Quarters to Semesters

Historical Development and Recommendation

As we entered a recession two years ago, I discussed with the Board of Trustees their interest in reviewing the University Calendar by initiating a review of benefits that could be derived from moving from our current quarter system to a semester system of course delivery. On February 2009, then Provost John Mason and Dr. Niel Zimmerman provided a report to the Academic Affairs Committee that indicated that there might be some benefits derived from making such a change. After this meeting, the Board of Trustees agreed to have the University move forward with a review of desirability of moving to a semester academic calendar.

Based on this recommendation, I constituted a Quarter to Semesters Committee to further investigate the desirability for converting the University calendar. The Committee completed its work in November 2010 and submitted its report to me and made a formal presentation to the Board of Trustees at a Committee of the Whole meeting during its November meeting. The Committee also presented its Report to the Academic Senate on November 8, 2010, at which the following resolution was made: “The Faculty Organization recommends that the administration, UFE and Board of Trustees cease considering a semester conversion until the state support budget has stabilized at academic year 2008-2009 levels for at least two consecutive academic years.”

The presentation to the Board of Trustees was provided as a first reading of the Committee Report and did not contain a recommendation for action by the BOT and similarly the Report presented to me did not contain a recommendation. The committee was charged to research the literature and interview institutions that have researched and converted from quarters to semesters and to present the resulting data and, therefore, did not provide a formal recommendation.

Some of the positive qualities of a semester-based system include:

- Aligns our calendar with the majority of institutions nationwide and internationally, providing many benefits for students; most high schools and private universities in the State of Washington are semester-based.
- Improves efficiency by supporting two, rather than three, primary academic-year terms; improves administrative efficiency, creates the potential for cost savings, requires fewer academic schedules, registration periods, and residential hall moves (both in and out).
- Provides greater opportunity and time for collaborative research, in-depth teaching, development of classroom projects; promotes reflective, deep thinking and greater student interaction with faculty.
- Enables students to more easily “catch-up” should a student get behind in their studies, thus resulting in better retention rates.
Additional positive factors include:

- Employers involved in co-op programs prefer the semester system because it allows for a longer work cycle, enabling them to benefit by entrusting students with projects of greater longevity and responsibility.
- A unique opportunity to re-examine and redefine curricula in a comprehensive manner to meet future educational and market requirements.
- Opportunity to decrease the number of courses offered and reduce the number of faculty course preparations and consolidation of curriculum; most textbooks are designed to fit a semester-length format of courses, thus easing the design of course content by faculty.
- Students would be better able to compete for summer jobs, and graduates would enter the job market earlier before most other students in Washington.
- Students at semester schools have more opportunities for study abroad due to semester alignment with international university calendars.

Based upon the Board’s goal of student success and in support of the in-depth research and input provided by campus constituents regarding the numerous benefits for faculty, students and administration, I am recommending that Eastern Washington University move to a semester format as soon as the financial environment stabilizes and additional resources are provided to the University. In the meantime, it is recommended that a detailed plan for implementation be developed with cost estimates. This detailed plan would be developed over the next 18 months and be ready for implementation after campus funding has stabilized. This plan will form the basis for an implementation date.
The Board of Trustees is asked to determine whether the University should continue consideration of a conversion from a Quarter-based instructional schedule to a Semester-based instructional schedule. Immediate steps would be the impaneling of a study task force to consider the matter, and to prepare a detailed statement of issues, timelines, finances, and parameters. The report would be due to the University mid-Fall Quarter preparatory to a decision on whether to make the conversion at a late Fall Quarter meeting of the Board of Trustees.

1. **Issue Summary**
   Currently approximately 85% of universities in the U.S. are on semester schedules. EWU and all other public universities, including community colleges, in Washington State are on quarter schedules, with the exception of WSU. Most private higher education institutions in the state are on semesters. High school schedules vary but are typically on a calendar schedule which more closely coincides with semester beginning and ending dates – Late August/early September starts – early June ending.

Conversion to a semester system has been discussed at EWU at various times for many years. The magnitude of the change is significant and costly, both in terms of dollar cost, and time (opportunity cost). The semester versus quarter debate is a long one, with many arguments on either side. A sample of the issues is included in Attachment 1. The two competing, major academic arguments are that 1) semesters provide longer time frames within which students are engaged with a topic, allowing greater in-depth understanding, and more time for course projects; 2) quarters provide more opportunities for students to take courses, with a higher intensity and greater focus on fewer courses. The clear procedural difference is that in semester systems there are fewer registration periods with the attendant administrative activities for students, staff and faculty.

2. **Plan.**
The proposal is that the University commission a conversion task force which would work over the Summer Quarter and part of Fall Quarter of 2009 to prepare a more complete analysis of the pros and cons of a conversion. A set of issues that the Task Force might be asked to consider is in Attachment 2. The BOT may wish to set pre-conversion parameters as starting points for the Task Force or may wish to ask the Task Force to include consideration of such parameters in their work. Examples of common pre-conversion parameters are in Attachment 3.

3. **Impacts**
   - Commissioning of a Conversion Task Force, working over Summer and Fall Quarters:
     - Broad campus representation – faculty, administrative, classified (c 10)
     - Process manager/chair
     - Funding: minimal stipends may be necessary; operations funding minimal
     - Commitment of BOT to consider conversion late Fall 2009
• Conversion to a Semester System – c $2 mil. See Attachment 4 for estimated budget details

4. **Schedule and Timing**
   • Decision to commission Task Force – immediately
   • Task Force Report – Fall Quarter 2009
   • BOT decision on conversion – November 2009

   See Attachment 5 for potential conversion timeline if the decision is made to convert

5. **Policy Decisions for the Board.**
   • Commission of Task Force – Support conversion study. Recognize study itself may be controversial. Assure campus of full, open process and discussion prior to decision.
   • Conversion to semester system (if that is the decision) –
     o Establish structure to manage conversion process
     o Provide one-time funding for administrative and curricular conversions
     o Publicly support major shift in University operations
     o Adopt pre-conversion principles to guide implementation
Attachment 1
Sample of Arguments Pro and Con for Semesters and Quarters

Examples of Arguments Supportive of Semesters
- Allows for enhanced writing assignments, time for remedial work, and improved depth of understanding.
- Textbooks are generally designed for semester delivery since c. 85% of U.S. higher education institutions are on semesters.
- Fewer financial aid award adjustments.
- Students have earlier opportunities for summer and full time jobs but must leave jobs earlier in the Fall if returning.
- Reduced administrative activities around beginning and ending of academic terms.
- Potential for cost savings and/or improved quality of service.
- Opportunity to schedule January mini-term.
- More time to recover from a bad start in a class.
- Better fit with study abroad opportunities.
- Better opportunity to take GECR and major courses concurrently.
- Fewer opportunities for dropping out.
- Lower stress level in longer instructional period.

Examples of Arguments Supportive of Quarters
- Larger set of course options for students.
- Course content that is best delivered through repetition and more consistent exposure to material is better suited for the quarter system.
- Semesters can make student budgeting financial aid awards more difficult - larger awards must be managed over more time by each student.
- August vacation schedule.
- Lower cost of failure for students - financially and in terms of opportunities to re-try courses.
- Transfer easier from quarter schools.
- More opportunities for admission of students.
- Take/teach fewer courses at one time.
- Conversion costs - financial and opportunity costs not incurred if don’t convert to semesters.
- Greater intensity and focus on a smaller of courses taken concurrently.
Attachment 2
Issues for the Summer/Fall Task Force

1. Evaluate the academic and administrative pros and cons of conversion
   a. Instructional/pedagogic advantages and disadvantages of current quarter system
      versus advantages and disadvantages of a semester system relative to University
      values and priorities
   b. Cost implications – dollar cost estimates, workload impacts in academic and
      administrative areas, opportunity cost issues during the conversion, and
      estimates of cost-savings or efficiencies following conversion

2. Propose a set of activities for the conversion process should a decision be made to make
   the conversion (These considerations could await a decision based on item #1.
   However, detailing of the processes may better inform the basic decision. Delaying
   of these considerations until after a positive conversion decision would probably mean a
   delay of a full year in implementation of a new instructional format.)
   a. Detailed timeline for transition
   b. Principles for a new academic calendar. e.g. start dates, length of semesters, re-
      start date for second semester, course credit equivalencies principles
   c. Management and communication process for transition – how will the
      responsibility for coordinating and communicating the processes be managed?
   d. Identify academic policy issues to be resolved, e.g. expectations as to program
      size, relative proportions and/or character of general education, major, minor,
      electives. Recommend whether this should be a program neutral conversion or
      utilized as an opportunity to make other changes in program delivery or focus.
   e. Identify recommended pre-conversion parameters.
Attachment 3
Sample of Pre-Conversion Parameters

1. No lengthening of student time to degree or cost (other than “normal” tuition percentage increases).
2. Post-conversion cost neutral outcome or savings/efficiency goals.
3. Curriculum shall be reduced by 1/3 at the macro level without a shift in the percentage balance of general education, majors, or electives. Essentially, this is a parameter requiring that conversion not be an opportunity for program growth but is a proportional conversion of existing programs.
4. Seek a uniform weekly instructional schedule built around a preferred course credit size, e.g. 3 semester hours as the preferred course size.
5. Conversion should be faculty workload neutral. The existing faculty, now operating under a quarter system, should maintain the ability to staff sections and serve comparable numbers of students under the semester system.
Attachment 4
Estimated Budget for Conversion to Semesters

Financing the Conversion
- Transition Administration Office (Strong recommendation of institutions that have made the conversion – provide a common, central source for management and information. Assumes approximately 3.5 years of work including some follow-on work during the first year of full operation on semesters.)
  - Director (probably at Vice Provost level for funding)
  - Administrative Assistant - writing, records keeping, questions
  - Communications Intern (?)

Costs:
- Director – annual salary - $120,000 + benefits (3 1/2 years)
- Administrative Assistant - annual salary - $50,000 + benefits (3 1/2 years)
- Communications Intern – annual stipend - $10,000 (3 years)

Office setup and operations
- Setup - $10,000
- Annual - $7,000
- Total $834,500

Additional Costs - Assumes the bulk of conversion work done in load
- Additional pay/staff (summer work to maintain momentum and continuity, stipends for additional workload to existing staff, additional staff where beyond current staff capability/time, contracting out functions that cannot be performed by regular staff)
- Curriculum revisions (stipends and/or released time for some revisions)
- Student Services policy, procedure, publication changes
- Information Technology transition

- Estimated additional pay or staff - $1,000,000

Total cost estimate - $1.8 - $2.0 million

After the Transition
- Areas of potential savings/efficiencies or quality improvement
  - Registration
  - Financial Aid
  - Information Technology
  - Advising

Potential Savings Estimates
- Assumptions of a reduction model
  - Can reduce staffing in direct proportion to registration instances
  - Can absorb additional duties to improve quality of service
  - Can absorb University enrollment increases without additional staff
- Assumptions contrary to a reduction model
  - Peak loads of activity are still as high (little ability to “spread out” some activities)
  - Need to maintain same staff but manage time more effectively over lower activity periods for better quality, e.g. better advising results in better retention and shorter time to graduation
  - Goal should be “cost neutral” and quality improvement
Attachment 5
Potential Conversion Timeline

Assuming the desire to make a Fall 2009 decision on proceeding with conversion

- Use Summer/Fall 2009 to provide further detail on issues, potential parameters of conversion, and assess desirability. Task Force
- Late Fall 2009 BOT decision on whether to convert to a semester format
- If decide to convert - Winter 2010 through Summer 2011 - Policy development; scheduling structures; faculty develop/approve curriculum changes
- Implementation of conversion - Fall 2011 through Summer 2012 - advertising, transfer agreements, contractual issues, conversion plan for each continuing student, final schedule/program decisions
- Fall 2012 - Begin full operation on semester calendar
Quarters or Semesters Research Report
To Convert or Not to Convert

This report was prepared at the request of Dr. Arevalo to provide the data necessary to determine whether it is advantageous for Eastern Washington University to move from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar. The president also asked for data to determine that, if a decision were made to convert from a quarter-based academic calendar to a semester-based academic calendar, what it would take for the university to successfully implement this conversion.

Executive Summary

The President charged the Quarter to Semester (Q2S) Conversion Research Team to study the desirability of Eastern Washington University moving from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar. In 1985, just under 70% of the U.S. higher educational institutions were on semester-based academic calendars. Currently, this number exceeds 90% (RIT, 2009). Most public higher education institutions in the state of Washington are quarter-based. Most high schools and private higher education institutions in the state of Washington are semester-based.

During the past 15 years, at least 32 colleges and universities nation-wide have converted or are in the process of converting from the quarter-based to the semester-based academic calendar. Many of these institutions chose to convert due to state-wide recommendations (RIT, 2009; WSU, 2000).

Although there are many assertions about the benefits and negative aspects of both quarter-based and semester-based academic calendars, very little empirical evidence exists to prove out specific assertions (CSLA, 2001C; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WSU, 2000). The Evaluate and Compare section of this report details perspectives of both academic calendars, student success and other factors relating to students, and the effects a change would have on faculty.

Some of the positive qualities of semester-based systems include: the ease of transfer for students coming from semester-based schools; the alignment of calendars with the majority of institutions nationwide and internationally providing many benefits for students; improved efficiency supporting two rather than three primary academic year terms; a greater opportunity for collaborative research, in-depth teaching, classroom projects, reflection, deep thinking and greater student interaction with faculty; a pace that allows for catching up should one get behind; and better retention rates.

In addition to a literature review and external consultant efforts, there were multiple open forums conducted in the Spring and Fall of 2010, providing students, staff, and faculty an opportunity to share their thoughts about the impact of a calendar change. A full transcript of these comments can be found in Appendix G.

