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Faculty Senate Minutes October 20 discussion on calendar

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Faculty Senate Minutes
July 22, 1997

Dr. Carter also explained the deliberations of the Calendar Committee concerning the possibility of a break in Fall Quarter under the Semester system. The Committee has sought input from all of the major units of campus and the students, and will bring forward the suggestion that we have a full week break at Thanksgiving for the Fall of 1998-99.

Faculty Senate Minutes
October 20, 1997

8. Academic Year 1998-99 Calendar: Dr. Carter

Dr. Carter described the calendar, including the options for the Fall semester considered by the Calendar Committee with input from faculty, staff and students: no break, a mini-Fall Break (Thursday-Friday or Monday-Tuesday), or an extended Thanksgiving break. The Committee's vote was as follows: 4 for no break, 3 for the short Fall break, and 8 for the long Thanksgiving break.

Mr. Clint Murphy (SGA VPAA) argued that the SGA had voted unanimously to support a mini-break in October and that a fourteen week session without a break would result in burnt out students and faculty.

Mr. Chad Elkins (SGA Pres) said that students who fly home are particularly opposed to the nine day Thanksgiving break followed by two more weeks of school. He added that the previous administration had also unanimously supported an October break. Dr. Carter said that Dr. Nolen had clearly represented the opinion of the students to the Calendar committee, but that the committee's votes had been divided, as is opinion across the university.

Dr. Marky Lloyd (CLASS) wondered if the policy might be changed in the future, and Dr. Carter said the calendar is reviewed on an annual basis.

Dr. Clara Krug (CLASS) asked if faculty would need to return for meetings a full week before classes start, and Dr. Carter answered yes, given the one-time transition involved in the shift from the quarter to the semester system during Summer 1998.

Dr. David Stone (COST) seconded the SGA's position. He felt it would be difficult

to "get people back on track" after a nine-day vacation.

Dr. Carter suggested that a Senator move to amend the original motion so that the option of an October break might be voted on. The motion was made and seconded.

Dr. George Shriver (CLASS) asked the students this: if they objected to two plane tickets home for an extended Thanksgiving and a Christmas break, wouldn't an October break necessitate three plane tickets? Mr. Chad Elkins (SGA President) said that students were accustomed to a four day break and would choose to stay in Statesboro during that time.

Dr. Charlie Crouch (CLASS) noted that the Spring Calendar provides for a reading day before finals but that the Fall Calendar does not. Dr. Carter said that to provide either the mini-break or the longer Thanksgiving break, a fall reading day had to be eliminated.

Mr. Milan Degyansky (COST) noted that the Fall quarter starts with a single day (Friday) week and exams begin on Saturday. He noted that many courses in COST will not have the same number of meeting days and argued for consistency.

In response to Dr. Clara Krug (CLASS), Dr. Carter said that appropriate weekends for the October break would be the 10th or the 24th, both of those involving away football games.

Dr. Carl Gooding (Dean, COBA) said that he had voted for no break, so as to avoid the Friday start and the likely "stretching" of the breaks, both resulting in poor attendance. He also said, however, that all over the country, semester-based schools have a full week at Thanksgiving and students cope somehow, and that the rationale against the long Thanksgiving break might equally apply to the Spring break.

In response to Ms. Iris Durden (LIB), Dr. Carter said that the plans of other System schools vary.

Dr. Trey Denton (COBA) added that, given the students' desire to abolish attendance policies altogether, classes might well be empty before and after the breaks.

Mr. Clint Murphy (SGA VPAA) said that because Georgia Southern's students are accustomed to the quarter system, the two-break system would better serve them and called the question. The motion to call the question passed by a two-thirds vote. The proposed amendment to the original motion passed 23 to 9.

Dr. Anne Pierce (COST) suggested that rather than beginning exams on a Saturday, we might begin them on Monday, December 14 and continue through the 18th. Dr. Carter said that the Registrar needs a workday before graduation.

Dr. Carl Gooding (COBA) pointed out that any calendar less than 75 class days would be overturned by the BOR.

Dr. J. B. Claiborne (COST) also expressed concern about beginning the Fall semester on a Friday. Dr. Carter said that part of the rationale was to accommodate freshmen orientation and other activities.

Dr. Claiborne asked Mr. Clint Murphy (SGA VPAA) for his input. Mr. Murphy replied that he attends every class. Dr. Claiborne asked Mr. Murphy, as SGA representative, about his sense about whether his fellow students would attend that beginning Friday course. Mr. Murphy said that he personally did not support an attendance policy; that attendance should be on students' own discretion.

Ms. Pam Watkins returned to Dr. Gooding's point that there is also a nine day Spring break. She pointed out that at least in the Spring five weeks of class follow Spring break, while only two follow Thanksgiving. Mr. Clint Murphy (SGA VP) agreed that students could "get back into it" in a five week period.

In response to Dr. Milan Degansky's concerns about beginning on a Friday and the lack of a reading day in Fall, Dr. Charlene Black pointed out that with graduation on August 2, there is a very brief time to prepare residence halls, classrooms, etc. for incoming students.

Dr. Anne Pierce suggested faculty be more positive about students' attendance on scheduled class days and added that there is no obligation for professors to repeat on Monday what non-attending students have missed on Friday.

Ms. Virginia Richards (CHPS) suggested the Senate should resist second-guessing the Calendar Committee.

Dr. David Stone asked why we will start the Spring semester so early. Dr. Carter said that the BOR gives earliest and latest beginning dates.

The Senate approved the amended Calendar, with a mini-break in October.

Faculty Senate Minutes November 30/December 1, 1999

Fall 2000 Calendar

Dr. Bleicken (Acting Provost) described the factors involved in developing the Fall 2000 calendar and then moved its adoption by the Senate.

