

April 30, 2016

Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Calendar Options

May 2016 Report

# Calendar Options Committee Report

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 6, 2015, the Ad Hoc Committee on Calendar Options was charged with studying the pros and cons of alternatives to the current semester system relevant to the UNH academic mission. From November through April, the committee documented the options that are currently in practice at UNH and conducted faculty and student surveys to determine the internal need for more flexibility in the calendar and define problem areas. The calendar options considered included (1) three 15-week terms with three 2-week breaks; (2) three 15 week terms and a J-term, with three 1-week breaks; (3) four 12-week terms with four 1-week breaks; (4) the current calendar.

A majority of both faculty (68%) and students (71%) expressed a preference for the current calendar. When asked whether they would be willing to teaching in the summer in exchange for being off-contract in another term or to take courses in the summer, 58% of faculty and 49% of students would not be willing to teach or take courses in the summer.

Calendars implying summer teaching posed a significant barrier for faculty for the following reasons:

- **Teaching Mission:** Small departments could find it impossible to staff a year-round calendar while providing the course sequence required while ensuring that faculty members maintain their nine-month appointment.
- **Work/Life Balance:** Faculty with young children would bear an additional financial burden for summer childcare while children are out of school in the summer.
- **Research:** Many faculty indicated that they use summer months to attend academic conferences, collaborate with colleagues at other universities and in other countries, and engage in other scholarship activities.
- **Faculty Governance:** It would be difficult to manage departments when one third of the faculty is missing in any given trimester.

Students expressed a number of concerns about taking classes in the summer, including:

- **Research:** Many students indicated that their field research, internships and international trips occur during the summer months.
- **Work:** Students need a term to earn money to fund their education.
- **Work/Life Balance:** Some students expressed the need to be with their family during 'traditional' school schedules.
- **Cost:** Many students expressed that the cost of an additional term at school would be prohibitive and that currently, financial aid does not cover three terms per year.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Committee charge

On 9/14/15, the Faculty Senate approved the formation of a committee to undertake the study of the pros and cons of alternatives to the current semester system relevant to the UNH academic mission. This committee, called the Committee on Calendar Options, was charged with the following:

- Determine the internal need for more flexibility in the calendar and define problem areas. For example, one department may benefit from the extra time afforded by the summer term, whereas another department with significant summer programming already in place might find little to no benefit. These areas must be identified department by department.
- Explore and document the options that are currently in practice, including short terms, online terms, master's degree terms, etc. Each of these has a different calendar. Would some departments benefit from broader use of existing calendar options?
- Evaluate other universities where flexible calendar options are present. Dartmouth is one such place.

The committee was formed at the end of October 2015 and met to receive its charge on November 6, 2015.

### 1.2 Committee members

Christine Shea, Decision Sciences, PCBE, chair  
Michelle Capozzoli, Mathematics & Statistics, CEPS  
Kelly Cullen, Natural Resources & the Environment, COLSA  
Roger Ford, School of Law  
Barry Hennessey, Assessment, Library  
Susan Horne, Decision Sciences, PCBE  
Kerry Kazura, Human Development & Family Studies, CHHS  
David Kaye, Theatre & Dance, COLA  
Sarah Prescott, Biology Program, UNH-M  
Jovana Milosavljevic, Graduate Student Senate  
Justin Poisson, Undergraduate Student Senate

## 2. Calendar Options Considered

The committee charge did not precisely specify the calendar options under consideration. Therefore, we based our choices on a relevant, albeit slightly dated, analysis of alternate

academic calendars conducted by the Hanover Research Council in 2010<sup>1</sup>. At that time, Hanover reported that over 81% of academic institutions in the U.S. used the semester system. A very small percentage of institutions (i.e., under 4%) used the trimester system. “Other” calendars made up the balance, including 8.5% of institutions that used a 4-1-4 calendar that consists of four courses taken for four months, one course for one month, and four courses for four months similar to the semester system with a J term. Hanover noted that “the use of alternate academic calendars is growing among institutions hoping to better suit the needs of their students and maximize campus resources” (p. 2). Their report focuses on advantages and disadvantages of the trimester calendar alternative to the semester system.

Based on the above, we evaluated the following options (see Figure 1 for a graphical representation of calendar options):

### 2.1 Option 1 – Trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks

In Option 1, the fall term would start at the beginning of September and end mid-December. The spring term would start at the beginning of January and end mid-April. The summer term would start early May and end mid-August. Terms would be separated by two weeks for a total of 51 weeks. The additional week could split among the three terms or inserted as a whole between two terms.

### 2.2 Option 2 – Trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks

Option 2 is similar to option 1 but includes a J term so it has a shorter break between terms. The fall term would start the second week of September and end the third week of December. J-term would be in January. The spring term would start at the beginning of February and end mid-May. The summer term would start late May and end the first week of September. There would be no break between J term and Spring term and a one week break between Spring, Summer, Fall and J terms.

### 2.3 Option 3 – Quarter System

Option 3 divides the year into four 12-week quarters with one week breaks between terms. The fall term would start at the beginning of October and end the third week of December. The winter term would start at the beginning of January and end the third week in March. The spring term would start at the beginning of April and end the third week in June. The summer term would start at the beginning of July and end the third week of September.