Lastly, a full impact study was performed that details the cost, timeline, and effort it would take to complete a transition from quarters to semesters. Most institutions that have moved from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar, took between three to four years to complete the transition. During this period of time, most institutions spent $3 million to $4 million. The majority of this investment was made converting curriculum and advising students to insure they were not harmed in the transition.
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Committee Charge

The President charged the Quarter to Semester (Q2S) Conversion Research Team to study the desirability of Eastern Washington University moving from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar. The committee was charged to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Evaluate and compare the quarter and semester calendar types
- Review national and regional institution calendar types
- Identify and review plans from institutions who have moved from quarters to semesters over the past 10 years
- In the event that EWU were to move to a semester system, research the issues surrounding making such a move.
- Develop a comprehensive list of the pros and cons and/or create a cost/benefit matrix of moving to the semester system as versus staying in the quarter system.

Find the full charge to the committee Appendix A.

Process

History

EWU has looked at the possibility of converting from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar multiple times in its history. In an attempt to gather details of these efforts, only information about a review in 2003/04 could be found. During this review, the Community Colleges of Spokane joined EWU in researching the potential for a change. A decision to convert was never made. Interestingly, the Community College participants at the time stated that they were willing to pursue simultaneous conversion if EWU were to decide and publicize its decision to convert (EWU, 2004A; EWU, 2004B).

In 2000, the Washington State Legislature directed the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) to research the feasibility of converting Washington State University from semesters to quarters to align with the rest of the State of Washington’s public higher education institutions. As a result of the study, the following recommendations resulted:

“HECB staff recommends that WSU maintain its current semester calendar based on the following:

- In every case study examined, there was no clear benefit to operating under one system over the other;
- The cost of changing the curriculum from one system to another is far higher than the marginal administrative savings or perceived benefits;
- A move from semesters to quarters runs counter to the national trend of institutions moving from quarters to semesters;
- Degree audit systems and course alignment methods (e.g., Course Applicability System) exist to accommodate student mobility regardless of the academic calendar employed.

In addition, HECB staff recommends that the state further examine the following issues:

- The impact of semesters versus quarters on student retention;
- Alignment issues with the K-12 system and K-12 reform;
- Capability of the Course Applicability System to accommodate student mobility;
- Coordinated delivery of classes and compatibility with the other universities participating in distance learning (e.g., Western Governor’s Coalition)” (WSU, 2000).
As a result of this recommendation, WSU, remained a semester-based institution. No evidence was found that the follow-up recommendations were considered or pursued.

Current

Initial research was completed at the request of the Provost in 2008/09. An initial presentation was made to the EWU Board of Trustees at their February 2009 Academic Affairs Committee Meeting.

President Arevalo charged the Quarters to Semesters Research Committee (Q2S) in late February 2010. The Q2S Committee Charge can be found in Appendix A and the Q2S Committee Membership can be found in Appendix B.

Sub-Committee Work

Sub-committees were charged with various aspects of the Q2S research process:

**The Charge for all sub-committees**

- Bring in appropriate internal representation
- Document Review
- Interviews with other institutions
- Determine Pros/Cons Costs/Benefits
- Recommend research questions for Eduventures
- Host internal open forum discussions with students, staff, and faculty to discuss these effects
- Estimate costs
- Estimate timelines
- Estimate level of effort
- Develop recommendation

**Sub-committees for Research**

- **Student Success**
  Charge: To study and report on the advantages and disadvantages a change from quarters to semesters would have on EWU’s student success

- **Curriculum Conversion/Revision**
  Charge: To study what it would take to convert/revise curriculum if EWU were to decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system

- **Advising**
  Charge: To study and determine what the advising function would look like if the institution were to decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system; How would EWU be able to hold students caught in the transition harmless?

- **Academic and Enrollment Services Policies/Procedures**
  Charge: To review current policies and procedures and recommend what changes would need to take place if the institution were to decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system

- **Administrative Systems/Technology**
  Charge: To review current administrative systems and recommend what changes would need to take place if the institution were to decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system

Input from Campus

Two sets of campus forums allowed for input from campus constituents (students, faculty, and staff):

- Spring Forums were conducted in June 2010 to inform campus about the process, including the charge to the committee, timeline for the research process, and status of the process at that time.

- Fall forums were conducted in October 2010. The intent of the forums was to share details of the findings and to illicit feedback from campus constituents to provide final input for the Q2S report for consideration by the President and the Board of Trustees.
External Research

EWU has an ongoing contract with EDUVENTURES Research and Consulting. EDUVENTURES performed three phases of research:

- **Phase I:** Identify Motives, Methodologies, and Impact of Quarter to Semester Conversions at Select Institutions
- **Phase II:** Assess Measurable Impact of a Quarter to Semester Conversion
- **Phase III:** Further Interviews at Select Institutions

Timeline

Academic Calendar Perspective

The United States higher education community has utilized three primary types of academic calendars: Quarters, Semesters, and Trimesters. In 1985 just under 70% of the U.S. higher educational institutions were on semester-based academic calendar. Currently, this number exceeds 90% (RIT, 2009).

During the past 15 years, 32 colleges and universities nation-wide have converted or are in the process of converting from the quarter-based to the semester-based academic calendar. Many of these institutions chose to convert due to state-wide recommendations (RIT, 2009; WSU, 2000).

Prior to making any decision to convert from one to another academic calendar, institution leaders must understand the complexity of such a move. This conversion requires effort on the part of every institutional department; a change in most academic, student services, and business policies and procedures; and the conversion of all curriculum. To successfully move through a conversion, successful institutions have invested in detailed planning and campus communications (RIT, 2009).

Although there are many assertions about the benefits and negative aspects of both quarter-based and semester-based academic calendars, very little, if any empirical evidence exists to prove out specific assertions (CSLA, 2001C; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WSU, 2000).

The following table illustrates some of the asserted strengths and weaknesses of calendar systems (student success factors are illustrated in the next section):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most public higher education institutions in the state of Washington are quarter-based; provides easier transition/transfer for students coming in from those institutions (EWU Q2S Committee, 2010; EWU, B; WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Most high schools, colleges, and universities nationally, and private higher education institutions in the state of Washington are semester-based; provides easier transition/transfer for students coming in from those institutions (EWU, B; SSU, 2007; UC, 2008; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodates a larger number of students (UC, A)</td>
<td>Easier transition/transfer of minority students since 94% of historically black colleges and universities are on a semester-based calendar (UC, A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides greater flexibility in scheduling (OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A)</td>
<td>Would allow EWU to capture more summer school students returning home for summer from semester-based institutions (UC, A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides more opportunities to teach highly specialized courses (OSU, 2010B)</td>
<td>Improves administrative efficiency, potential for cost savings; fewer academic schedules, registration periods, residential hall move in/outs (EWU, B; UC, A; RIT, 2009; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides for more diversity in courses (EWU, B; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Facilitates management of the academic calendar (WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves operations of co-op programs (RIT, 2009; WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Employers involved in co-op programs prefer the semester system because it allows for a longer work cycle, enabling them to benefit by entrusting students with projects of greater longevity and responsibility (UC, A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Improves efficiency in the use of space (WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moving to a semester calendar will increase average class size and place additional stress on classroom scheduling (UC, A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presents a unique opportunity to re-examine and redefine curricula in a comprehensive manner to meet future educational and market requirements (UC, B).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A semester calendar with courses of various numbers of units offers more flexibility for course design than does our current quarter system (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Less money would be spent by athletics for students to come to campus in late summer before current quarter begins (UC, 2008).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A detailed account of the academic calendar usage in the United States can be found in the Mayberry Report (RIT, 2009) and the Washington State University Report (WSU, 2000).
Student Success

Early in the research process, Dr. Arevalo asked the Q2S Committee to insure that student success was a significant factor for the research into whether EWU should consider moving to a semester-based academic calendar.

The Student Success sub-committee was tasked to “study and report on the advantages and disadvantages a change from quarters to semesters would have on EWU’s student success.” Thus, it became imperative that the sub-committee start with a generally accepted definition of Student Success supported by a review of the literature.

Most of the literature on “Student Success” begins with an attempt to define it. In “Enhancing Student Success in Education,” authors Peter Ewell and Jane Wellman offer a synthesis of the “major themes and findings from the [July 2006] National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) Symposium on Student Success” and to address selected topics the symposium did not cover.

Ewell and Wellman’s report begins with the “simplest” definition of student success: getting students into and through college to a degree or certificate. But they add that the words “student success” are used by those who study the topic as “a generic label...with many dimensions, ranging from student flow across the entire educational pipeline (high school graduation, college enrollment, retention, and degree completion), to the quality and content of learning and skills achieved as a result of going to college, to positive educational experiences (such as student engagement or satisfaction).

The sub-committee assembled a listing of Student Success Measures from a reading of “What matters to student success: A review of the literature.” This report was commissioned by the National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success in July of 2006 and served as the primary document from which Ewell and Wellman (above) drew their summary. A .pdf of the Kuh team’s executive summary can be located here: http://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Kuh_Team_ExecSumm.pdf. The entire report can be located here: http://cpr.iub.edu/uploads/Kuh%20Kinzie%20Buckley%20Commissioned%20Report%20for%20the%20National%20Symposium%20on%20Postsecondary%20Student%20Success.pdf.

Student success is defined as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance. Traditional measures include attainment or degree completion, often measured using traditional standards of academic achievement (enrollment, persistence, grades) and post-graduation achievements, such as graduate school admission test scores, enrollment and completion rates, performance on discipline- or field-specific examinations (CPA, etc.), and post-college employment and income.

Alternative measures also exist. Outcomes leading to a path to a 4-year degree include transfer-ready status and acquisition of vocational knowledge & skills for a job. Student satisfaction measures include levels of comfort and affirmation in the learning environment and student impressions of institutional quality/willingness to attend again. Learning outcomes (reaching cognitive standards) are comprised of high levels of written and oral communication ability, quantitative and mathematical ability, critical thinking and problem solving ability, scientific literacy, and information literacy. Soft skills are another component of measure. These consist of reaching high levels of personal functioning/well-developed sense of identity (self-awareness, confidence, self-worth, social competence, sense of purpose), motivation, responsibility, attitudes of tolerance and respect for others, a continuing motivation to learn, and commitment to democratic values. Behavioral outcomes include job placement and career mobility, civic and community participation, and cultural pursuits.

A student’s ability to accomplish his or her personal goals is also an important measure. These consist of wanting to be better educated, informed citizens; enhancing personal happiness and satisfaction; obtaining a higher degree; making more money; meeting job requirements; believing in one’s ability to perform in college and capacity as a learner; being excited about learning; and, feeling cared about as a student and a person.

Transformational changes—from being a repository for information to becoming a self-directed, lifelong learner—are important measures of success for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved by postsecondary education. Societal measures include more citizens with college credentials of value to the country’s workforce and citizenry.
Institutional measures consist of higher levels of preparation, participation, affordability, completion, benefits to society, learning (from Measuring Up—State Report Card on Higher Education)

From this listing, the sub-committee devised a nine-item survey designed to query a representative cross-section of current EWU students about their perceptions of student success. The sub-committee wanted to investigate whether EWU students defined success uniquely given the high percentage of first generation students who enroll here. The survey was designed as a preliminary glimpse (as noted in the cover letter to each student participant). Please see Appendix F for results of the survey and conclusions.

As stated earlier in this report, the review of literature, showed little empirical evidence as to whether a quarter-based calendar or a semester-based calendar better supported students; but, there were many assertions made (CSLA, 2001, C; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WSU, 2000):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarters</th>
<th>Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preferable for courses that emphasize the acquisition of factual data or discrete skills (RIT, 2009).</td>
<td>Provides greater opportunities and time for collaborative research, in-depth teaching, and classroom projects (EWU, B; RIT, 2009; OSU, 2010B; SSU, 2007; UC, A; WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Longer individual class meetings allow more time for flexible uses (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Class periods can be somewhat shorter, helping the attention span (CSLA, 2001A).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students can focus on somewhat fewer courses at one time, yet take a wider variety of courses overall (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Superior for teaching and learning; Offers more time for thinking and acquiring new knowledge; more conducive to promoting reflective and deep thinking (CSLA, 2001C; EWU, B; RIT, 2009; SSU, 2008; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faster pace does not allow students to fall behind (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Pace allows for catch up, should one get behind (CSLA, 2001C; UCLA, 2002A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides more opportunities to make up for failure (UCLA, 2002B; WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Improved retention rates (CSLA, 2001C; RIT, 2009; SSU, 2007).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not allow enough time for students to consult adequately with faculty, to share developing ideas with a larger group, or to bring more ambitious projects to a satisfying conclusion (UCLA, 2002A)</td>
<td>Allows for greater student interaction with faculty (UCLA, 2002A)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is evidence that there is a temporary effect on graduation rates. In many schools that converted from quarters to semesters, there was evidence of a temporary increase in graduation rates leading up to the conversion. The assumption is that this represented students who wanted to complete their academic program prior to conversion. Alternatively, some schools experienced a lower enrollment in the year following conversion (RIT, 2009). Yet, “of the institutions that had available data for graduation rates, there appears to be no consistent trend between graduation rate and Q2S conversion” (EDUVENTURES, 2010B, p. 6).
Graduation Rates for Institutions that Converted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Before Conversion</th>
<th>After Conversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Auburn University*</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>-1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland State University</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan Technological University</td>
<td>-0.9%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeastern University**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Minnesota**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Toledo</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah State University***</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youngstown State University</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Campus enrollments aggregated  
**Graduation rate for year converted unavailable in IPEDS  
***Utah State Regional campuses were excluded from totals, as data started to be collected in 2003 – 5 years after the Q2S conversion  
†Change from 1-2 years prior to conversion, depending on data availability  
‡Change 4 years after conversion

Source: Eaduventures analysis of NCES IPEDS data (2009)

