Green" would be more noticeable, and explained that the committee was made up of three faculty members, three administrators, and three students.

Christobek said that the Council was in its early stages. Two things need to be improved: culture, and communications.
The Council members passed out a handout and asked for comments and suggestions; their email address is sustainability@osu.edu.

**Semesters**

President Gee set out guidelines. Non-senators may speak if there is no objection from the Senate. He will not call on speakers more than twice. When he sees the conversation ending, he will ask for summary statements pro and con.

Dick Gunther praised the work of the ad hoc committee and its chair, Tim Gerber. Gerber said that what is different now from prior moves toward semesters is the source (then from the president; now, from Faculty Council) and the underlying reasons (before, pedagogy; now, the formation of the University System of Ohio, OSU's integration within that system, and consequent political pressure). The major political goal is to enhance access through transferability. Nine of the thirteen public universities are semester schools already. The other three have already voted or are on the edge of voting to convert to semesters. Only OSU remains on quarters. The mandate is in the Chancellor's request that universities on quarters give "strong consideration to change to a semester system."

Gunther rehearsed the past--the formation of the ad hoc committee by Senate resolution; its composition of sixteen faculty, students, and administrators; the hours of deliberations over the past five months; the three successive Faculty Council discussions, in which the first part of the latter meeting was open to all faculty to speak; discussions in Faculty Cabinet; open forums with student groups; and in addition, the Senate discussion of 12 February. On 3 March 2009, the Council on Enrollment and Student Progress (CESP) voted to send an amendment but to accept the conversion.

Tim Gerber, ad hoc committee chair, went over the charge and the highlights of the report after thanking Gunther and committee members. He noted that the committee was to determine desirability and feasibility, not provide details of the conversion, and was to make recommendations on key issues. The sets of key issues the committee considered led to the creation of axioms about the process and the product.

In terms of what it should produce, it should enhance and protect our mission, preserve a strong diversity of course choices for students, not change greatly requirements for majors, demand no greater financial resources than currently, not alter proportions of faculty time devoted to teaching, research, and service, and allow innovative approaches to course length and schedule.

In terms of process, it needs to preserve programs, specifically interdisciplinary programs, not have a disruptive impact on students, attempt to minimize complications through extra advising options and liberal treatment of waivers, not increase the workload of non-instructional staff (some people who worked on the transition would be compensated), and the special concerns of Regional Campus faculty need to be addressed.
Speaking mostly to the students, Gerber said that the model is not specific or prescriptive, but it does give an idea of future possibilities. He referred to his daughter, an OSU junior, who thought the new schedule was cool, and who asked him if he read the Lantern and what was being said (which drew laughter). What could a semester system look like?, Gerber asked rhetorically. It would start in September, it is 65 days or greater, all Thanksgiving week is off, there is one more week of classes, then exam week. Winter break is three weeks. Then there's a January term. She asked if one could a six-week break at that time combining winter break and January term; the answer was yes. But the January and May terms in the model enable students to get the equivalent of a semester course on an intensive, compressed basis, do international study, and so on. Spring semester would start again at the end of January, have a spring break at the regular time, come back, have exams, and graduate by mid-May. The May term is 3 weeks; then there are 3-, 3- and 4-week summer terms, ending in mid-August.

Gerber noted that this would free greater research time for faculty.

President Gee than asked Dick Gunther to introduce an amendment. Gunther said it resulted from the Faculty Council meeting discussion on 26 February. The discussion pointed out that the committee report's axioms were reasonable and need to be respected, so there was a need seen for cross-referencing. At that time the report was a draft, and the draft was voted on; hence, a need to amend to take the Council's request and CESP's recommendations as Gunther had promised at that Faculty Council meeting. It does not restrict the calendar. CESP will report back to the Senate, which will vote on a specific calendar to be adopted. The amendment is listed as #2. It reads:

**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.**

The motion was moved, and President Gee requested and got a second.

Gunther was asked if, were the amendment not to pass, CESP could still rely on the axioms. Yes, but they would not have to, he replied, and faculty members were concerned about that.

