

Academic Calendar Advisory Committee
Listening Hour Notes

7/23/09

3:00 pm to 4:00 pm

Carol Burke Lounge

Questions from and Observations by Participants

- Is it possible to address the financial issue of Winter term by changing the price, making it the same price index as Fall and Spring?
 - The question should be considered. Remember, though, that the number of units usually taken in winter is fewer than fall and spring.
- Why is there a duplicate committee structure?
 - This is a question that the committee isn't in a position to answer. The President has appointed the committee to provide him with feedback.
- Is our campus the only one in the CSU with this calendar model?
 - yes
- Could we also look into a quarter system model as an alternative?
 - yes
- What has the ACAC group been doing so far?
 - ACAC has been hearing from individuals, reading reports and data and asking questions to identify the relevant material needed to consider the question. The group does not have a finding at this point.
- Based on having taught under other calendar models, it is more difficult to deliver complex curriculum, such as Nursing, in a 13 week semester than it is in a 15 week semester. The extra 2 weeks is beneficial for complex courses.
 - Wouldn't that also be a problem to deliver complex courses in a quarter model?
 - The quarter model only covers a quarter length course. The 13 week and the 15 week models are both semester length units.
 - Winter is optional, so faculty is not required to teach courses in it that they feel are unsuited.
 - The issue of complexity and length of term is related to the secondary effect of eliminating winter , which is the extension of the main semesters to longer terms.
- If we eliminate winter, might we have to revise all the course program descriptions, given that fall and spring semesters will be going from 13 weeks to 15 weeks?

- If a teaching load is now 7 courses, 1 of which is picked up in winter, what would the courseload be without winter? It will be difficult to teach a load of 3 one semester and 4 another.
- Having been at the University when it began using a quarter system, and having experienced the change to the 4-1-4, there appear to be 2 reasons to question whether the 4-1-4 should be retained: academic and financial. How does winter add to the cost? No evidence has been provided. Therefore, the most compelling rationale for examining the term would be academic. The original reason for having the term was to accommodate special courses, such as travel courses and innovative programs/opportunities. Now, the situation may have changed. Regular semester courses are offered in addition to the innovative travel/study programs in the winter term.
- Fieldwork cannot be done as effectively in a regular fall or spring semester. The programs that are being offered allow intense interaction with students. The opportunity to have the winter term is qualitatively significant and contributing to an outstanding student learning experience. The courses we have been offering as special innovative ones are truly life-changing for many students.
- Small classes with intense focus allow students to be successful. Students do better academically during winter term. It has a significant retention impact. This should be considered in evaluating any changes.
- The elimination of winter term is viewed as a fiscal issue. Staff members are indeed burdened in delivering the winter term. The VP for Business and Finance has assured UEPC that there is money to be saved. That said, there is concern regarding the confusion between actual costs and workload issues. In addition, concerns continue regarding the role of the two committees. It is troubling that the usual avenue for appointing faculty to committees has not been followed. With all due respect, the retired faculty members on the committee really don't have the same interests as the current faculty. The shared governance practices regarding faculty appointments should have been followed. The UEPC advised the President that this was an appropriate topic for their consideration. The President has promised that he would deliver both committees' reports to the Academic Senate for consideration. The timelines for the two reports are also of concern, with one being due at the end of this month, and the other in the fall. The process seems rushed.
- Regarding the impact on workload, there is a huge workload impact on administrative staff. The term does not conform to Peoplesoft. Past experience as a student at Chico demonstrates that an intersession can be offered as a precursor to the spring semester, preserving student financial aid. The same experiences can be accommodated through this model without losing the focus in winter term we now have.

