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Survey Regarding Calendar Changes

Faculty Senate

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GSU Faculty Senate Survey Regarding Calendar Changes

March, 2009

Responses: 82

Faculty Status:

- Tenured/Tenure-track 49
- Program Coordinator 6
- Instructor or Lecturer 21
- Academic Resource/Other 2
- No Response 12

Program Association:

- BA or BS program 41
- MA or MS program 55
- Doctoral program 9
- Other 7
- No Response 12

Note: Respondents may be tenured/tenure track and also program coordinators. Therefore, All Response will not necessarily equal the total of other columns. In addition, of the 82 respondents, 12 did not respond to the item asking for faculty status.

1. Does the current calendar support your present program and individual teaching needs?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	64 78.0%	41 83.7%	5 83.3%	16 76.2%
No	18 22.0%	8 16.3%	1 16.7%	5 23.8%

2. Would the proposed calendar meet your program and individual teaching needs?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	42 51.2%	25 51.0%	2 33.3%	11 52.4%
No	40 48.8%	24 49.0%	4 66.7%	10 47.6%

3. If neither meets your program and/or teaching needs, how could the calendar be changed to meet those needs? (Please respond NA if not applicable.)

NA: 53

Comments from Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty

NA: 33

Leave as is -

Move to a 9 month calendar.

I wonder how many people understand their present program needs in terms of accreditation, enrollment, student, etc. issues. Please don't count on my answers here since I have no idea about the needs of my programs. The proposed calendar intentionally failed to address and communicate the key issue to the key constituent, i.e., changes to teaching load to faculty (pages 5 and 7). To answer your next question about spring break, it depends on if we are going to attract more traditional full-time students or not. With our current student population (most are non-traditional part-time students), it is not necessary to have a spring break.

It presents a problem for faculty on 10 month contracts. Some of our graduate courses would not be able to be offered in the 6 week block. It is too short.

Dates for the end of the winter trimester and the beginning and end of the Sp/Summer trimesters would need to be changed. How can we have one trimester ending on May 6th and the next trimester beginning on May 5th?

Fall: Needs to start after Labor Day and end Dec 15 Winter: Need to start 2nd Week of January Need more grading time between blocks

I would prefer a semester system where we have a longer interim break between Fall and Winter trimesters. Also, the proposed schedule as written has NO interim between Winter and Spring/Summer; in fact, the Winter semester ends the day AFTER the first class day of the Spring Summer begins.

Many of our quantitative courses can barely be completed in 7.5 weeks and could never be completed in 6 weeks. Additionally, having 4 hour classes in the summer block courses reduces classroom availability by 50%.

The problem with the proposed calendar is that it is designed for a university whose faculty are on a nine month contract. I would be agreeable to the calendar change if the university would agree to a nine month contract for faculty. The proposed calendar encroaches on the time off that faculty currently have with no obligation to the university, for those of us who take our time off in July and August. Also, it's difficult to evaluate this calendar without precise dates reflecting when Blocks 2 and 3 would begin and end in the summer session. If the university really cares about our concerns with this calendar, which I am sure they don't, then why don't they give us complete information to evaluate?

the current calendar could maybe be improved by adding a short January semester (4 weeks) for specific purposes such as, foreign study, other small group exercises.

Six weeks in the summer will be a real crunch for students to complete all the activities and absorb the concepts in a way which supports synthesis of ideas. 7.5 is already hard to manage.

You do not specify any block 2 or 3 dates for summer. Does this mean there will be no summer blocks proposed for next summer? If this is the case, I don't feel it would support my individual teaching needs or meet with the union contract. Our department is testing out a summer schedule and those six week classes meet from June 1-July 15 as well as another Block 1 course I am teaching. What about the block schedule?

Extend the summer

They both meet our program's needs

Starting after Labor Day should remain. I vote definitely NOT to change the schedule. The only way I would vote for schedule changes would be to move us to a 9 month contract. But even with that change, we definitely should start the fall after Labor Day NOT before.