The question was called and a show of hands requested. A sea of hands went up in favor; only two were no votes.

Nina Berman and Rob Coleman proposed an amendment that would guarantee no effects on workload, research, salaries, etc. They noted that their concern had been sparked by Provost Alutto's written statement to the ad hoc committee.

A student from the College of Medicine objected that, according to the rules on page 19-3, the amendment had not been received by the Program Committee, and could not be considered. He said that the Rules needed to be suspended first. The Parliamentarian
ruled that the amendment could be considered because the rules allow amendments from the floor.

Provost Alutto said the amendment was unnecessary because the proposal does not increase workload, will not decrease faculty research, it will have no effect on salary, and sabbaticals would be addressed in a manner similar to that of our aspirational peers. He said the amendment was not practical because workload changes day by day, year by year. He said that even if the amendment were accepted, it could not be implemented.

Rob Coleman pointed out that Provost Alutto may not be provost during the transition, so this should be on the record.

Alutto responded that it was not needed; whoever the provost was, he/she would have to do the same things.

The motion did not pass when the question was called. The number of hands in favor was discernibly smaller than those opposed.

Anne Smith, chair of CESP, was invited by President Gee to present an amendment. CESP asked that the resolution be changed to better define a semester as 65 days or more and 70 days or fewer of instruction. This was moved and seconded as it appears below:

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that The Ohio State University adopt a semester calendar with no fewer than 65 and no more than 70 days of instruction in each semester to take effect no earlier than Autumn, 2012; and**

Tim Gerber announced that he wanted to amend this amendment because a clarification was needed. There could be a problem with Law and other professional schools because of professional certification requirements. He added words to change the CESP amendment’s wording to:

**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**

Dan Mendelsohn from the College of Engineering objected to the resolution, and asked to speak about his amendment. He said that this exception would adversely affect Engineering and the Arts and Sciences.

President Gee said that we would have to work around the problem. First, we would vote on the motion on the floor.
Anne Smith said that CESP should address this.

Dick Gunther, already aware of the content of Mendelsohn's proposal, said he did not think that 75 days was the way to go. He said that professional students would not be disadvantaged. Professional schools could start before the "normal" semester, with the major part coterminous; for example, the professional students might start at the beginning of January, joining the rest of the students at the end of January when the semester begins for everyone else. We are not defining courses with this vote, he said, just the calendar when it's up and running. Otherwise, if the Mendelsohn amendment were adopted, all students would be forced to a seventeen-week semester.

Charles Brooks said it was best to leave the length of a semester as open as possible. He would vote against the Smith amendment and agree to the Engineering proposal.

President Gee said we would vote on Gerber’s amendment to the Smith amendment first. He was asked whether it was a friendly amendment, and whether a vote was required. Gee asked for the vote. There were 67 in favor and 19 opposed.

President Gee then called the vote on the Smith amendment, and it passed by a very large majority.

The Mendelsohn amendment would mandate "no fewer than 65 days and no more than 75 days."

An undergraduate stated that the 70-day language was due to USG. USG considers Mendelsohn’s a hostile amendment. Zack Usmani from USG stated that "other highly prestigious universities" had shorter terms. Shorter terms attract more faculty. A seventy-five day semester would decrease or eliminate January and May terms. Students like shorter terms, he said, which is why they like quarters. Students could not support a fifteen-week semester.

A question was asked of President Gee as to the calendars of the other public universities that currently have semesters. President Gee indicated that they varied.

A faculty member from CESP, Nath Rao, asked whether we wanted short minimesters. If the semester is seventy-five days, there would be no minimesters.

Ahmet Selamet, from Mechanical Engineering, said that we are not here to determine semesters' lengths. Engineering is asking for sufficient time; we shouldn't determine things right now. Further study is needed. He noted that 30 weeks for three quarters total 150 days; divide by 2 and you get 75 days.

