

Report of the Education Affairs Committee to University Council

November 16, 2016

The Educational Affairs Committee last met on October 18, 2016 at 3:00 pm in 315 New College. The EAC is a University Council standing committee composed of 11 faculty representing each school or college, an undergraduate and a graduate/professional student representative, and a representative for the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. We welcomed new member, Dr. Diane Cooper, from the College of Education to the committee at our October 18 meeting.

The Educational Affairs Committee has been working diligently since our last report to University Council. Much discussion and feedback from departments and colleges has been received in regard to semester length and starting date modifications to the academic calendar. We appreciate and recognize this input. At our October 18 meeting, the EAC Calendar Subcommittee proposed revisions for the spring 2018 calendar that considered issues of the current early starting date for the term, the Board of Regents' and federal requirements for the length of a term and number of instructional minutes required, as well as mandatory final exams. The proposal the Subcommittee presented moved the start date of the term from Thursday, January 4 to Monday, January 8 and reduced the term to a 14-week + exam calendar. After lengthy discussion, it was determined that the proposal did not align with federal guidelines under the current UGA final exam policy, in which final exam contact time is not mandated. In addition, only making changes to spring 2018 would complicate the summer and fall 2018 calendars. The proposal was tabled so that the subcommittee in collaboration with the Registrar and the Office of Curriculum Systems would bring back to the committee calendars for spring, summer, and fall 2018 that meet BOR and federal requirements. If proceeding with the 14-week + exams calendar model, a revision of the existing final exam policy must be drafted and proposed. There was not time to accomplish this task to present such a change to Council at this time.

We realize the desire within the University community and the need to modify semester starting dates and calendar length to avoid negatively impacting faculty, as well as student experiential learning and internship opportunities. Adjusting the academic calendar to meet BOR and federal requirements and alleviate time constraints between semesters and summer sessions is not a simple issue. Simply adjusting the starting dates does not solve the calendar issues long term. As such, a separate Subcommittee made up of Steve Lewis (as Chair), Barbara Biesecker, Mark Farmer, Jacob Fucetola, and Henry Munneke (as an invited member) was formed to explore possibly changing the length of class time and alternate class scheduling as is currently in use at some of our peer institutions as a means of addressing our calendar issues. The subcommittee met this week. The EAC will be meeting again over the next few weeks as a working group to review possible calendar changes proposed by the subcommittee. We are addressing spring and summer 2018, as well as the 2018-19 academic calendar. Multiple working group meetings may occur before our regularly scheduled full EAC meeting on February 8, at which time a 2018-19 academic calendar and any modifications to the spring and summer 2018 calendar will be proposed and be sent forward to Council.

Lastly, the EAC Petitions Subcommittee has reviewed 36 student appeals and approved 21, denied 14 and tabled 1. Also, in accordance with university policy, the 2015-2016 Academic Honesty Report is presented as an informational item to University Council. If there are any questions about the report, I will defer to Ms. Deborah Bell, Director of Academic Honesty & Student Appeals.

Respectfully submitted,



Jean L. Williams-Woodward, Ph.D.
Chair, Educational Affairs Committee