There is no time for the students or the faculty to "break" between the end of the proposed new winter semester -ending May 6th and the summer semester beginning May 5th. In this case there should be no "semester break" in winter - the week should buffer the winter/summer transition. This is a school for grownups. Spring break is not necessary. Giving students and faculty time between semesters is vital.

I was on the calendar committee and the summer term could also be 8 week and 4 week blocks.

Comments from Program Coordinators

NA: 4

It presents a problem for faculty on 10 month contracts. Some of our graduate courses would not be able to be offered in the 6 week block. It is too short.

Fall: Needs to start after Labor Day and end Dec 15 Winter: Need to start 2nd Week of January Need more grading time between blocks

Comments from Instructors and Lecturers

NA: 16

I may add that changing the summer term into a shorter period of time, that the course meeting times may have to be extended to meet the same number of hours that the course would meet during the fall and spring.

As presented the summer terms starts ONE DAY BEFORE the end of the spring term. For faculty teaching both spring and summer, that means NO time at all to grade final assignments for the spring term and NO time to prepare for Summer courses. There needs to be a minimum of two weeks to provide adequate time for grading/feedback for one term and preparation for the next. IS THERE A TYPO IN THE PROPOSED SCHEDULE?

If summer starts at the very end of winter, then when are faculty supposed to get grades submitted? You literally have the end of classes and the beginning of classes overlapping. Both Students and Faculty need time between terms to get reorganized and ready to start again. Also, some courses require a specific number of contact hours. How will these hours be addressed? Will classes that are 3 hours/week go up to 4 hours/week over the 12 week summer?

The only problem for teachers is that summer school cannot begin May 5th as they do not get out of their school year until June 10-15 (depending on snow days). Therefore they would have to take a shorter summer session.

Start winter term on Jan. 12th. The winter term begins after the university has been closed for the holidays. This causes a problem for students. Have spring/summer begin one week later and keep the spring break.

4. Do you think it is necessary to have a spring break?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	27 33.3%	14 28.6%	0	7 33.3%
No	54 66.7%	35 71.4%	6 100%	14 66.7%

5. Thinking of the proposed summer semester with two six-week blocks, do you think you can effectively deliver your courses in a six-week session?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	35 47.9%	23 46.7%	2 33.3%	10 47.1%
No	38 52.1%	26 53.1%	4 66.7%	11 52.9%

6. If you were to teach a six-week course, how would you prefer to meet the required 45 contact hours? Please rank the following options in order of your preferred weekly configuration, with 1 = most preferred; 7 = least preferred.

The following table shows mean ratings by 74 respondents.

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Once a week for 7.5 hrs.	4.82	4.82	5.00	4.95
Meeting 2 times a week for 3.75 hrs. each time	2.66	2.84	2.83	2.33
Meeting 3 times a week for 2.5 hrs. each time	3.32	3.18	2.67	3.81
Meeting 4 times a week for 1.875 hrs. each time	4.93	4.84	5.00	5.33
Hybrid of on-campus and on-line meetings	2.73	2.82	2.33	2.33
All on-line meetings	4.41	4.61	5.00	3.71
Other (please specify below)	5.12	4.90	5.17	5.52

Comments from Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty:

NA: 7

What we have now works. Keep it.

Not to teach it at all if possible.

The survey set-up that does not allow one to rank responses that are equally "least preferred" does not allow me to accurately report my preferences here!!!

a hybrid version supplemented with Blackboard with asynchronous assignments, not necessarily "meetings".

I cannot teach most of my courses in 6 weeks.

Teach more courses in Fall or Winter so I don't have to teach in summer at all.

No other recommendations

Go to 9 month contracts with summer teaching optional.

I think you've covered the doable configurations.

7.5 weeks is already challenging enough for our students--let's not make it worse!!

