

**DISCUSSION PAPER**  
**Conversion of Academic Calendar**  
**from Quarters to Semesters**

**April 3, 2012**

**Office of the President**  
**Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs**  
**California State University, Bakersfield**



**CSU Bakersfield**



Over the years there has been much discussion at California State University, Bakersfield about the possibility of a transition of the academic calendar from quarters to semesters. Our use of a quarter system relying primarily on five-unit classes puts us out of sync with the region, the CSU system, and the nation. Recent developments make such a change more vital today than it ever has been. Given the continuing budget challenges, the CSU system is looking to benefit from a model of shared services across multiple campuses (e.g., technology services and human resources administration). To promote long-term savings and synergies the system will consider funding all quarter campuses in their transition to semesters. Our needed growth has been in a time of severe budget constraints which has often overburdened faculty and staff. Moving to semesters would reduce term-based processing, as there are only two terms per academic year instead of three, and this would allow more time for other duties. The following pages will highlight the primary advantages and challenges that the administration foresees in a semester conversion, and seek input from faculty, staff and students on ways to meet the challenges.

## **I. Impact on Student Success**

Potential impacts on student success<sup>1</sup> are central to any discussion of how the curriculum is delivered. Unfortunately there are no published studies which test whether student learning outcomes differ based on whether courses are scheduled according to a quarter or semester calendar. However, there are a number of reasons to suggest that CSUB students might benefit from a semester calendar. Student learning may be facilitated by the slower pace, allowing students to think about and grapple with difficult material in smaller chunks. Virtually all of our new undergraduate students, whether first-time freshmen or transfer students, experienced a semester schedule prior to matriculating at CSUB, and they are used to this pace. Since the 5 unit course is the norm at CSUB, students are asked to learn the same amount of content as in a comparable 3 unit semester course, and many struggle to adapt to this faster, more intensive calendar, and many struggle to keep up. There may be positive implications for pedagogy as well. The longer term may lend itself to making changes in a course within the term in response to student performance and feedback. The semester may also better accommodate in-depth projects which ask students to conduct original research, engage in creative production, or other applied experiences by virtue of students' ability to wait longer for resources (such as interlibrary loans), make observations or collect data, schedule time with others (e.g., conduct interviews, engage in service learning), or simply to contemplate ideas.

In a semester system students who are struggling academically have more time to seek out academic support (and faculty to refer them to appropriate resources) without falling too far behind. Because content is spread over more weeks, missing classes because of illness means that less material is missed. A semester calendar may also impact student success in other ways. Having more time between the first day of classes and the last day to drop (Census Day) allows students more time to solve problems and finalize their schedules, which may reduce the numbers of WU (unauthorized withdrawal) or F

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<sup>1</sup>The published literature contains very little on the relative merits of various academic calendar systems. The material that is available focuses on potential benefits and costs and not on assessment of evidence from which conclusions may be drawn. The major exceptions are a few analyses of impacts on student unit-loads and campus FTES, which will be discussed later in this document.

grades on their records. The combination of having time to ensure that they are in the right classes, to seek out and benefit from help within the term, and to complete assignments effectively may enhance the likelihood of success for struggling students, with a potentially positive impact on student retention. And, this added time to each term does not add to time-to-degree. Students who attend full-time as defined by academic progress (15 units per term = 1 FTES on both quarter and semester calendars) will graduate in four years. Some students limit their term units to 12, the minimum number required to qualify for “full-time” financial aid. These students may in fact take longer to graduate in a quarter calendar because most courses which count toward degree requirements are 5 units, which leaves room only for two courses in the schedule (or six per year). In contrast, students who carry 12 units per term on a semester calendar may complete four courses per term, or a total of eight per year, which may in turn shorten time-to-degree (and perhaps increase the likelihood of graduation within six years).

**Table 1.** Student Unit and Course Loads for Timely Degree Completion

	Quarter	Semester
Units to graduate	180	120
Full time unit load (= 1 FTES):	15	15
# Courses per term	3	5
Years to graduate	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>
“Full-time for Financial Aid” (less than 1 FTES)	12	12
# Courses per term	2+	4
Years to graduate	<b>5+</b>	<b>5</b>

There are also a number of regulatory procedures that tend to disadvantage students on a quarter calendar. Some examples include the rules governing Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) related to eligibility for financial aid; policies regarding Academic Dismissal for all students, and NCAA rules for athletic eligibility for our student athletes.