Dick Gunther restated that we are not voting on the calendar. According to the resolution, should it pass, the work will be done by CESP. There will be a vote on the calendar for 2012. He suggested that a seventeen-week semester would engender opposition and a different vote result in the Senate.
Selamet said he was in favor of the change. He thinks the current recommendation is too rigid. Other universities have fifteen-week semesters.

The question was called. Many hands were shown in opposition, few were in favor. The Mendelsohn amendment was defeated.

President Gee said he took the discussion to mean that these concerns needed to be addressed by the responsible committees.

Another amendment was proposed by Dan Mendelsohn, that other semester models be considered in addition to the sole model presented in the report. It was moved, seconded, and passed by a large margin. It reads as follows:

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.

Jason Marion, president of CGS, addressed the Senate. He said his constituents were divided, but want to be involved in any transition. Graduate students know there are political repercussions if the switch is not made. If we embrace the change, we are free to choose it on our terms. If we pass, others may give us an undesirable model. OSU has been protected. While other parts of state government are being cut, education is protected; indeed, education is seeing increases due to the goodwill of legislators.

We aren't immune from state influence. What are we giving up in these times? The Governor and General Assembly went to bat for us, Marion said, and we need to exhibit trust in their plan. We need to support the transition. If we do not, the perception, which most will take as reality, would be that OSU does not care about student transfers or easing student mobility, and we are not grateful. Voting this down "would be perceived as a veto" of the governor's plan. Marion said that he expected all constituencies to be at the table during the transition.

Danelle Wilbraham, senator from CGS, said that, while undergraduates oppose semesters, graduate students generally support semesters. She expressed her concern about how the change will affect GTAs' teaching responsibilities. GTAs carry much of the burden of teaching at OSU, particularly the introductory courses. The Chism Report said that "Graduate assistants are students first and employees second" "their progress toward a degree should be protected" "the actual time spent teaching should not be increased by the conversion."

Wilbraham said that GTA appointments need to be designed as training opportunities.

Tim Gerber said that the ad hoc committee built on the Chism Report. There is no
intention to shift loads to GTA’s, nothing the guiding principles of the Chism Report applied here as well.

Marilyn Blackwell suggested that CESP consider involving the university as a whole in the discussion of the calendar.

Mary Jo Fresch, from College of Education and Human Ecology and teaching on the Marion campus, addressed the Senate. She said that she supported the proposal but had reservations about implementation. Fresch said that "Workload neutrality should maintain our current proportions among teaching, research and service on the Regional Campuses and in comparison to our Columbus colleagues." She alluded to a memo from Provost Alutto from 3 March 2009, in which he made statements that alarmed regional faculty. "The spirit of the response made several points we found perpetuated an outdated view of our work lives," she stated.

Fresch said that on Columbus campus, large sections are taught by TAs, while on the Regional Campuses, "Regional faculty are, in nearly every case, solely responsible for lecturing, labs, tutoring work with students, and advising. Based on the March 3 memo, our workload does not appear to be maintained, but rather, increased."

Fresch further said, "The most distressing comment [the Provost made] regarded our scholarly work. We were told, given the teaching focus of our Regional Campuses, there is no expectation that the research impact of Regional faculty will be the same as on Columbus campus. Rather, we are expected to teach more courses, be less involved in research, and our promotion decisions are supposed to reflect this." She noted that this establishes a two-tiered system within a Research 1 university, which President Gee has characterized as "one university." She said that "we cannot have leadership who has a lesser view of, or arrangements that disadvantage a large body of Ohio State faculty."

Fresch noted that college deans were instructed by OAA not to include Regional Campus faculty members' research in their productivity reports. Regional deans, on the other hand, supply data just on enrollment, programmatic, and financial issues. She said that "scholarly work we do is nowhere in the data sent to the Office of Academic Affairs. Reviewing the data will demonstrate just how productive we are under our current teaching loads and the service we provide to both our Regional Campus and our Columbus departments."

After describing regional Campus faculty members' accomplishments, Fresh closed by stating "The bottom line is, we are Ohio State University faculty and want to be treated as such."

