

**Subject:** RE: Academic Calendar Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes

Good afternoon Dr. Henderson,

I understand your concern; however, the statement below was an oversimplified summarization of what we, as the subcommittee, assessed to be the underlying motivation of the respective parties to only part of the problem. While those factors were part of the discussion, they were not the primary deciding factors. Instead, highlights of our discussion are as follows:

- Results from polling students indicated that their order of preference is 6 or 8-week, then 12-week, and then 3 or 4-week sessions; they prefer taking required major courses more than core and elective; and they prefer taking face-to-face courses more than online.
- Reasons they provided for not taking summer courses were primarily because they did not have the money to take summer courses and could not afford to save any of their financial aid for the summer. In addition, some students indicated that they do not take summer courses because the courses they need are only offered online.
- Although students indicated a preference for the face-to-face format, enrollment indicates more students take online classes and many face-to-face classes do not make, even when the option for both formats is offered with the same class (example: PSYC 4400 (Statistics) online and f2f were offered; f2f did not make but multiple online sections did). The reason students have given for taking the online section is that their preference is f2f, but they go home so they can work and save money, and it offers them flexibility for summer vacations, etc.
- Historically, students took summer courses to lighten their fall and spring loads while making sure they graduated on time. Now with dual enrollment courses, so many students are entering with college credit such that the demand for summer courses appears to be less.
- When the University tried short (4-week) sessions for online classes, the students did not do well and we switched to 6- and 8-week sessions.
- We have tried the 3-week, 6-week, and 12-week model and are now using the 4-week, 8-week, and 12-week model. The faculty prefer the current model because it gives a little more time for the students to learn the material (whether it's online or f2f) and it seems to streamline the options, making it more likely classes will make.
- The subcommittee did not favor options that included a refund cut off well before the classes started. This would put the student potentially in a situation of registering for class and then immediately dropping it, only to find out that the refund date had passed even before the student registered for the class.
- Concern with faculty is that offering too many options will spread the students out too much and will result in one of two consequences: a.) the class will be cancelled thereby frustrating the students and faculty and b.) faculty will be asked to teach classes at a portion of the salary.

We understood our charge to be to consider and decide on options that would increase “time” offerings to students and therefore increase enrollment. After looking at a variety of models, the consensus was that the current model (4, 8, and 12-weeks options) is successful and meets the needs of students. Why it appeared that the decision was based on the two financial factors alone

is that the primary reason given by students for not taking summer courses is that they cannot afford it. However, in an effort to entice more students, the committee determined that what appeared to be the issue, in spite of enrollment, is not the “time structure” (3-week, 8-week, etc.) but rather the students’ desire for more f2f options, particularly the more difficult, major courses where having it f2f is beneficial. While it was not the charge of the committee, we wondered if a different policy/cut off might be considered on a trial basis to see if more students could be recruited to summer classes with f2f options so that students and faculty aren’t frustrated by cancelled classes and without the faculty having to take a significant cut in salary. The latter is how faculty’s concerns for compensation became part of the discussion.

I hope that I have remembered all points of discussion and that this offers more insight into our meeting and the careful consideration that was given to the decision.

Please let me know if I can answer any questions or offer more information.

Cynthia

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