The new federal requirements on Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) are particularly salient on our campus since well over two-thirds of our students depend on financial aid to continue their studies. Federal Student Aid regulations mandate that institutions apply “reasonable standards” for measuring student academic progress, specifically, GPA, Pace (percentage of cumulative units earned divided by cumulative units attempted), and maximum time and unit limits consistent with federal standards.<sup>2</sup>

Briefly, at the end of each term, a student who has not achieved the required GPA and/or Pace will automatically be placed on Financial Aid Warning status for the next term. This will allow the student one term to get back into good SAP standing while continuing to receive their financial aid. If the student does not meet SAP the next term, their financial aid eligibility will be suspended.

<sup>2</sup>Details of CSUB’s Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) Policy, including students’ rights and responsibilities, can be found at <http://www.csub.edu/finaid/documents/sap/AY2011-12.pdf>

If the student has mitigating factors that have hindered their SAP, they may submit a SAP Appeal Form. Their Appeal is reviewed by a committee. If the Appeal is approved, and: (1) it is reasonable that the student may regain SAP within one term (e.g., they have a 1.99 CSUB GPA and need a 2.0 CSUB GPA), they will be granted one term of probation. This will allow the student a term to get back into good SAP standing while continuing to receive their financial aid. If the student does not meet SAP the next term, their financial aid eligibility will be canceled and they cannot re-appeal; or (2) it is determined the student will need multiple terms to regain SAP, the student will be required to meet with the SAP Academic Advisor in the Advising Center to initiate a formal Academic Plan in order to continue their aid eligibility. If the student does not follow the Academic Plan, their financial aid eligibility will be canceled and they cannot re-appeal.

Students who find themselves in difficulty after the Fall quarter are able to receive notification and engage in the appeals process in order to avoid cancellation of their financial aid, and student support staff are able to work with those students promptly to engage them in interventions designed to guide them through improving their academic performance. However, because there is so little time between Winter and Spring quarters, students who fail to achieve SAP at the end of the Winter quarter are simply unable to do what is needed to maintain eligibility. To illustrate, this is the expected course of events at the conclusion of the Winter 2012 quarter:

- Monday, March 19 is the last day of classes.
- Final examinations are given Wednesday, March 21 through Saturday, March 24
- Winter quarter grades are due on Monday, March 26, 2012. However, because many faculty historically do not submit their grades until after the deadline, the Registrar will typically wait until Thursday to roll official grades into the university transcripts (note: there will still be some missing grades at this point which will count against the student's Pace);
- Financial Aid staff will run SAP processes on March 29, 2012.
- The campus is closed March 30 for Caesar Chavez Day.
- Spring quarter begins the following Monday, April 2, 2012.

Based on this timeline, there is not enough time for Financial Aid staff to evaluate SAP for all students, to notify students of their SAP status, for students to submit Appeals, to review Appeals, to initiate Academic Plans, and/or to conduct any intervention strategies (such as SAP workshops) before the next term begins. As a result, financial aid will be delayed for many of these students at least until the end of the first week of spring term. This will affect their ability to purchase books and may actually perpetuate their SAP issues.

In semester systems, there are three to six weeks between semesters that allow sufficient time both for SAP processing and for students to work toward maintaining eligibility. Thus, with respect to SAP requirements for maintaining Financial Aid eligibility, a semester calendar allows (1) students more time to achieve academic progress (16 weeks as opposed to 11 weeks); (2) more time between terms for our staff to evaluate each student's SAP (a few weeks as opposed to a few days between terms); (3) more time for students to submit a SAP Appeal, and more time for us to review the Appeal, prior to the beginning of the next term; and (4) more time to initiate

intervention strategies to assist those students not making SAP (such as initiating an Academic Plan for students placed on Probation, or mandatory advising for students placed on SAP Warning status).