It really depends on the course for me. I am fine teaching once a week for a day, the types of courses I teach lend themselves well to that format. Twice a week is also fine, the others are not my preference in general, except our program does offer many courses online so depending on program needs, I am flexible there. I think how the courses are offered should be left up to departments to decide in order to accommodate faculty, program and individual needs. A weekend format could also be implemented as a hybrid course, meeting Sat/Sun for 15 hours for 2 weekends and online weekly to meet the other 15 hours. Or, Friday evening from 6-9, Sat 9-5 and Sun 9-4, leaving 9 hours online. There are many ways to implement a hybrid and I do believe strongly in letting faculty decide what is the best schedule for them and their courses. Why should there only be one way when there currently are multiple existing formats?

I am a resource professional, so this question doesn't exactly apply

The above check mark system does not allow you to check least preferred or any other option more than once. Thus, to recap what I cannot indicate above is-- the first four options I vote for least prefer. Options 5 and 6, that is, hybrid and all online are my most preferred. Great now this systems won't even allow me to proceed forward until I check boxes. VERY bad set up here.

Do not change to six week block.

no comment

I won't teach 6 weeks, but 12 weeks.

Most major universities offer courses for 6 weeks without extending the number of minutes per meeting. What's the problem for GSU? Look at the calendars for the Big 10 schools.

Comments from Program Coordinators

NA: 1

a hybrid version supplemented with Blackboard with asynchronous assignments, not necessarily "meetings".

Comments from Instructors/Lecturers

NA: 3

Some classes cannot be taught in 6 wks.

No suggestions

I think it would be difficult for a science lab/lecture to be taught as two separate courses during a six week period and give it the same attention that it would be given during the fall and spring.

It appears as if "Other" requires an answer ... strange survey. I don't have an 'other' yet I must rank order it

Not sure what this "other" would be... This is a difficult question because it depends on what the content includes. I would not teach Statistics on-line (though some do) nor would I teach it for 7hours straight. I do see a few advantages to some course being either longer sessions or twice a week. Stats is good candidate for 2x/week I think.

Schedule a combination of classroom time, online discussions and visiting sites related to course.

My classes are all taught online. On-campus is not an option.

7. Are you absolutely opposed to the proposed calendar?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	23 31.9%	16 32.7%	3 50.0%	6 30%
No	49 68.1%	33 67.3%	3 50.0%	14 70%

8. If you answered yes to the above, please rank the following reasons in order of the strength of your opposition, with 1 = strongest reason for opposition; 6 = weakest reason for opposition.

The following table shows mean ratings for the 28 responses.

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Program planning/ sequencing for meeting students' needs	2.46	2.67	1.67	2.00
Impact on instructional effectiveness	2.08	2.06	2.00	2.29
Accreditation requirements	3.80	3.88	4.00	3.83
Service time/ commitments	4.19	4.47	4.33	3.57
Scholarship time/ commitments	3.63	3.56	3.33	3.57
Other (please specify below)	4.65	4.31	5.67	5.00

Comments from Tenured/Tenure-track Faculty:

Does not fit with 10 month union contract

Space--I strongly doubt that we have enough classrooms to make this schedule work. Now, for example, a room which is filled at 4:30 is vacated at 7:30, and can be used for another course. But if the 4:30 class runs four hours or more, where do we put the 7:30 students? Enrollment--students will not be able to, or want to, attend classes 7+ hours per week, whether in one session or several sessions. The administration MUST recognize that the great majority of our students have 8 to 4:30 jobs which they can't quit. THEY ARE NOT TYPICAL COLLEGE STUDENTS, AND EVEN VIGOROUS RECRUITING WILL NOT BRING IN MANY WHO ARE.

You need to check your survey here. I marked "no" for 7, but was, nonetheless, forced to mark answers for 8.

I teach mostly graduate courses and therefore the meetings take place in the evenings. Lengthening the 7:30 meeting time to 11 will reduce enrollment considerably

Im not opposed, but am concerned that it could take students longer to graduate, and study plans will have to be redesigned. However it is important to have at least 5 years of academic calendars and course offerings set ahead of time.

