



CSU Bakersfield

Office of the President

Mail Stop: 33 BDC
9001 Stockdale Highway
Bakersfield, California 93311-1022

(661) 654-2241
(661) 654-3188 FAX
www.csub.edu

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 20, 2012

TO: The Campus Community

FROM: Horace Mitchell 
President

SUBJECT: Change of Academic Calendar

Over the years there has been much discussion at CSU Bakersfield about the possibility of a transition of the academic calendar from quarters to semesters. During academic year 2011-12 there were discussions between the Academic Senate and the administration in which there was a general agreement to have a focused discussion on the issue during the spring quarter 2012. I stated that I would make a decision about a possible conversion to semesters by the end of the quarter, following broad consultation. Our general agreement was that if a change were to be made it would be implemented in fall, 2014.

Pursuant to our discussions, the following actions occurred:

- On April 3, 2012 Provost Soraya Coley and I issued a paper titled "Discussion Paper: Conversion of Academic Calendar from Quarters to Semesters" (Discussion Paper). The summary states:

"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.”

- The April 2012 issue of the President’s Monthly Campus Update listed the links for access to the Discussion Paper and a 2007 campus memo on the same topic. In addition, it included an email address and a conference folder on the First-Class desktop for receipt of comments.
- The initial May 1, 2012 deadline for receipt of comments was extended to May 31, 2012 at the request of the Academic Senate.
- In concurrence with a request from the Academic Senate, the agenda for the May 18, 2012 University Council meeting was changed to consist entirely of a campuswide discussion on the possible conversion to semesters.

Throughout the comment period, the recurring major reasons given for why we should not make the conversion were:

- Given the state’s continuing financial crisis, the continuing reductions to the CSU and CSUB budgets, and the anticipated costs of the possible conversion, this is not the time to move forward.
- The proposed timeframe, with a fall 2014 implementation date, is too short. More time is needed to insure success if the decision is made to convert.

In considering the two major reasons for not moving forward, the administration has acknowledged the validity of both. We have responded by saying:

- The President will make a decision on the issue by the end of the spring 2012 quarter. However, we know that we cannot, and therefore would not, move forward with implementation until significant funding for this purpose is provided by the Chancellor’s Office.
- The proposed implementation schedule would be extended to correspond to the availability of significant funding from the Chancellor’s Office.

Projected conversion costs for CSUB would range between \$2.5 - \$3 million over three years. Those costs would be incurred in these areas:

- Faculty release time or summer stipends for conversion of courses and curricula
- Training of staff in administrative offices (e.g. admissions, registrar, financial aid, financial services, etc.)
- Advising
- Publications
- Communications

- Conversion of PeopleSoft software

If you would like to review the Discussion Paper again, it is posted on the CSUB home page as “Q2S Discussion Paper”.

In addition to the actions mentioned above, in late May the Academic Senate held an informational election on the issue. Of the 275 faculty eligible to vote, 99 voted, with 71 expressing a preference to remain on quarters, 15 favoring a conversion to semesters and 13 indicating they would be satisfied either way.

In other action, the Associated Students, Inc. stated in a June 4, 2012 memo:

“This academic year has fostered intense discussion and debate concerning the merits of the conversion of the institution’s academic calendar. The Associated Students Inc. who serves to provide the official voice of the student body has thoughtfully weighed the qualities of both the quarter and semester calendars and has come to see that a semester calendar would be beneficial to the students we serve.

With this insight, and the commitment CSU Bakersfield has to protecting the academic progress of students we support the conversion.”

In their Resolution SB10: Quarter to Semester Conversion, the ASi Board resolved, “The Associated Students, Inc. is in support of the university’s transition from quarters to semesters.” The resolution was approved by the ASi Board on May 25, 2012.

Concurrent with our CSUB discussions, a subcommittee of the CSU presidents consisting of the six presidents of quarter campuses (CSUB, East Bay, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Pomona and SLO), has been discussing with the Chancellor’s Office the desirability and cost-effectiveness of having all six campuses convert at the same time with significant support from the Chancellor’s Office. Those discussions are on-going.

In consideration of all of the foregoing information, including appropriate campuswide consultation, I have decided that we will change the CSU Bakersfield academic calendar from a quarter system to a semester system. The timeframe for implementation will be changed from fall 2014 to a later date based on the availability of significant funding for this purpose from the Chancellor’s Office.

With this decision being made, we can now focus our attention on how best to achieve a smooth, efficient, and cost-effective transition. Provost Coley and I express our great appreciation to everyone who participated in the discussions and / or provided comments regarding this important issue.