## **II. Benefits to Operations: Efficiency and Effectiveness**

Converting to a semester calendar reduces workload by reducing the number of academic-year term-based processes from three to two times per year. This will not result in cost savings through reductions in personnel, since we are already experiencing reduced staffing as a result of budget constraints. The semester calendar therefore makes the workload more manageable for those personnel who remain. This impacts all members of the campus community – faculty, staff and students. Student advising related to registering for classes is reduced to twice per year (summer advising is generally done in conjunction with advising for fall registration). Faculty engage in course preparation and assigning final grades only twice during the academic year, and with sufficient time between terms (in contrast to the nearly nonexistent break between winter and spring quarters). Fewer new student orientation sessions would be needed each year. Course and room scheduling would be reduced. There are many, many other complex processes and reports that are done each term.

For example, each quarter staff in the Financial Aid department must disburse financial aid for about 7,200 students, transmit the disbursement records to the federal government, issue Book Vouchers for students experiencing disbursement delays, run Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for about 7,200 students, review SAP Appeals for about 200 students, conduct Census Day Repackaging for all students enrolled less than full-time, and conduct withdrawal calculation up to the 60% point of the term. Data and reports on enrollment, applications, degrees granted, and course enrollments must be prepared each term.

Demands for information and documentation resulting from growing expectations related to accountability, transparency, and data-driven decision-making are difficult to meet; a decrease in term-based workload would help to make these additional expectations manageable at existing staffing levels. Below is a partial list of tasks that would be reduced from three times per year (plus summer) to twice per year (plus summer).

### **Academic Affairs**

Review applications to the university

Review applications for graduation

Heavy traffic at “front desk” reduced (lowers need for temporary hires)

Articulating transfer credits

Communications to students (fee deadlines, registration deadlines, etc)

Evaluate Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)

Financial Aid disbursement

Financial Aid reporting (to federal government)

Review SAP appeals

Census day repackaging of aid for students enrolled part-time  
Withdrawal calculations  
Admissions/Enrollment/Degree data reporting to Chancellor's Office  
Course scheduling  
Room scheduling  
Student advising  
Processes/paperwork related to hiring part-time instructors  
Evaluation for articulation and transfer (courses and unit conversions)  
Course change forms impacting catalog (PeopleSoft)  
Academic petitions

### **Student Affairs**

Student vaccination tracking  
Academic Progress reporting for student athletes  
Risk management processing for service learning  
Orientations for service learning  
Verification of enrollment (Counseling Center, Student Recreation Center)  
Events related to beginning of terms  
Grade checking (verification of eligibility for student government, etc)  
Children's Center enrollment and scheduling

### **Business and Administrative Services**

Paperwork and processing related to adding and deleting part time faculty and staff from Payroll (Human Resources)  
Cashiering, student payments, issuance of financial aid, scholarship payments, student vouchers, Cashnet transactions (Student Accounting)  
Reduction in term-based purchasing (fewer transactions)  
Reduction in term-based printing orders (fewer transactions)  
More time for performing maintenance between terms (Facilities)  
Bookstore: ordering, delivery and stocking; more time to ensure compliance with federal mandates designed for semester calendars  
Cash Flow improved by collecting student fees earlier in the year

## **III. Alignment with Other Calendars**

Data on academic calendars show that the use of quarter system in higher education has declined slightly over time and is now relatively rare (13% nationally, and 26% in the CSU; see Figure 1). Currently, the quarter calendar is much more prevalent among for-profit institutions than among public or private, non-profit institutions of higher education (see Table 2).

Better alignment with calendars of other institutions, including educational institutions (k-12, community colleges, universities), agencies and organizations responsible for administering

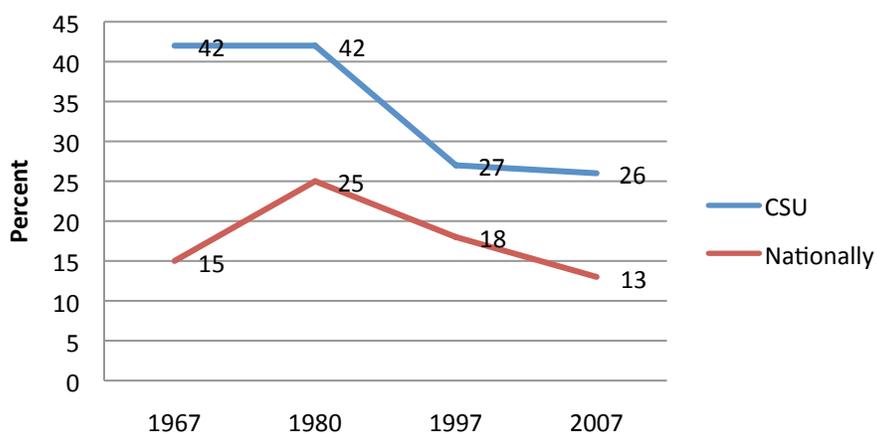
higher education policies, processes, and resource provision, and other community stakeholders is a positive feature of a semester academic calendar.

