The special meeting of the University Senate Executive Committee was called to order by Chair Harrison at 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 18, 2002 in the Tamarack Room of Davies Center

1. Additional Discussion of 2004-2005 Academic Calendar
   - Introduction of Issue – Chair Harrison
     - Options for academic calendar brought to Executive Committee two weeks ago by Administrative Officer Morse
       - By vote of 8 for, 4 against, Draft 2 with classes beginning after Labor Day recommended to full Senate; both options forwarded for information
     - Draft 1 (with classes beginning the Thursday before Labor Day) includes 41 MWF and 28 TTh instructional days in fall semester; fall semester of Draft 2 includes 40 MWF and 27 TTh class days
       - Both options conclude with finals week from December 13th through December 17th and commencement on Saturday, December 18th
     - Both options comply with System requirements
       1) 170 days of faculty/student interaction
       2) Faculty contractual period of 39 weeks
       3) Classes not beginning before September 2nd
     - UW-Eau Claire guidelines include:
       1) Fall semester should end no later than December 22nd
       2) Should be 43 MWF and 29 TTh class days each semester
       3) Semester lengths should be kept as equal as possible
       4) Finals should be scheduled over five days
       5) If there are only 2 days of classes prior to Labor Day, wait until after Labor Day to start classes
     - Neither option fully complies
     - University Senate discussed and voted on calendar at one meeting because of January 14, 2003 System deadline for calendar submission; vote was 32 for, 17 against Draft 2
   - Chancellor Mash at this point has neither approved nor rejected that Senate action
     - Senate Chair has received emails, personal visits, and heard rumblings concerning passage of calendar; feedback centered on two issues
       1) Severely limited classroom instruction in fall semester
       2) Passage of calendar without customary first reading/second reading, allowing time between to gather opinions of constituents
     - After consultation with Shared Governance Discussion Group, decision was made to call this special meeting for twofold purpose
       1) Allow chancellor to hear additional comments concerning calendar to aid his decision
       2) Allow Executive Committee to act on behalf of full Senate if decision contrary to that passed at Senate meeting of December 10, 2002
         - Negotiation with Executive Committee and then return to full Senate required when chancellor does not approve action taken by Senate
         - In instances where not feasible to conduct a meeting of full Senate, Executive Committee does have power to act in its stead
     - Unfortunately Chancellor Mash is ill and unable to attend this meeting; notes will be shared as soon as possible
• Request to get calendar options to Senate in early November in subsequent years to allow plenty of time for action noted

• Another option surfacing at Shared Governance Discussion Group was to continue fall classes through December 14th, with four days of finals from December 15th through December 18th, and commencement on Sunday, December 19th.

• Summary of arguments against Draft 2 (from Senate meeting) included
  • Limited number of instructional days in fall semester; lose too many class periods
  • Imbalance between instructional days in fall vs. spring semester
  • Inability to offer fall break
  • Seems first thing to go during discussion is time for education

• Summary of arguments for Draft 2 (from Senate meeting) included
  • Does not require coming to campus for two class days, then returning home for three day weekend
  • Convenience of moving into dorms over a weekend vs. midweek
  • Allows more days for orientation and registration of international, transfer and other students not yet registered
  • Matches wishes of students consulted

• Discussion of 2004-2005 Calendar
  • Option with four days of finals does not allow study time between end of classes and beginning of exams
  • Many opinions expressed in emails heard during Senate discussion; will always be people opposed to whatever passed
  • Major concern was so few instructional days; what was once 16 weeks, now 15, in Draft 2 is 13 plus one day
  • Scheduling classes on Labor Day not viable because of federal holiday; scheduling prior to September 2nd not an option because of state statute
  • Chair received eight emails, one personal visit; once calendar determined, heard other rumblings
  • Seems Senate rushed to judgment without considering alternate proposals; fundamental issue seemed to be convenience for students vs. contact time
    • Increasing tuition is trend as is decreasing student contact hours; should hold line on academic instruction time
  • No time to go back to Senate for further discussion; need to act on their behalf today
  • Not prudent to have finals over four days because of impact on student stress levels, especially going directly from classes to finals