Other Factors Affecting Students

It was found that most institutions with a quarter-based calendar had fewer classes per term, but that class meetings tended to be longer; where institutions in a semester-based calendar tended to have an additional class per term, but shorter class periods. Semester-based institutions tended towards a consistent 3-credit hour class with hour-long classes on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, or hour and a half classes meeting on Tuesday, Thursday. The following shows other statements regarding the effects on students in both calendars:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarters</th>
<th>Semesters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allows students to pay bills in a smaller bite (WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Full year tuition &amp; fees would be the same; student would owe a larger percentage of the full year's tuition &amp; fees per term; (CSLA, 2001C; OSU, 2010B; SSU, 2007; UC, 2008; WS, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provides higher intensity and focus, less tedium in subject matter (CSLA, 2001C; EWU, B; OSU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002A; WSU, 2000)</td>
<td>Students will take more classes for shorter class periods over a longer term (CSLA, 2001C)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion to semesters can negatively impact part-time, one-course only enrollment (RIT, 2009).</td>
<td>Advantages greater for graduate education (RIT, 2009).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If a student drops out for one term, it is only one third of an academic year that is lost, not one half (CSLA,</td>
<td>Provides for better opportunities for internships and independent studies under the supervision of faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001C)</td>
<td>(OSU, 2001; SSU, 2007; UCLA, 2002A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students better able to compete for summer jobs (SSU, 2007; UC, A; UCLA, 2002A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduates enter the job market earlier (SSU, 2007).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitates better student teaching opportunities (UC, A)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer registrations and academic terms (CSLA, 2001C; WS, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling work easier (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows students greater flexibility in regard to switching dropping/adding or otherwise switching classes because of the extended length of time (UC, A).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less variety of courses available each term (CSLA, 2001C; OSU, 2001).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing to a semester calendar reduces the total number of courses offered (RIT, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students pay less money for textbooks on semester calendars (CSLA, 2001C; RIT, 2009; OSU, 2001).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The early-start semester model allows students to enter the summer (and permanent) job market earlier (RIT, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students at semester schools have more opportunities to study abroad (UC, A; RIT, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many textbooks are designed for semester length courses (CSLA, 2001C; SSU, 2007; WS, 2009).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allows underprepared students greater time to adjust to the rigors of university life; reduces stress for students and faculty (CSLA, 2001A; OSU, 2001; UC, A; UCLA, 2002B).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Factors Related to Faculty

The following chart illustrates factors that affect faculty members in a comparison of quarter-based and semester-based academic calendars:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Semester</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes it convenient to schedule faculty sabbatical leaves to pursue research interests (UCLA, 2002A).</td>
<td>For faculty, planning, ordering books and other “gearing up,” evaluating, grading, paperwork, getting to know new groups of students two rather than three times per year (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under quarters, still including summer, faculty members can receive 9 months off by choosing 2 quarters off at 75% pay, but can receive full pay for 6 months maximum (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Sabbaticals for a full semester would be fully funded, thus enabling a leave, including summer, of approximately 8 months with full pay (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Require fewer simultaneous different class preparations (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Advising, including applications for graduation and counseling new students, takes place one less time per year (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are fewer students to interact with at any one time, so more personal contact is possible (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>A shortened teaching year would free more time for research or creative activities (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For faculty who enjoy teaching a wide variety of courses, the quarter system allows a somewhat wider range (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>There is a greater likelihood of teaching-load reduction for tenure-track faculty on semesters rather than quarters. This results, for example, from our ability to increase class size by teaching 2 sections per year of a course rather than 3, the ability to create courses with varying numbers of units, etc. (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is more flexibility in choice of quarter off (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>Teaching loads should be neutral in a change from quarters to semesters (OSU, 2008; UC, 2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty members have already developed their courses for 10-week terms (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
<td>The pay scale for lecturers is equivalent for semesters and quarters, but checks are spread out over a longer period on semesters (CSLA, 2001C).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EWU Campus Feedback

There were multiple opportunities for the EWU campus to participate and provide feedback to the committee’s review of Quarters and Semesters. In June 2010, Open Forums were held to provide students, staff, and faculty an opportunity to ask questions about the process. Fall Open Forums were held in October 2010. These provided students, staff, and faculty the opportunity to provide feedback about the potential impact of a move to semesters. Many comments also came in through electronic forums, like email and Facebook. Comments about both calendar types were captured and can be found in Appendix G.

In general, there were great comments, discourse, and debate in the various campus feedback forums. There were preferences shown by all constituents (students, staff, and faculty) for both calendar types (Appendix G). Consistent themes arose from these conversations:

- Is there enough evidence that shows the level benefit (retention, time to graduation, other student success factors, cost savings, administrative efficiencies, calendar alignment, etc.) is significant enough to justify the level of risk (potential short and long-term enrollment loss) and investment of resources ($, staff effort, time) needed to successfully transition?
- Should we consider taking advantage of this opportunity to revision the curriculum?
- Is there another way to solve the calendar misalignment (move the quarter academic calendar up a month) without converting to semesters?
Is this the right time to consider this change (budget climate, just after significant organization reorganization, etc.)?

Substantial concern surrounding any significant organizational change.

Other key comments should be noted as well:

- From an advisors point of view – a significant number of students self-advice; so this would force them to work with an advisor. On the other hand, don’t think we have the advising structure on the campus right now to handle this. Advising is not solidified - no universal policy.

- For accredited programs, it is likely that this kind of a transition would set in place a need for a re-accreditation. There would be a significant effort and cost if this were to happen.

**Impacts of a Decision to Convert**

**Cost**

Of the institutions studied, the cost of converting from Quarters to Semesters has ranged from no cost to $14 million. The majority of institutions spent $3 - $4 million during the course of 3 to 4 years for their conversion (Appendix C – Institution List). Each school that underwent a conversion from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar had a different way of allocating expenses of the process (RIT, 2009). Few included details in reports reviewed by this committee.

The following illustrates how some institutions have allocated the transitions fund:

- **Curriculum/Pedagogy** – Provides the release time and overload costs for faculty, academic leadership, and curriculum management support staff to convert the curriculum and manage the curriculum process.

- **Advising** – Funds additional advising staff and training to assist students through the transition.

- **Administration (Transition Team)** – Includes salaries and benefits for an identified team of individuals dedicated to the project. Most of these teams consist of 3 FTE (Director, Administrative Support, Communications Support) plus additional student support.

  - **Transition Operating Budget** – Includes day-to-day operating expenses, project communications, and project management.

- **Enrollment, Technical, and Support Services** – Provides backfill funding and over-time expenses to allow full-time staff to focus on converting enrollment, data input, and other support services, processes, and policies.

* Most institutions identified Curriculum Conversion and Advising accounted for the largest portion of the costs

In addition to the costs of conversion, there are assertions that there are reduced costs for running on a semester-based academic calendar; yet, little evidence exists to show that this is the case. There are cost implications to a change in the number of days students are on campus, the number of registrations, recruitment cycles, and residential hall move ins/outs. Whether or not there are true cost savings realized through these changes, administrative and operational efficiencies should be gained as a result of the change (CSLA, 2002B; EWU, B; OSU, 2010B; RIT, 2009; UC, A; UCLA, 2002A; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000). On a steady-state basis a change in academic calendar should be cost and revenue neutral in the long-term (UC, 2008).

“Adjuncts will receive more pay in the fall semester than the university is used to paying for the quarter. Again, this will balance out, but is an initial expense that should be anticipated” (RIT, 2009, p.17).

**Timeline**

Of the institutions that provided detail on their timeline for conversion, all of them planned for a 3 to 4 year transition plan. This project duration provides ample time for the following efforts to occur:

- Cost effective and efficient implementation

- Revision pedagogy and converting curriculum
- Develop and implement technology systems to support implementation
- Modify and test technology systems to operate under new format
- Input data
- Develop, revise and implement new procedures and policies
- Provide students appropriate advising

**Curriculum Conversion**

“Every existing course remaining on the books will be revised, thus requiring curricular review and approval. Likewise, all degree programs will be revised in some way—course sequencing, course content, degree timeline, etc.” (RIT, 2009, p. 9; CSLA, 2001C). Rethinking and converting curriculum in every program may be complex for some programs. The process for review and approval must be streamlined to reduce the potential chaos of refining all curriculum at the same time. Programs with pending certification and accreditation reviews will require special attention (CSLA, 2001C). The process of curriculum conversion should begin as soon as a decision to convert is made and should be completed a year prior to the actual conversion to allow for activities such as recruitment, advising, etc. (RIT, 2009).

Many full-time faculty will play a role in curriculum revision. Many institutions that have converted have compensated and/or provided funds to backfilled teaching loads to allow faculty to take part in the curriculum conversion process (CSLA, 2001C; RIT, 2009).

The method used to perform curriculum revision varies. The Constant Content Method keeps course content the same while spreading it over a longer period of time. The number of credits is reduced in this model. The Constant Format Method allows the course credit hour value to remain the same, but the content is increased. A full year’s content is divided by two, rather than three. The method chosen would determine both student and faculty course loads (RIT, 2009).

Some institutions that have converted calendar systems have used the conversion as an opportunity to re-vision, integrate, and strengthen their curriculum, while others have limited the curriculum process to repackaging to fit the new calendar type and elimination of under-enrolled courses (RIT, 2009).

**Enrollment**

Some institutions that converted from a quarter-based to a semester-based academic calendar experienced a small decline (a few percentage points) in enrollment for one to a few years (CSLA, 2001B; OSU, 2010B; UC, 2008; RIT, 2009). This could end up being the single biggest cost of the conversion (RIT, 2009). In a review of IPEDS data, it was found that some institutions had a drop in enrollment in the years leading up to a conversion (EDUVENTURES, 2010B). Students may resist taking more courses per term initially (CSLA, 2001A). Yet, in the years following a conversion, many institutions experienced an increase in enrollment (EDUVENTURES, 2010B).
**Total Average Enrollment Patterns Pre- and Post- Conversion**

- Auburn University*
- Cleveland State University
- Michigan Technological University
- Northeastern University
- University of Minnesota*
- University of Toledo
- Utah State University**
- Youngstown State University
- Eastern Washington University

Source: Eduventures analysis of NCES' IPEDS data (2009)

**Average Enrollment Growth Before and 5-Years After Conversion (N=8)**

- **Before Conversion**
  - Auburn University*: -4.4%
  - Cleveland State University: -3.3%
  - Michigan Technological University: -0.8%
  - Northeastern University: -4.5%
  - University of Minnesota*: -9.8%
  - University of Toledo: -17.2%
  - Utah State University**: 10.1%
  - Youngstown State University: -11.2%

- **After Conversion**
  - Auburn University*: 6.4%
  - Cleveland State University: -1.9%
  - Michigan Technological University: 2.7%
  - Northeastern University: 12.6%
  - University of Minnesota*: 12.1%
  - University of Toledo: 2.9%
  - Utah State University**: -14.8%
  - Youngstown State University: 9.5%

*Campus enrollments aggregated
**Utah State Regional campuses were excluded from totals, as data started to be collected in 2003 – 5 years after the Q2S conversion

Source: Eduventures analysis of NCES' IPEDS data (2009)
The Mayberry report stated that there may be part-time enrollment shortfalls: “The quarter calendar is particularly attractive to the part-time adult or employed student who takes courses intermittently. Schools with a high reliance on this student population should analyze and prepare for the likely decline in part-time enrollment. Mid-way through its conversion process, Northeastern University decided to keep its University College and law school on the quarter system so as to avoid decline of a student population critical to their budget projections” (RIT, 2009, p. 18).

Some schools experienced a lower enrollment in the year following conversion due to a rush of students trying to graduate prior to conversion (RIT, 2009).

“In the initial year of the conversion, the summer term will likely have to be shortened to squeeze it between the end of the spring quarter and the beginning of the fall semester. This will likely result in a reduced FTES for that summer” (CSLA, 2001B, p. 1).

**Advising**

If a decision to convert to a semester-based system, advising would be a significant issue. “It is imperative that a comprehensive student advising campaign covering the entire transition period be developed at the very outset of the conversion process” (RIT, 2009, p.12). Careful attention should be paid to students transitioning from the quarter-based to the semester-based academic calendar to insure that no student is harmed by the move (UC, 2008; UCLA, 2002B). The advising process should begin as soon as a decision to convert is made (RIT, 2009).

**What would the advising function look like if the institution were to decide to transition from a quarter-based system to a semester-based system?**

The consensus among the advisors was that the advising function would not change a lot under a semester or quarter system. They would meet with students twice a year instead of three times. However, semesters did provide advisors opportunities for longer developmental advising and the opportunity to meet with students more than once. Advisors liked the possibility of being able to check-in with advisees more than once to assist with getting students the academic support they need (EWU, 2010B; UCLA, 2002B).

Many tutors find a quarter-based calendar is too fast paced to effectively work individually with students (UCLA, 2002B).

**What would EWU need to do in order to hold students in the transition harmless?**

Advisors were concerned about students falling through the cracks. Currently, a high number of students (guess by advisors was at least 70%) self-advice after their freshmen year. During the transition, a huge influx of students would need advising that currently are self-advising. The following were recommendations to help students through the transition:

- Increase in advising staff.
- Specific outline of how to handle students who are in the transition (Handbooks, guides).
- Building an academic framework (on paper) of classes to be offered and making a commitment to keep the framework so that 3-4 year plans will be able to be honored.
- Develop an Individual Advising Plan (I.A.P.) for all students in the transition that is signed off on by advisor and Dean of College or Chair of Department.
- Effective communication from departments to the advisors is essential.
- Clear guidelines on how quarter credits are going to be converted and what requirements previous quarter credits will meet.
- Increase efficiency with technology such as Banner, Degree Audit, etc.
- Train the advisors (all advisors on EWU campus) about all new forms, processes, and technology.
- Advising guides developed for all academic programs on campus.
- Communication plan to make sure that all students impacted by the transition meet with an advisor and understand the 3-4 year conversion process (EWU, 2010B).

**What would be needed to be in place for the advisors?**
- Accurate curriculum and equivalencies for classes before and after the conversion.
- Courses will need to be committed to in advance (3 to 4 years) and followed through on by the Colleges.
- All advisors need to be knowledgeable on degree audit and the imaging system. Both of those systems need to be accurate and running.
- Credit Conversion tables in place.
- Communication regarding changes to the General Education Requirements because of the conversion.
- Student-Advisor Ratio - Extra staff will be needed.
- Provide students with information both electronically and hardcopy regarding an academic plan to navigate the 3-4 year conversion process.
- Faculty need to be trained on advising in anticipation of the increase of students needing advising. English department has a good system/model in place to build upon (EWU, 2010B).