CSUB has been working to deepen engagement with the community, and has naturally focused on creating partnerships with k-12 schools. Many of our faculty, staff and students are involved in programs with local schools designed to enhance student learning, increase college readiness, and provide resources to teachers. CSUB's teacher credentialing programs also partner with local schools in training future teachers. These involvements are likely easier to manage when the calendars of the two institutions are similar.

Opportunities for academic and scholarly enrichment, as well as employment opportunities, may also be affected by the academic calendar. Schedules for summer activities designed for faculty and for students, such as conferences, in-depth workshops, research opportunities and internships, are often more compatible with a semester calendar in which the academic year finishes in May rather than in June. Moreover, students seeking summer employment, or graduates seeking entry-level jobs in their chosen fields must either search for jobs nearly a month after their colleagues from semester schools begin their searches, or must begin to seek (and possibly procure) employment at the middle of the spring quarter, perhaps undermining their achievement.

A semester calendar may also contribute to quality of life, particularly for faculty and students. On a semester system, the duration of sabbaticals is 16 weeks rather than 11. For faculty and students who are parents, beginning and ending dates of semesters coincide better with k-12 calendars than is the case for quarters. CSUB's spring break is almost never scheduled at the same time as the k-12 spring break. It is usual to still be engaged in their courses in June while their children have already finished school for the summer.

**Figure 1.** Percent of Post-Secondary Institutions with Quarter Calendars



Source: 1967 through 1997: Quann, 1998. 2007: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2007. Computation by DAS-T Online Version 5.0 on 2/14/2012. 1967: N=2,316; 1980: N=2,833; 1997: N=3,779; 2007: N=6,818.

**Table 2.** Calendar Systems by Institution Type, 2007

	Calendar system							N
	Semester	Quarter	Trimester	4-1-4 plan	Other academic year	Differs by program	Continuous	
<u>Sector of institution</u>	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	(%)	
<b>Public, 4-year or above</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	674
Private not-for-profit, 4-year or above	77	8	4	8	2	0	1	1,631
Private for-profit, 4-year or above	23	49	3	0	20	2	4	502
Public, 2-year	82	10	1	0	0	4	4	1,150
Private not-for-profit, 2- year	61	11	10	0	3	11	6	189
Private for-profit, 2-year	10	31	2	0	3	19	36	873
Public, less-than 2-year	13	3	3	0	4	54	23	239
Private not-for-profit, less-than 2-year	18	1	2	1	4	29	46	101
Private for-profit, less-than 2-year	2	3	0	0	2	23	70	1,459
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6,818</b>

Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), 2007. Computation by DAS-T Online Version 5.0 on 2/14/2012.

#### IV. Quarter and Semester Units

The basic equations that convert between quarter and semester units are presented here but they do little to elucidate the similarities and differences of the two measures.

$$\text{Semester Units} = \text{Quarter Units} * 2/3$$

$$\text{Quarter Units} = \text{Semester Units} * 1.5$$

The federal definition of the credit hour alludes to more meaningful measures:

*One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time;*

This definition helps one to understand the equivalence of the quarter and semester systems when evaluated over the course of a year for many aspects that are important to faculty and students.

