At the May 10, 2012 Academic Senate meeting, the Calendar Task Force presented a report that “reviewed long-term calendar options permitting compliance with WASC and federal contact-hour requirements.” The report summarizes the following problems:

- Overstatement of the value of a Saint Mary’s College course credit, in terms of instructional minutes;
- Disparity in instructional minutes among Fall, January, and Spring terms;
- Understatement of a full-time teaching load at Saint Mary’s College, in terms of instructional minutes.

A fourth problem ... (is) student’s actual, four-year programs may fall significantly short of the new, minimum federal standards or of the College’s declared 128 Cu (32x3.5 Cu courses + 4 x 4.0 Cu courses) minimum requirement for the baccalaureate. *(Report to the Senate, Calendar Task Force, April 22 2012).*

The problems above pertain primarily to the undergraduate curriculum. However, in addition to the problems noted above, the WASC accreditation process requires that we adopt and publish a credit hour policy consistent with federal mandates and applicable across graduate, undergraduate, and professional programs. The credit hour policy attempts to identify course equivalencies across programs and within the greater U.S. system of higher education.

Over the summer and with the endorsement of the Senate, academic administrators and interested faculty¹ met to consider a draft credit hour policy, the “Resolution on the Undergraduate Calendar and Course Valuation 4 May, 2012” and two alternate proposals presented by faculty. The group focused on the implications, for students of establishing expectations for the time commitments associated with a course, with the recognition that faculty workload is defined largely, but by no means exclusively, in the amount time devoted to direct instruction of students. Furthermore, it deemed that additional conversation may be desirable in defining what constitutes a “lecture,” “laboratory,” or “studio” course. The credit hour policy proposed below provides general expectations consistent with many higher education institutions but does not mandate definitions.

Finally, the group recognizes that credit hour and calendar proposals have been crafted in a context of evolving policies about faculty workload. Definitions of “course” have been somewhat fluid throughout Saint Mary’s College history; in the past decade, all faculty were “rebalanced” from a seven-course load to a six-course load without a change in unit calculations in the Faculty Handbook. Where as the unit

¹ Participants in the discussion and/or review of proposals included: Steve Balassi, Linda Baumgardner, Jerry Brunetti, Richard Carp, Carl Guarneri, Tomas Gomez, Jessica Kintner, Andras Margitay-Becht, Tom Poundstone, Chris Procello, Chris Sindt, Kathleen Taylor, James Temple, and Ted Tsukahara.
calculations can be interpreted to articulate faculty duties in addition to direct instruction (e.g., faculty advising, service on committees as comprising three units of 21-22), the unit equivalents do not match the six-course expectation articulated throughout the *Handbook*, because SMC values a “course,” in programs that count courses toward degree completion rather than “units,” as more than three units. As the *Report to the Senate* notes, “Saint Mary’s College asserts that a one-semester SMC undergraduate course is equivalent to 3.5 Carnegie units,” and “a January-term course is the equivalent of 4 Carnegie units.” Undergraduate courses have varied in actual instructional time between a Carnegie equivalent of 3.04 and 4.0 units.

The proposals advanced here for consideration address these discrepancies and provide consistent ways of accounting for individual courses. They do *not* address the fact that the current unit conversion of faculty workload can only account for direct instruction and cannot capture the full scope of faculty activity.

### 1. DRAFT CREDIT HOUR POLICY
Saint Mary’s College of California follows federal and WASC guidelines that measure for all courses and programs the amount of time students engage in coursework dedicated to achieving intended learning outcomes.

In order to receive one hour of credit for one semester or trimester course, students will engage in approximately 750 minutes of contact time with the instructor of record and approximately 1500 minutes out of class.

In order to receive one hour for quarter term courses, students will engage in approximately 550 minutes of contact time and approximately 1100 non-contact minutes.

Adherence to this policy in courses and programs will be reviewed periodically through the Program Review process by sampling a range of program or department course offerings.

**Credit Hour Equivalencies**
An equivalent amount of academic activity to that described above must be accomplished in the case of laboratory and studio work, internships, independent study courses, service learning courses, travel courses, and courses utilizing online or hybrid instruction.

**Online and Hybrid Courses**
Students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to engage with faculty for the same number of contact and non-contact hours (whether online or in person) as they would in any course.

**Laboratory and Studio Courses**
In order to receive one credit hour for a laboratory course or studio course, students will engage in approximately 1500 minutes of laboratory or studio practice and 750 minutes of out-of-class preparation.