• Another option
  • Because lose Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving and Monday for Labor Day
    • Could hold classes the Thursday and Friday before Labor Day and also on Monday, December 13th (which gives 14 full weeks of instruction)
    • Then make Tuesday a study day until 6 p.m. with exams beginning Tuesday evening and running through Saturday, December 18th
    • Commencement on Sunday, December 19th
      • Madison and La Crosse hold commencement on Sunday
  • Wrapping finals around commencement also an option; still meet December 22nd end of semester guideline
    • Affects only those graduating; don’t know final grades at commencement as it stands
    • When calendar crunched like this one, which happens every six or seven years, this is minor inconvenience compared to continuing to lose educational days
  • Stout held commencement last weekend with finals this week
  • Should be able to sell option to students: if students want commencement after finals, and to break before Christmas, then at times will have to come back before Labor Day
  • Could be radical and not have a final exam week; could make those instructional days adding time for one or two more class periods and one exam period
  • Pattern of decreasing instructional time when more material to cover is very serious problem
    • Already using questionable practice of counting three weeks of Winterim as instructional days when only 10% of student participate
    • Have also traded a week of education for students during year for week of education for faculty at beginning of academic year
  • Results in decrease in quality of our graduates because not enough time to educate
  • Would recommend increasing number of instructional days whenever possible
• Need to look at whole picture; problem is attempt to squash whole semester between Labor Day and Christmas – cannot fit 15 or 16 week semester in
  • Could go back to old method with semester continuing into January; problem is students don’t like that and would lose Winterim
  • Still need to set priorities
• At institutions around nation, semester is 15 weeks with 14 weeks of instruction and one week of finals (which is 42 MWF and 28 TTh instructional days)
  • Draft 1 with 41 MWF and 28 TTh days comes pretty close to accepted concept of semester
  • Maybe not as convenient, but this is compromise because of unfortunate calendar that year; assume that is why was put together this way
  • Draft 1 is justifiable calendar without instituting things like short or split finals
• Voted for Draft 1 because academically sound, although respect arguments for Draft 2
• If classes start Thursday before Labor Day, dorms would probably open by noon on Sunday, August 29th
• Asked to use creative pedagogical techniques to make up for limited class time, but in sciences scheduling labs also problematic due to space constraints
  • This few class periods may encourage practice of scheduling exams in evening
  • Trying to fit into 40 class periods what is hard to fit into 45 class periods hurts students
• Student present at meeting indicated no strong feelings for Draft 1 vs. Draft 2, but strongly opposed condensing or wrapping finals around commencement, or using finals week for instruction
• Concerned that at this type of meeting considering additional ideas; think more appropriate to just consider options already seen by full Senate
• Concern expressed by members of math department over chipping away at instructional days
• Students not showing up for two days of classes before Labor Day should not be problem because can be dropped from class if do not show up on first day – some of these classes have wait lists of 30 students
• Can recover two class days before Labor Day to accomplish what is necessary without negative effect at end of semester that fiddling with exams would cause
• Not much you can do – this type of calendar surfaces every six or seven years – can ignore guidelines for these few years because need instructional days
• Could also move commencement to after Christmas
  • These kinds of additional ideas need to be looked at over long term, not acted on today
• Other campuses start before Labor Day, many split finals week, still others have gone to 55 minute periods
  • Final exams over four days would increase conflicts and students with three or more exams in one day; would also sacrifice things like common exams and/or decrease length of individual finals, or extend very late
  • Would rather manipulate front end of calendar than back end
  • But don’t see decrease in instructional days as trend, just something that happens once every seven years or so when faced with this type of calendar
  • Like to think university much more efficient; with technology now have, can do lots of things to save time without affecting quality of instruction
  • Concerned about two days on campus, then three days to go home – think of accidents and drug- and alcohol-use issues that weekend
• Amount of information required in some classes growing faster than technology making advances
  • Important for premed, pre-optometry, pre-dental students to pack all information in because of exams required for those students
• Support quality of education by keeping as many instructional days as possible
• Have experienced such things as split finals week, and commencement before finals; affects 5% of students at expense of rest

Straw vote indicated 20 people present supported Draft 1 (27 people in room at time of vote)

• Continued discussion
  • Executive Committee could inform chancellor which options could support
  • Encourage committee to make decision
  • Child care, for both students and faculty, becomes issue with Saturday exams
Motion 39-SE-04
MOVED by Senator Gapko and seconded to recommend Draft 1 over Draft 2 on behalf of the full Senate, after much discussion, as a compromise during extreme calendar conditions.

Amendment 39-SE-04-a1
MOVED by Senator Gapko and seconded to amend Draft 1 to include classes on Monday, December 13th and shift finals to Tuesday, December 14th through Saturday, December 18th with commencement on Sunday.

Discussion of Amendment
- Concerned about doing something like this without speaking to full Senate; types of issues discussed today should be raised early on before next calendar looked at
  - This raises too many issues that have not been widely discussed
- Administrative Officer Morse indicated System requires calendar by January 14th
  - Could not imagine System would not take some minor changes made after that date
  - Have never requested changes before, just a guess
- Better to go with Draft 1 as is

Vote on Amendment 39-SE-04-a1: Amendment DEFEATED

Continued Discussion on Main Motion
- Should ask full Senate to discuss issues raised here so can give thought to concerns and get sense of philosophy
  - Things like study day before finals, shortened finals week, commencement placement, etc.
- Makes nervous to support motion because overturning vote from full Senate
- But senators did not have time to go back to constituencies to discuss as is customary Senate procedure; in essence this meeting is second hearing
- Do support science colleagues, but perhaps larger constituency (not present today) feels strongly about version passed; troubled that overturning vote of larger body
- With all due respect to science, I’m from education and I also support Draft 1

Vote on Motion 39-SE-04: Motion PASSED by vote of 11 for, 2 against

Meeting adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Wanda Schulner
Secretary to the University Senate