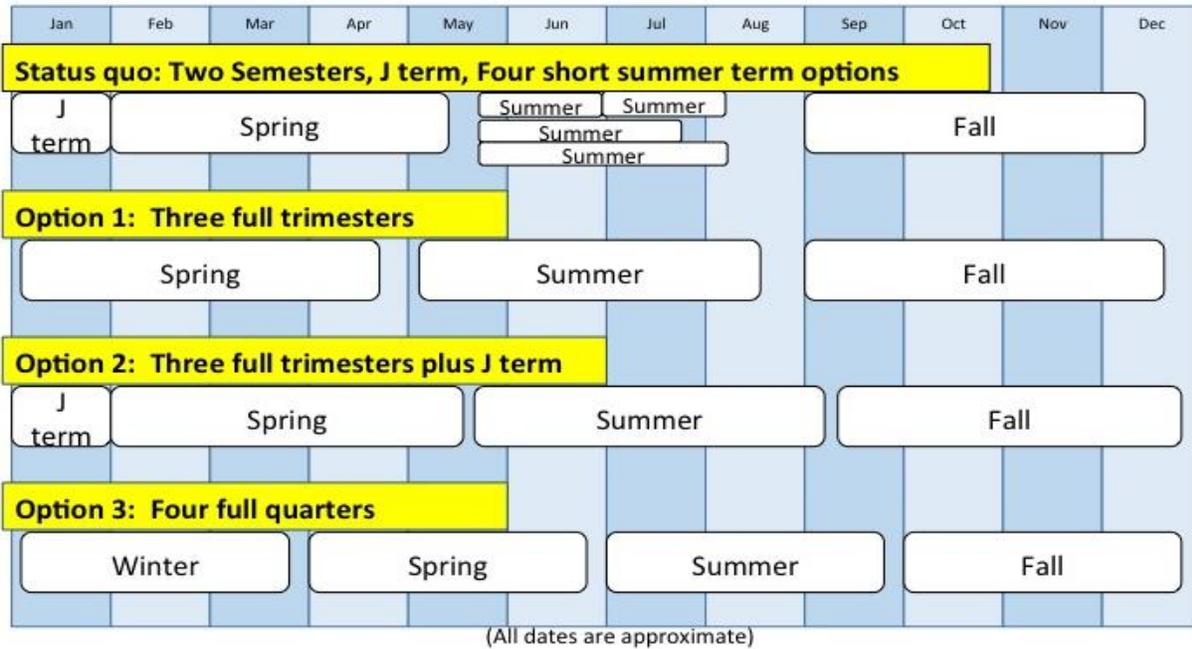
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<sup>1</sup> “Alternate Academic Calendars and the Trimester System: Profiles and Compliance,” a report by The Hanover Research Council, 2010, Washington, DC ([www.hanoverresearch.com](http://www.hanoverresearch.com), 2010).

## 2.4 Current Calendar

The current calendar has a fall term starting at the beginning of September and ending early December, a J term in January, a spring term from February through the first week in May, and various summer sessions ranging from five to 10 weeks.

Figure 1  
**UNH calendar options**



A survey of calendars in use by UNH colleges and programs yielded variations from the current calendar as shown in Table 1.

## 3. Faculty Input

We surveyed all UNH tenure track and CCLEAR faculty about the impact of each calendar option on the academic mission of their programs and departments. We received 285 for a response rate of 27%. Of those responses, 211 were from tenure track faculty for a response rate of 33% of tenure track faculty, and 73 were from CCLEAR faculty for a response rate of 18% of CCLEAR faculty. Table 2 shows the breakdown of responses by college and rank. With one or two exceptions, all of the respondents are currently required to teach four or fewer courses per academic year and none are required by contract to teach in the summer.

Table 1

## Deviations from the Current Calendar

College	Undergraduate calendar	Graduate calendar	Summer Programs
CEPS	Complies with UNH calendar	Complies with UNH calendar except MS in Teaching which runs for four weeks in the summer (end June – early July)	
COLA	Complies with UNH calendar except for Justice Studies (has a requirement in the summer)	Complies with UNH calendar	Youth Camps; Paul Arts at capacity except for 20 days
COLSA	Complies with UNH calendar except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Zoology and marine biology have two weeks at Isles of Shoals in August</li> <li>• Some courses (e.g., wetlands delineation) are offered only in summer</li> <li>• Required internships are often in summer</li> </ul>	Complies with UNH calendar. Possible future exception is a 12 month Master in Forestry	
HHS	Complies with UNH calendar	Complies with UNH calendar except: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marriage and therapy = 24 continuous months from September of Year 1 through August of Year 2</li> <li>• Online MSW has three yearly admissions and staggered cohorts</li> <li>• Master in Analytics = 11 months from June through April</li> </ul>	
Law	Semester calendar slightly different from UNH calendar	Semester calendar slightly different from UNH calendar	Intellectual Property Institute and student clinics; Full online semester in summer
Paul	Complies with UNH calendar	All graduate programs use five term model recently approved to comply with eUNH's evenly spaced 8-week semester from early September through late June	Smattering of courses offered during summer term
UNHM	Complies with UNH calendar		

