MEMORANDUM

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, STANISLAUS

To: General Faculty

Date: June 12, 1986

From: John W. Moore
President

Subject: REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Subsequent to my memorandum of June 2, I met with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar regarding the status and content of its report. It was agreed in that meeting that more in-depth analysis and consultation with the faculty were necessary and desirable before the Committee would be comfortable in submitting its final report to me in September.

Attached is a copy of the Ad Hoc Committee's "preliminary report." The Ad Hoc Committee is inviting faculty to read the preliminary report and submit reactions and recommendations to Dr. Jacqueline Johnson, Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee. Information received from the faculty will be considered carefully by the Ad Hoc Committee prior to preparing its final report.

I encourage you to correspond with the Ad Hoc Committee. Thank you.

JWM/cig

Attachment

Committee Members:

Dr. Jacqueline Johnson, Chair
Dr. Richard Alter
Dr. James Bowen
Dr. Thomas Carter
Dr. Mark Perkins
Dr. James Tuedio
Dr. Robert Van Regenmorter
ASSESSMENT OF VIABLE CALENDAR OPTIONS

Recommendation to President Moore
California State University, Stanislaus

Drafted by
Tom Carter and Jim Tuedio

for the

PRESIDENT'S AD HOC CALENDAR COMMITTEE

Jacqueline Johnson, Chair
Richard Alter
James Bowen
Thomas Carter
Mark Perkins
James Tuedio
Robert Van Regermorter

May 30, 1986
FORMAT OF REPORT

1. Approach Taken by the Committee.
2. Criteria for Evaluating Calendar Options.
3. Summary of Committee's Evaluations:
   A. Mission of the University
   B. Academic Programs
   C. Impact on Students
   D. Impact on Faculty
   E. Operating Issues
4. Concerns and Options
5. Recommendations

Appendices:

A. President's Charge to the Committee
B. Sample Academic Calendars
C. Recommended Class Modules
The Committee has met at least once a week since mid-January to discuss strategies for carrying out our charge as prescribed in the President's memo of January 7, 1986. Our early reflections focussed on the development and elaboration of criteria for evaluating calendar options. We quickly narrowed our focus to two options: enhancing and strengthening the Winter Term calendar currently in operation, or converting to a traditional semester calendar. We gathered a variety of reports that had been drafted previously by groups and individuals concerned with, or charged with reflecting on, the calendar issue. These spanned the past fifteen years, and offered bold interpretations of data collected from multiple sources (from the Registrar to surveys). Though the data were often consistent from one report to the next, the interpretations varied widely.

To solicit input on issues and concerns related to the various calendar options, we held open hearings and encouraged (and received) written comments from a variety of sources (including School Deans, individual faculty members, faculty representing academic programs, and administrators). We conducted an informal poll of faculty, staff, and administrators. The feedback from these sources indicated a wide diversity of issues and concerns, and strong sentiments for and against the two calendar options. Against this background, we decided to focus our energy on developing and analyzing a comprehensive set of criteria against which the two calendar options would be assessed.

We generated a list of criteria, and grouped them under five general conceptual areas of importance to the University: Mission of the University, Impact on Academic Programs, Impact on Students, Impact on Faculty, and Operating Issues. We felt that the impact on general Academic Quality should be a primary concern, to the extent that it can be affected by an academic calendar. But we were also aware of the importance of giving due consideration to implementation and operational costs associated with the two calendar options. From the standpoint of Academic Quality, the variety and flexibility inherent in the Winter Term calendar made this option the strong preference of the committee. From the pragmatic standpoint, however, the traditional semester calendar exhibited strengths, due primarily to ease of implementation and operation. On the other hand, a reduction in staff budgeting which might accompany a change to traditional semesters could have a significant short-term impact on the campus (not only in terms of administrative and instructional support, but also morale). Fortunately, we are in the enviable position of receiving budgetary support for the operation of Winter Term. In addition, we found no legislative impediment to modifying the Winter Term calendar (given our reading of Title 5, Section 42715, p. 546).

Thus, to a great extent, the committee found itself free to assess the two calendar options on their own merits, and we proceeded to develop a conception of an enhanced Winter Term calendar that would incorporate as many of the benefits of a traditional two-semester calendar as possible, without sacrificing the unique academic virtues of Winter Term.
CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING CALENDAR OPTIONS

The following criteria were used in our assessment of the two calendar options. Within each of the five general categories, we have listed particular areas of possible impact, together with specific examples from each area.