- The campus should recognize the importance of openness and transparency in this process. We need to understand how to balance the interests of various people. Amity should be a strong value.
- If winter term is eliminated and course offerings need to be redistributed back into the fall semester, is there enough room in the schedule and facilities to accommodate this?
 - Based on an earlier report by Ed Aubert, the impact on the schedule of classes would be minimal. Keep in mind also that our enrollment FTE will be decreasing, so we won't be moving or scheduling the same number of students and classes. Utilization would need to be addressed, as not everything could fit into the 10am-2pm preferred time slots. It is true that more of the schedule would have to be utilized to accommodate it.
 - Even if there were additional slots, this assumes that students can take more courses. This places a bigger burden on students and may have a retention impact. Many of our students work, are parents. This might be difficult for them.
- Some courses currently offered in winter term could move to UEE. The Cuernavaca course used to be offered through UEE. We need to think outside the box.
 - Turning Cuernavaca into a UEE offering would greatly increase the price and be too expensive for many of our students.
- In essence, winter supports 3 kinds of classes: the exotic/innovative classes, GE and a course such as the specialty course on the Environmental History of the Central Valley. This class meets 3 hours on one day, 6 on another. It cannot be done during the regular semester. The students are introduced to the material by being in the field. It is only possible to conduct this particular class during December and January. It cannot be shifted into the fall or spring.
- In 2000 there was a scandal involving the awarding of the contract to Peoplesoft. Concerns were raised about there not being a competitive bid process. Campuses were then expected to implement it and pay for it. Now we find out that after all this effort and the resources poured into it that it cannot support our winter term. We should carefully evaluate whether we are considering eliminating winter term just because of the convenience of this software system.
- We should keep in mind that making a change to the academic calendar is permanent. It is very difficult to reverse.
- Difficult economic times cause us to take difficult actions. If this can save money and prevent people from losing jobs, we need to seriously consider this.

- Student representatives and administrators have indicated that all the special courses, such as the wetlands one discussed earlier, will be retained during that timeframe and that all GE will move to the summer.
 - The ACAC has not formulated a recommendation. It will be up to the President to determine how any change will be implemented.
 - As a point of clarification, that information was shared as part of a general discussion of ideas between the President and student leaders.

- In terms of some special/innovative classes, the department faculty in at least one area has already discussed that their special winter courses will no longer be offered if winter term is eliminated.

- Reflecting on having taught only at this institution with a winter term, it was part of the golden old days when all faculty had to teach and there were no catalog courses offered in winter, only the innovative/special ones. Over time, that has changes. Golden days are gone. Past studies have suggested that we should revitalize winter term. That would be great. There are many good reasons to have a special time to offer these courses. Models need serious consideration. However, we must reduce costs.

- Field trips and field study are two different types of activities. The field study conducted in winter term puts the students actually into the environment doing the work. A field trip is more passive and can be conducted during any term. Field work has the added benefit of freeing up classroom space.

- What is the truth about winter term? It is hard to tell. One measure, however, is gained through observation. When topics keep coming up for reconsideration, there must be something to be improved. Why do we keep discussing this on campus? Things that are working correctly don't end up being the topic of regular review such as winter term.

- Winter term has helped to ease the burden on students. It is more difficult to take 15 units each semester as a parent and full-time working person. Winter term helps lessen the burden.

- A student needs 15/16 units per semester to graduate (as a transfer student) in 2 ½ years. Without winter, students will be put behind.

- Music majors take 20 units each semester and really need the winter term to keep going. Without it, how many units would music majors have to take? This will delay graduation by several years. Music majors are already taking 5 years to graduate under this schedule. How much more can be added to their time?

- It is important to note that since the state is subsidizing a significant portion of the cost of a student attending college, increasing their time at the institution actually costs taxpayers more money.
- Student leaders need to look at all students. We need to cut the budget to save jobs and to preserve opportunities for future students.
- Some faculty came to this institution because they were attracted by the 4-1-4 calendar and the commitment to innovation. It is important to have intensive classes to continue to attract and retain faculty.
- What are the true savings from winter term? We need to know what we are transitioning to, not just what we are leaving. What are those costs? Faculty will have to change their programs and faculty committees will have to address these changes as part of our processes. We need to make sure we are really saving money.
- A middle ground might be possible. Workload can be alleviated by closing admissions and graduation cycles in winter. We should check what other campuses do. Chico was mentioned earlier.
- When faculty teach in winter is it part of the regular workload?
 - Yes
- If we have to teach 4 classes in one semester (and 3 the other) to make up our total commitment for 7 courses, the impact on research will be great. It will sabotage research. We need to consider the consequences of no winter term.
 - Nursing faculty teach a load of 8 (4 each term) and do research also. Course loads are different in different departments.
 - Regarding the impact on research, how do other campuses accomplish this, given the fact that most are already on a semester program? It must be feasible.
- Winter term used to serve a different purpose. It does not serve that purpose any longer. The golden days are long gone. We have a serious budget problem. It is preferable to incur some change than to issue pink slips.
- The economic crisis is not over. This is the beginning. We need to get started to address what savings we can.
 - Regarding eliminating winter term, this will be the President's decision. It will likely not be practical to do in 09-10, as the financial aid and other schedules are already out. Most likely would be 10-11; however, this is a decision for the President, not the committee.
 - Doing it as soon as possible is preferable.

