

Faculty Senate Review of the Bi-Term

Academic Quality: AQ will investigate whether there is any evidence that bi-term courses, as they are defined in the Provost's proposal, offer any significant advantages over the semester-long courses that currently predominate at WKU. AQ will pay special attention to courses that require term papers, performances, art projects, laboratory experimentation, student teaching, and other pre-professional activities.

Faculty Welfare: FW will study what effects a bi-term calendar or a hybridized bi-term/semester calendar would have on Faculty research capabilities, faculty workloads, time-management, and quality of life, and what impact a shift in emphasis might have on WKU's ability to attract and retain high-quality professors and instructors. FW will be especially interested in gauging what a "typical" week would look like for faculty when Wednesday is the designated day off.

University Curriculum Committee: The UCC will study whether the system suggested in the proposal is feasible. Whereas AQ will handle issues of whether or not particular kinds of courses would be as instructionally effective if taught as bi-terms, the UCC will undertake to determine whether it is possible or feasible to run a true "mix" of bi-term and semester courses. Would such a system run smoothly or cause significant inconvenience or chaos? And as a result, would either semester or bi-term courses inevitably dominate a hybridized schedule? Is an "optional" system merely a softly sold segue to a calendar change or is it possible/likely/unlikely/impossible that faculty and students can maintain a hybridized schedule?

Other issues are bound to arise, such as:

- Would a concomitant shift to a per-credit-hour tuition system cost students--as a whole--more money? If so, which ones?
- What, exactly, according to the CPE, will trigger our ability to shift to a per-hour tuition rate? Would students respond favorably or unfavorably to such a decision?
- Would a bi-term or hybridized schedule be a positive or negative change for students who work and/or students that have families? Would students leave WKU for more traditional and time-tested calendar systems at nearby colleges and universities? Would they have a choice? Or would such a system attract more students and expand enrollment?
- What would this mean for student athletes who often have to miss class time for competitions?
- What effect would this have on the cost and availability of parking for faculty and students?

These and additional unforeseen questions extend beyond the purview of any single committee, and will be dealt with and delegated on a case-by-case basis by the three chairs. In some cases, the three chairs will synthesize knowledge gained from their respective committees and work as a team to formulate answers.