



STAFF QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ON SEMESTER CONVERSION

BACKGROUND

1. Why is the campus moving forward with quarter to semester conversion at this time?

In his Fall 2014 convocation address, President Leroy Morishita identified the conversion of CSUEB from a quarter to a semester academic calendar as a “critical strategic priority” for the University. As President Morishita noted in his address, 109 of the 112 California Community Colleges (CCC) use a semester calendar. Of the more than 70% of our students who transfer, the vast majority does so from the CCCs. Most of our feeder community colleges are on semesters, and moving to semesters will help us recruit students and simplify many of our administrative processes. The trend right now is for all of the CSU campuses to move from quarter to semester. Thus semester conversion will align our academic calendar with the other CSU campuses, our CCCs, and more than 90% of colleges and universities nationwide.

An obvious benefit of semester conversion, then, would be to smooth the transition for students, enabling them to transfer course credits more easily and apply them towards degree completion. Moreover, Chancellor Timothy White has agreed to pay a substantial proportion of the funding for quarter to semester conversion. Please also see President Morishita’s comments, which are available on the [Semester Conversion website](#).

2. What other CSU campuses are on the quarter system? Are there other CSU quarter-based campuses that are considering a conversion to a semester system?

A total of four campuses are on a quarter calendar: Cal Poly Pomona, CSU San Bernardino, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and CSUEB. Currently, the Bakersfield and LA campuses converted from quarter to semester calendars in fall 2016. Cal Poly Pomona is on the same conversion schedule as our campus, fall 2018, and CSU San Bernardino expects to convert to semesters by fall 2020.

3. Are other universities in the state and country changing their academic calendars?

All campuses in the UC system except Berkeley and Merced are on the quarter system. In 2003, UCLA decided not to convert from quarters to semesters. While several universities in California are on the quarter system, the national trend is moving from quarters to semesters. In the 1980s

about 25% were on quarter calendars; currently less than 10% of U.S. colleges and universities use the quarter system.

In Ohio all state institutions on the quarter system were converted to semesters (completed in Fall 2012) to be in alignment with the other state universities. The Rochester Institute of Technology completed its conversion to semesters in Fall 2013.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND FISCAL

1. What is the timeline for conversion?

CSU East Bay will offer a semester-based term in fall 2018. Work to transition the campus from quarters to semesters began in fall 2014. The majority of the work needed to convert the curriculum to semesters occurred in 2015-16, and this new curriculum will be reviewed and approved in 2016-17. A semester-based University curriculum will be available in 2017, allowing a complete year for academic advising based on the new curriculum. A detailed Semester Conversion Curriculum Schedule is available [here](#). [updated 10-7-16]

2. What will be the costs to the campus to convert?

The current estimated cost of conversion activities is \$12.1 million. [updated 10-7-16]

3. How will conversion be paid for?

The Chancellor's office has provided \$8.2M in funding for the initiative. The University will support the remaining cost of conversion out of reserve funds. [updated 10-7-16]

4. Will existing systems be able to handle semesters? (e.g., PeopleSoft, Blackboard, etc.)

Yes, the current student administration system, PeopleSoft, is capable of handling the semester calendar. In fact, this system is used by most of the CSU campuses that are on a semester calendar. There is, however, one caveat to this. As in any conversion process, technology resources will be devoted to developing applications or modifying existing applications to support the change. Significant changes will have to be made in the three modules of PeopleSoft: the Human Resources Information System (HR), the Financial Information System (Finance), and the Student Administration System (SA).

Other systems that CSU East Bay and numerous semester-based campuses use, such as Blackboard, can handle a semester calendar.

5. What assistance will divisions, colleges, departments, and faculty receive? (Resources, release time, etc.)

In spring quarter 2015, departments received budget allocations to cover the cost of converting or transforming academic programs and courses to semesters. Department budgets provide faculty

with assigned time, overload pay, summer stipends and departmental retreats to convert or transform the curriculum. Prior to receiving their budgets, departments developed implementation plans that described their expected expenditures. In addition to funding departments and programs, faculty serving on committees that required significant work for semester conversion received either assigned time or supplemental compensation. [updated 10-7-16]

6. Conversion will require a lot of additional work for the administrative staff in departments. How will the university handle compensation for work on the semester conversion project?