**Estimated Advising Cost to Transition**

According to Mayberry (RIT, 2009), it is estimated, that colleges and universities that have gone through a quarters to semesters conversion (typically a 3-4 year conversion process), have spent roughly 1.5 million dollars towards advising. Advising is one of the largest expenses of a conversion (UC, 2008).

The full report of the Q2S Advising Sub-Committee can be found in Appendix E.

**Policies and Procedures**

The majority of all academic and student policies and procedures will require revision as a result of a decision to convert, but many of these changes will be limited to changing deadlines and calendar-based processes (RIT, 2009). There would be a significant strain placed on all institutional support units to support the conversion. Revisions would need to be completed by subject matter experts (UC, 2008).

The full report of the Q2S Academic, Enrollment Services, and Other Policies and Procedures Sub-Committee can be found in Appendix D.

**Records and Registration**

The Academic Calendar would need significant modification, including: timelines for publications and scheduling, changes to dates and deadlines, etc. The number of registrations cycles would change from four to three (EWU, B; UC, A; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000). The number of graduation applications would remain the same. In many instances intensity and duration of activities would increase; but, the number of high demand times decreases annually – neutral net effect (EWU, 2010 A).

Terms in Banner Student system would need to be considered carefully:

- Unless we use the WSU calendar, we would still need to run 2 separate terms (to accommodate COMD) – this approach would require significant manual processing, especially for Financial Aid (EWU, 2010 A).
- Off-campus courses offered at community and technical colleges (CTCs) may need to stay on quarters to coincide with the CTCs facilities use and keep the enrollments up at those locations. This may require us to also run quarters in Banner which could cause problems for Financial Aid; this approach would also require significant manual processing (EWU, 2010 A).

Change will be required to the probation/dismissal policy (via University Academic Committee)

- Currently, students are on probation 2 qtrs before being dismissed. If we used the same model, they could be doing poorly for 1 ½ years on a semester system without being dismissed as opposed to 1 year on a quarter system. Changes to the policy may need to be made (EWU, 2010 A).
- From UCLA academic calendar committee report, “The quarter system makes it possible for those who fail a course or find themselves subject to academic dismissal to get back on track quickly. Under the semester calendar, they lose one-half of the academic year and may have a harder time returning than if they had lost only one-third of a year under the quarter calendar” (UCLA, 2002C, p. 38).
Admissions
An academic calendar change would allow for two entry points each year instead of three. This would require:

- Rebuilding transfer equivalencies in student information system and transfer guides (joint effort with Records & Registration and Undergraduate Studies office) (EWU, 2010 A).
- Converting the admissions cycle to meet semester based system.
- Conversion of current prospects to semester terms.

We would lose spring quarter transfer students (no spring quarter entry point) from local CTCs and other four-year universities on quarters – EWU has approximately 150 – 190 students who transfer in during spring quarter based on data from spring 2008 and spring 2009 (EWU, 2010 A).

Financial Aid
An academic calendar conversion would require revisions to:

- All forms, publications, and web content.
- Student budgets.
- All process cycles, including:
  - Application cycle and needs analysis routines (FAFSA and scholarships)
  - File verification, awarding, loan certification, and disbursement cycles.
- Student employment cycle.
- Satisfactory academic progress cycle.
- Statistics and fund management process.

Quarters would provide a shorter time-frame for the return of Title 4 funds (lower cost of failure to students on the quarter system). All of the major processes run by the Enrollment Services offices are based on Eastern’s term calendar. Any academic programs that deviate from that calendar require separate and often manual processing.

Currently, EWU has two major terms: EWU’s quarter term and COMD’s WSU semester term. If we convert to a semester calendar that does not match WSU’s semester calendar, we have a possibility of up to three calendars, all of which will require separate subsystems:

- EWU semester calendar
- WSU semester calendar for COMD
- EWU quarter calendar for joint programs with the CTCs

In addition, students at the CTCs who mix EWU semester courses with EWU or CC quarter courses experience issues. This is particularly problematic for financial aid, as non-term aid processing requires compliance with an entirely different set of financial aid regulations (EWU, 2010 A).

Student Financial Services
Fewer terms would require fewer but more intense times where students pay tuition and fees (EWU, B; UC, A; WS, 2009; WSU, 2000). An academic calendar conversion would require fewer fee audits. Students will receive a higher portion of their aid in the fall than they currently do since the annual award will be divided by 2 instead of 3. As a result, students may initially have a more difficult time managing their financial aid awards during this longer period of time. One solution could result in higher institutional loans to students which could result in higher collection costs as well. (EWU, 2010 A).
**Data Reporting**

Fewer terms would reduce the number of reporting cycles. Although, there would be difficulty comparing data between quarter credits to semester credits. Reports currently written based on quarter system would need to be revised to the semester calendar (Discoverer, On-Demand reports, etc.). Predictive value of historic data would impacted in the short-term (CSLA, 2001B; EWU, 2010 A).

**Transfer & Articulation Agreements**

All transfer articulation agreements would require rewriting (UC, 2008). Course by course articulations of transfer courses from quarter schools will be more difficult; could potentially negatively impacted quarter students (EWU, 2010 A).

Transfer tables for degree audit and transfer of credits would need to be updated. This work could only begin after curriculum conversion is complete. Additional staff would need to be hired to support this effort. Every department will need to review the new articulations for courses in their area (EWU, 2010 A).

**Athletics**

Under the current quarter calendar, the EWU football team plays some of its scheduled games before the start of fall quarter instruction. If the start of the football schedule was more aligned with the start of fall classes (as it would under the semester system), student attendance at the initial football games would most likely improve. Less money would be spent by Athletics for students to come to campus in late summer before current quarter begins (EWU, 2010 A; UCLA, 2002B). There would also be positive impact on the cost incurred by Athletics, as pre-season housing and meal costs can be reduced (UC, 2008).

There would be 2 NCAA certifying cycles instead of 3. Athletes would need to pass 24 semester hours to be eligible to play; this can be harder than in quarters because they can’t make up the lost hours as easily if they don’t do well in one semester. It’s easier to make up lost hours in quarters (EWU, 2010 A).

**Residential Life**

A semester system would allow for a broader range of time for extra-curricular activities, student organization activities, intramural sports, sports clubs, non-credit classes. (UCLA, 2002B).

There are only two residential housing move in/out periods per year versus three (EWU, 2010 A; UCLA, 2002B).

**Information Technology Issues**

Multiple efforts related to information technology need to occur to support a conversion from Quarters to Semesters. These primarily fall into two categories: developing technology to support the conversion and modifying existing systems to successfully manage a new schedule.

Many of the institutions researched spoke about the need to develop and maintain a web-based system for input, evaluation, and revision control for curriculum conversion, policy development, advising (individual advising plans for students), etc. (RIT, 2009; UC, 2008).

In addition, multiple technical systems require some level of conversion and data input to operate effectively under a different calendar, including:

- Administrative Systems (Banner)
  - Student
  - Financial Aid
  - Financial
  - Human Resources
- eCommerce Systems (CashNet/Touchnet)
- Degree Audit System (SOAR)
- OneCard/Flex System (Blackboard Transact)
- Learning Management Systems (Blackboard)
- Housing System (RMS)
- Library Circulation System (Millennium)
Other Impacts

- Many Banner tables/forms/records would need to be updated by Admissions, Records & Registration, Financial Aid, and Student Financial Services (EWU, 2010 A).
- Semesters would make budgeting financial aid different (larger awards over more time) (EWU, 2010 A).
- There will be difficulties in completing work on current projects related to dual enrollment with CTCs. Dual enrollment is difficult between institutions on different types of calendars (EWU, 2010 A).
- Mayberry report stated that “many of the schools consulted for this report did experience a decrease in bookstore sales – with the University of Minnesota topping the list at an approximately 20% decline in bookstore sales” (RIT, 2009, p. 17).
- International Students - Generally, semesters would be beneficial for international students; it will make transfer easier as the vast majority of universities abroad are on the semester system (EWU, 2010 A).

References


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Appendix A – President’s Charge

The President charges the Quarter to Semester (Q2S) Conversion Research Team to study the desirability of Eastern Washington University moving from a quarter academic calendar to a semester academic calendar. The committee will provide the President with a recommendation by November 2010. The committee is charged to accomplish the following outcomes:

- Evaluate and compare the quarter and semester calendar types
- Review national and regional institution calendar types
- Identify and review plans from institutions who have moved from quarters to semesters over the past 10 years
- In the event that EWU were to move to a semester system, research the issues surrounding making such a move:
  - What would be the approximate time necessary to complete conversion?
  - What activities would need to happen throughout this time period?
  - What would be the approximate costs of conversion?
- Develop a comprehensive list of the pros and cons and/or create a cost/benefit matrix of moving to the semester system as versus staying in the quarter system, including affects on and efficiencies for:
  - Teaching and learning - Course schedule, Curriculum, Gen. Ed.
  - Costs to students
    - Financial aid
    - Tuition
    - Books
  - Recruitment and admissions
  - Articulation and transfer
  - Student learning, success, and progression – Time to graduation, etc.
  - Cost considerations
    - Non-recurring cost of transition
    - Long term recurring
  - Staffing
  - Facilities
    - Maintenance
    - Types of spaces needed
  - Modifications to IT systems
  - Accreditation
  - Communications Issues
  - Business policies and procedures
    - Academic Affairs
    - Business and Finance
    - Student Affairs
- The committee will provide the President with a recommendation by November 2010
Appendix B – Q2S Conversion Research Committee

Membership of the Q2S is as follows:

- **Chair**
  - Gary L. Pratt; Chief Information Officer

- **Faculty**
  - Patty Chantrill; Associate Professor, Communication Studies
  - Bob Zinke; Professor, Public Administration
  - Martin Garcia; Professor, Chicano Education

- **Academic Leadership**
  - Judd Case; Dean, College of Science, Health, and Engineering
  - Niel Zimmerman; Interim Dean, College, Business and Public Administration

- **Business and Finance**
  - Dennis Wilson; Director, Student Financial Services

- **Enrollment Services**
  - Erin Morgan; Registrar
  - Josh Ashcroft; Director, Student Activities

- **Athletics**
  - Don Ross; Associate Athletic Director/COO/NCAA Compliance Officer

- **Student**
  - Justin Terry; ASEWU
  - Stacey Butler; ASEWU
  - Nicolle Stanfill; ASEWU

- **Staff Support**
  - Denise Campitelli; Manager, IT Budget Administration
## Appendix C – Institution List

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<th>State/Institution</th>
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Note: HECB = Higher Education Coordinating Board
Appendix D – Q2S Academic, Enrollment Services, and Other Policies and Procedures Sub-Committee Report

Records and Registration Impact

- Academic Calendar modification; timelines for publications and scheduling, changes to dates and deadlines
- System updates (Banner Student, SOAR, etc.)
- Same number of registrations annually but in three cycles not four
- Same number of graduation applications
- In many instances intensity and duration of activities increase but the number of high demand times decreases annually – neutral net effect.
- Terms in Banner Student system
  - Unless we use the WSU calendar, we would still need to run 2 separate terms (to accommodate COMD) – this requires a lot of manual processing especially for Financial Aid
  - Off campus courses offered at CTCs would need to stay on quarters to be able to use the CTCs facilities and keep the enrollments up at those locations. This would require us to also run quarters in Banner which causes a lot of problems for Financial Aid and also requires a significant amount of manual processing.
- Change will be required to the probation/dismissal policy (via UAC)
  - Currently students are on probation 2 qtrs before being dismissed. If we used the same model, they could be doing poorly for 1 ½ years on a semester system without being dismissed as opposed to 1 year on a quarter system. Changes to the policy may need to be made.
  - From UCLA document “The quarter system makes it possible for those who fail a course or find themselves subject to academic dismissal to get back on track quickly. Under the semester calendar, they lose one-half of the academic year and may have a harder time returning than if they had lost only one-third of a year under the quarter calendar.”

Admissions Impact

- Rebuilding transfer equivalencies in student information system and transfer guides (joint effort with Records & Registration and Undergraduate Studies office)
- Convert admissions cycle to meet semester based system.
- Conversion of current prospects to semester terms.
- Fewer admit points each year
  - 2 entry points each year instead of 3
  - We would lose spring quarter transfer students (no spring quarter entry point) from local CTCs and other 4 year universities on quarters – we have approx. 150 – 190 students who transfer in during spring quarter based on data from spring 2008 and spring 2009.

Financial Aid Impact

- Rewriting of all forms, publications, and web content
- Revisions to student budgets
Revisions to all process cycles including:
  - application cycle and needs analysis routines (FAFSA and scholarships)
  - file verification, awarding, loan certification, and disbursement cycles

Revisions to student employment cycle

Revisions to satisfactory academic progress cycle

Revisions to statistics and fund management process

Revision and rewrite of all term-related policies and procedures

Quarters provide a shorter time frame for the return of Title 4 funds (lower cost of failure to students on the quarter system)

All of the major processes run by the Enrollment Services offices are based on Eastern’s term calendar. Any academic programs that deviate from that calendar require separate, and often manual, processing, resulting in delays and frustration for students. Currently, there are two major terms: 1) EWU’s quarter term, and 2) COMD’s WSU semester term. If we convert to a semester calendar that does not match WSU’s semester calendar, we will essentially have four calendars, all of which will require separate subsystems:

1) EWU semester calendar,
2) WSU semester calendar for COMD,
3) EWU quarter calendar for joint programs with the CCs,
4) non-term calendar for students at the CCs who mix EWU semester courses with EWU or CC quarter courses.

The latter is particularly problematic for financial aid, as non-term aid processing requires compliance with an entirely different set of financial aid regulations that are not currently supported in the Banner environment. To reduce confusion and frustration for students, it is highly recommended that the EWU semester calendar conform to the WSU semester calendar and that all joint programs with the CCs discourage and avoid the mixing of quarter and semester coursework.