Table 2

## Faculty Survey Respondents by College and Rank

Rank	College:	CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	OTHER *	Total	Response Rate
Assistant Professor		7	3	10	6	3	4	2	0	35	26%
Associate Professor		10	9	41	8	10	4	1	2	85	34%
Professor		26	3	36	17	3	2	4	0	91	35%
<b>Total Tenure Track</b>		<b>43</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>33%</b>
Contract		0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	10%
Clinical		0	17	0	4	0	0	0	0	21	29%
Lecturer		8	2	23	5	8	0	0	0	46	21%
Extension		0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	5	14%
Alternative Security		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Research		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
<b>Total CCLEAR</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>Total Faculty:</b>		<b>51</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Faculty Response Rate</b>		<b>29%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>27%</b>	

### 3.1 Faculty Survey Results

One question asked faculty to rank the calendar options in preference order with 1 being the option they prefer. Sixty eight percent (68%) of the faculty ranked the current calendar as their top preference. When asked if they would be willing to teach in the summer in exchange for being off-contract during another term, 58% of the faculty replied “no”. Faculty were asked why they do not prefer to teach in the summer. The majority (64%) indicated that summer teaching interferes with research, conference schedules, and collaborative work with faculty from other universities and countries. Forty three percent (43%) indicated that they needed the summer to recharge, and 37%, that it would interfere with family obligations. Additional comments included that there is insufficient student demand for summer courses, too few courses available to teach during the summer, and that those are saved for graduate students.

#### 3.1.1 General Faculty Rating of Each Option by College

To provide a broad view of calendar preferences, a single question asked faculty to rate how each calendar option would support their department’s academic

mission in general. The results are summarized in Appendix 1. There was no significant difference by college in the mean ratings of Option 3 or the current calendar. However, ratings for Option 1 and Option 2 did differ by college ( $\chi^2 = 30.3$ ,  $p < .10$ ; and ( $\chi^2 = 36.2$ ,  $p < .05$ , respectively). Further, results in Appendix 1 show that:

- The current calendar received the highest score in all colleges. Means range from 3.25 to 3.8.
- Calendar Option 3 was the least preferred option in all colleges. Means range from 1.85 to 2.27.
- Of Options 1, 2, or 3, faculty in all colleges prefer Option 1. Means range from 2.23 to 3.29.

### 3.1.2 General Faculty Rating of Each Option by Department

Looking at the general support question for each option by department provided similar results to the “by college” analysis.

- The current calendar consistently received the highest ranks with means ranging from 3.1 to 4.0.
- Option 3 was the least favored in all departments with mean ranks ranging from 1 to 3.
- Option 1 and 2 were similarly favored with mean ranks between 1 and 4.

Further analysis of the faculty comments did provide some local support for considering a change in the calendar. For example, a different calendar would create an opportunity to teach classes and conduct fieldwork in a more appropriate season and under better weather conditions in ornithology, ecology, marine biology, and forestry. It could also improve alignment with the public school schedules, allowing education students to gain in-class experience. On the other hand, some mentioned that a calendar change would hinder teaching practica since schools are closed in the summer. In particular, programs such as Music and Dance with heavy reliance on collaboration of faculty in coordinating theater productions or ensembles would be negatively impacted by calendar changes.

### 3.1.3 Faculty Rating of Each Option on Five Dimensions

Focusing on each of the options, we asked respondents to rate, on a scale from 1 to 4, how well an option would support five aspects of their academic mission:

- Undergraduate programs
- Graduate programs
- Research
- Institutional service
- Academic mission in general
- Work life balance.

Survey results for each option are included in Appendix 2. Notably, responses tended to follow a similar pattern across colleges.

With respect to Option 1 (trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks), scores clustered around the 2.5 point on a 1 to 4 scale. UNH Law was the most favorably inclined college towards this option with scores reaching 3.0 and 3.13 in terms of the extent to which Option 1 would support their Institutional Service and Research and Academic Mission in General. The colleges that were the least favorably inclined towards this option were COLA and Paul College. However, the lowest score of 2.11, attributed to this option's ability to support Paul College's graduate programs, must be viewed in the context of the five 8-week term schedule currently in effect for those programs.

Option 2 (trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks) scores tended to be slightly below option 1 for CEPS, CHHS, COLA, UNHM and UNH Law. COLSA responses indicated a slight preference for the trimester-with-J-term option and Paul College results indicated no difference.

Option 3 (quarter system) was, by far, the least favorite of all options with scores on almost all aspects of the academic mission averaging below 2 on the 1 to 4 scale.

The Current Calendar had the highest ratings not only overall but also for each aspect of the mission. Scores clustered around 3.5 on the 1 to 4 scale.

## 3.2 Summary of Faculty Comments on Benefits and Challenges for Each Option

### 3.2.1 Option 1 - trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks

One hundred and sixty-one (161) comments noted negative attributes of this option and 26 comments noted positive attributes. Negative comments covered a wide range of concerns. Faculty with children noted the struggle to find childcare options when their children are out of school during the summer months, and the additional financial burden this would cause. The most dominant areas were related to difficulties in scheduling courses, time for research and artistry (for faculty and students) and difficulties in conducting a department's governance and other business with any number of faculty gone in any given trimester. A number of individuals expressed doubt that a sufficient number of faculty would want to work over the summer to make a trimester system workable. Faculty from smaller departments noted that such a system would be particularly difficult for them.