**Table 3.** Study Time, Hours of Coursework, and Faculty Instruction Time

	Quarter	Semester
<b>Hours of Study per Year for Full-time Financial Aid Status</b>	12 quarter units x 3 hrs/week x 10 weeks/quarter x 3 quarters/year = <b>1080 hours/year</b>	12 semester units x 3 hrs/week x 15 weeks/quarter x 2 semesters = <b>1080 hours/year</b>
<b>Minimum Hours of Coursework Required to Graduate</b>	15 units/qtr. x 3 quarters/year x 4 years/degree = 180 qtr. units/degree  x 15 class hrs/week x 10 weeks/quarter x 3 quarters/year x 4 years/degree = <b>1800 class hours/degree</b>	15 units/semester. x 2 semesters/year x 4 years/degree = 120 sem units/degree  x 15 class hrs/week x 15 weeks/semester x 2 semesters/year x 4 years/degree = <b>1800 class hours/degree</b>
<b>Minimum CSU Faculty Hours of Instruction per Year</b>	Lecturer: 45 WTU/year X 10 weeks @ 1 hr/WTU = <b>450 hours/year</b>  T/TT: 36 WTU/year X 10 weeks @ 1 hr/WTU = <b>360 hours/year</b>	Lecturer: 30 WTU/year X 15 weeks @ 1 hr/WTU = <b>450 hours/year</b>  T/TT: 24 WTU/year X 15 weeks @ 1 hr/WTU = <b>360 hours/year</b>

As can be seen from Table 3, the total learning time and total teaching time is equivalent in both systems. Assuming that we follow the federal definition of the credit hour and that the same proportion of a student’s homework is graded under either system, it follows that the total grading would also remain the same. *What may differ is the distribution* of that coursework and grading over time. In general, the semester has more flexibility for rearranging workload across the term but less flexibility for arranging workload across the year. Because there are fewer semesters than quarters in a year, students are taking more classes per term and faculty are teaching more classes per term even as they teach the same number of hours per week. While this might seem like more preparatory work—it need not be. Each class has a smaller time commitment per week and the work can be spread out to avoid an accumulation of grading. For instance, an instructor can design the midterm exams to be farther apart in Semesters. All other things being equal, each instructor would see the same number of class-students across the year but, because the semester has fewer terms, would encounter more class-students each semester. Nevertheless, each faculty member would not need an increase in office hours because the student weekly workload for each class is less in the semester system. Because the pace is slower and assignment due dates are more spread apart, more time may transpire between office visits. Students have more time to adjust to a professor’s teaching style and syllabus so questions of this nature may diminish. Nevertheless, professors who schedule assignments for all of their classes near the same date will encounter a predictable increase in stress because they will encounter more student questions and more grading in the short time preceding and following the due date. Such situations are largely avoidable.

## V. Challenges with Respect to the Transition Period

Change is not intrinsically good, nor is it intrinsically bad, but it may be necessary to remain relevant. As Heraclitus is reported to have said, “you cannot step twice into the same river; for other waters are continually flowing in.” Nevertheless, abrupt change, such as a semester conversion, engenders special challenges during the transition. An abrupt change will not happen without substantial effort and those who are completely satisfied with the *status quo* will not be eager to take on that challenge. On the other hand, this change will also afford the university and all of its programs an opportunity to re-imagine themselves in the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Those that take advantage of this opportunity will reap the continuing benefits. For those programs that choose not to make significant changes, a simple switch from 5-quarter unit to 3-semester unit basis would not be particularly onerous since the conversion slightly reduces the total units required and, thus, no program would be pushed above the 120/180 unit limit.<sup>3</sup> Table 4 shows how such course conversions would retain 90% of their content and adjusting one’s syllabus would not need to be much more difficult than switching to a shorter summer schedule, for instance. There would be certain curriculum sequencing issues to manage and roadmaps would need to be revised but since more courses are offered each term the constraints on when students take specific classes would not be as crucial as it is in the quarter system.

**Table 4.** Course Comparison for Conversion from 5-Quarter-Unit Lecture to a 3-Semester-Unit Lecture

	<b>5 Quarter-Unit Lecture Tues/Thurs</b>	<b>5 Quarter Unit Lecture MWF</b>	<b>3 Semester Unit Lecture Tues/Thurs</b>
Length of Lecture	125 minutes	83.3 minutes	75 minutes
Lectures per Week	2 times per week	3 times per week	2 times per week
Lectures in Term	20 lectures	30 lectures	30 lectures
Term Lecture Minutes	2500 minutes	2500 minutes	2250 minutes
Total Assumed Student Study Time	150 hours	150 hours	135 hours

Those programs wishing to more comprehensively restructure their curriculum would be afforded the opportunity to utilize dedicated development funds and attend curriculum development workshops. The funding for such faculty development would be a necessary precondition from the Chancellor’s office and would not impair other ongoing operations. In addition, support to facilitate faculty review of curriculum proposals may be required in order to allow a timely review of all proposals.