Our students sometime struggle with 8 weeks sessions. 6 weeks are out of the question. Moreover, most of our students have children. Thus, starting after labor day aids them in getting the kids off to school and then for them to get ready for their own classes. By starting before Labor Day you cause problems for those GSU students who have kids in Chicago schools.

Comments from Program Coordinators:

None

Comment from Instructors and Lecturers:

I am really not that opposed. So many schools have this schedule, and it seems very reasonable to be consistent with the pack.

9. If you were offered a new 9-month contract with optional summer teaching, would you support it?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	56 76.7%	38 77.6%	6 100%	15 71.4%
No	17 23.3%	11 22.4%	0	6 28.6%

10. For Unit A faculty: Does your current 10-month contract support the proposed calendar?

	All Responses
Yes	23 31.5%
No	25 34.2%
NA	25 34.2%

11. For Unit B faculty: Does your current 10-month contract support the proposed calendar?

	All Responses
Yes	11 28.9%
No	5 13.2%
NA	22 57.9%

12. For program coordinators only: Approximately how much lead time would you need to reorganize your program offerings, as well as adjust student study plans for the proposed calendar (e.g., a month, two months, etc.)? Please respond NA if not applicable.

The Chair will know about this.
6 months
two months
Question is incomplete and does not reflect adequately the work of a coordinator. Not all coordinators "adjust student study plans" not do they "reorganize program offerings" each term. Unless you are asking about a transitional period? In that case, a semester would be needed.
A YEAR
As a unit b lecturer I have 12 mth contract
6 months to a full academic year
1 year
two months
6months

13. If the proposed calendar is implemented, do you see benefits to your teaching or program needs?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	30 41.1%	21 42.9%	2 33.3%	7 33.3%
No	43 58.9%	28 57.1%	4 66.7%	14 66.7%

14. Have you ever taught in a semester system (i.e., two 15 or 16 week semesters and a shorter summer session)?

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Yes	53 72.6%	36 73.5%	2 33.3%	15 71.4%
No	20 27.4%	13 26.5%	4 66.7%	6 28.6%

15. Please offer your suggestions regarding any other academic calendar formats that should be considered (e.g., January fast-track term, Maymester, summer two-week crash course, etc.). If none, please respond “none.”

Suggestions from Tenured/Tenure-Track Faculty:

None: 32

Fast track Sept. term. Then full term from Oct to Dec. Then full term Jan to March. Then full term April to June.

A 9-month contract for faculty and a full 15-week summer term optional to faculty.

1. 15 week Fall, 15 week Winter, 10 week Summer 2. 15 wk. F, 15 wk W, no S. 3. 12 week F,W,S

Why not keep the current trimester system and just divide the summer session into 3 5-week sessions to provide more scheduling flexibility for individual programs. A program may schedule classes for one of the 5-week sessions, for two, or the full summer session.

January special topics courses. More flexible and changing from year to year

I have taught express sessions (both in January and in May) of two week, daily meetings. While I think they are useful and should remain on the table as options for specific programs, I'm not sure that my program is large enough to warrant a regular offering of this kind.

To meet the diverse life styles of our adult students, I think the university should survey students on what would work for them. Fast track courses offered so that the student could concentrate on one subject at a time has been brought up by many students.

I don't support a fast-track term or Maymester (whatever those are - as you do not explain), however, many students who take summer courses should have a variety of options and weekend formats/hybrid, and 2 week courses can easily be implemented as M-Th or F 9-5 or 9-whenever.

My undergraduate alma mater offers a 4-4-1 calendar; the 1 month May Term offered wonderful opportunities to take

classes at other colleges in our consortium; if we can find other universities to partner with, perhaps the 6 week blocks in summer term might offer options such as this to our students, potentially greatly enriching our student's academic experiences.

I have taught in a Maymester. It is nice to have a concentrated block for a course with no distractions. Have to be clever about what is taught in that block.

