

To: Senators and Administration (and others who may be interested)

From: Ray DeCarlo, Professor and Senator for ECE

RE: The proposed summer schedule with two 6-week modules

Participants: Upper administration, senate, faculty at large, students

Synopsis: The proposal seeks to change the current summer session schedule to two six week sessions. Each six-week session would be equivalent to a 16 week semester course. The rationale for the change was to enhance/entice incoming freshman (graduated HS students) to take summer school courses because many did not graduate till mid June; students might make more progress toward their degrees with a two six week session similar to IUPUI, which offers an entire year of chemistry in two 6 week modules; full time students (a minimum of six credits for the module) could receive financial aid. Other comments made during the senate meeting included loosely speaking and to the best of my recollection: a better utilization of classrooms in the summer as current usage is quite low and some relationship to the trimester effort put forth by the upper administration. Clearly, there is an economic factor with expected projections as to additional income; for example, the trimester scenario is expected to gross \$40 million a year.

Process

The proposal was not brought before the Steering Committee of the Senate and was pushed into consideration by the Senate under “New Business” near the end of the meeting when many senators had departed. There was no formal presentation, but simply a document for discussion, and by protocol for voting at the next senate meeting.

When faculty write proposals, we have to clearly and adequately address a wide variety of issues and often set forth and demonstrate existing and future collaborations. A proposal like this should have had a formal presentation (for example by Professor Reed-Rhodes) in which the proponents of this significant change in the summer schedule demonstrate to the senate their careful preparation, their extensive vetting of the proposal by a diverse (across disciplines) faculty (not simply administrators), an ability (based on careful preparation and research) to satisfactorily address any concerns and questions of the senate. For example, the question was raised about Engineering and Science labs over 16 weeks being scrunched into 6 weeks—the answer was something about engineering not having labs in the summer. This question among many others should have been carefully investigated by the proponents of this proposal prior to bringing the matter to the senate. Indeed, in a spirit of collaboration (not competitive negotiation as per the “One Minute Negotiator”) it is incumbent on the administration to pursue such a course of careful preparation and investigation in collaboration with a diverse set of faculty who do not have a vested interest in the administrative perspective.

Questions and Issues

1. How does a six week session jive with existing educational metrics for student learning? Where is the research that supports quality learning for a 6 week session as compared to a 16 week session or 8 week session? Can the administration justify this proposal from an educational set of metrics as opposed to an economically driven set of metrics?
2. It was mentioned at the senate that this proposal of two six-week sessions is related to the “trimester” academic year. Please clarify the relationship in detail. Since the “trimester” proposal is supposedly to gross \$40 million a year, on what data and on what comparables is such a estimate based? How does this proposal fit into this economically motivated plan to completely revamp the traditional class schedule?
3. Since part of the motivation for the proposal is to speed students through the college “experience”, how is this proposed plan for two 6-week sessions related to the reduction in graduation hours to 120 now mandated by the state? So if the hours are reduced, the 10,000 hour attribute described in the book *Outliers* would suggest we are simultaneously reducing the success rate of our graduates, or at least lengthening the time to success¹.
4. Why should a university modify its summer schedule to potentially allow more graduated High School students to take the last 6 week module (since as stated most are still in school for the beginning of the first 6 week module) just prior to officially beginning their freshman year? Is this advisable prior to orientation?
5. How are 16-week lab courses in science and engineering supposed to fit into a six week module?
6. At a steering committee meeting some years ago, President Cordova was challenged to consider faculty time when making administrative policy that affects faculty and staff time. Who is going to crunch and modify 16 week courses into 6 week courses? The administration is not capable of doing this. How will faculty be compensated for the extra duty in revamping their summer courses?
7. How is compensation to be provided? Will compensation be commensurate with current academic year compensation? Is not the reason why faculty generally do not teach summer classes and why few summer classes are offered “compensation-based”? How will schools/departments be compensated in their budget for such summer courses in ways that are different than now? How will academic year compensation be affected by these changes? Is there some long term plan to modify our contracts so that we can be forced to teach in the summer? How will our contracts be modified if the trimester scenario becomes a reality?

¹ In the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, 10,000 hours is asserted as a threshold for the beginning of success using examples such as Mozart, Bill Gates and Steve Jobs.

8. How does this proposal affect financial aid? We were told at the last senate meeting by Acting President Sands that administration needs to increase the numbers of financial aid packages. Some simple math suggests that more aid per year will be needed to cover student attendance for increased summer courses?
9. It was said by Professor Reed-Rhoads that we underutilize our summer sessions. Historically this is because there is no additional money made available to departments/schools to teach summer school. The problem rests directly with the administration and the budgeting process. Change the budgeting process and more summer classes can be offered. This is really a no brainer. Additionally, schools on the quarter system find summer sessions much less attended according to the rumor mill. Show the faculty senate DATA that supports the expected increase if we open the summers up to additional courses.
10. How will this proposal affect accreditation?
11. How does this affect paper writing and proposal writing in the summer? (Summers are times when many faculty meet more frequently with their graduate students, complete journal papers, write proposals and generate new ideas for proposals.)
12. Will summer research support criteria remain the same?
13. As with our research papers that receive peer reviews, how about if we circulate this proposal to the faculty-non-administrative leaders at other university senates? Are we not always being asked to compare ourselves to our peer institutions? Let's get input from their faculty.
14. When a corporation like McDonalds develops a new sandwich, they test its "success" in selected markets. Wouldn't it be better to do the same with such a proposal even if the senate approves it? Wouldn't it be better to have some data in regards to pilot tests of such a proposal?