

## **Report of the Education Affairs Committee to University Council**

September 21, 2016

The Educational Affairs Committee is a University Council standing committee charged with considering and recommending to the Council educational policies dealing with registration procedures, class times and periods, academic advising, and the academic calendar. The EAC also hears academic student petitions, including grade appeals.

One of the important, challenging and rewarding EAC assignments is serving on the Petitions Subcommittee. The Petitions Subcommittee reviews student appeals each month. Since the last report to Council in May made by outgoing chair, Dr. Rodney Mauricio, the Petitions Subcommittee has met four times and reviewed 145 student appeals. The number of appeals reviewed each month for the past four months has ranged from a low of 18 in August to a high of 74 in June. Of these appeals, 82 were approved and 63 were denied. Appeals range from requests to change credit hour registration errors to hardship withdrawals. The subcommittee diligently evaluates each appeal with compassion and consideration for upholding University standards. There are student registration issues that keep arising within the appeal process that the EAC will work to address this year.

The EAC's action item before Council today concerns amending the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar. The full EAC met on August 24, 2016 and discussed the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar that was approved by University Council on May 3, 2106. The earlier start date of Thursday, August 11, 2106 for this current semester raised concerns by students and faculty about its interference with student internships, training, and summer course work. Several professors, including myself, reported a higher than average number of student absences the first two days of classes this semester. In addition, the EAC was presented a resolution from the Student Government Association requesting and supporting an adjustment in the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar.

The negative student impact of the earlier semester starting dates was the impetus for EAC discussion and subsequent proposal to amend the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar. It also led to the separate (and independent from the EAC) faculty petition to adjust the 2017-2018 calendar also being presented before Council today. As explained by the Registrar, Dr. Jan Hathcote, at the August EAC meeting, there are many considerations that impact calendar development including federal and university holidays, financial aid deadlines, drop/add deadlines, grade deadlines, reading day, commencement scheduling, the federal requirement for classes to meet for 15 calendar weeks, and the Board of Regents requirement of a minimum of 750 minutes of instruction or equivalent for each semester credit hour. There was active discussion on various ways the 2017-2018 calendar could be revised. The EAC voted to create an Academic Calendar Subcommittee, with members Dr. Andy Carswell, Dr. Andy Owsiak, Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro, and Mr. Jacob Fucetola volunteering to serve. Andy Owsiak has been asked to chair the subcommittee, which has been charged to 1) examine semester length, often referred to as "14-week + exams" option to meet the 15-week federal requirement, as well as what changes might be needed within either UGA or BOR policy, if such a calendar change is considered; 2) evaluate the five summer sessions that are constraining the fall and spring calendars; and 3) create options for the 2018-2019 academic calendar that meet BOR requirements.

A motion was also made to amend the 2017-2018 Academic Calendar by moving the first day of classes for fall semester 2017 from Thursday, August 10, 2017, to Monday, August 14, 2017. This change would also include operating Tuesday, December 5, 2017, on a Friday schedule so that there would be 15 class periods for each week day to meet the 15-week and 750 minute per credit hour requirements. It was also proposed to move the first day of classes for spring semester 2018 from Thursday, January 4, 2018, to Monday, January 8, 2018. The committee voted to approve the revision; however, the Registrar was asked to review the requested changes and determine if they meet policies and guidelines before final approval. Initially, the revision of both Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 calendars was proposed as an agenda item to Council's Executive Committee; however, the final revision proposed, and what is before Council today, is only for amending Fall 2017 at this time. Although the Fall 2017 revision complied with policies and guidelines, there were complications associated with the proposed spring revision that affected summer sessions and the draft Fall 2018 calendar. The full EAC discussed the calendar revision via email and a motion was made and approved to allow the Fall 2017 calendar amendment to move forward and to hold the Spring 2018 calendar for further consideration. The EAC Academic Calendar Subcommittee has met and is actively addressing the calendar issues for Spring 2018 and beyond. The subcommittee will report to the full EAC at our scheduled October meeting with the goal of proposing amended Spring and Summer 2018 calendars for Council consideration.

University Council has a committee structure. The Educational Affairs Committee has the responsibility to work with the Registrar in approving and advancing the academic calendar. The EAC understands the issues and concerns associated with the earlier start dates of the current and the 2017-2018 academic calendar. The EAC is addressing these concerns by putting forward revised and future academic calendars that meet BOR policy without negatively impacting student experiential learning opportunities and internships.

The COMMITTEE MOVES FOR A VOTE ON THE REVISED FALL 2017 ACADEMIC CALENDAR as proposed to would move the first day of classes for fall semester 2017 from Thursday, August 10 to Monday, August 14, 2017 and operating Tuesday, December 5, 2017, on a Friday schedule.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jean L. Williams-Woodward". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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