1) Mission of the University:
   a) Liberal Arts Programs (General Education/Breadth & Variety/Constraints)
   b) Graduate and Professional Programs (MBA/MPA/Certificate Programs)
   c) Teacher Education Programs (Student-teaching Supervision/Growth/Quality)
   d) Community Resource Potential (Drama (WT)/Speakers/Special Programs)
   e) Regional University Concept (Stockton Programs/ITV/Consortium/Outreach)
   f) Institutional Image (Distinctiveness/Excellence/Demographics)

2) Impact on Academic Programs:
   a) Quality (Music/Foreign Languages/Education/Innovation/Pacing)
   b) Off-Campus Components (Practicums/Internships/Student Teaching)
   c) Variety of Learning Experiences (Intensive Learning/Compression/Pacing)
   d) Innovation (Travel-Study/Children's Theatre/New Courses/General Ed)
   e) Articulation (ITV/Community Colleges/JC and UC transfers) \{5(e)\}
   f) Change (Curriculum Review and Refinement/Flexibility) \{2(a)\}

3) Impact on Students:
   a) Diversity & Flexibility (Workload Management/Outside Responsibilities)
   b) Pacing (Acceleration/Fragmentation/Courseload Distribution)
   c) Extra-Curricular Activities (Athletics/Clubs/Activity Hour)
   d) Financial Considerations (Job Scheduling/Financial Aid/Fees)
e) Faculty-Student Interaction (In-Class/Out-of-Class/Advising)
f) Classroom Exposure Time (Intensity/Focus/Retention/Quality Time)
g) Innovation (Innovative Courses/GE and Catalogue Courses) {cf. 2(c,d)}
h) Variety of Learning Experiences (Exposure to Different Formats)

4) Impact on Faculty:

a) Teaching (Workload Management/Proficiency/Renewal and Creativity)
b) Scholarship and Research (Quality Time/Release Time/Flexibility) {4(a)}
c) Faculty Governance (Meeting Times/Accessibility) {4(e)}
d) Innovation (Development and Implementation of Special Courses) {4(a)}
e) Accountability (Faculty Governance/Advising/Collegiality) {Summary}
f) Public Service (Lectures/Consulting/Conference Activity/Performance)
g) Morale (Burn-out/Self-Image/Abuse/External Perceptions/Stockton) {4(a)}
h) Personal Life (Vacations/Stress & Fragmentation/Obligations) {4(g)}

5) Operating Issues:

a) Staffing-Issues (Funding/Workload Management/Faculty/Support Staff)
b) Budget (CSU Resources/Internal Resource Allocation) {5(a)}
c) Facilities (Efficiency/Distribution at Peak Hours/4-unit Courses)
d) Enrollment (FTE Impact/Recruiting & Diversity of Students) {Summary}
e) Articulation (Coordination with JC's/ITV/Concurrent Enrollment) {5(f)}
f) Registration/Administration (Number of Processes/Consortium/Scheduling)
g) Logistics of Resource Allocation ("S" Factor Courses) {5(a,i)}
h) Collective Bargaining (Faculty/Staff/Public Safety/5 Other Units)
i) CSU Administration (Friendly Relations/Budgeting/Image)
j) Fee Management (Fee Schedule Impact on Income and Expense Budgets)
SUMMARY OF COMMITTEE'S EVALUATIONS

I. MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY

The committee members believe that two fundamental aspects of our mission as a regional State University should be emphasized in any assessment of calendar options: to provide a sound, high quality education to our students, and to serve as a regional cultural and educational resource. To a large extent, we found the calendar options neutral with respect to the mission of the University. In a few areas, however, we noted a potential for discernible impact. This is particularly true in regard to our potential for providing our students with a broad liberal arts education, together with rigorous approaches to multiple subjects in a variety of learning contexts. We have an obligation to prepare our students to function effectively as problem solvers in life situations that vary widely in their form and complexity. To the extent that a calendar can promote exposure to diversity in learning environments, we feel that it supports this aspect of our mission.