The most dominant positive comments tended to focus on the advantages of field research for students over the summer trimester. However, several faculty noted that this schedule would prove to be beneficial for their own research, as it offered the option to conduct more extensive research at times other than the summer. Other positive comments saw the equal length of the three terms as being long

enough to achieve course objectives. Economical use of facilities and the ability for students to complete their degrees in a shorter time frame were also noted.

The length of each trimester and loss of J-term were seen as a positive by some respondents and a negative by others. Some indicated that the loss of the J-term would not impact their department because they don't utilize the J term, while others indicated it would be a loss of income and opportunity for them.

### 3.2.2 Option 2 - trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks

One hundred and thirty (130) comments noted negative attributes of this option and 47 comments noted positive attributes. Overall, the negative and positive attributes noted for Option 1 were also the most dominant comments noted for Option 2. Several comments stated that this was better than Option 1, but that Option 2 still retained many of the same problems as Option 1.

Ten comments noted childcare-related challenges. Two repeated comments specific to option two were that the trimesters would be too short and that this system did not offer enough break time between semesters. (It is important to note that faculty would only teach back-to-back trimesters one time a year, though students could, technically, elect to enroll for all three semesters in a year.)

Retaining J term was seen as both a negative and a positive. It was noted as a negative by those who see the current J term as too short to be useful ("extra revenue for the University in exchange for unearned credit") and positive by those who use J term for courses and for short study abroad opportunities.

New comments were brought up with this option but not for Option 1 even though they would also apply to Option 1. Some faculty were concerned that there would be significant problems for departments that run summer programs for pre-college students. There were also concerns about the additional difficulties students could have with matching their schedule/course needs with a faculty member's schedule. Performing arts departments would be negatively affected with students not available in any given trimester. Several respondents noted the loss of summer revenue for faculty who currently teach on overload during the summer.

### 3.2.3 Option 3 – quarter system

There were 191 comments that noted negative attributes of this option and 30 comments that noted positive attributes.

The most dominant negative comments noted that the terms would be too short for some disciplines to effectively teach their content or to conduct student or faculty research. A change to this system would require a significant overall restructuring of course offerings, labs and other ways in which departments are organized. Some comments were far more negative than responses to the other

two options such as “I would retire,” or “It will destroy our academic program...” All of the dominant negative reactions noted for options one and two were also noted for option three (e.g., “does not work with scholarship/artistry,” “too many faculty will not want to teach over the summer,” “can’t conduct department business,” etc).

The most dominant positive comments focused on the added flexibility a quarter based system would offer. It was also noted several times that a student would take fewer courses in a term in this system compared to the current system and that this element, combined with the shorter term, would provide a more intensive (beneficial) experience for the students. Several of the positive comments came from faculty who were undergraduate students at institutions that used the quarter system.

### 3.2.4 Current Calendar

There were 131 comments that noted positive attributes of this option and 51 comments that noted negative attributes.

The most consistent positive comments noted that the current calendar offers more time between semesters to make changes and provides a better time frame for research, scholarship and artistry. Others noted that the current system allows for better continuity, provides a good balance of time on and time off over the calendar year, including the needed space in January to prepare for the second semester. The current calendar was noted as better conforming to life demands and family schedules. It was also seen as the best schedule for undergraduate education and better for students who rely on summer work, or summer research, fieldwork or artistry.

Negative comments focused on the underuse of the summer sessions and the J term. (There were several comments voicing overall dissatisfaction with the current summer session schedule). Some respondents thought that the 15-week semester was too long for students. Some comments stated that the current calendar underutilizes campus facilities. Others noted that financial aid is a problem for J term and summer courses, and that the current calendar does not address this problem. Some noted that this is the least flexible of the calendar options and it makes it more difficult for students to take on fieldwork or internships during the non-summer months.

The most dominant theme in the comments concerning the current calendar is that the calendar works well, that “we are used to it,” and “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.”

## 4. Student Input

We surveyed all undergraduate and graduate students using Qualtrics. We received 799 (6%) responses from undergraduate students and 273 responses from graduate students (13%). Respondent distribution by college and their status as part time or international student are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Student Respondents by College and Status

College: Status	CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	OTHER*	Total	Response Rate
Undergraduate Students	159	140	188	159	121	32	0	0	799	6%
Graduate Students	65	37	71	27	25	6	24	18	273	13%
<b>Total Students</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1072</b>	
International Students	31	0	8	4	5	0	0	3	51	
Part Time Students	10	10	26	3	13	10	1	3	76	

### 4.1 Student Survey Results

One question asked students to rank the calendar options in preference order with 1 being the option they prefer. Seventy one percent (71%) of the students ranked the current calendar as their top preference. When asked if they would be willing to take courses in the summer, 49% of the students replied “no”. The majority (71%) of students indicated that summer courses would interfere with their work schedules and 52% indicated that the additional tuition costs would be prohibitive. Additional comments included the need to do research, internships, or travel in the summer, other obligations such as national guard training, and the need for time off with family during the ‘traditional’ school schedule.