Unless we go to a 9 month calendar, why does this school need to change the present calendar which already works effectively?

Consider a Fall Break as well that covers a Thursday, Friday, and Saturday during the month of October

I don't like any of those formats. It will adversely impact our practicum schedule.

Optional 15 week summer

Summer: 12 weeks, 8 weeks, 6 weeks, or 4 weeks.

No to all of the listed options. I think we should adopt a more standard semester calendar, with all that entails (including a spring break).

Suggestions from Program Coordinators:

None

Suggestions from Instructors and Lecturers:

None: 14

Instructors need some down time regardless of the calendar. You have to consider all levels: A & B.

Quarters

Refresher courses and courses that can be offered as block2/3 courses work well with shorter summer terms. By running 7.5/8 week summer term, students and faculty understand the demands. This also provides an opportunity for scheduled vacations when classes are not in session for both students and faculty.

I had a 9-10 mth contract w/out any affect on my benefits/salary, I would be more inclined

I attended grad school where there were both January intensives and summer intensives. I loved both. Very attractive to some students ...esp non-traditional ages (like GSU).

I believe a hybrid course will be needed for summer school for teachers/administrators to fit with their K-12 calendars.

summer 12 week courses

16. Please rank your overall preferred calendar option, with 1 = most preferred; 4 = least preferred.

The following table shows the mean rankings by 71 respondents.

	All Responses	Tenured/ Tenure Track	Program Coordinator	Instructor or Lecturer
Present calendar, 10 month contract	2.10	2.12	1.83	1.95
Proposed calendar, 10 month contract	2.45	2.51	2.83	2.29
Proposed calendar, 9 month contract	2.13	1.98	1.50	2.52
Other (Please specify.)	3.32	3.39	3.83	3.24

Comments by faculty who selected “Other” for the above item:

I'm on a 12 month contract so this is not applicable at present
The present calendar works well for me and for my students. Changing the calendar is not the problem. We need more instructors to offer some courses more often
Fast track Sept. term. Then full term from Oct to Dec. Then full term Jan to March. Then full term April to June.
9 month contract with a 15-week summer term optional to faculty.
I am not familiar with the 9 month contract?
Going just a couple of days longer in Fall and Winter (or starting JUST a couple days sooner) and having a Spring Break. But maintaining the 2 months off for scholarship.
15 week F, 15 week Wint, 10 week Summer
9 month with 8 week summer optional (especially for lecturers).
Although I doubt that the university cares about any faculty member's opinion on this, I think that it would have been better if the administration had disseminated to faculty the proposed calendar, reasons for changing from the current calendar, and some indication of the university giving us a nine month contract if we go to this new calendar. That should be a nine month calendar with no teaching in the summer, or, if we do teach, extra pay for that. This is putting the cart before the horse. Give us a nine month contract before changing the calendar. Also, this whole, patently ridiculous idea of "trimesters" should be scrapped. Before I started at GSU over 18 years ago, I never had heard that word. A year round university is a ridiculous idea. Both faculty and students need some time off. Students usually work intensely hard and need some down time. Faculty need time off to do research. I'm for a calendar change, but do it along with adjusting faculty teaching load and contractual requirements, like a sensible organization would do.
9 month contract. Two semesters 09/01- 12/15 and 02/01 - 5/31
Proposed 9 month calendar with summer school being flexible to accommodate calendars of area school districts (graduate level courses for teachers and administrators).
Contract will not affect teaching load.
The ideal calendar is 9 months with Fall starting the first week of Oct. and running 13 weeks . Then Winter beginning in the first week of Jan. and running 13 weeks to the end of March. And then the second week of April running 12 weeks until the end of June. Thus, the 3 months off are July, August and Sept. For those who want to teach in the summer, they can run 8 week classes in August to Sept. or 4 weeks of rapid classes just in Sept.
As mentioned, starting Winter schedule one week later and having a spring break.
I am not sure the difference between 9 month and 10 month calendars.
I can think of no "other" that would be a viable option.