For example, teacher education programs should expose potential teachers to a variety of approaches to teaching and learning as part of their preparation to be effective—teachers. It is not sufficient to prepare our teachers for the environment they will encounter in their initial teaching job. They need to be prepared to cope effectively with changes they will encounter throughout their careers in teaching and learning environments. Similarly, expansive exposure to a variety of learning environments and techniques is appropriate to our other students as well, particularly those who will take on professional responsibilities that call for a diversity of problem-solving strategies.

Before we can educate students, we must first attract them. The image of a university plays a key role in this process. The committee found two divergent perspectives on how the calendar options would affect our image as a regional institution of higher learning. One emphasizes the positive side of a traditional, "familiar" semester plan. The other emphasizes the positive role of "uniqueness" in attracting students.

Given our large percentage of part-time students (nearly 50%), the opportunity to take courses during three terms a year could be an especially attractive feature of our recruiting package. An essential aspect of this feature would be an enhanced Winter Term that includes regular catalogue and general education courses.

In relation to our cultural resource potential, we have discovered several important, largely Winter Term dependent, opportunities. These include the Drama Department's Children's Theatre production that reaches 3000 area school children under the one-month Winter Term format, and which would reach twice that many under a six week format. The Music Department could complement these productions with ensemble performances for the young. We also see the potential for public presentations by participants in travel-study courses, upon their return to campus (which is not currently feasible under the one-month format).
II. ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

There was a consensus among committee members that any calendar change prompting a thorough and fundamental curriculum review and emphasizing the 30-week aspect of the Academic Year would benefit the institution. Beyond that, we looked for a calendar which would enhance the opportunities for academic variety and flexibility.

We concluded that, relative to Winter Term, a change to traditional semesters would limit not only the variety of learning experiences available to students, but also the innovative and experimental opportunities available to faculty. We found this contrary to the spirit of our educational mission. However, we also found it important to propose modifications to the Winter Term format which would allow and encourage academic programs to take full advantage of the 30-week aspect of the Academic Year.

A number of academic programs have expressed an inability to make effective use of Winter Term under the current 4-1-4 format (e.g., Music, Foreign Languages, Education, Business, Graduate Programs, and the Sciences). For the most part, they feel cut off from the 30-week aspect of the Academic Year. Primarily in response to their objections, we have developed the concept of a lengthened Winter Term (from one month to six weeks), and have outlined some reasonable approaches that can be taken by these various programs to allow for an effective use of the 6-week Winter Term format. (See the section of our report entitled "Concerns and Options" for a discussion of these approaches.)

We recognize that there are some courses that could be taught more effectively over a 15-week term than over 13 weeks. However, to give 15 weeks to those courses would mean sacrificing most of the variety and flexibility inherent in a Winter Term calendar. This issue seems most critical in relation to year-long sequences (e.g., introductory foreign language, physics, chemistry, mathematics, and supervised student-teaching courses). We have addressed this issue in more detail in the section to our report entitled "Concerns and Options." In essence, we are proposing that these programs could restructure their year-long course sequences to distribute the material over all three terms. For example, Basic Physics I and II, and Principles of Chemistry I and II (each comprising 5-unit courses in Fall and Spring) could become Basic Physics I, II, and III, or Principles of Chemistry I, II, and III (comprising 4-unit courses in Fall and Spring, and a 2-unit course in Winter). In this way, the 10-unit sequence would be distributed over the full 30-weeks of the Academic Year. Similarly, Elementary Spanish I and II, and Calculus I and II (all 4-units courses) could be modified to take advantage of Winter Term by conversion to a 3-unit course in Fall and Spring, and a 2-unit course in Winter. Although these changes might produce occasional problems for transfer students, they would alleviate many of the problems commonly associated with the compact nature of our Fall and Spring semesters. At the same time, they would promote active participation in Winter Term.

Music and Education have expressed the opinion that the Winter Term format is incompatible with their academic programs. In the final analysis, however, we found their objections generally traceable to insufficient faculty for staffing Winter Term offerings. (These objections are dealt with in more detail in the section to our report entitled "Concerns and Options."
III. IMPACT ON STUDENTS

The basic tradeoff between traditional semesters and a Winter Term calendar seems to be between a larger number of courses during longer terms and a smaller number of courses during shorter terms. The former option emphasizes extended time for absorbing material; the latter emphasizes a reduction in fragmentation and more intensive learning. Though the committee finds attractive elements in both of these options, we find additional potential advantages to the Winter Term calendar that would make it better suited to the needs of our students.

