

Final Report of the Academic Calendar Committee:

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The committee's primary charge for considering possible changes in the academic calendar included whether such changes positively affect the delivery of education at either the lower division or the upper division levels. Our research discovered that, with one important difference, the academic calendar large has no effect on academic performance or retention. We also examined the effectiveness of so-called "intersessions" on student performance, and again found no intrinsic effect on faculty teaching workload, student workloads, student retention, or student's "time-to-earn degree." Where the calendar does have an effect appears to be in effective classroom utilization and student access to needed classes, most particularly involving summer course offerings. [Baldwin & McInnis 2002, 3-7; Davis, 1972; Stark 1972]

After examination of other schools calendars and their use of intersession and summer classes, the committee recommends the following:

1. That fall semester begin, as the Fall 2007 semester does, on the first Monday after the fourth Friday in August, which includes dates running from 8/25 to 8/31. This would essentially bring CNU's calendar into alignment with other area schools, as well as allowing for two weeks of classes after the Thanksgiving break, which should reduce some of the stress associate with the end of the fall semester and give the faculty more flexibility in setting deadlines for assignments and allow students more flexibility to complete such assignments on time.
2. That the spring semester remain as current scheduled, beginning on the first Monday after the third Sunday in January, which includes the dates 1/19 - 1/25. Again, this would synchronize CNU's schedule to other area schools and prevent forcing graduation well into late May. This also would allow faculty doing research to make more optimal travel plans.
3. The committee recommends that the University not implement intersession classes at this time until clear information can be found regarding their cost effectiveness and student interest in such programs.
4. The committee recommends the Senate strongly encourage summer sessions as the best way for both students to take, and professors to offer interesting courses as well as required courses. Because many of our students now have twelve-month housing contracts they are on campus in the summer and might populate those classes. Additionally, summer class, as research has shown, can generate revenue for the university, keeping in mind that if students take summer classes at community colleges or other four-year institutions closer to home and transfer those credits in, we lose revenue. Finally, taking classes in the summer can help with retention, in particular by allowing students to replace failing grades (something they can't do at home or at another institutions) or take extra credits to move them toward graduating in four or five years. [Baldwin and McInnis 2002, *ibid*; Dainhow 2001, A33]

The following table demonstrates how this schedule would work:

| item | historical* | proposed | notes |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| fall classes start | Aug. 20 - 26 | Aug. 25 - 31 (last Monday) | Labor Day will always be the 2nd Monday of the semester. |
| fall grades due | Dec. 10 - 16 | Dec. 15 - 21 (3rd Monday) | We no longer have winter commencement. |
| winter break | 5 weeks or 6 weeks (half of the time) | 5 weeks | |
| spring classes start | Jan. 10 - 18 | Jan. 19 - 25 (1st Mon. after 3rd Thurs.) | |
| commencement | May 7 - 15 | May 16 - 23 | The range of Mother's Day is May 8 - 14. |
| contract length | 39 weeks or 38 weeks (half of the time) | 38 weeks | This correlates with length of winter break. |

*Based on 1996 - 2007. data

References:

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