#### 4.1.1 General Student Ratings of Each Option by College

To provide a broad view of calendar preferences, a single question asked students to rate how each calendar option would support their program completion and learning goals. Results are similar to Faculty Survey results (see Appendix 3) showing that:

- The current calendar received the highest score in all colleges. Means range from 3.30 to 3.71.
- Calendar Option 3 was the least preferred option in all colleges. Means range from 1.79 to 2.59.
- Of Options 1, 2, or 3, students in most colleges prefer Option 1. Means range from 2.28 to 2.76.

#### 4.1.2 Undergraduate Student Ratings of Each Option on Five Dimensions

Focusing on each of the options, we asked students to rate how well an option would support the following four aspects of their educational experience:

- Program completion and learning goals
- Off-semester employment
- Work/life balance
- Ability to engage in extracurricular activities

Undergraduate Student results are reported in Appendix 4. While responses tended to follow a similar pattern across colleges, some differences exist, as demonstrated by a significance test on difference by college (see last column of Appendix 4).

With respect to Option 1 (trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks), scores tended to cluster between the 1.5 to 2.25 range on a 1 to 4 scale. Students scored Option 1's effect on their program completion and learning goals and their extra-curricular activities higher than its effect on their ability to obtain off-semester employment and achieve work/life balance. Option 2 (trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks) scores tended to be slightly below Option 1 for all colleges. Similar to faculty results, Option 3 (quarter system) was, by far, the least favorite of all options with scores on almost all aspects of the academic mission averaging below 2 on the 1 to 4 scale. Finally, the Current Calendar had the highest ratings not only overall but also for each dimension of undergraduate education surveyed, with scores clustered around 3.5 on the 1 to 4 scale.

#### 4.1.3 Graduate Student Ratings of Each Option on Five Dimensions

Graduate students also rated the following four aspects of their educational experience for each of the four calendars:

- Program completion and learning goals
- Off-semester employment
- Work/life balance
- Ability to engage in extracurricular activities

Graduate Student results are reported in Appendix 5. Again responses tended to follow a similar pattern across colleges, but some differences exist, as demonstrated by a significance test of difference by college (see last column of Appendix 5).

With respect to Option 1 (trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks), scores tended to cluster between 2.0 and 3.0 on a 1 to 4 scale. Students scored Option 1's effect on their program completion and learning goals and their extra-curricular activities higher than its effect on their ability to obtain off-

semester employment and achieve work-life balance. Option 2 (trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks) scores tended to be slightly below Option 1 for all colleges. Similar to results among faculty, Option 3 (quarter system) was, by far, the least favorite of all options with scores on almost all aspects of the academic mission averaging below 2 on the 1 to 4 scale. Finally, the Current Calendar had the highest ratings not only overall but also for each dimension of graduate education, with scores clustered around 3.25 on the 1 to 4 scale.

## 4.2 Summary of Undergraduate Student Comments on Benefits and Challenges for Each Option

### 4.2.1 Option 1 - trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks

There were 118 comments that noted negative attributes and 9 comments that noted positive attributes to this option.

Negative comments fell into four primary clusters. Ordered in terms of frequency of occurrence, these were matters of employment/TA stipends, changes to the current term arrangement, the resulting shortness of breaks, and loss of internships/study abroad opportunities. Many comments expressed specific concerns that employment would be hard to secure and maintain given this calendar. Because of this, it was also expressed that one's ability to support him/herself (in regard to tuition or otherwise) would be more difficult. The dismay of even the idea of breaks changing was also loudly heard and this was identified as also affecting work, travel, relaxation and the notion of "too much school!" as described by one student.

Positive comments also followed a pattern. Five of the nine positive undergraduate student comments indicated that these students appreciated the idea of being able to finish course work and/or graduate earlier. The remaining four saw benefit to both the number and duration of the terms as well as the compressed calendar. One quote corroborating this included the idea that "information stays fresh."

The idea and implications of three terms were negatively viewed by most though they were viewed positively by a handful of students. J-term concerns were minimally mentioned.

### 4.2.2 Option 2 - trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks

There were 99 comments noting negative attributes and 13 comments noting positive attributes to option 2.

Negative concerns were focused mainly on three issues. The first of these and the most frequently mentioned was concern about the shortness of breaks. More specifically, comments honed in on the smaller gaps between semesters that did

not allow sufficient time off or for internships. There was also dissatisfaction with changes to the summer schedule as it currently stands. Primarily, the importance of summer as “vacation” was most often voiced. As with the first option, concerns regarding one’s ability for employment as well as internships and study abroad were mentioned frequently.

Of the 13 positive comments, most were about the ability to complete program requirements and graduate early.

#### 4.2.3 Option 3 – quarter system

There were 102 comments that noted negative attributes and 9 comments that noted positive attributes to this option 3.

