



UNIVERSITY
of HAWAII®
SYSTEM

September 16, 2010

To: ACCFSC

From: Linda Johnsrud on behalf of the
Chief Academic Officers

Re: Revising the Academic Calendar

The Council of Chief Academic Officers is requesting the campus Faculty Senates to engage in a discussion on revising the academic calendar. This change has the potential to reduce time to graduation, improve retention, save on energy costs, increase faculty scholarship time and more effectively use our resources.

Currently the Fall semester is 17 weeks, 16 weeks of instruction and 1 week of final exams. The Spring semester is 18 weeks, 16 weeks of instruction, 1 week of Spring Break and 1 week of final exams. The instructional period is 16 weeks because the calendar is developed by counting the actual number of MWF or TTh or F class days (excluding holidays/noninstructional days) and calculating the number of minutes of instruction. The guideline used for a 3 credit course is 2250 minutes (50 minutes/credit X 3 credits X 15 weeks = 2250 minutes). This guideline comes from the *Unit of Credit as defined in the Handbook of Accreditation 2008, by the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges & Universities, Western Association of Schools and Colleges, page 121.*

Potential reasons for revising the semester length include the following:

- Allow year round scheduling of courses by increasing length of summer session
- Build stronger curriculum continuity between semesters
- Energy efficiency increases by closing down classrooms between semester breaks
- Reduced semester will help students focus on classroom participation
- Engage all faculty in updating academic majors and courses offered to fit new timeframes
- Stimulate new courses
- Eliminate spring break that disrupts class efficiency and student learning
- Others?

Concerns with a revised academic calendar may include:

- Sufficient time in the semester for disciplines to meet accreditation or certification criteria.

- Faculty will need to rethink and redesign their courses
- Impact on tuition revenues for summer session
- Sufficient classroom space if class times are extended
- Others?

Another consideration is the need for a spring break. Are the reasons for a spring break educationally relevant?

Faculty input is essential to this discussion. The Chief Academic Officers have **not** endorsed a change but believe the idea has sufficient merit to request your input. To assist your discussion, attached are some options for a revised academic calendar:

- 1) 15 weeks of instruction + 1 week of final exams with no extension of class time, no spring break and a noninstructional day added before Kuhio Day.
- 2) 14 weeks of instruction + 1 week of final exams with added class time and a spring break.

Other options are possible and suggestions are welcomed.

Also attached is a report from a UHM committee who was charged to study ways of addressing graduation and retention concerns. This report was designed to increase student productivity by eliminating "down" time and creating more continuity in the classroom time and efficiency. The committee concluded that the calendar needed to be amended.

Action requested: The campus faculty senates discuss a revised academic calendar and provide the following:

- 1) An endorsement or not for considering a revision to the academic calendar.
- 2) A summary of your discussion with any recommendations

Please send your response to Joanne Itano (itano@hawaii.edu) by Feb. 14, 2011. If there is sufficient interest, a systemwide committee of faculty, staff and administrators will be convened to work on the details.

Please feel free to contact your campus' chief academic officer, me or Joanne Itano for any questions. Thank you.

C: Chief Academic Officers