Dear Colleagues,

At the last Senate meeting, the Senate approved Academic Calendar Proposal Model 3. I am charged with responding to this action and forwarding a recommendation to the President.

Please know that I value the deliberations of the Senate representatives and the care with which they have been recounted, as well as the contributions of faculty over the past weeks and months. We specify a 36-course requirement for the baccalaureate degree, and we have ample evidence to indicate a high degree of academic quality and rigor provided within that 36-course framework. Ideally, the contact hours, per federal guidelines, would amount to the 128 Carnegie unit equivalent claimed on undergraduate student transcripts. If all standard courses are given comparable value; i.e., Jan Term courses are valued at 3.5, then the Senate resolution would result in 3.46-3.51 unit equivalent per course, for a 126 unit equivalent as the minimum for degree completion. I am satisfied that the 126-unit equivalence adequately expresses the investment of our students and rigor of our undergraduate degrees.

One calendar constraint in the Spring semester may not have been anticipated in the Senate resolution. “Easter Monday” is non-negotiable for many members of our community. In order to provide sufficient contact minutes, the Senate proposal requires that classes meet on “Easter Monday,” and that there be no study days between the last day of classes and final exams.

The Senate recommendation can be translated into a workable calendar if we 1) count 120-minute final exams as mandatory contact time with students, and 2) we round up, from 3.45 to 3.5 unit equivalents, consistent with the Model 3 statement that “computational results slightly below target units are acceptable.” I will recommend to the President that we adopt an academic calendar with 38 MWF sessions at 65 minutes each, and 26 TTh sessions at 95 minutes each. The resulting class schedule can preserve the break after January term, preserve “Easter Monday,” and end with commencement on Memorial Day weekend. It also provides a weekend between the end of regular classes and final exams.

These are the adjustments to the Model 3 Illustration for 2013-2014:

Fall Term 2013
• Classes begin Tuesday, September 3 and end Friday, December 6; Exams end Thursday, December 12
• Retain Labor Day holiday, Thanksgiving break, mid-semester Thursday and Friday holiday
• MWF classes: 38 meetings + final exam = 3.45 Cu
• TTh classes: 26 meetings + final exam = 3.45 Cu
January Term 2014
• Classes begin Monday, January 6 and end Friday, January 31
• Classes meet 4 times per week for 2hrs, 45 mins.=3.52 Cu

Spring Term 2014
• Classes begin Monday, February 10 and end Friday, May 16; Final exams are Monday-Thursday, May 19-22
• Retain Monday holiday at end of Easter Recess
• MWF classes: 38 meetings + final exam =3.45 Cu
• TTh classes: 26 meetings + final exam =3.45 Cu

Thank you to all who have contributed to these deliberations. I am continually reminded of the collegiality and commitment to student success that characterizes our community, and I am proud to be a member of it.

Regards,
Beth