**Internship Courses**
In order to receive one credit hour for an internship course, students will engage in at least 2250 minutes of internship practice and associated academic activities.
A few assumptions about interpretation of the Draft Credit Hour Policy and implications for the Academic Calendar:

- Final exam periods can be counted as contact hours as long as they are mandatory and include meaningful learning activity (as defined by faculty). The proposals drafted for consideration assume the counting of final exam periods.
- Courses that meet for extended blocks of time (e.g., more than two hours) may include short breaks as part of the contact hours as long as educational quality is not compromised.
- These proposals leave open the determination of which courses are traditional, contact-intensive (with 2/3 of student time devoted to out-of-class activity) and which should be classified as laboratory or studio (with 2/3 of class time spent with the primary instructor co-present).
- Student credit hour calculations do not necessarily align with faculty workload calculations; for instance, faculty teaching laboratory, studio, or activity courses may receive more course credit than designated to students based on the credit hour policy.
- These models define credit hour equivalencies, and number and length of class sessions. They do not predetermine the start and end date of terms, as different calendar options (e.g., ones that include a fall holiday) are subject to a subsequent review process and Senate recommendation.
- Summer session courses will be subject to the credit hour policy, though class meeting length and number may vary.
2. DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR SAINT MARY’S COLLEGE UNDERGRADUATE CALENDAR AND COURSE VALUATION

Model 1. Academic Senate Calendar Task Force Resolution: Conversion to 3 Cu Equivalents

1. Saint Mary’s College undergraduate Academic Calendar should be articulated (a) into two, “long” Fall and Spring terms, each comprising thirteen weeks of instruction and one (fourteenth) week devoted to final examinations, and (b) into a January Term of four instructional weeks;
   (a) Each long term would thus accommodate 38 meetings of courses meeting 60 minutes on three days, and 25 meetings of courses meeting 90 minutes on two days, during each instructional week; the January term would accommodate 15 meetings of each course;

2. Course valuations should be expressed in Carnegie units (Cu), each unit comprising 750 instructional minutes (im);
   (a) Courses meeting 60im over 38 meetings or 90im over 25 meetings would thus comprise 2250im/term or 3.0 Cu;
   (b) Courses meeting 150im on each of 15 instructional days during the January term would comprise 2250im or 3.0 Cu.
   (c) All courses would be assigned Cu values equal to actual im/750 (rounded to the lowest 0.1 Cu), except laboratory and activity courses;
      (i) Laboratory courses, and the laboratory component of courses designated “lecture and laboratory,” would be assigned Cu values equal to \( \frac{1}{2} \) actual im/750;
      (ii) Activity courses would be assigned Cu values equal to \( \frac{1}{3} \) actual im/750;

3. Full-time Saint Mary’s College tuition should reflect 27–37 Cu per academic year (12–17 Cu per long term, plus 3 Cu in the January term);
   (a) The undergraduate program would thus, normally, comprise 14–15 Cu (4–5 courses) in each long term and 3 Cu (1 course) in the January term;

4. The minimum baccalaureate program at Saint Mary's College should equal 128Cu;

5. The ordinary undergraduate teaching load should remain as presently defined in the Faculty Handbook, viz.: 21–22 Cu per academic year.

6. The conversion of calendar and courses valuations should be completed no later than the opening of AY 2013–14 (July 1, 2013).

Note regarding budgetary implications: This model would either require a change from 6 to 7-course teaching loads, or passing the cost to students in the form of charging tuition for an additional course per year.

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Model 2. Minimal changes to our current practice, except for length of semester

1. Saint Mary’s College undergraduate Academic Calendar should be articulated into two, “regular” fall and spring terms of 14 instructional weeks plus exams, and a January Term of 4 weeks @ 4 meetings/week with class time extended by 15 minutes (from 2hrs, 30 mins to 2hrs, 45 mins; retain spring recess after Jan Term)

2. Course valuations should be expressed in Carnegie units, with “normal” courses, including Jan Term, credited as 3.5 units
   (a) Computational results slightly below target units (e.g. 3.44) are acceptable
   (b) Retain the present 1/1½ hour class meetings
   (c) No option for 3.0 courses — this will minimize student 5-course semesters and prevent faculty 7-course teaching load

3. The minimum baccalaureate program should equal 128 units: 36 courses @ 3.5=126 units, plus labs, fractional-credit courses, transfer courses, additional electives. — or — the minimum baccalaureate program should equal 126 units.