In line with concerns for the previous two options, respondents noted challenges with both the shortness of breaks and the number of terms as proposed in this third option. This concern was the most dominant, accounting for just under half of all comments for this option. Other challenges noted (consistent with Options 1 and 2) included one’s potential for employment and TA stipends as well as a broad category including in obtaining internships, study abroad and fieldwork opportunities. Students expressed concerns about how classes and semesters would be scheduled, about the availability of both teachers and advisors, and about the frequency or regularity with which certain classes might be offered.

The notion of being able to finish one’s degree earlier was again offered up as a comment. A pertinent positive opinion was the idea that “being able to choose courses is important and one could do that with this option to fit their schedules outside of college.”

#### 4.2.4 Current Calendar

There were 109 comments that noted positive attributes to this option and 27 comments that noted negative attributes.

Positive comments followed a couple of identifiable patterns. Many undergraduate students mentioned the adequate length of breaks and the overall balance in the number and length of academic terms, allowing better employment opportunities during the summer as well as providing ample time for traveling and internships. Additionally, one comment noted how the current calendar and length of semesters allows for more time and contact with professors.

Negative comments showed the flip side to some of the above positive ones. For example, many students mentioned that the length of summer and winter breaks in particular can be too long. It was noted that getting back into the academic rhythm is difficult with such a long summer term where many students are not taking courses.

### 4.3 Summary of Graduate Student Comments on Benefits and Challenges for Each Option

#### 4.3.1 Option 1 - trimester with three 15-week terms and three 2-week breaks

There were 130 graduate student comments that noted negative attributes and 37 comments that noted positive attributes to Option 1.

As was noted for many of the options in the undergraduate responses, the shortness of breaks and the changes to summer were very prevalent negative comments. Because graduate students comprise a large portion of the pool for TAs, there were more comments concerning potential loss of summer employment. Restrictions of time for research due to the need to teach during the terms, as well as the shortened nature of interterm breaks was a frequent objection.

The most frequent positive comments for this option were concerned with the potential to graduate earlier. Some also felt that stipends might work better because of a “steadier” pay. Additionally, one respondent noted the benefit to more full and thorough summer labs for certain programs because of the extension of this term. This option seemed to have a degree of flexibility that was appreciated by many graduate students as well.

#### 4.3.2 Option 2 - trimester with three 15-week terms, a J term, and three 1-week breaks

There were 118 comments that noted negative attributes, and 30 comments that noted positive attributes to Option 2,

Negative graduate student comments about Option 2 were similar as those for Option 1. These included the idea that fieldwork, research, summer employment and travel would be negatively impacted. The shortness of breaks was brought up again. Negative effects of changes to the current summer arrangement more specifically included childcare costs, the inability to have a “real summer break” and balance with work and family. It was also mentioned that law students often need to work in the field (i.e., law firm summer associate programs) during the summer.

Positive attributes were again focused on the ability to graduate earlier, and the option for J-Term classes was attractive. Some respondents who considered J-Term a benefit also noted its absence in Option 2. Another positive attribute was the following: “It is easier for TAs to teach intensively for a few weeks than less intensively throughout the summer.” The ability for the Social Work program to provide better student placements was also noted by one graduate student.

While some felt the graduate program(s) may be more quickly finished, others felt that field work and research (necessary components to finish respondents’ respective programs) would be negatively affected.

### 4.3.3 Option 3 – quarter system

There were 113 comments that noted negative attributes, and 18 comments that noted positive attributes to Option 3.

Similar to sentiments expressed in previous options, negative comments about Option 3 tended to concern the shortness of breaks and the length of the quarters. Many graduate students also worried about study abroad logistics as well as potential problems with internships, fieldwork opportunities and the availability and scheduling of courses during the terms. Additionally, one common theme was the inability of students to absorb information in what seemed to many as being overly short terms.

The majority of positive comments for this option, related to the potential of accelerating one's program and graduating earlier. Respondents also mentioned the possibility that more courses would be offered and a "better academic distribution throughout the year." One positive comment noted "having a week off after every quarter, knowing what to expect and how to plan is a plus!"

### 4.3.4 Current calendar

There were 117 comments that noted positive attributes to this option and 29 comments that noted negative attributes.

Positive comments were primarily the length of breaks and the structure of the current summer term. The summer was noted as being constructive for research, writing and fieldwork. Additionally, graduate students looked favorably upon how the current calendar provides for employment during off-terms including summer.

Dominant negative comments about the current calendar were most often about breaks being viewed as too long, both summer and J-Term. Some respondents also viewed current semesters as too long. Many focused on the four months of the summer as four more months that separate a person from completing the degree.

The benefits of J-term were also evident in some comments which noted accelerated classes and the ability to relax between terms. Others were not in favor of the current J-term and expressed their feeling of it being a "waste" and simply a break that is too long.

Sentiments regarding summer as it currently stands are that it's still either too long for relaxing, or too short for courses.

## 5. Other Issues

Based on our charge, the Committee did not consider issues related to the institutional changes a year round academic calendar would require in the area of student and faculty support services, facilities maintenance and changes, housing, food, summer program displacement and athletics. Feasibility and cost benefit analysis of any changes in these areas should be thoroughly evaluation before any decision is made.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, both faculty and students indicated a preference for the current calendar. Both groups cited outside obligations and schedules as barriers to adjusting to a revised academic calendar that would imply a summer term. For faculty and students with children, summer is when their children are out of school and having to teach in the summer would present a significant additional financial burden and source of work-family conflict. The prevalent academic calendar provides a summer without required teaching. As a result, many academic conferences, internships, and collaboration opportunities are designed to take place during the summer. Being out of step with the rest of the academic world would present a problem for many faculty members.