For instance, Winter Term provides students with the opportunity to focus intensively in a single course, and thus to experience the virtues of "single-minded" intensive learning. Students are also exposed to "change of pace" learning under this format, and to the diversity of innovative, experimental, and travel-study courses. Students have the flexibility to distribute their course load over three substantial terms, to engage in workload management, to accelerate their degree work, take more courses during prime-time hours (9 am to 1 pm), and to coordinate their academic and non-academic responsibilities and interests. In particular, the enhanced Winter Term calendar offers consistent course scheduling across the three terms (both in terms of class times and range of regular catalogue and general education courses). This is particularly important for working and part-time students (who, together, make up a majority of our clientele). In addition, the Winter Term calendar provides the advantage of starting later in the Fall, which could be of benefit to students with agriculture-based summer jobs.

We endorse the concept of a regularly scheduled "Activity Hour" during which students can participate in extra-curricular activities. This would be of particular value to our commuting students. Given the option to distribute their course load over three terms, students operating under a Winter Term calendar would have more flexibility and time for involvement in such activities.

Student surveys have indicated a growing desire for regular catalogue and general education courses during Winter Term. The enhanced Winter Term format would provide quite readily for this option, but would still protect the valuable option for non-traditional courses.

Under the current 4-1-4 calendar, there is a somewhat artificial requirement that students must attend a certain number of Winter Terms. In addition, students do not need to sign up for Winter Term in order to maintain continuous enrollment privileges. It is our expectation that the expanded offerings will encourage most students to participate voluntarily in Winter Term. Nevertheless, we recommend a thorough review of the policies concerning required attendance and continuous enrollment. We should encourage active participation by students throughout the 30-week Academic Year.
IV. IMPACT ON FACULTY

Many of the same considerations that apply to students also apply to faculty. Specifically, in a traditional semester system, faculty would typically teach four 3-unit courses per semester. Under a Winter Term calendar, teaching loads can be distributed over the three terms to reduce fragmentation, to improve workload management, and to provide flexibility for variations in teaching pace and intensity. A Winter Term calendar also fosters and enhances opportunities for experimental and innovative teaching methods and course content. Additionally, we feel that the change of pace inherent in a Winter Term calendar is conducive to faculty renewal and to research and creative activities.

The committee recommends that all faculty be expected to participate actively over the course of the full 30-week Academic Year. We feel this is not only important, but also realistic, in virtue of the fact that the enhanced Winter Term format provides for the offering of regular catalogue courses on the same basis as in the Fall and Spring semesters. (Regular catalogue courses would not require special review to be offered in Winter Term; non-catalogue courses offered during any term would be reviewed on an annual basis by the appropriate subcommittee of EPC.)

The concern for a lack of accountability for faculty activities and course format and content during Winter Term under the 4-1-4 calendar was given strong consideration by the committee. In order for the 6-week Winter Term to be effective, it is essential that all departments make a strong commitment to become actively involved in Winter Term. This includes reviewing their curriculum within the context of the 30-week Academic Year, under a three-term format, and identifying and offering appropriate regular catalogue courses (including general education courses) during Winter Term. In addition, faculty must expect to engage in regular advising and committee-related activities throughout the course of the 30-week Academic Year. Department Chairs and Deans would share, with the faculty, responsibility for assuring active participation throughout the academic year. (We are not recommending that all faculty be explicitly required to teach during all three terms. In certain circumstances, "active participation" might mean research or scholarly activities, or special projects. We are recommending that faculty be accountable for their activities in all terms for which they are under contract, and we feel strongly that Department Chairs and Deans should be actively involved in this process.)

In relation to accountability for the form and content of Winter Term courses, it is our expectation that many of the Winter Term offerings will be regular catalogue courses, and must meet the same standards that are in effect during the Fall and Spring semesters. We think this is reasonable, since the expanded Winter Term format mirrors the 6-week Summer Session, and is roughly half the length of the Fall and Spring terms. (For instance, a 3-unit catalogue course would typically meet MWF for 2 hours per day, or TTh for 3 hours per day, and thus would be directly comparable to a Fall or Spring offering of the same course.) The committee overseeing non-catalogue offerings would be expected to engage in a more effective and thorough process of review than is currently practiced, and faculty would be expected to respect and abide by the recommendations of the committee,