

Paul,

I am writing in light of your involvement with the proposed Alternative Calendar. I admit I have not read the full proposal in detail. Nor have I discussed it with my department. But I have engaged in several informal discussions with various people around the university, and I would like to share some thoughts with you.

As was indicated at the Council of Chairs meeting today, we are far more likely to influence the outcome if we have positive recommendations to make than if we just point out what we do not like about the proposal. Given that the overriding (if not sole) concern seems to be to make more efficient use of university resources in the summer, it seems to me this can be accomplished with much less disruption to virtually all phases of campus life throughout the year. We could expand our summer program, develop "Summer in Washington DC" programs that would involve a combination of classes, internships, and community service, and no doubt invent several other initiatives that would attract students from other universities and communities. (For just one example, I am working on a proposal for a summer institute commemorating the 30th anniversary and examining the meaning of *Brown v. Board of Education* for race relations in the U.S. today..) One target audience would be students who live in Washington DC and come home for the summer but attend school elsewhere during the academic year. Other students would come from other schools and communities and, therefore, would reside in our dorms.

We could have programs of varying lengths, just as we do with our summer school program now. I admit I do not have the numbers on how many dorms or classrooms stand vacant in the summer, or what the revenue loss is from such inactivity. But it seems to me we could thoroughly explore these "voluntary" approaches before mandating that students spend at least one summer on campus and requiring departments to offer a full range of courses that would necessitate "encouraging" faculty to teach more in that time period.

Here are some of the problems I see, many if not all of which you may have already heard. I suspect requiring all students to attend at least one summer on campus will be a significant disincentive to apply to GW. Many need their summers to work, travel, serve in internships, or meet other responsibilities. The progress we have made in recent years in increasing the number and academic quality of our students will likely come to an end.

Particularly for small departments, scheduling required classes throughout three semesters rather than two will make it difficult to provide them in a sequence that will be compatible with the time frames of many students. And getting faculty to teach the required courses that will become necessary to offer in the summer will also be problematic. Having departmental meetings and conducting other normal departmental business will also become logistically difficult when presumably one-third of the faculty is not on campus at any given time. Perhaps as department chair I am a bit more sensitive to these matters than most. But there are real costs the university will pay even if not everyone is as sensitive to them.

Related to this is the proposal to convert classes from three- credit to four-credit offerings. If more contact hours are not part of the package, there may be accrediting problems. If more contact hours are added, it works against the objective of being able to deliver more credit hours in a finite amount of space. I also suspect this will result in a work speed-up for the faculty. Dean Frawley has suggested one outcome could be that faculty currently teaching four three-credit courses in a given year will now teach three four-credit courses and have more time for research. I certainly hope this would be the case. But at this point I am not sure that this would necessarily be the result.

For a variety of reasons, I do hope we can thoroughly explore a range of options before adopting a plan that will be very disruptive of the university community, and in the long run (and perhaps not so long run) may well undermine the intended objectives.

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