Many units across the university are involved in making our conversion to a semester calendar a success. The extent of that involvement has varied greatly. Some units have been minimally affected; in other units, the transition is requiring significant changes to business processes. Compensation of staff is determined in accordance with applicable provisions of the collective bargaining agreements, as well as CSU and campus policies. For administrative departments most affected, the budget will include funding for additional temporary staffing.

7. How will the system conversion affect the fee structure?

Students will pay for 2 semesters, rather than 3 quarters. At the time of the semester conversion, annual academic year student fees for two semesters will equal annual student fees charged for three quarters.

CALENDAR AND SCHEDULES

1. What are the differences in term length, and start and end dates between quarter and semester systems?

The following are some of the differences and similarities between quarter and semester systems that conform to definitions provided by the CSU Chancellor's Office:

- Quarters: three terms per year of 10-11 weeks each typically beginning in September or October and ending in June, plus an optional summer term.
- Semesters: two terms of 15 instructional weeks typically beginning in August and typically ending in May, with an optional summer term that is often shorter in length.
- Similarities: Both the quarter and semester models require identical numbers of instructional days. A typical Academic Year (AY) is 147 instructional days, give or take one or two per year, or the equivalent in effort. A variety of other qualifying faculty workdays, such as a few examination and evaluation days per term, are added to the number of instructional days to arrive at the total number of Academic Work Days per AY. The required number of Academic Work Days per AY for each academic year employee in both quarter and semester models is a minimum of 170, according to the CSU Chancellor's

Office, and a maximum of 180, pursuant to the CFA Collective Bargaining Agreement, Provision 20.4 ("Work Year").

2. What is the status of our new academic semester calendar?

FAC has done a thorough analysis of the constraints and possibilities, and the Academic Senate and President approved the semester ten-year calendar for fall 2018. A [transitional calendar](#) that includes quarter and semesters has been developed. [updated 10/7/16]

3. How will a semester calendar affect summer course offerings?

Converting to semesters means that we can no longer offer a 15-week summer session. The semester calendar that was approved by the Academic Senate includes include 8-week summer sessions. Like most CSU campuses that are on semesters, we may be able to offer several different (but concurrent) summer sessions.

4. Will the new calendar accommodate a winter intersession?

Many CSU semester campuses have special “intersession” classes in January, held between the Fall and Spring semesters, that meet for two or three weeks of intensive study. These classes allow for field trips or activities that are otherwise hard to fit into the typical course modules. The approved calendar includes a two-week winter intersession.

5. What will be the impact on the registration, enrollment, and schedule building and processing calendar?

Registration: In the quarter system, the short timeline means that there are few breaks (or even overlaps) between the various registration periods, and the registration periods are often no more than two weeks long. In the semester system, there will be longer breaks between registration periods but there will still be a two week add/drop period for the fall and spring semesters, with permission being required to add a course on the 6th instructional day and the deadline for grade type changes will remain on the 15th day of instruction. Shorter sessions (including summer) will have a separate registration calendar, with a 5-day drop/add period. The first enrollment period for summer will also now occur prior to the beginning of fall enrollment.

Schedule Building: Academic departments normally take several months to plan and build course offerings for the next term. This timeline is not based on the type of calendar the campus follows. Class schedule building will most likely remain at four to five months prior to the next term. The obvious benefit is that semesters require two rather than three schedule. [updated 10/7/16]

7. How will semesters affect Commencement?

Conversion to semesters will not affect the commencement ceremony itself. Cal State East Bay will continue to hold these time-honored ceremonies at the end of the spring term. The benefit to a semester calendar is that the ceremonies will be held earlier in the year. An added benefit to

our graduates is a chance to enter the job market at the same time as others who are also on the semester system.