

July 17, 2001

To: Cal State LA Community

From: Task Force on Academic Calendar
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The Academic Senate Executive Committee appointed this Task Force to gather information and lay out reasons both for and against changing the academic calendar at CSLA. We want to explain our summer work to you, so that you have an opportunity to help shape its course if you are interested.

As many of you know, only six CSU campuses are on the quarter system. Each of these campuses has been asked by the Chancellor's Office to consider conversion to a semester calendar and, if we decide not to convert, to explain the reasons for our decision. The Senates at the two Cal Poly campuses, Pomona and San Luis Obispo, have voted to retain a quarter calendar. CSU Hayward, Bakersfield, and San Bernardino will all decide in Fall 2001.

The Academic Senate Chair, Bill Taylor, sent a memo to all faculty in May 2001 explaining the process that will take place during Fall Quarter 2001: two University meetings the week of October 1, College meetings during the weeks of October 8 and 15, then Academic Senate discussion, as a first reading item, on Oct. 23, and as a second-reading item on Oct. 30. A vote by the Academic Senate may come as soon as Oct. 30.

Members of the Task Force will attend the University and College meetings during this time and act as resources.

Website and email:

Our website is accessible through the Academic Senate website, "Issues before the Academic Senate": <http://www.calstatela.edu/academic/senate/issues/index.htm> . All relevant documents and links will be available here as they are finished. We plan to post our report in September 2001. This summer you can find links to reports from the other quarter campuses. Some of their websites have not only their own very comprehensive reports, but also a number of links to relevant research and other documents.

An email address is available for your questions, requests, and comments: calendr@calstatela.edu
Although the task force will not respond substantively to each message, we will consider them carefully.

The context in which are working:

Although the Academic Senate considered calendar conversion during the mid-1990s, the context has changed somewhat. There is now a system-wide commitment to *year round operation of all CSU campuses* as well as approximately \$2 million available to each quarter system campus to offset the costs of conversion.

The Task Force is studying all the information, arguments and reports posted by the other quarter system CSU campuses, previous CSLA academic calendar committee reports from 1994-95 and 1999, committee and subcommittee reports written in Spring 2001, and statistics from various CSU campuses. We are consulting with those with relevant experience, for example, CSU Dominguez Hills, who converted to semesters in the 1980s. We are also asking various individuals at CSLA to provide us with information and estimates.

It is important to remember that this Task Force has no decision-making power. Our task is to lay out relevant information and reasons to enable the Academic Senate to decide in an informed and rational manner. In order to make the choices less vague, we intend, for example, to sketch possible calendars and class schedules, compare possible "progressions to degree" for students, explore possible consequences of conversion for student retention, FTES, etc.

Issues we are exploring:

Although many concerns people have as individuals often result from their status as students, faculty, staff, or administrators, the issues themselves don't break down neatly into these categories. Thus as we list the issues below, keep in mind that we will explore each issue, where relevant, from the perspectives of the various categories of people in the university community. The chancellor's office has also asked that each campus consider systemwide interests as well.

Calendar Possibilities

How the calendars compare: four ten-week quarters vs. various plans with two semesters and a state-supported summer term, including trimesters.

Curriculum

- Teaching and learning issues
(from the points of view of both students and instructors)
- Pros and cons of curricular revision in a calendar conversion context
- Transfer and articulation
- Possible class schedules
(including the availability of classrooms of various kinds and sizes)
- Impact on various kinds of courses: undergraduate major courses, general education and service courses, graduate and professional courses

Workload/Courseload

- Impact on various groups of employees of the university—tenure-track faculty, lecturers, staff and administrators who directly service students (e.g., registration, financial aid, academic advisement, *et al.*) and those who don't (e.g., operations).
- Students' course loads—possible patterns of taking courses, progress to degree, etc.; students' needs to juggle their academic and non-academic lives.

Long-term Fiscal Issues

- Impact on number of courses students take (both in the years immediately following conversion and in the longer-run)
- Possible scenarios with different levels of enrollment
- Financial aid for students and other possible ways of easing financial burdens
- Impact on administrative costs of one fewer "student cycle" per year

Short-term Fiscal Issues: The Costs of Conversion

- What special support would be needed for faculty, staff and administrators (e.g., for curriculum revision from the department level through the approval process, extra advising support, modification of articulation agreements, procedural changes for many student-related processes, modification of computer systems to accommodate changes, etc.)?
- Where might this support be found?

Transition Issues if a Semester Calendar is Chosen

- Advising and special curricular accommodations for students.
- Possible revision of curricular approval process for various types of courses

So...have we overlooked something that you would like us to explore?

Do you want to make sure we understand the issues listed here in the same way you do?

If so, or if there is something else you would like to communicate to the Task Force, please email us at calendr@calstatela.edu.