<sup>3</sup>For instance, a hypothetical program asking students to complete 14 different 5-quarter-unit courses to graduate would necessitate 70 quarter-units in the major, which is 39% of the total units required to graduate. A semester program asking students to complete 14 different 3-semester-unit courses to graduate would necessitate 42 semester-units in the major, which is 35% of the total units required to graduate.

Any change to semesters must be predicated upon a commitment to student progress and degree completion. Student progress would be adversely impacted by (1) a decrease in units taken each year or (2) a lack of preparedness for substantial changes to the major curriculum. Both situations can be remedied with pervasive use of advising. The campus will pledge no loss in academic progress and no delay in graduation for any student who takes advantage of the campus' recommended advising support and heeds that advice. Some students will enter with the transition, others will graduate before the transition, some will only require a few unchanged courses to graduate, but most continuing students will need additional advising help during the transition. These continuing students will need an individualized advising plan for graduation. Part of this individualized advising plan will be to help students to keep their unit loads consistent so that they do not lose time toward graduation. Students who don't earn an average of 15 units each term in either system cannot graduate within four years unless they make up for lost units during summer school. Students and faculty advisors will need to be vigilant in resetting the expectations for progress toward a four-year degree from three five-unit classes per quarter to five three-unit classes per semester.

## VI. Challenges Regarding Faculty Workload

Despite the fact that the minimum contractual hours of instruction remain the same in both systems and total grading should not be expected to increase, there are concerns that other aspects of the semester system may increase work for faculty or make scholarly activity more difficult. In particular, since faculty are teaching more courses per term there is concern over the number of lectures they would be required to prepare each week. Whenever this is a concern, the chair can often reduce the number of lecture preparations by scheduling with that in mind. Most departments have multiple courses that are offered more than once per year and, in fact, there are nearly 300 courses that were offered at least three times in the 2010-11 academic year. It is anticipated that multiple sections of these courses would be offered during the same semester and if they were assigned to the same professor it would reduce the number of lecture preparations required.

**Table 5.** Sample Schedules for a faculty member in Department X under a quarter schedule (the class offerings are modeled on those of a real instructor) and a similar but hypothetical semester course schedule:

Fall Quarter	Winter Quarter	Spring Quarter
X 300 (6) MWF 10-11:57 X 340 (5) TR 12:45-2:50 X 380 (4) TR 3-4:40	X 100 (5) MWF 10-11:23 X 340 (5) MWF 1-2:23	X 300 (6) MWF 10-11:57 X 340 (5) MWF 1-2:23
15 Quarter WTUs 7 lectures to prep per week	10 Quarter WTUs 6 lectures to prep per week	11 Quarter WTUs 6 lectures to prep per week

Fall Semester	Spring Semester
X 100 (3) TR 1-2:15 X 300 (4) MW 12:45-2:50 X 300 (4) MW 3:00-5:05 CSUB 101 (1) T 2:30-3:20	X 100 (3) TR 1-2:15 X 340 (3) MW 1-2:15 X 340 (3) MW 3-4:15 X 380 (3) TR 2:30-3:45
12 Semester WTUs 5 lectures to prep per week	12 Semester WTUs 6 lectures to prep per week

While it may be true that there is less leeway in scheduling across the year, this drawback is often compensated for by more flexibility within the term. Some chairs currently work to carve out a light load term for faculty who need to travel or devote multiple days of uninterrupted time for scholarly activities. For instance, it is currently possible to schedule a tenure-track professor for 15 WTUs for two quarters and only 6 WTUs in the third quarter (perhaps freeing up Thursdays and Fridays for travel or research work). It is more difficult, but not impossible, to do this under the semester system. During the semester, however, a professor can more easily accommodate some conference travel because substituting one lecture for an online module, library assignment, or something else will typically result in a loss of only 2-3% of the lecture time.

The administration is prepared to allow departments and deans to work collaboratively to provide greater flexibility in the assignment of faculty workload. For instance, a department and dean may establish an agreement to “fund” departmental release time for research by increasing class sizes to compensate for the lost teaching load. These agreements will allow departments to empower faculty by devoting additional time for scholarship so long as students’ needs are met.