Student Financial Services

- Fewer fee audits need to be done
- More institutional Loans may be issued in a semester program

Data Reporting

- Reporting cycles reduced
- Difficulty comparing data between quarter credits to semester credits
- Reports currently written based on quarter system will need to be revised to the semester calendar (Discoverer, On-Demand reports, etc.)
- Predictive value of historic data is impacted

Athletics

- Less money spent by athlestics for students to come to campus in late summer before current quarter begins.
- 2 NCAA certifying cycles instead of 3
- Athletes would need to pass 24 semester hours to be eligible to play; this can be harder than in quarters because they can’t make up the lost hours as easily if they don’t do well in one semester. It’s easier to make up lost hours in quarters.
Other Impacts

- Many Banner tables/forms/records need to be updated by Admissions, Records & Registration, Financial Aid, Student Financial Services. Will this be addressed by the IT group?
- Students have earlier opportunities for summer and full time jobs
- Less time spent by students on administrative tasks (registering, advising, etc.)
- Semesters can make budgeting financial aid more difficult, larger awards over more time
- Credit overloads
  - Not as many students are likely to take credit overloads in a semester system (6+ classes) and this could have a negative impact on tuition collected
- Housing
- There will be difficulties in completing work on current projects related to dual enrollment with CTCs. Dual enrollment isn’t viable between institutions on different types of calendars.
  - Only 2 move out periods per year versus 3
- Enrollment impacts
  - Cal State LA report stated the following “Our expectation is that, as students adapt to the conversion, the campus FTES [are] likely to decline by a few to several percentage points for one to a few years. That is, for example, student course load behavior may take some time to adjust to the need to take more courses at a time in a semester environment.”
  - Cal State LA report stated the following “In the initial year of the conversion, the summer term will likely have to be shortened to squeeze it between the end of the spring quarter and the beginning of the fall semester. This will likely result in a reduced FTES for that summer...”
  - Cal State LA report stated the following “It is very likely that FTES will decline. There are several factors that might contribute to such a decline.
    - “Students have a propensity to continue take the same number of courses after calendar conversion, so the average unit load might decline. Other campuses have found that their current students were likely to resist taking even one additional course each semester at first. Typically this lasts only until their current students graduate”
  - Auburn University report stated that fewer students came following conversion as many students had rushed to complete their degrees prior to conversion. This resulted in a downturn in enrollments.
  - Mayberry report stated that their may be part-time enrollment shortfalls.
    - “The quarter calendar is particularly attractive to the part-time adult or employed student who takes courses intermittently. Schools with a high reliance on this student population should analyze and prepare for the likely decline in part-time enrollment. Mid-way through its conversion process, Northeastern University decided to keep its University College and law school on the quarter system so as to avoid decline of a student population critical to their budget projections.”
  - Students taking summer quarter at WA CTCs or other quarter institutions may not be able to start in fall semester @ EWU due to calendar overlaps (at both grad and undergrad levels)
  - Summer Session enrollments may decline. High school students and other students in quarter schools will still be in school when our summer quarter begins.
  - Running Start enrollments may be impacted negatively
    - Running Start students register in a way that gives them more flexible time and more free hours in the afternoon to work or do other activities
In a semester system, they will need to take more classes per term with scheduling that may not allow for the flexibility they now have.

If Running Start students fail a course at EWU, they may not be able to make it up in time for their high school graduation. This may deter them from choosing EWU for Running Start as the Community Colleges of Spokane also offer the Running Start program.

- Transfer & Articulation Agreements
  - Rewrite all articulation agreements (20+)
  - Course by course articulations of transfer courses from quarter schools will become more difficult and quarter students could be negatively impacted
    - In some cases, quarter students will need to exceed what’s done in the semester in term of credits; this may result in fewer transfers of students without the DTA
  - Updating the transfer tables for degree audit and transfer of credits will be a very large task
    - 2 full time staff would need to be hired for a 2 year period to do this work which can only begin after the curriculum has been converted
    - Every dept will need to review the new articulations for courses in their area
    - Currently we have all 34 CTCs complete course catalog articulated for student transfer
  - We may need to provide more sections to offer the same number of seats which could result in difficulties with classroom scheduling (impacted by the structure of the curriculum)
  - Current policies for graduate instructors which limit the number of sections they can teach per term will need to be modified or additional adjunct faculty will need to be hired in some cases (i.e., ENGL 101 where section sizes need to remain small and total number of seats need to remain the same to serve the student need)

- Bookstore
  - Mayberry report stated that “many of the schools consulted for this report did experience a decrease in bookstore sales – with the University of Minnesota topping the list at an approximately 20% decline in bookstore sales.”

- International Students
  - Generally, semesters would be beneficial for international students; it will make transfer easier as the vast majority of universities abroad are on the semester system.
Appendix E – Q2S Advising Sub-Committee Report

June 29, 2010

By Josh Ashcroft

On April 19, 2010 an advising sub-committee met to discuss the following three questions:

- What would the advising function look like if we decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system?
- What would EWU need to do in order to hold students in the transition harmless?
- What needs to be in place for advisors in order to be successful?

We had representation from advisors in General Undergraduate Academic Advising, College of Science Health and Engineering, College of Arts and Letters, Africana Education and Chicano Education.

What the advising function would look like if the institution were to decide to transition from a quarter system to a semester system?

The consensus among the advisors was that the advising function would not change a lot under a semester or quarter system. They would meet with students twice a year instead of three times. However, semesters did provide advisors opportunities for longer developmental advising and the opportunity to meet with students more than once. Advisors liked the possibility of being able to check-in with advisees more than once to assist with getting students the academic support they need.

What would EWU need to do in order to hold students in the transition harmless?

Advisors were really concerned about students falling through the cracks. Currently, a high number of students (guess by advisors was at least 70%) self advise after their freshmen year. During the transition a huge influx of students would need advising that currently are self advising. The following were recommendations to help students through the transition:

- Increase in advising staff
- Specific outline of how to handle students who are in the transition (Handbooks, guides)
- Building an academic framework (on paper) of classes to be offered and making a commitment to keep the framework so that 3-4 year plans will be able to be honored
- Develop an Individual Advising Plan (I.A.P.) for all students in the transition that is signed off on by advisor and Dean of College or Chair of Department.
- Effective communication from departments to the advisors is essential
- Clear guidelines on how quarter credits are going to be converted and what requirements previous quarter credits will meet
- Increase efficiency with technology such as Banner, Degree Audit, etc.
- Train the advisors (all advisors on E.W.U. campus) about all new forms, processes, and technology
- Advising guides developed for all academic programs on campus
- Communication plan to make sure that all students impacted by the transition meet with an advisor and understand the 3-4 year conversion process.

What is needed to be in place for the advisors?

- Accurate curriculum and equivalencies for classes before and after the conversion
- Courses will need to be committed to in advanced (3 to 4 years) and followed through on by the Colleges.
- All advisors need to be knowledgeable on degree audit and the imaging system. Both of those systems need to be accurate and running.
• Credit Conversion tables
• Communication regarding changes to the General Education Requirements because of the conversion
• Student-Advisor Ratio
  o Extra Staff will be needed. What role will new staff play in the advising function? How long will they be employed? What happens after the conversion?
• Provide students with information both electronically and hardcopy regarding an academic plan to navigate the 3-4 year conversion process.
• Faculty need to be trained on advising in anticipation of the increase of students needing advising. English department has a good system/model in place to build upon.

Estimated Advising Cost to Transition

• According to the Mayberry report it is estimated, that colleges and universities that have went through a quarters to semesters conversion (typically a 3-4 year conversion process), have spent roughly 1.5 million dollars towards advising.
Appendix F – Q2S Student Success Sub-Committee Report

Most of the literature on “Student Success” begins with an attempt to define it. In “Enhancing Student Success in Education,” authors Peter Ewell and Jane Wellman offer a synthesis of the “major themes and findings from the [July 2006] National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (NPEC) Symposium on Student Success” and to address selected topics the symposium did not cover.

Ewell and Wellman’s report begins with the “simplest” definition of student success: getting students into and through college to a degree or certificate. But they add that the words “student success” are used by those who study the topic as “a generic label…with many dimensions, ranging from student flow across the entire educational pipeline (high school graduation, college enrollment, retention, and degree completion), to the quality and content of learning and skills achieved as a result of going to college, to positive educational experiences (such as student engagement or satisfaction) (2).

The authors note a “tension between dimensions of success—in particular the difference between what success means for a student or an institution, in contrast to what society needs from higher education” and claim this tension is at the center of the national debate about what to do to achieve higher rates of student success at the postsecondary levels. As noted, there’s a solid body of research about how students perceive success and how institutions of higher education define success. However, less is known “about how to use this knowledge to change behaviors and how to do a better job of meeting society’s needs for student success.” Ewell and Wellman identified these shortcomings as “urgent” and trumpeted the need to use existing research to “galvanize action, with a particular focus on strategies to leverage change across traditional institutional boundaries. (4)

These are the challenges to implementing strategies for increasing student success (as identified by the Symposium participants):

- Investments in student financial aid have not materially reduced disparities in access and degree attainment for low-income students. The single biggest predictor of college enrollment and graduation remains socioeconomic status, not academic performance. It is predicted that 75% of the next generation of college students will be coming from low-income families (Carnevale and Fry 2000; Martinez 2004).

- Student success is heavily influenced by precollege background and experiences, as well as by current student context.

- What colleges do matters a lot. Specific educational practices increase the probability of student success across the board. Included among those (identified by Hearn) are high expectations that student will succeed, curricular and behavioral integration, pedagogies involving active learning and collaboration, frequent feedback, time on task, respect and engagement with diversity, frequent contact with faculty, connections between academic and non-academic experiences, and an emphasis on the first year of study. This list, of course, is not new and is typical of many similar “good practices” that have been identified for at least two decades (e.g., Chickering and Gamson 1987). The significance for policy and practice today is that greater systematic investments in these educational practices by governments, and more time and attention devoted to these practices by institutions will probably yield better results in college outcomes.

- What faculty do to create and deliver educational experiences is the single most potent component of what institutions do. Research confirms that the individual classroom or educational encounter is decisive. Although institutional culture and government policy can provide a supportive climate, these influences matter little if faculty do not follow through. The structure and direction of the incentive system that shapes faculty behavior is therefore critical because, as Hearn emphasizes, the American higher education system values individual faculty self-determination and autonomy. The clear policy message is for institutions and governments to more deliberately shape these incentives to induce faculty to do the right things. A significant theme from the Braxton paper was the need to improve the professional skills of faculty already tasked to teach.
The alignment and coordination of efforts to improve student success is important. Several specific areas of coordination are notably important, including academic standards alignment between K–12 and postsecondary settings, curricular and behavioral alignment between 2- and 4-year institutions (especially in the light of growing student mobility and patterns of multi-institutional attendance), and partnerships between academic and student affairs. The clear message for policymakers is to carefully inventory available policy tools and use them in ways that are consistent and mutually reinforcing.

Systematic information about student outcomes and behaviors is a valuable auxiliary. Information about the progress of individual students is valuable for guiding intervention, information about program performance is needed for program improvement, and information about institutional performance is needed to guide investment and ensure appropriate accountability. The specific message for policymakers is to make greater investments in information systems at both the institutional and the state/federal levels that can provide important support for both research and policy.

How to define and measure student success. Beyond just increasing degree attainment. While each paper proposed its own taxonomy, the most prominent additional definitions were cognitive learning outcomes, personal satisfaction and goal attainment, job placement and career advancement, civic and life skills, social and economic well-being, and commitment to lifelong learning.

How to achieve success cost effectively. As Hearn notes, few of the background papers explicitly mentioned cost. Although specific actions and programs can be deemed effective based on research findings, they were not examined in terms of which might provide the greatest return on investment. Given the policy imperative of greatly expanding current levels of postsecondary attainment in light of international competitiveness and the probable ceiling on future investment of public funds in higher educations, cost-effective approaches will be mandatory for both institutions and governments.

How to implement the things research tells us to do. How to translate research findings into institutional and government action. Foreshadow a prominent theme that we saw in the Symposium itself—the need for action research to implement research results that appear promising.

The need to avoid simplistic and one-size-fits-all solutions. The kinds of policy “solutions” that will be most effective will vary appropriately across student populations and institutional contexts. At the student level, different populations may require different kinds of interventions. At the institutional level, differences in mission, circumstances, and student clientele will necessarily yield differences in student outcomes. Applying uniform accountability or performance measures without taking these differences into account will be counterproductive. It is important to satisfactorily explain and deal with complexity without losing the political goodwill that accompanies an understandable and compelling policy goal around student success.

New institutions and settings. A final implementation challenge is that the landscape of higher education is increasingly moving away from the settings in which most of the research on student success has been conducted. One dimension is the emergence of private, for-profit institutions and the growing proportion of students served by community colleges. Another dimension is the impact of distance and technologically mediated instructional formats. These new institutions and settings both need to become the object of research to learn how they can best adopt or adapt practices already shown to work in more traditional academic contexts.

The Charge to the Sub-committee on Student Success

The Student Success Sub-committee was tasked to “study and report on the advantages and disadvantages a change from quarters to semesters would have on EWU’s student success.” Thus, it became imperative that the sub-committee start with a generally accepted definition of Student Success supported by a review of the literature.

We assembled the following listing from our reading of “What matters to student success: A review of the literature.” This report was commissioned by the National Symposium on Postsecondary Student Success in July of
2006 and served as the primary document from which Ewell and Wellman (above) drew their summary. A .pdf of the Kuh team’s executive summary can be located here: http://nces.ed.gov/npec/pdf/Kuh_Team_ExecSumm.pdf

Measures of Student Success

Student success is defined as academic achievement, engagement in educationally purposeful activities, satisfaction, acquisition of desired knowledge, skills and competencies, persistence, attainment of educational objectives, and post-college performance (7).