## Appendix 1

### Mean Faculty Responses on a Single General Question for Each Option by College

College:		CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	OTHER <sup>1</sup>	Test of difference by College
Number of respondents:		51	34	110	42	25	10	7	5	
How well would each option support your department's academic mission in general?	Option 1	2.60	2.83	2.23	2.65	2.40	2.64	3.13	3.29	$\chi^2=30.3^*$
	Option 2	2.28	2.70	2.14	2.66	2.24	2.09	2.75	2.75	$\chi^2=36.2^{**}$
	Option 3	1.92	2.03	1.85	1.93	2.27	1.91	2.13	2.00	n.s.
	Current calendar	3.53	3.79	3.58	3.50	3.65	3.80	3.25	3.25	n.s.
<sup>1</sup> Due to low response rates, "other" includes Library, Cooperative Extension, and EOS *p<.10, ** p<.05,										

## Appendix 2

### Mean Faculty Responses for Five Aspects of Each Option

College:		CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	Other <sup>1</sup>	Test of difference by College
Number of respondents:		51	34	110	42	25	10	7	5	
How well would <b>Option 1</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Undergrad. Programs	2.74	2.64	2.27	2.53	2.33	2.64	n/a	3.00	n.s.
	Graduate Programs	2.76	2.57	2.24	2.57	2.11	3.00	2.88	2.75	n.s.
	Research	2.75	2.53	2.39	2.37	2.37	2.67	3.13	2.89	n.s.
	Institutional Service	2.64	2.64	2.36	2.45	2.24	2.56	3.00	2.75	n.s.
	Academic Mission	2.60	2.83	2.23	2.65	2.40	2.64	3.13	3.29	$\chi^2=30.3^*$
	Work Life Balance	2.63	2.34	2.27	2.21	2.29	2.36	2.88	2.63	n.s.
How well would <b>Option 2</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Undergrad. Programs	2.28	2.56	2.16	2.48	2.31	2.82	2.00	2.80	n.s.
	Graduate Programs	2.23	2.59	2.20	2.55	2.00	2.50	2.63	2.50	n.s.
	Research	2.32	2.43	2.35	2.57	2.17	2.20	2.71	2.78	n.s.
	Institutional Service	2.19	2.65	2.31	2.69	2.18	2.20	2.71	2.38	$\chi^2=31.2$
	Academic Mission	2.28	2.70	2.14	2.66	2.24	2.09	2.75	2.75	$\chi^2=36.2^{**}$
	Work Life Balance	2.24	2.33	2.22	2.38	2.24	1.91	2.75	2.67	$\chi^2=30.98^*$
How well would <b>Option 3</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Undergrad. Programs	1.87	1.84	1.76	1.91	2.15	1.91	1.00	1.80	n.s.
	Graduate Programs	1.96	1.90	1.93	1.86	2.26	2.33	2.13	2.00	$\chi^2=29.91^*$
	Research	1.85	2.00	2.07	2.00	2.11	1.73	2.13	1.89	n.s.
	Institutional Service	2.00	2.09	2.01	2.02	2.22	1.80	2.38	2.11	n.s.
	Academic Mission	1.92	2.03	1.85	1.93	2.27	1.91	2.13	2.00	n.s.
	Work Life Balance	1.86	2.09	1.91	1.79	2.20	1.73	2.13	1.89	n.s.
How well does the <b>Current Calendar</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Undergrad. Programs	3.47	3.82	3.67	3.60	3.69	3.80	3.00	3.40	n.s.
	Graduate Programs	3.49	3.68	3.52	3.55	3.05	3.67	3.25	3.40	$\chi^2=36.9^{**}$
	Research	3.43	3.65	3.35	3.50	3.33	3.70	3.38	3.33	n.s.
	Institutional Service	3.54	3.76	3.57	3.56	3.78	3.78	3.13	3.13	n.s.
	Academic Mission	3.53	3.79	3.58	3.50	3.65	3.80	3.25	3.25	n.s.
	Work Life Balance	3.46	3.71	3.46	3.54	3.68	3.80	3.38	3.00	n.s.
<sup>1</sup> Due to low response rates, "other" includes Library, Cooperative Extension, and EOS * $p < .10$ , ** $p < .05$										

### Appendix 3

#### Mean Student (Undergraduate and Graduate) Responses on General Question for Each Option by College

College:		CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	OTHER <sup>1</sup>	Test of difference by College
Number of respondents:		222	172	259	187	146	38	24	17	
How well would each option support your program completion and learning goals?	Option 1	2.69	2.28	2.44	2.32	2.32	2.45	2.33	2.76	$\chi^2=87.6^{***}$
	Option 2	2.50	2.08	2.33	2.20	2.08	2.61	2.04	3.00	$\chi^2=100.6^{**}$
	Option 3	2.11	1.83	2.02	1.89	2.02	2.45	1.79	2.59	$\chi^2=89.8^{***}$
	Current calendar	3.30	3.71	3.53	3.51	3.53	3.37	3.42	3.35	$\chi^2=106.2^{***}$
<sup>1</sup> Due to low response rates, "other" includes Library, Cooperative Extension, and EOS *p<.10, ** p<.05, ***p<.01										