## **VII. Challenges to Maintain Student Progress Toward Degree**

While students may differ in their preference for the faster pace of the quarter system or the slower pace of the semester system, their overriding concerns are for the time it takes to graduate. If we are to switch to a semester system, we would pledge to continuing students that they would lose no time to graduation so long as they maintain the same pace of progress toward their degree. Students who maintain the same unit load, earn the same proportion of credits attempted, and do not “stop out” should be able to graduate the same in the semester system as they would have in the quarter system. This pledge will require the use of individualized advising plans, a publicized “teach out” schedule or substitution list for significantly modified curricula, and an attention to unit load.

It should also be noted that the cost of education is a concern for many students. If the time to degree is not extended, the cost of education will not go up because annual tuition is equivalent in both systems. In considering our current reliance on 5-quarter-unit courses as the norm and assuming that most programs move to a curriculum based on new norm of 3-semester units, some students may actually be able to get an extra course completed each semester without overloading (15 sem. units → 18 sem. units).

Another consideration for our students is coordinating their work schedule to fit with their classes each term. The same number of hours of classwork would be expected of students and, thus, total time away from work should not be appreciably different. However, since schedule changes occur less frequently under the semester system, working students and their employers would benefit.

## **VIII. Tentative Timeline**

The earliest start date of Fall 2014 would be possible with a decision to convert before the end of the 2011-12 academic year. An ambitious timeline follows:

- Spring 2012: Immediate work gets underway for PeopleSoft conversion and curriculum revisions; faculty agree on general direction for curriculum (minimal changes of 5 qtr units → 3 sem units or a framework for revision). Faculty decide on representatives to flesh out the details, craft curriculum proposals, revise roadmaps, and come up with transition plans.
- Summer 2012: Institute on curriculum revision for the 21st century
- Fall 2012 & Winter 2013: Formal approval of curricula (additional committees &/or more frequent meetings would be needed to complete the consideration of all curriculum proposals)
- Spring 2013: Completion of remaining curriculum details.
- Summer 2013: Institute on Scheduling, Advising, and Individualized Advising Plans
- Fall 2013: Plans publicized. Programs publish acceptable substitutions and “teach out” schedules for phased-out courses. Continuing students develop individualized advising plans.
- Jan-Mar 2014: Class schedules for 2013-14 entered in PeopleSoft and advising for the new curriculum.
- April 2014: Registration for Fall 2014
- **Fall 2014: START SEMESTER CALENDAR**

## IX. Costs

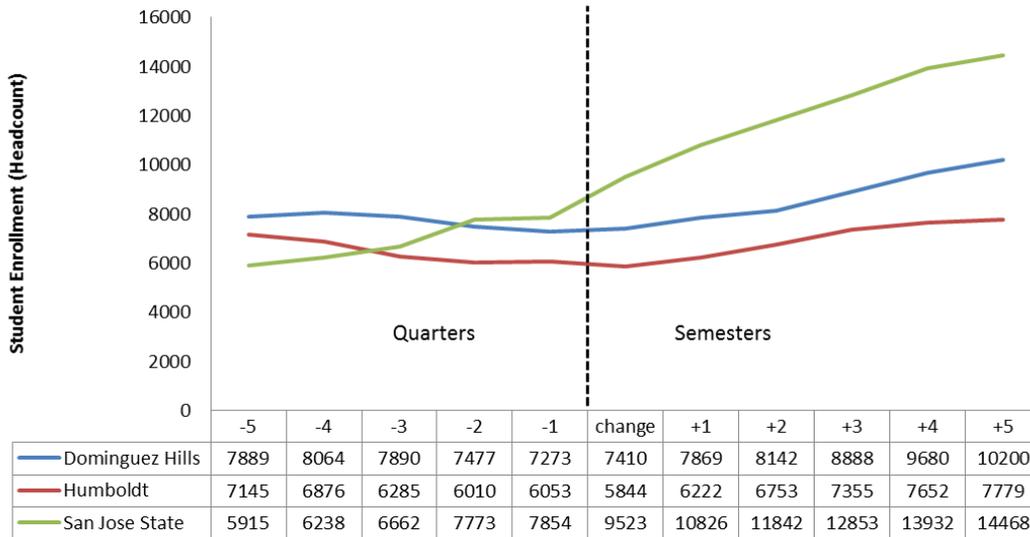
The CSU Chancellor’s office has recently revisited the question of how it may support conversion to semesters for the six campuses which still follow a quarter calendar, and are working to delineate the tasks that must be undertaken to complete a transition, timelines for each step, and cost-sharing models. The expected timeline for completing this work is spread over three years (see below). Conversion to semesters is contingent upon support from the Chancellor’s office but this support need not come in one lump sum, but rather is borne over at least four years, as indicated below.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
PS conversions			
Curriculum Revision (AY Efforts and Summer Institute)			
Revising Systems and Procedures (admissions/records, FA, advising, transcript conversion, etc.)			
Additional Communications and Advising			
“Teach-out” of Old Curriculum			
Potential for Decreased FTES			