Brian McEnnis, a member of the ad hoc committee teaching on the Marion Campus, noted that he had represented the Regional Campuses on both the Chism and the Gerber committees. He said he subscribed to everything Fresch had said. He supported the Chism Report recommendation and the Gerber resolution. The change in political climate has made semesters possible at this time.
He stated that he is concerned about workload issues in general. These are not just Regional Campus issues. The Chism Report said that we needed to advance policies that foster and advance the research mission of the university. We must make sure we can continue to hire and retain faculty on all campuses. He urged close attention during implementation to make certain we do not hinder our research mission.

Tim Gerber was asked by a student about the fifth "whereas," which states that students are adversely affected by quarters. Where are the statistics?, she asked. Gerber said he did not have such data, but believed OSU students who complete school in June are at a disadvantage compared to those who get out one month earlier in May. He asked Brad Myers, the university's registrar, to respond. Myers said that while we have more students than Miami, for example, abroad, we have a smaller proportion of such students. The calendar issue makes things more difficult, he said.

President Gee asked for closing remarks.

Dick Gunther spoke in favor of the change. He pointed out that he'd been the ringleader of the opposition to semester conversions in 1991 and 2000 when they had been proposed. He explained why he now supports the conversion. If things had not changed in the interim, he would still favor quarters, but we're voting in Ohio in 2009. This proposal is better than previous ones, and "the externals" are dramatically different.

Earlier efforts focused, he said, on pedagogical issues. There are no advantages to either, only tradeoffs. In the past, given no pedagogical gains, he'd focused on the considerable costs of the change. Now, the SIS is being implemented and costs are reduced.

This proposal allows a fifteen-week semester with thirteen weeks of instruction. It allows intensive short courses that offer the content of a full semester in just three weeks, or six weeks, etc. There's no reduction in calendar flexibility. So, there are many possibilities, and the short-term costs are being reduced or eliminated with adoption of the SIS. OAA is going to fund an extra September salary check, so faculty members do not lose a month of pay in the transition. Reassurances have been given on sabbaticals. Many of the Chism Report's concerns have been addressed.

Further, the costs of not engaging could be considerable. We're now an integral part of the University System of Ohio. The other twelve universities have either already converted or will convert. To remain on quarters would be a slap in the face of the governor and chancellor.

The Board of Regents now recognizes OSU as Ohio's flagship. Subsidies, which used to be the same as those at Columbus State, are now more commensurate. We've been protected from budget cuts. Past decades saw a 20% decline in real spending, while the Strickland administration has raised support by 17%, and in the next budget, main campus will get a 9.7% increase. Meanwhile, in Washington, Florida, and Kansas, there have been cuts of 20% or more. In Arizona, there have been faculty furloughs and loss of
a campus. The University of California faces a 15 to 20% cut. Private universities are suffering as well.

Richard Hart spoke on the merits of the quarter system. He said he'd studied and taught under both systems. He much prefers quarters. He cited quarters' "natural granularity." Because a quarter hour is smaller than a semester hour, the course content and credit find a better fit. It is easier to replace a faculty member for a quarter than a semester. The possibilities of two quarters' teaching and two of research allows chairs flexibility.

For students, internships and co-ops have four potential start dates rather than three. It allows concentration and reduced course loads. Part-timers can spread out their times more easily. Student illness is much less disruptive. There is greater diversity of courses and the depth is at least as good as in semesters. Students can't achieve the same depth of experience when they're taking courses concurrently.

Is change the sole gain? He asked rhetorically.

In his experience, changes get clogged up in OAA. That is likely to happen with this change. Furthermore, the chancellor actually said we had to consider conversion seriously, which we have done.

MAPS Senator Rob Coleman requested that the voting be done by paper ballot. While paper ballots were being distributed and collected, President Gee stated that the debate was a great demonstration of governance, and it was a healthy process. He said he "wanted to be on the record about the tremendous support received from our governor." Berkeley may be facing cuts and layoffs, but we are moving forward with good leadership towards our common goals.

The vote was reported by the Secretary of the Senate as 91 in favor and 19 opposed.

The meeting adjourned.

The resolution as passed is below:
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.