Traditional Measures (common in the past--most questioned now)

Attainment or Degree Completion

- Often measured using traditional standards of academic achievement
  - Enrollment (scores on standardized entry exams)
  - Persistence (credit hours earned in consecutive terms)
  - Grades

Post-graduation Achievements

- Graduate School Admission test scores
- Graduate & Professional School enrollment & completion rates
- Performance on discipline- or field-specific examinations (CPA, etc.)
- Post-college employment and income

Alternative Measures

Intermediate Outcomes (along the path to a 4-year degree)

- Community Colleges:
  - Transfer-ready status
  - Acquisition of vocational knowledge & skills for a job

Student Satisfaction

- Levels of comfort and affirmation in the learning environment
- Student impressions of institutional quality/willingness to attend again

Learning Outcomes (reaching cognitive standards)

- Reaching high levels of written & oral communication ability
- Reaching high levels of quantitative and mathematical ability
- Reaching high levels of critical thinking and problem solving ability
- Reaching high levels of scientific literacy
- Reaching high levels of information literacy

Soft skills acquired

- Reaching high levels of personal functioning/well-developed sense of identity (self-awareness, confidence, self-worth, social competence, sense of purpose)
Motivation
Responsibility
Attitudes of tolerance & respect for others
A continuing motivation to learn
Commitment to democratic values

Behavioral Outcomes
Job Placement & Career Mobility
Civic and Community Participation
Cultural Pursuits

Accomplishing the Student’s Particular Goals (adult learners & Latino students used as examples here)

Adult Learners:
- Wanting to be better educated, informed citizens (49%)
- Enhancing personal happiness & satisfaction (47%)
- Obtaining a higher degree (43%)
- Making more money (33%)
- Meeting job requirements (33%)

Latino Students:
- Believing in one’s ability to perform in college
- Believing in one’s capacity as a learner
- Being excited about learning
- Feeling cared about as a student and a person

[NOTE: Transformational changes—from being a repository for information to becoming a self-directed, lifelong learner—are important measures of success for all students, especially those who have been historically underserved by postsecondary education.]

Societal Measures
More citizens with college credentials of value to the country’s workforce & citizenry

Institutional Measures
Higher levels of preparation, participation, affordability, completion, benefits to society, learning
(from Measuring Up—State Report Card on Higher Education)

Method
From this listing, we devised a nine-item survey designed to query a representative cross-section of current EWU students about their perceptions of student success. We were especially keen to investigate whether EWU students defined success uniquely given the high percentage of first generation students who enroll here.

The survey was designed as a preliminary glimpse (as noted in the cover letter to each student participant:

The results of this project will be used to determine if a more complex survey is indicated to determine EWU student perceptions of success. Through your participation we hope to understand what success means to you. We hope that the results of the survey will be useful for understanding EWU
student perceptions, and we hope to share our results in a report to the Quarters to Semesters Research Committee within the next month.

The survey included 7 demographic indicators (socio-economic background, gender, age, academic ranking, etc.) and 2 items directly querying a definition of student success and a perception check on whether the survey respondent believed he/she was on track to accomplish his/her goals.

Before conducting the survey, we sought and received an exemption from EWU’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). We then surveyed a total of four courses, two undergraduate and two graduate, during the Spring 2010 quarter. In the Chicano Studies course (CHST 101), we received 39 respondents. In the Masters in Public Administration course, we received 19 surveys back. The Master of Science in Communication course yielded 14 respondents, and the Communication Studies (CMST 340) Intercultural Communication course yielded 54 survey responses.

Aggregate results of the first seven demographic items are included in the table below (minus question 3 on the student’s planned/declared major—which will be handled separately).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Academic Ranking</th>
<th>33 Freshmen</th>
<th>23 Sophomores</th>
<th>23 Juniors</th>
<th>12 Seniors</th>
<th>33 Graduate students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>58% female = 74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40% male = 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Planned/Declared Major (see results below)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>First Generation</td>
<td>Yes = 53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No = 73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ethnic Identity</td>
<td>White = 63</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Non-White = 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Socio-economic background</td>
<td>Low = 28</td>
<td>Middle = 88</td>
<td></td>
<td>High = 9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Age range</td>
<td>less than 18 = 1</td>
<td>18-24 = 89</td>
<td>25-34 = 23</td>
<td>35-44 = 3</td>
<td>45-54 = 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planned/Declared Major, Question 3: in response to this question, the array of projected majors was fairly diverse. Yet, the most intriguing result was that the question solicited as many specific responses as it did—especially when we remember that 56 of the 127 respondents were freshmen and sophomores. Less than 2% of respondents left this question blank. Further research into possible correlations between student success indicators and projected major seem warranted here.

Student Defined Success, Question 8: We designed this question to allow students to rank order primary and secondary choices.

What did you intend to accomplish by coming to EWU?

(Please RANK ORDER the following, 1-4, 1 being the highest goal, 4 being the lowest)

_____ career/job advancement  _____ personal fulfillment
_____ preparation for graduate/advanced study  _____ Other (please explain)

EWU students identified their goal for attending Eastern in step with their national peers:

Why Come to Eastern?
career/job advancement | 86
personal fulfillment | 24
prep for grad/advanced study | 16
other | 4

On path to accomplish goals, Question 9:

Are you accomplishing your goals?

98% of respondents answered YES.

The survey did not indicate a need for further investigation into EWU student’s potentially unique perceptions of success. Our students were in step with their national peers and affirmed the literature on the subject of student perceptions of success. Further, respondents in this survey believe themselves to be on track to achieve their goals—regardless of major, socio-economic upbringing, ethnic diversity and/or gender.

Conclusion

Suggested Curricular and Cultural Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Policy Shifts and Systemic Coordination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High expectations that student will succeed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent feedback and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent student contact with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher levels of preparation, participation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>affordability, completion, benefits to society,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alignment and coordination of efforts to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student success, including academic standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alignment between K–12 and postsecondary settings,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>curricular and behavioral.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| Pedagogies involving active learning and          |
| collaboration                                     |
| Respect and engagement with diversity            |
| An emphasis on the first year of study            |
| Curricular and behavioral integration             |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time on task</th>
<th>Redefine our working definition of success beyond academic achievement, incorporating cognitive learning outcomes, personal satisfaction and goal attainment, job placement and career advancement, civic and life skills, social and economic well-being, and commitment to lifelong learning.</th>
<th>More deliberately shape incentives to induce faculty to “do the right things”; improve the professional skills of faculty already tasked to teach.</th>
<th>Connections between academic and non-academic experiences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Greater investments in information systems at both the institutional and the state/federal levels that can provide important support for both research and policy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**EWU STUDENT SUCCESS SURVEY**

Dear EWU Student,

The members of the Student Success Sub-committee (of the Quarters to Semesters Research Committee) are inviting you to participate in a research project to study how Eastern Washington University students define “student success.” Along with this letter is a very short questionnaire that asks you to identify your class ranking and answer 2 questions about your intentions for coming to Eastern. We are asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete it and return it to us. It should take you no more than 3 minutes to complete.

The results of this project will be used to determine if a more complex survey is indicated to determine EWU student perceptions of success. Through your participation we hope to understand what success means to you. We hope that the results of the survey will be useful for understanding EWU student perceptions, and we hope to share our results in a report to the Quarters to Semesters Research Committee within the next month.

We do not know of any risks to you if you decide to participate in this survey, but we can guarantee that your responses will not be identified with you. We promise not to share any information that identifies you with anyone outside our research group (Faculty members Robert Zinke, Martin Garcia, Patricia Chantrill and Associate Dean of the College of Business & Public Administration, Niel Zimmerman). If you do not feel comfortable handing in your survey to us (or your teacher) today, you may also drop it off at the Communication Studies office, room 108.

The survey should take you less than 3 minutes to complete. We hope you will take the time to complete this questionnaire and return it. Your participation is voluntary [and there is no penalty if you do not participate]. Regardless of whether you choose to participate, please let us know if you would like a summary of our findings. To receive a summary, please request it by email to pchantrill@ewu.edu.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about being in this study, you may contact Patricia Chantrill at 359.4236. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Eastern Washington University has approved this study. If you have any concerns about your rights as a participant in this study—or any complaints you wish to make—you may contact Ruth Galm, EWU Human Protection Administrator at 509.359.6567.

Sincerely.

Members of the Q2S Sub-committee on Student Success

April 2010
SURVEY

Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. Your answers will be used by the Student Success Sub-committee of the Quarters to Semesters (Q2S) Research Committee to learn more about how Eastern Washington University Students define student success and if EWU student perceptions are similar or dissimilar to students’ responses nationwide.

Your participation in this survey is anonymous and completely voluntary. You may omit providing information that makes you uncomfortable and you may stop at any time. Once you are finished with the survey please fold and leave it in the designated area. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a research participant, you may contact Ruth Galm, Human Protections Administrator at Eastern Washington University, at 509-359-7971 or rgalm@mail.ewu.edu.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Please circle your academic ranking:
   - Freshman
   - Sophomore
   - Junior
   - Senior
   - Graduate

2. Gender: (circle one)
   - Female
   - Male

3. Please write in your (planned or declared) major: ______________________________________

4. Are you a first-generation student (neither parent had college experience)? Yes_____ No_____

5. What ethnic status do you identify with? __________________________

6. What socio-economic status best characterizes the one in which you were raised? (circle one)
   - Low-income
   - Middle-income
   - High-income

7. Please circle your age range:
   - less than 18
   - 18-24
   - 25-34
   - 35-44
   - 45-54
   - 55+

STUDENT-DEFINED SUCCESS QUESTIONS

8. What did you intend to accomplish by coming to EWU?
   (Please RANK ORDER the following, 1-4, 1 being the highest goal, 4 being the lowest)
   - _____ career/job advancement
   - _____ personal fulfillment
   - _____ preparation for graduate/advanced study
   - _____ Other (please explain)

9. At this point in time, are you accomplishing your goals? Yes_____ No_____
Appendix G – EWU Campus Feedback

Faculty/Staff Input

➢ Pay issues - how does summer fit into it? Semester would be a different time period so how would we ensure consistency in flow of funds? Over the year - net neutral, but would be chunked differently. The only thing that was different was when it started and ended - still some flexibility for calendar.

➢ More flexibility in semesters - a month in December and a month in May - you had an opportunity for mini-terms to gain additional income or feed your muse! More entrepreneurial. Quarter systems would be more structured and less opportunities.

➢ Is their a summer term - yes. Summer terms actually are shorter in a quarter basis.

➢ Internships and practicums - with quarters, students have to pay for themselves prior to fall quarter starting - athletic training. Semesters would be better.

➢ What about modifying the current quarters systems to align with the benefits of semesters and what would be the cost? Not part of the charge, so we haven't focused on that. Could be an option - nothing in the Eduventure results. Some of the documentation showed alternatives.

➢ Is there any value in working together with the community colleges if there would be a conversion? Cost factors - benefits to the community - curious what the general public would feel about this. Would it be taken to HECB? Back in 2004 they were on board - They are part of statewide system so harder for them to make singular decisions.

➢ Could this be a statewide effort? There were states that did this. We are not doing our research as a result of a statewide effort.

➢ I came from a region with a consolidation effort so that schedules could sync up.

➢ In general - semesters works well for financial aid - problem when there is a mix of Q and S programs - that creates havoc.

➢ I taught under both systems - everybody (students and faculty) is real tired in a quarter system by Spring - not as tired with semesters due to the breaks. More space before I see my students - breaks to read/review without being in class everyday.

➢ Do you end up with more prep? There is that potential but semester is better spaced.

➢ Being on the quarter system is a big draw for many international students. Essentially, on the semester system they can only move up 3 levels in a year. With the quarter system, it's possible for them to progress through 4 levels in a year. We have many students from Saudi Arabia who come on full government scholarships and who have only 1 calendar year in which to finish ELI classes and get into undergrad. Sometimes this can be extended for 6 months, but that's the limit. If we went to semesters, students who begin in our Level 1 would just not have enough time to finish before their scholarships ran out, and it would be very difficult even for students beginning in Level 2. At present we have almost 90 Saudi students. After finishing ELI, 80% or more remain at EWU --paying non-resident tuition, which is roughly 2.5 times resident tuition--for their entire undergraduate or graduate education.

You might also like to have a close look at the 1+2+1 Dual Degree students from China. They also have one calendar year to finish English proficiency requirements. On the quarter system, they have no trouble with this. From the point of view of these students, the quarter system is far preferable.

Of course being on the quarter system is only one of many factors that influences student recruiting and retention, but as far as ELI goes, it is an extremely important factor.

➢ I looked quickly at the section on Policies and Procedures and did not see a component with regard to the immense responsibilities that the UAC and GAC Course and Program Approval Committees (CPAC) would have. As you know, at this time, every program and course revision must be submitted to and approved by the appropriate CPAC. I’m a current and former member of the GAC CPAC and know that it often takes a full
year of review (at least) for even one new program or major program revision to be completed. I cannot even fathom how this process would be undertaken for the full University at one time.

