

Priority issues and concerns with semester conversion process

David Andereck, Gene Mumy, Valarie Williams
Associate Deans, Arts and Sciences

I. Highest Priority

A. General Issues

1. What is the timetable for all aspects of the conversion process?
2. Can we facilitate reverse engineering of course requirements? We would like to know which service courses (physics, math, chemistry, biology, statistics, etc.) are required by other courses and programs across campus, and what the client units need.
3. Will there be a comprehensive conversion manual that units can refer to when considering their transformation?
4. What will the conversion teaching loads from quarters to semesters be based on?
5. Will half-semester (7 week) courses be allowed?
6. What will be the credit hours conversion algorithm? Will there be variation between lecture, labs, and recitations?
7. Assuming that 3 credit hours are the norm for courses, will 4 and 5 credit hour courses be allowed? (Note that 4 and 5 credit hour courses are relevant to current 3-course sequences (and 2-course sequences) that will still need to be delivered in one academic year under semesters.) Will 1 and 2 credit hour courses be allowed?
8. Will we be mandated to cut the number of courses in Book 3? Will there be a mandated reduction in the number of courses offered annually, through cuts in number of courses (item 8) and/or reductions in the frequency of offerings? (An example issue would be if space resources are not sufficient to meet a unit's proposed course offering schedule, how will this be handled?)
9. What will be the daily schedule of classes?

B. Undergraduate Issues

1. What will the GEC(s) look like? What will the Honors GEC(s) look like?
2. What will be the minimum hours to an undergraduate degree?
3. What will be the minimum (120 for a "typical" BA and BS?) and maximum hours for an undergraduate, non-tagged degree, major? Will larger programs (i.e., tagged degrees, for

example) be allowed to simply proportionately scale their hours? Will there be any changes in criteria?

4. What will be the minimum and maximum hours for an undergraduate minor? Will there be any changes in criteria?

C. Graduate Program Issues

1. What will be a normal pre-candidacy load? What will be the required minimum number of credit hours per semester for graduate students funded by a TA or RA (currently 9 during the year, 7 in summer) versus those on fellowships (currently 15)?

2. What will be the normal post-candidacy load? In particular, the “3 credit hour rule” should be revisited.

3. How many credit hours in a standard graduate course?

4. Relevant to (1) and (3), there needs to be a recognition that many graduate programs will want pre-candidacy students to take the same number of courses per semester as they do on quarters (3 not 5) to deliver sequentially covered material in the same time frame, meaning, e.g., three 5 credit semester courses.

5. How many credit hours for a Masters degree?

6. What will the requirements be for a Graduate Interdisciplinary Specialization? for a Graduate Minor?

II. Other Issues to Consider

1. What will be the procedure regarding grandfathering of those students who have to convert from quarters to semesters, part of their way through the degree?

2. What are the plans for the summer before the switch? Will there be a summer term that year? (This has implications for recruiting, as the summer program with its funding is an attraction to many incoming students.)

3. What are the plans for graduate student funding in the summer of the switch? Even apart from TAs, those on RAs or Fellowships would normally receive three months of support.

4. Are faculty (and graduate students) considered to be on-duty for both semesters and the May term? What constitutes being “on-duty”?

5. Units must be held harmless fiscally for some period of time during and following conversion.

6. Will faculty be compensated for their increased workload during the conversion process?

7. Use of the Electronic Course Approval system (ECA) is problematic for processing very large numbers of courses and cannot be used at all for programs. We must be allowed a simplified paper submission process, such as a pre-populated spreadsheet (totally new courses that bear no identifiable relationship to existing quarter-based courses that are proposed during this time should go through a standard approval process). For consistency, we should simply halt use of ECA during this time.

8. There should be no policy requiring that all syllabi have to accompany program submissions.

9. Requirements for assessment plans should be minimal and departmentally based rather than course-by-course, or program-by-program. Essentially, all programs and courses should be evaluated by departments before and after conversion to ensure that learning goals are still being met. A return to a more formal process must be held in abeyance until after completion of the conversion.

10. Will there be a mechanism for adjudicating disagreements on service courses between the offering and client units, and possibly GEC needs? (For example, the number of hours for calculus courses vary across the country.) What about possible problems with cross-listed or other shared course offerings?

11. What will be the course numbering scheme? Which course numbers will be reserved for certain standard types of offerings (those at present include 367, x93, x94, 699, 999, 489, H783)?