

Proposal to the Auburn University Senate Steering Committee
July 6, 2004

The proposal below, in preparation for the July 13, 2004, Senate meeting is presently an information item. I hope to be able to notify Dr. Larkin and Dr. Cobia on or before Monday, July 12, that the Calendar Committee has voted to make this proposal an action item at the July 13 Senate meeting. Therefore, if Senators can discuss these proposed calendars with their colleagues July 6-13, the Senate may be able to take action on the calendar at the July 13 meeting.

HERE IS THE PROPOSAL WHICH THE CALENDAR COMMITTEE IS REVIEWING:

The Senate Calendar Committee proposes that at its July 13, 2004, meeting the Auburn University Senate discuss and decide between the proposed "72-day" and proposed "75-day" fall 2005 through spring 2007 university calendars which the Calendar Committee has prepared and which are attached. As promised at the June 2004 Senate meeting, we have attached a chart of descriptive statistics regarding calendars at SEC campuses which was presented to the Calendar Committee this past year for the Committee's consideration (the same document is attached as a high-resolution pdf file and as a lower resolution jpeg file).

As a representative of the Calendar Committee has described in presentations at the May and June Senate meetings, previous calendar committees have proposed calendars with the feature of 75-day fall and spring semesters based on concerns regarding preserving academic rigor following Auburn University's transition from quarters to semesters. The present calendar committee was approached by faculty members concerned that in programs where faculty teach twelve months of the academic year, the present length of fall and spring semester creates an imbalance in the distribution of time available to these faculty to address the university's missions of research, teaching, and service. The Committee's next step was voting to consult the Senate in March for feedback on the impact of adjusting the fall and spring semesters from 75 to 73 days, to achieve as close to a ten-day break between semesters as possible. At that March Senate meeting, a Senator who had been on the Calendar Committee during Auburn's quarter-to-semester transition recalled the strong concern of the Senate at that time that a 75-day semester be preserved. This same Senator said she had examined all of the academic calendars for the SEC (i.e. our conference) schools and noted that very few schools maintain a 75-day semester. Instead a 72-73 day term appeared to represent the norm (or average). This information was a surprise to the Senator, who commented that perhaps it may be time to re-examine the 75-day issue.

The Calendar Committee is submitting a proposed 72-, rather than 73-, day calendar to be discussed by the Senate together with a proposed 75-day calendar in response to a request from the Senate Steering Committee in response to a proposed 73-day calendar:

In each fall and spring semester, the [73-day proposed fall and spring calendar submitted to the Senate Steering Committee April 2004 gave] more class time to classes meeting Tuesdays and Thursdays than to those meeting Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The difference amounts to 100 minutes (equivalent to two 50-minute MWF classes). . . .

Instead, a proposed 72-day calendar reduces the difference from 100 minutes to a 25-minutes difference. Thus the Calendar Committee has submitted not a proposed 73-day fall and spring semester calendar but instead a proposed 72-day fall and spring semester calendar together with a proposed 75-day fall and spring semester calendar for the Senate to discuss and decide between at its July 13 meeting.

It is important that a university calendar be accepted. Therefore, the Calendar Committee requests that the Senators discuss and decide between the two proposed calendars before the Calendar Committee's representative or representatives at the Senate meeting entertain motions from the floor regarding particular features of the proposed calendar the Senate selects: for example, whether to move spring break earlier in the term (rather than make that break where it presently is scheduled, in correspondence with Auburn City Schools' scheduled spring break).

Respectfully submitted,