- I like the idea of going to semesters
- Textbooks - naïve to think that teachers can teach a quarter with 15 weeks of material - material is jammed in
- One less class start - all in favor - one less grading - one less syllabus. Quarters - breaks are very short - less time to coordinate - less time for class prep for next quarter
- I like the idea that you get more time to get into the topic - to synthesize the information - to jam all the material in 10 weeks
- I do like my September off - but that is minor compared to what it does to the students.
- For quarters - faster pace does not allow students to fall behind - NO, they just fall behind much faster and there is no recuperation period.
- If class is offered once a year - it's a lock-step program - so if you miss a class - you miss the full year no matter if you are semesters or quarters - true for all of our professional programs (Physical Therapy, Dental Hygiene, Occupational Therapy)
- Classes are a push for the student and faculty - same amount for the full year. Quarters - less classes, but more intense.
- Students having 10 weeks to learn the same amount of information as 15 weeks - that compression issue can kill you, especially if the student is coming from a semester high school system.
- What do they do with that chunk of textbook that is not taught in a 10-week quarter - what is done with that knowledge.
- Internships would be better on semesters
- We have 12-week internships so we have to assign incompletes at the end of the initial quarter (additional paper work trail) and then assign grade in next quarter. Competitive factor with internships - the internships are offered at this duration so we line up to that.
- As a member of the COMD faculty and on semesters, I do have a few comments:
  - The transition was a bit “rocky” as far as the administration issue....but once those were worked out....and we as faculty understand how to interface with people in Cheney few errors transpired.
    I much prefer teaching on semesters...although I was against it in the beginning...I see that the students have less pressure on them and the learning is much greater. Originally st the graduate level we had a hybrid system of blocks...Fall was 12 weeks, and winter and spring were 8 weeks each. We did not have a finals week so we “cramped” as much as we could into the course sequences. Now we still have similar course sequences but are able to address much more content.
    I have “heard” concerns about the teaching load issue....I see it as the same as before...we teach over the semester but have quarter course credit....eg 3 semester class = 4.5 quarter credits so if one looks at the student contact hours it should be the same.
    I am happy to talk with anyone who has questions about the semester system regarding course load as I have experienced it
- I did not think that there was a thorough discussion of the impact moving to semesters would have on the relationship between EWU and Spokane Community College system; e.g. students taking courses from both simultaneously, moving back and forth between the two and transferring mid-year from SCC to EWU. If EWU is intent on moving to semesters, it really should be done in concert with SCC.
- I will attend the forum later this week, but wanted to also provide some written feedback. I was originally a proponent of semesters, but have since reversed my stance based on the impact it would have on our joint
programs with the quarter-based schools. As noted below, whenever quarter and semester courses are intermixed, it creates substantial challenges for financial aid. Essentially, it forces us to implement all of the non-term rules for aid, which are significantly different from the term-based rules. This in turn, requires the implementation and maintenance of an entirely separate processing system which Sungard has not traditionally supported very well. Release 8.9 may offer some relief, but we won’t know how much until we have a chance to examine it. I simply don’t have the staff to handle another subsystem, and it would also require additional OIT support.

- My concern is regarding cyclic leave.

Most of the classified staff in Dining Services have only 9-month appointments. Under the current system, we usually get to spread the 3 months without pay fairly evenly throughout the year, though some of us have as much as two solid months of cyclic at a time. Most of us, however, have only one solid month of cyclic in either July or August, filled out with lots of leave in December and around spring break.

The proposed system, I fear, might cause our department to schedule larger blocks of cyclic leave, which can be a real hardship. As it is, we only have three-quarters of a job, though I must say we find the grousing over ten days of furlough amusing. If some of us end up being scheduled off for three months at a time, and unless the legislature allows us to spread our pay across the year, I fear the university will lose more culinary talent. I certainly couldn’t afford to stay in that circumstance.

- In case I am unable to attend the forum tomorrow, have we considered Eastern’s special situation with respect to community colleges, particularly the Community Colleges of Spokane? Not only have many Eastern students transferred from community colleges, but some students co-enroll at EWU and SFCC or SCC (also, one might suppose, at others such as Bellevue College.) Thank you for all of your efforts on the Q2S Committee.

- Based on our biennium budget, why would be consider this?

- Riverpoint - look at alignment with WSU - committee should consider the facilities efficiencies - doesn’t have to be identical as WSU, but consider the beginning and ending dates

- Community college - large numbers come to Riverpoint - have you considered the impact?

- I am a Prof. Emeritus out of the PEHR Dept. at EWU. I am currently working for Independent Learning on campus in an adjunct position, with on-line classes. When I retired from full time teaching with EWU. I taught adjunct for Gonzaga for three yrs. In my judgment, hands down, the semester system was superior for student learning. I am in my 50th. yr. of teaching and have taught in and with every imaginable format, including my own private consulting company. Due to the demanding schedule I keep I will not be attending any of the open focus sessions but wanted to put my two cents worth in. :-)

- Those 90% on semesters - early warning systems more effective with semesters

- Appreciate the effort because it makes us look at our curriculum and other factors due to this research

- Positive impact to registration, financial aid

- Regarding going to semesters:

  Advantages:
  - Fewer syllabi and final grades to prepare
  - Aligns Riverpoint with four-year Spokane Higher Education
  - Matches the local school district’s breaks
  - Books are written for semesters (16-week)
  - More time to develop depth in student synthesis of material
  - Have more time to develop knowledge and skills
Less intensity with students having a mid-point to assimilate (quarters offer so little time for reflection)

We don't have to convert credits like the majority of the rest of academia (non-Washington)

Students will have more topics to address at a time (keeps interest)

Fewer topics will need to be multi-semester

**Disadvantages:**

- Change!! - it's hard
- No long September summer break
- Fewer topics can be addressed (but more is not necessarily better)
- Students will have to work on more topics to address at a time (can be challenging if focus is problematic)

Breaks up alignment with SCC and SFCC

The quarter system is more stressful psychologically for students if there are attendance issues due to illness or emergencies; there is less time in the quarter to make up work. More time is allowed in a semester system to catch up. First generation students feel the big impact of the quarter system due to family issues that take them away from class. Weather issues; with the quarter system, starting during the late Fall, climate can make entering students feel lonely and isolated because there are fewer outdoor activities and congregation in outdoor public spaces.

Going to a semester system, elective courses may be lost. Impacts students’ ability to get the courses they need to make them marketable in the job market.

Just because we have semesters wouldn’t impact the start and end dates on the calendar.

For international students; study abroad would allow students to stay in countries longer which is beneficial. The same applies to internships.

Lost enrollment is an issue because of transfer issues with incoming students.

More and more high schools are going to semesters – this is beneficial to us if we convert to semesters.

Faculty impact – 3 unit sem course vs 4.5 unit qtr course (being asked to do 4 and 4’s) need to restructure credit allotments. But the math is works out to 12 hrs per week

Complaints – semester; a boring class, it lasts too long. Plus class sessions are shortened. Learning needs time, meeting daily not is optimal for learning (except in foreign language studies).

Semester system would lessen administration time needed by/for students – spreads out more time with the student such as advising.

This is not the right time to address this change with current budget cuts, uncertainty, and staffing issues. Also not good timing to convert due to cost on converting and subsequent enrollment dips immediately after implementation. Low resources (faculty and staff) are a concern.

With the quarter system students can drop a class early and retake later with less impact. We need an overwhelming reason to do this now.

Psychologically semesters might be more beneficial to student mental health due to the extended time in each academic period

The NW climate might be a reason to stay with a quarter system since August generally is the best month of the year for summer in this region.

Distinction to shorter class periods - do semesters have 50 minute classes? MWF - 50 minutes/90 minutes T/Th - spread out differently - faculty would be teaching more classes per semesters and students would be taking more per semester.
Series classes - Chemistry - year-long sequences - the amount of information is comparable. Would the primary effect on curriculum be on the individual classes? Would the information expand in semesters? Or does the faculty member present 1.5 in content. Individual classes can be a problem - typically semesters will have 25% less courses - to maintain content for semesters, each department would have to deal with this. The typical course content would be 3 semester hours and to go outside of that, you would have to make a case for it. This would be a decision that would have to be made. How do we divide up our content into fewer number of packages?

Example in Accounting - 5 credit class (Financial Accounting) - advantage in semester - spreading the same content over a longer period - with the intensity of it would allow them to be more successful in semesters. Time away from course gives them more time and you can add more skill-building and tests.

Academic conferences do fit semester schedules better.

Depends on your subject matter - we have a lot of single quarter classes - impact if we change it to semesters.

Mechanics of conversion - cohorts beginning and completing in a 2-1/2 year cycle - how do you rewrite this curriculum? How does faculty deliver and create new curriculum and survive? Does the university as a whole convert at one time? Second year courses (semester curriculum) would have to be ready to go at conversion.

All students would have an individualized plan for transition.

Our students start in any quarter of the year and trying to coordinate all of their transitions would be a nightmare. Universities would need to invest in Advising to make this happen.

Nationally accredited programs - it is likely that this kind of a transition would set in place a need for a re-accreditation. Burdensome to faculty with a tremendous cost! Another piece of the puzzle that needs to be considered. (Northwest and professional accreditation)

Transition from community colleges - would they go to semesters? It would be a conversation that would need to happen.

Cost - is this conversion considered to save money? Do you have evidence that money was saved? No evidence that dollars were saved - only efficiencies in administrative processes. Difficult to get comparative data on that since every institution is organized differently.

What did students say? Did anyone look at teacher evaluations pre and post? Would tell us how students are receiving their education. Did not find any evidence that this happened.

What about our peers - Western, Central, Evergreen?

There is an absence of an overwhelming need to move to semesters - singularly bad choice of time - could not pick a worse time to move - student to faculty ratio is not good - no classrooms - doesn't seem like a good choice.

I don't think this is the time to do it - EWUs reality and what it is predicted to be - it is a bad idea. This is not the dream world of graduate school. Studied in 2004 - those were the days of the fatted calf - and today it is fiscally worse. A tipping point for a lot of us - disastrous!

Fair to say, a lot of faculty find the idea of taking this on now is PROFOUNDLY UPSETTING! When we are talking to each other and managing our resources as carefully as we are - there isn't anymore energy.

Two new colleges - still in the middle of the reorganization - the energy thing is profound not to mention budget.

Colleagues said - I should go to that meeting but I would be too upset and angry.

We (a staff member comment) don't understand the teaching world - how can this be explained to the layman - you are using the same book - the same classrooms. How does it affect custodians, facilities? We don't understand the differences between how this affect faculty vs staff? Apples to apples.
Advising came up a lot - from advisors point of view - significant number of students to self-advise so this would force them to an advisor. On the other hand, don’t think we have the advising structure on the campus right now to handle this. Advising is not solidified - no universal policy. Gave examples of the different types of advising at EWU. Would take an enormous amount effort since there is no structure in place.

Advising is expensive - Ohio had a mandate and were given state money - they did it right. Would we bother to put that $14 million into it and do it right? The correct way to do it would be more expensive than the $3 to $4 million. Goes back to why now? If we do it right, it would be even more expensive to do it right?

Examples of Eduventures - did they demonstrate long term cost savings? NO - There is no evidence of annual savings going forward.

First impression - small data set - skeptical with the data set - larger institutions and were not on the west coast.

Chemistry has retention problems in first year courses - natural average first-year chemistry has 40% failure rate. Quarters a better option - semesters are longer term and would have to wait a year to repeat - not a good thing for our students. Quarters allow students to retake classes.

You can create modules in any system - doesn't preclude modular systems - but waiting for a normal quarter schedule is worth considering.

Pedagogy - I have taught and been a student in both sides - in Biology - not a large array of classes - we would lose the field classes and upper level electives. My life would be easier but I am resistant because I do not want to lose the course diversity or our students.

Cost - wondering about the gap from $3 to 4 million to $14 million is huge. Are we looking at $14 million? No.

Hypothetically - if we assume that we are going to change to semesters - I like Cincinnati's support to restructure the university and it will cost more.

The provost came to meet us 2 or 3 years ago and one thing he wanted to achieve was a quarter to semester change.

If classes stay large - no on semesters. If class sizes are reduced, then semesters would be better. The focus seems on something abstract and I could answer every time "it depends."

Call me suspicious - with the governor cutting funds - is this being veiled as a cost-cutting device and being sold as something to improve teaching. Answer - President’s primary focus was student’s success. He specifically asked that this research not be intended to achieve cost savings.

Why and so what - without those answers, it is frustrating. I feel like I am supposed to make a decision - I feel this is not a satisfactory effort to make a decision.

Did anyone measure satisfaction of faculty or students? No they did not.

This proposal to look at semesters - not to cut cost, correct? Especially if we restructure the university. So do we need to be looking at the structure itself of something that is not working. Does the mission of each unit need to be restructured? I am looking for a reason behind why we would consider this.

Such a sleeper issue with no legislators taking a stand!

Concerned about programs being cut as the result of restructuring the university who went to quarters.

For financial aid - how will that be packaged with semesters? Answer - they get a larger chunk of money at the beginning in the semester. Over the academic year, the allocation is the same.

Why is this being considered with all the cuts going on? On one hand we consolidate colleges to save money and the other hand, why would we spend this money?

Faculty members are wondering if their load turns into a 3-4 load - does semesters make it 7 - we have to have the discussion is what workload would look like - over the academic year, workload s/be neutral.
 I cannot tell you how this would affect me without clarification if it will 4/4 or 4/2 - We have to talk turkey, dependent on what those breakout numbers turn out to be

 How will people be compensated for tearing our curriculum apart - how can we make a decision without knowing what that compensation looks like.

 Why were quarters created in the first place - for veterans in the 40s - now we see more veterans coming back - wouldn’t it behoove us to stay on the quarters season - are we moving backwards?

 Expect to see a larger influx of students due to veterans - couple with the economy.

 My perspective as an EWU staff member, adjunct faculty, and alumni is a preference for the quarter system. I went to another school that was on semesters and my personal comparison is that students learn more on the quarter system. In the quarter system, class content is “jam-packed” into a short period. Students are forced to focus on coursework, rather than being distracted by days off (and sometimes weeks off) during the term. I’m sure the argument could be made that those days off (in the semester system) allow students the opportunity to study more and learn better. But my perception/experience is that students procrastinate and put things off until the last minute – so having the extra days is really of no benefit. Indeed, it may even be detrimental.

As well, the quarter system provides the opportunity for students to learn even more content – being able to take 3 classes in a time period each year, instead of just 2 (... not counting summer session, which would be comparable in both systems).

Another benefit of the quarter system is morale (... something that shouldn’t be dismissed too lightly). Quarters seem to fly by – the term is over practically in the blink of an eye. As both a student and teacher, I appreciate that I can complete a course in a short amount of time ... giving me a sense of accomplishment and helping maintain my sanity. Under the semester system, I recall wondering if the term would EVER end!

I’m sure arguments can be made for both systems, but my personal POV is to keep the quarter system we have – I believe it ultimately provides the most benefits to students (which should be the primary concern in considering such a huge change).

 As laudable as the President’s motivations for making the change, I feel that the fiscal and emotional cost in faculty time and effort may not be worth the extra time a student would have to meet the requirements of a given course. In a semester system you have courses that are worth fewer credits – so a full load equals additional preparations for the student. The three or four classes a student takes in a quarter system becomes 5 maybe 6 in a semester system. The road to a BA still requires the same total effort on the part of the student. I would really like to hear objective reasoning from a minority affairs specialist that had experience and research to back up the proposed move to semesters.