## Appendix 4

### Mean Undergraduate Student Responses for Four Aspects of Each Option

College:		CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	Other <sup>1</sup>	Test of difference by College
Number of respondents:		157	139	188	155	119	32	0	0	
How well would <b>Option 1</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.59	2.07	2.31	2.33	2.24	2.44	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=30.4^*$
	Off-semester employment	1.72	1.44	1.64	1.69	1.55	1.77	n/a	n/a	n.s
	Work/life balance	2.03	1.63	1.81	1.90	1.76	2.13	n/a	n/a	n.s
	Extra-curricular activities	2.25	2.02	2.16	2.15	2.07	2.07	n/a	n/a	n.s
How well would <b>Option 2</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.50	1.91	2.19	2.18	2.05	2.56	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=48.1^{***}$
	Off-semester employment	1.70	1.36	1.52	1.60	1.49	2.04	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=30.2^*$
	Work/life balance	1.99	1.46	1.69	1.75	1.67	2.20	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=56.5^{***}$
	Extra-curricular activities	2.19	1.81	2.04	1.98	1.85	2.25	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=33.0^{**}$
How well would <b>Option 3</b> support you: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.06	1.74	1.89	1.88	1.84	2.38	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=32.5^{**}$
	Off-semester employment	1.44	1.30	1.35	1.39	1.39	1.81	n/a	n/a	n.s
	Work/life balance	1.75	1.40	1.49	1.51	1.50	2.16	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=40.5^{***}$
	Extra-curricular activities	1.97	1.71	1.73	1.75	1.68	2.00	n/a	n/a	n.s
How well would the <b>Current Calendar</b> support you: (scale from 1 to 4)	Program completion and learning goals	3.36	3.79	3.61	3.52	3.63	3.41	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=53.9^{***}$
	Off-semester employment	3.67	3.79	3.65	3.58	3.62	3.46	n/a	n/a	n.s
	Work/life balance	3.38	3.63	3.53	3.49	3.54	3.39	n/a	n/a	n.s
	Extra-curricular activities	3.34	3.66	3.51	3.46	3.46	3.18	n/a	n/a	$\chi^2=31.2^*$
<sup>1</sup> Includes Library, Cooperative Extension, and EOS *p<.10, ** p<.05, ***p<.01										

## Appendix 5

### Mean Graduate Student Responses for Four Aspects of Each Option

College:		CEPS	CHHS	COLA	COLSA	PAUL	UNHM	UNHL	Other <sup>1</sup>	Test of difference by College
Number of respondents:		62	37	70	26	23	6	24	17	
How well would Option 1 support your: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.93	3.17	2.78	2.15	2.64	2.50	2.33	2.76	$\chi^2=30.0^*$
	Off-semester employment	2.09	2.38	2.09	1.90	2.20	3.00	2.00	1.85	n.s.
	Work/life balance	2.60	2.49	2.24	2.19	2.55	2.67	2.35	2.76	n.s.
	Extra-curricular activities	2.70	2.63	2.25	2.41	2.43	3.00	2.30	2.54	$\chi^2=31.5^*$
How well would Option 2 support your: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.54	2.70	2.63	2.19	2.15	2.83	2.04	3.00	$\chi^2=38.6^{**}$
	Off-semester employment	2.00	2.15	2.18	1.75	1.88	3.00	1.79	2.23	n.s.
	Work/life balance	2.36	2.25	2.13	2.04	2.00	3.00	1.92	2.82	$\chi^2=29.8^*$
	Extra-curricular activities	2.42	2.32	2.29	2.10	2.07	2.67	2.05	2.69	n.s.
How well would Option 3 support your: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	2.28	2.14	2.32	2.04	2.87	2.83	1.79	2.59	$\chi^2=29.4^*$
	Off-semester employment	1.70	1.79	1.90	1.65	2.50	2.50	1.54	2.00	$\chi^2=33.8^{**}$
	Work/life balance	1.97	1.73	1.93	1.88	2.61	2.33	1.77	2.35	n.s.
	Extra-curricular activities	1.98	1.83	1.93	2.05	2.44	2.33	1.95	2.31	n.s.
How well would the Current Calendar support your: (1-4 scale)	Program completion and learning goals	3.11	3.43	3.38	3.58	3.17	3.17	3.42	3.35	n.s.
	Off-semester employment	3.25	3.36	3.56	3.60	3.50	3.50	3.38	3.54	n.s.
	Work/life balance	3.05	3.33	3.36	3.38	3.50	3.50	3.00	3.27	n.s.
	Extra-curricular activities	3.04	3.29	3.25	3.36	3.33	3.33	3.23	3.33	n.s.
<sup>1</sup> Includes Library, Cooperative Extension, and EOS *p<.10, ** p<.05, ***p<.01										