Motion: Dr. Bleicken motioned for the approval of the Fall 2000 calendar as described in the attachment to the Faculty Senate meeting agenda. The motion was seconded.

An amendment to the motion was immediately offered by Ms. Pam Watkins (COST).

Motion: Ms. Pam Watkins motioned to amend the proposed Fall 2000 calendar to include a Fall break on Monday and Tuesday, October 23rd and 24th, to eliminate the reading day on Friday, December 8th, to move the last day of classes to Monday, December 11th, and to hold final exams from December 12th through 16th. The motion was seconded.

Ms. Pam Watkins (COST) explained the rationale for the amendment by stating: "The reason that we're proposing a Monday and a Tuesday for Fall break, instead of a Thursday-Friday, is because it cuts out a lot of Thursdays and Fridays during the Fall. If we put it on a Monday-Tuesday, and couple that with the Wednesday-Thursday-Friday Thanksgiving break, that takes us out a whole week. Moving the last day of class until Monday compensates for the Labor Day holiday. So we don't come up short any days by doing it that way. Regarding the elimination of the reading day, if we put a reading day on a Friday basically we are giving the students a long weekend right before final exams, and I don't think that's necessarily an educationally sound thing to do. I realize that one trade-off is having a Saturday final, but as we discussed in the Calendar Committee meeting, finals could be scheduled in such a way that Saturday finals would impact the fewest number of students and faculty members."

Dr. Clara Krug (CLASS) followed up on Watkins point by stating: "If this two-day Fall break is added and if the scenario plays out the way Pam has described it, graduation would not occur any later, we would still finish on the same day, and yet we would have a two-day Fall break."

Dr. Jack White (COBA) asked: "How do you give a Saturday afternoon exam, get it graded, get it over to the Registrar, and know whether those people graduate? I mean, I am all for them working 24 hours a day, but I think that is almost what it would take and I might direct that to Mike Deal."

Mr. Mike Deal, Registrar, responded: "We have changed our procedures so that we are not issuing diplomas at graduation so that's really not an issue any longer. We would not have to

have grades before graduation."

Dr. Kathleen Koon (CHPS) stated: "I would just like to support the amended calendar that Pam Watkins has proposed, primarily for the reason that it does have a full complement of 15 Fridays, and elimination of a Friday for our students is elimination of an 8-hour clinical day so it has a considerable impact on them."

Dr. Leo Parrish (COBA) asked: "The folks that analyzed this in terms of how many Monday night graduate classes meet and Tuesday night, and so forth, have you had a chance to determine the impact of this change on whether we're going to be making up night classes on a weekend because of this? I am just wondering if this amended schedule has been analyzed to be sure that it doesn't end up coming up short on labs..."

Dr. Frank French (COST) stated: "There's an impact every time you have a holiday break...I just think that we are chopping up the schedule so much that it's breaking up the rhythm of school."

Mr. Michael Mills (CLASS) stated: "As I understand it, Fall break was initially a student-initiated motion, and I am wondering if there are any student representatives here today? How do students feel about this and was polling done about whether they wanted the Fall break?"

Ms. Casey Jackson (SGA) responded: "We did a survey for the Calendar Committee, a very informal survey, but overall by a wide majority the students wanted a Fall break."

Dr. Clara Krug (CLASS) reported on a faculty survey conducted by herself and Ms. Watkins regarding the Fall calendar. On the issue of Fall break, she reported that: "105 of our colleagues wanted a Fall break out of the 143 responding in CLASS. In the College of Education, of the 38 respondents, 31 wanted a Fall break. Of the faculty in College of Science and Technology, 62 out of 99 wanted a Fall break. In COBA the total number who wanted a Fall break was 14 out of 31. So there were somewhat less than half. So more than half of the faculty wanted a Fall break."

Dr. Grube stated: "You're about to vote to recommend something to me and I'm missing a huge piece of information. I've heard almost no substantive pedagogical reasoning given to support the two-day break. I need to hear your thinking on this point. Simply a popularity poll about whether you are going to take a couple of days off isn't quite enough for me."

Dr. Janie Wilson (CLASS) responded to Dr. Grube's concern: "I think it's unfair to the students and the faculty to suggest that it's just a break. Some discussion here today has been that students will blow off classes. I would prefer to think that's not true. I believe my students spend time perfecting papers when they have days off...they come back with better papers after a break, so I tend to think they do a better job when they have extra time for those things."

Dr. Clara Krug (CLASS) followed up by quoting a comment from a faculty member who replied to a survey about the Fall calendar: "I'm not as concerned with faculty in relation to the Fall break as I am with students. The break offers them a time to get caught up and rejuvenate. Going from the 3rd week in August to Thanksgiving with only one three-day holiday is too long, they need the Fall break."

The motion to amend the proposed Fall 2000 calendar to include a Fall break on Monday and Tuesday, October 23rd and 24th, to eliminate the reading day on Friday, December 8th, to move the last day of classes to Monday, December 11th, and to hold final exams from December 12th through 16th was defeated by a vote of 19-14.

The original motion to approve the Fall 2000 calendar as described in the attachment to the Faculty Senate meeting agenda was approved by a vote of 23-9.

Spring 2001

Dr. Bleicken (Acting Provost) described the factors involved in developing the Spring 2001 calendar. One important issue concerned the "earliest start date" for Spring 2001 semester as mandated by the Chancellor's office. Dr. Bleicken reported that the Chancellor's office would not approve GSU's request to move the earliest start date from January 5 to January 8, as requested by the Calendar Committee.

Motion: Dr. Bleicken motioned for the approval of the Spring 2001 calendar as described in the attachment to the Faculty Senate meeting agenda. The motion was seconded.

The motion to approve the Spring 2001 calendar passed.