 In case you are taking votes, I would really like to stay on the quarter system. Thanks!

 My belief that the semester system works best for the mental health of our students remains strong. Thanks

 Many thanks for your invitation and for the opportunity to attend such a forum. Sad to say, I’ve come down with an unpleasant cold that will preclude my attendance today.

I entered college in 1960 and I’ve studied and taught under both quarters and semesters. I prefer our quarters very strongly, first, and above all, because I like the quick pace and am freshened by the change of assignment and of students; second, because of the greater flexibility in the use of staffing and in scheduling; third, because quarters are strong and healthy within our state and our region where, among state-sponsored institutions, WSU is the principal odd one out.

I am aware that there are costs entailed in providing three, rather than two, registration and grading cycles. Registration was once massively labor-intensive, however, and I expect those costs to be much reduced in a digital age. We must offset those costs against the barrier to movement between EWU and the community colleges that a semester-based system would pose.
I am also aware that some of my colleague are as wed to semesters as I am to quarters, that they are prone to panic attacks under the limitations of a quarter term. I have heard them explain that they are only hitting their stride in their classes, barely even getting started, when the quarter is over.

In the forty years I have worked at EWU, I have served once or twice on ad hoc committees charged with exploring a conversion to semesters. Since this issue rises up again and again, there were other times, of course, that I did not happen to serve on the committee exploring semesters. On the balance, it has seemed to me that the university confronts so many real challenges, our efforts were better focused on real problems than on the notion of abandoning quarters for semesters.

- I'm of mixed mind on this - psychology - good reasons to believe semesters would work - like 16 weeks of statistics into 10 - lab classes are intense - semester would give me more time to do the work.
- It is harder to teach in semesters - you prep for an additional course!
- I like being off in the Fall!
- University I came from converted from quarters to semesters - collaboration was key for the conversion - faculty meetings discussed the planning for curriculum conversion - three years of preparation. Auburn was the big university that changed and it was a cascade affect to other universities.
- Switching now is diversionary - spending a lot of time and energy ignores that our status and quality is not what it should be. Spending internal efforts are a waste of time - $$ could be better spent. Workload issue - uncertain as to how the courses would be converted - I am unwilling to support this unless I knew more - if it is more of a burden, I would be concerned. How much am I going to be involved in uncompensated time is diversionary.
- Students who step out for a quarter who don't have money - one quarter step out doesn't have as much impact as students who step out for a semester - what about student retention? Will we get them back? Is there any research on that?
- Concern with the community colleges not switching.
- I would like to register my strong disagreement with a change from quarters to semesters, especially in view of the nature of our students which consists of many older working adults and in light of the fact that all other state schools except WSU are on quarters (we have many transfers both from community colleges and other state four-year institutions). A further point is cost---what are we doing looking at an expensive change like this in a time of continuing and severe budget cuts?
- I am sure that you have heard this before, but let me join my voice with those who share my thinking that we should not change to semesters because:
  There is, as far as I know, no clear evidence supported by unbiased research (either way) to demonstrate that one system has better educational results for students.
  It would be an expense in the millions to switch, not a good thing in such cannibalistic times, even though there would be some savings later.

While most state systems in the United States use the semester system almost all have moved all institutions at the same time by legislative action and in our case we would be out of step for transfer for all except WSU, with attendant problems for easy transfer and enrollment. It might also suggest to legislators that we merge with WSU, whether President Floyd wants it or not. This would nullify all faculty contracts at Eastern and eliminate the UFE, not results welcomed by many EWU faculty and staff.

The time involved in reconstructing Department courses and requirements would be enormous, engaged in reluctantly/grudgingly by many, so perhaps not well, and taking energy (in a finite supply) from the faculty's teaching and research and, finally, burdening Department Chairs already swamped with work.

This is not the time, for reasons too numerous to mention and known by you in any case.

- I don't see the point in changing to semesters.
1. All the research I’ve seen says that it makes no difference to student learning which system is used. This conclusion was also expounded in the 2000 WSU/HECB report investigating the pros and cons of changing from semesters to quarters, which resulted in a decision that it was not of any benefit to change.

2. It costs millions to switch over at a time when we don’t have the money.

3. It is unlikely that most students could have only a 2 or 3 day week of courses, given the many departments they have to take classes in. It of course does mean that the faculty might only have to come in 2 or 3 days a week and could do “research” the rest of the time. (I know some might actually do research).

4. It would put us out of synchronicity of terms with all the community colleges in the state on whom we depend for transfers, and also with four of the other five universities in the state system.

5. At institutions where they have changed there followed a four or more year drop in FTEF before it returned to the pre-change average.

6. I don’t see any upside to it.

I am unable to attend the meetings but wanted to provide a bit of feedback from the 15 site supervisors I worked with this summer for our internship program. Generally, we used to bemoan the fact that our kids get out in mid-June and do not have a jump on the jobs for summer. However, I got a very different feel for this issue when quizzing the supervisors on what they prefer, i.e., having students start mid-June and staying until mid-Sept (qtr) or having students start in mid-May and leave mid-August (sem). They hands down agreed on the quarter system. They love having students still available over Labor Day and into September.

Personally, having taught here for 24 years (and at two other universities on semester system), I am a HUGE fan of quarter system. Though the tough part, of course, is handling a typical textbook in 11 weeks, the advantages outweigh those issues by having sooo many more electives available for students. If we are really thinking of the students, the quarter system is by far to their advantage.

Substantial revision of Biology program will take time and will negatively affect teaching during transition period.

Half of our majors are in Health sciences and other half are in Environmental sciences. Health science student need variety of narrowly focused classes, which are better offered in a quarter-based schedule than semester-based schedule. However, for courses taught as a one-year sequence, the semester system may have some advantages, especially human anatomy & physiology, which enrolls hundreds of students per year, semesters offer a more advantageous schedule.

For the other half of biology majors, field courses fulfill an important work related skills. Field courses will be less effective or downright not suitable to teach during short warm period either in fall or spring semester (assuming the semester calendar would be similar to other institutions in this area namely, WSU & Gonzaga and K-12 school districts).

Transfer students from Community colleges across the state will find it difficult to enroll at EWU.

Our students will have less numbers of elective courses in biology OR will shy away from experimenting with an elective class, especially if the current courses are expanded to 15-week schedule.

If a student is falling behind in class or is having difficulties, he/she will loose more time and will require additional semester to make up for it.

Less time for advising and mentoring undergraduates, meeting students twice a year in place of three times a year.

Fewer opportunities to teach elective courses.

Increased cost to the department to staff and fund laboratory & field courses.
- Transition period will put more demand and stress on faculty time and will require mechanism to provide appropriate compensation or release time (or both).
- Class sizes are likely to increase, negatively affecting students and faculty.
- Moving away from quarter system will mean that we loose early part of September month in which the weather is good and contributes towards quality of life in the northwes. This will be sorely missed.
- Students will have more time to assimilate concepts.
- This will give more time to students conducting their research projects in BIOL 270, capstone courses or in Directed studies.
- Some courses can go more in details.
- Extra 5 weeks in a semester system will allow faculty to explore alternate style of teaching (e.g. discussion groups, problem solving and projected oriented instruction).
- More time for professional leave with reduced financial impact on faculty.
- An opportunity to revise the entire curricula.
- Better tie-in with the Public school system (K12) will have positive impact on recruitment of high school graduates
- This will benefit faculty with young children to match their work schedule with their children’s school schedule.

**Student Input**
- I prefer quarters - I appreciate the speed of it - I am an adult learner - your getting a lot of expense by converting to semesters, why?
- I came from Semesters to Quarters - semesters are so drawn out - quarters you pack it in and get it done.
- I came from community college and transferred here - all community colleges are quarters - would make the change more difficult if you go to semesters
- Project-oriented background - semesters give you more time to figure out what you are doing and how you do it - quarters burns you out - have the same amount of work but less time to do it.
- Semester-type programs have to take more classes. I work full time and I would be screwed if you go to semesters.
- Curriculum - may go more in depth in semesters, you get a broader variety with quarters. I get more contact with my teachers on quarters - semesters had too many students.
- Quarters add stress to the load - that’s a positive thing cause it gets you ready for the real world. This is a plus because it is stressful.
- Whitworth - 5 semester classes at a time - here it is 3 or 4, maybe more intense here - easier to study for tests and easier to focus
- I carry a lot of books in my backpacks and if I had more classes!!
- Busy work given by professors - you get more of that in semesters, but not in quarters
- Teachers have to work more with the curriculum - has a cost - why would you do this?
- Budget cuts coming - why would the university want to spend more money for something that is not really needed?
College athlete - liked having the month before school (in the quarter system) started to focus on my sport and my team before classes started.

Quarters systems gives us more flexibility.

Scheduling 5 or 6 classes in one day has to be so much more difficult - make the classes fit for your major could be tough.

Major downside would be for the students who have to work - trying to fit your class schedule into your work schedule- quarters help you differentiate.

Other modes of transportation to get students here - such as AmTrac, buses when they move here, may charge more due to more people moving at the same time.

I was close to going to WSU-Vancouver and chose not to because of semesters.

Wouldn't you pay more for textbooks because you may be adding more classes for semesters which would eventually balance out.

Could be stuck with a teacher that you did not like! But you would have a longer add/drop period.

Job market/internships comment - harvest would be difficult for students on semesters.

I work the wheat/barley harvest north of Reardan. The harvest season in Eastern Washington does not end till mid-late September, usually leaving only a few days in between the end of harvest and the start of school. For me, that works perfect, However, if EWU switched to a semester system, school would start in mid-to late August – right in the middle of harvest. This creates problems for both students of Eastern Washington University and farmers in the area. For the students who work harvest, their finance would be majorly cut. My harvest job is my major source of income, and one reason I chose EWU was so I could harvest. I know many college students, several personally, also work harvest. Losing a major source of income for them would only add to the already heavy load of college expenses. Therefore, as we live in a farming based region, I would advise EWU to stick with the quarter system.
Concern about class sizes
Some classes might get too big
Some classes might get cancelled if they are too small
Concern over the physical limitations of our facilities if the class sizes increase. Do we have enough large classrooms to accommodate big classes?
Concern over size of classrooms as far as student to teacher ratio increasing.
Concern about students transferring from EWU to other schools on a different system.
If a student doesn't like their job they may be stuck in it for half a year instead of only a quarter.
I attended this afternoon’s quarters to semesters meeting and would like to share some of my feedback with you. I did not share earlier.

I first would like to voice that I am opposed to this transition. I am currently a Graduate student in the MPA program and I received my undergrad from Eastern as well.

I had the opportunity to attend WSU for one Graduate semester before transferring to Eastern. I will say that I believe the semester to be too long and too drawn out. It does not provide the same level of urgency as the quarter system. I think the semester system also lacks the flexibility that the quarter system offers to both the student and the administrators’ of the classes.

I think from a university standpoint we need to look at who our students are and what their needs are. Eastern caters largely to transfer students and first generation students who must work while attending school. The quarter system facilitates this population in a much better fashion than does the semester. If Eastern was a research focused university the semester might make more sense in that the longer time allows for more specialization and focus on a subject.

I also believe that switching to a semester system to accommodate athletes is the absolute wrong thing to do and a very poor argument. If the athletics programs were revenue generating then it may make sense but I would probably guess that EWU’s programs operate in the red. It would not make sense to spend finite resources, (time, money, etc...) to accommodate a revenue losing enterprise.

I am strongly opposed to the semester system and feel Eastern should stay true to the students and not move forward with this proposal.

First of all, I have spent a little time since the forum earlier to think about the proposal of moving to a semester system. I feel like if one school does it all schools should do it. Forcing a student to pick between Eastern and Western (for example) because one school has quarters and the other semesters is unfair. I enjoy my time spent on campus at Eastern but if the school went to a semester program, I would likely change schools. I enjoy having a choice of teachers, and I personally have to take classes at Spokane Falls at the same time as Eastern and a change would make that impossible. Also, I don’t think my question was understood by your committee. When I asked what the drop-out rates are between the two schools, I was not referring to a "change" year. I would personally like to see information about the drop-out rates from the two types of schools without any changes for about a five year period. I would bet that the semester schools have a higher drop-out rate.

Facebook Comments
I actually really like the quarters system. Plus if it will cost more to the university to transition, what’s the point? I think our math department needs a lot of adjustments in comparison to the need for semesters.

I agree in total, with what she said. ... you right above me .. yea.
Also agreed with the above
Moving to a semester system would be a terrible idea, and if it IS true that it would cost the university money to make the transition, like (she) said, what's the point? Is the quarter system broken? Who exactly came up with this idea, anyway? Some classes (especially series classes like anatomy, or other science courses) work best with a ...

Don't change to semesters! The reason why I wanted to go to EWU is because of the quarter system. The semester is too long and if you are in a class you don't like, you will have to stick it out for five months.

NO! Stay quarters. What are you thinking???

I also partially chose EWU because of the quarter system. If I take 4 classes a quarter, I'd have to take 6 a semester. That's too much. Also, what if a class isn't offered every semester? I'd have to wait a whole year to take it. Finally, classes really start to drag on around weeks 8 and 9..adding 6 weeks onto that would be miserable.

Listen to the students, keep the quarters! Besides the fact that we just like quarters, changing it will mess up everyone's schedules! Seriously, just stay different, EWU.

NO!!!!!!!

DON'T DO IT

I agree.. Don't do it!

NOOO!! please don't!

By moving to the semester system it will stream line the transfer process. The quarter system only hurts the students academically.

EWU is not different for having the quarter system, most of the colleges in the state are on the quarter system(UW, EWU,SCC,SFCC) If they changed to semesters, it would for example only make transferring to places such as WSU and Gonzaga smoother because they are semesters. I went to EWU last year and am now at a semester school, and each system has it advantages and disadvantages. I love the quarter system. changing it would be a mistake!

It doesn't matter what we think. Whatever is cheapest in the long run, and least expensive as far as paying the professors is what they're going to chose. This school uses money for the stupidest things.