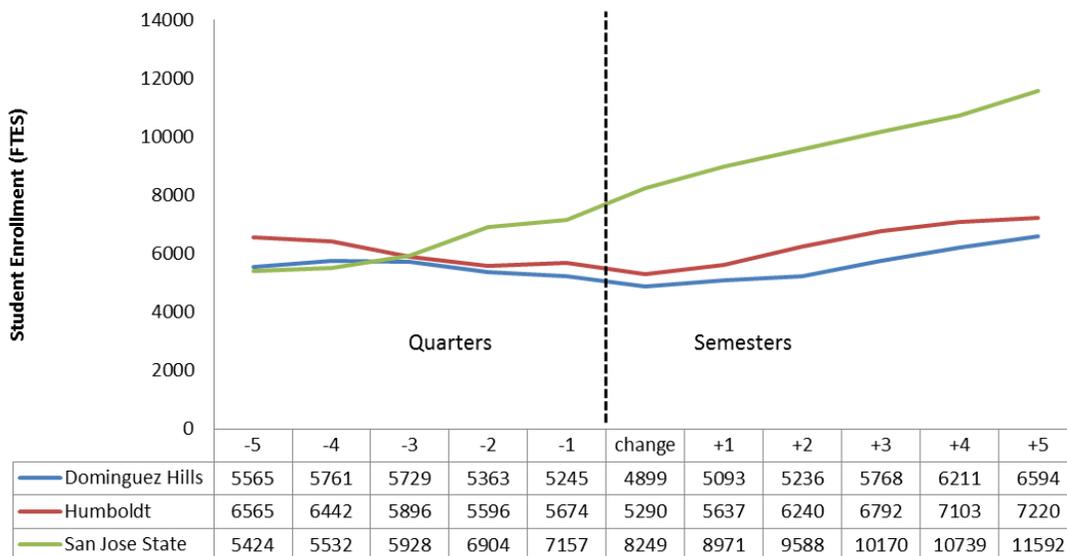
In particular, a concern about potential FTES loss after the conversion would benefit from a guarantee from the Chancellor to hold CSUB harmless for any initial loss in FTES that might accompany conversion. Figures 3 and 4 show enrollment at the three CSU campuses that have

made the conversion from quarters to semesters: Dominguez Hills, (1986-87), Humboldt (1986-87), and San Jose (1955-56). Though there are some reports of substantial FTES decreases after conversion to semesters, an analysis of the enrollment trends for these three CSU campuses indicates that such losses need not be substantial or long-lasting.

**Figure 3.** Student Headcount Before and After Semester Change



**Figure 4.** Full-time Equivalent Students Before and After Semester Change



## Summary

The administration currently believes that a semester conversion would best serve the long-term needs of students and the institution as a whole. However, we are interested in hearing compelling reasons why we should remain on the quarter system. A First-Class folder has been created to solicit input to inform the President's decision. Elucidation of unidentified consequences and suggestions for potential solutions to the challenges are welcome. After compiling the responses, an opportunity for dialogue with faculty and staff will be announced. A forum will also be scheduled to address students' concerns regarding a potential transition and highlight the mechanisms we intend to put in place to support their timely degree progress. After consultation with faculty, staff, and students it is the intention of the President to announce the decision by the end of this academic year.