Model 2 Illustration for 2013-2014:
Fall Term 2013
• Classes begin Monday, August 26 and end Friday, December 6; exams end Thursday, December 12; retain Thanksgiving break, eliminate Labor Day holiday and mid-semester Friday holiday
• MWF classes: 43 meetings= 3.44 Cu
• TTh classes: 29 meetings=3.48 Cu

[An equivalent alternative that includes the Labor Day holiday would have classes begin Friday, August 23]

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 Wednesday, May 28; Final exams are Fri., Sat., Mon., Tues., May 30 to June 3
• Retain present Easter Recess
• MWF classes: 43 meetings=3.44 Cu
• TTh classes: 29 meetings=3.48 Cu

[An equivalent alternative that shortens Easter Recess to Thursday through Monday would have classes end Friday, May 23 and exams end Thursday, May 29]
Model 3. Slightly shorten present Academic Year, but lengthen class hour

1. Saint Mary’s College undergraduate Academic Calendar should be articulated into two, “regular” fall and spring terms of 13 instructional weeks plus exams, and a January Term of 4 weeks @ 4 meetings/week with class time extended by 15 minutes (from 2hrs, 30 mins to 2hrs, 45 mins; retain spring recess after Jan Term)

2. Course valuations should be expressed in Carnegie units, with “normal” courses, including Jan Term, credited as 3.5 units
   (a) Computational results slightly below target units (e.g. 3.44) are acceptable
   (b) Move to 65/100 minute class meetings (except for Jan Term)
   (c) No option for 3.0 courses—this will minimize student 5-course semesters and prevent faculty 7-course teaching load

3. The minimum baccalaureate program should equal 128 units: 36 courses @ 3.5=126 units, plus labs, fractional-credit courses, transfer courses, additional electives. – or – the minimum baccalaureate program should equal 126 units.

Model 3 Illustration for 2013-2014:

Fall Term 2013
- Classes begin Wednesday, September 4 and end Friday, December 6; Exams end Thursday, December 12
- Retain Labor Day holiday, Thanksgiving break, eliminate mid-semester Friday holiday
- MWF classes: 40 meetings= 3.47 Cu
- TTh classes: 26 meetings=3.47 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 Monday, May 19; Final exams are Tuesday-Friday, May 20-23
- Eliminate Monday holiday at end of Easter Recess
- MWF classes have final meeting on Monday, May 19
- MWF classes: 40 meetings=3.47 Cu
- TTh classes: 26 meetings=3.47 Cu
**Sample Instructional Blocks, 65/100 im**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MWF</th>
<th>TTH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8-9:05</td>
<td>8-9:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15-10:20</td>
<td>9:50-11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30-11:35</td>
<td>11:40-1:20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45-12:50</td>
<td>1:30-3:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MF 1 p.m.- 2:35 p.m.</td>
<td>3:20-5:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:45-3:50</td>
<td>5:10-6:50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW 4-5:35</td>
<td>7-8:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MW 7-8:35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Time</td>
<td>Wednesday 1-2:35 p.m.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 time blocks
Allowing for 1 hour classes to grow to 65 minutes

7 time blocks
Allowing 90 minute classes to grow to 100 minutes

Latest classes in FAH would end at 3:50 (no impact on KSOE classes)

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**From the WASC website: Credit Hour Policy and Checklist**

All candidate and accredited institutions are required to be in compliance with federal regulations concerning the definition and assignment of credit hours and accrediting agencies, including WASC, are required to evaluate compliance as part of comprehensive reviews. Institutions must provide the following material to the team and staff liaison in order for the team to conduct this part of the review.

1. Policy on the credit hour/award of academic credit
2. An explanation of the process the institution uses for periodic review of application of the policy to assure that credit hour assignments are accurate and reliable (for example, program review, new course approval, periodic audits)
3. A list of the kinds of courses that the institution offers that do not require the standard amount of in-class seat time designated in the WASC policy (for example, online and hybrid courses, laboratory courses, studio work, clinical work, independent study, and internship courses)
4. A course schedule for the fall term showing the weeks, hours and days that courses meet
5. Three sample course syllabi, course approval forms, or the equivalent for each category of courses that does not meet for the standard amount of in-class seat time called for in the policy.