

To: Shannon Bellum, University Senate President

From: Keith Barrack, Chief of Staff

CC: Junius Gonzalez, Provost  
Wendy Lin-Cook, VP of Enrollment Management

Date: August 14, 2024

Re: Responses to May 8, 2024 Senate Recommendations on Revised Academic Calendar

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At its May 8, 2024 meeting, the University Senate recommended that, prior to a final decision to implement significant changes to the academic calendar and/or weekly course grid, the University Administration engage in certain steps as part of the decision-making process. The steps are outlined below in italics, each followed by the Administration's response.

- 1. Determination of whether, and how, the totality of course sections offered in recent terms would fit into the proposed scheme.*

Response: The new course block offers 71 options, compared to the existing 36 options. By taking full advantage of these additional options, the University will be able to accommodate all existing courses within the new course block structure, with the added capacity to introduce even more sections if needed.

- 2. Comprehensive survey of the time and scheduling needs for laboratory, studio, performance and other class meetings that require non-standard time periods;*

Response: Faculty and departments with legitimate, unique business needs may select more than one set of course blocks to meet their instructional requirements. For example, a music studio session that needs to meet daily could use a combination of course blocks E3 and A9. This flexibility ensures that laboratory, studio, performance, and other classes requiring non-standard time periods are adequately accommodated

- 3. Determination of the number and type of sections that would be 'off-grid' due to the specific needs of the related courses, as well as the likely effects of such courses on the ability of*

*students to register for other courses in the same term.*

Response: Effective January 2025, no course will be allowed to operate off-grid. Such practices disrupt students' ability to enroll in other courses and hinder the optimal utilization of classroom space, even when the department owns the classroom or lab space.

4. *Development and dissemination of any significant changes to policies and procedures related to implementation of a new scheme (e.g., assignment of courses that meet three times per week).*

Response: The University, through a partnership with Academic Affairs and University Communications, will publish a set of FAQs and official communications commencing in late Summer/early Fall 2024 to begin acclimating the community in advance of the Winter 2025 go-live date.

5. *Systematic estimation of the times and quantity of maximum entrance/exit, traffic and the capacity of the relevant campus to accommodate such.*

Response: Our student body uses a variety of transportation methods to reach campus. Our primary goal in scheduling courses is to provide a range of start and end times, offering maximum flexibility for our students. This approach allows them to create schedules that best suit their individual needs.

Additionally, the University is planning a comprehensive space and traffic study to be conducted during the upcoming academic year. This study will provide a thorough analysis of our space usage and relevant information, including an assessment of how we respond to the new course block structure.

6. *Assessment of the maximum expected demand for parking, for students and employees, in relation to parking capacity on the relevant campus.*

Response: See previous response.

7. *Identification of additional impacts on adjunct-faculty instructors (e.g., irregularities in the schedule and/or schedule alignment with other local institutions), especially those that might affect the ability of the University to recruit and retain adjunct faculty, as well as possibilities for mitigation of such impacts.*

Response: The University has made the decision to move to the new calendar as part of a larger strategic decision and expects that there may be some adjunct faculty who choose to not continue at the University as a result. However, it is expected that the majority of adjunct

faculty will be amenable to the new schedule. We will work closely with the adjunct faculty union to address concerns as they arise.

8. *Determination of the effects on other operations of the University that depend on periods of reduced occupancy or operational intensity, including facilities maintenance and administrative work, as well as inter-term support, advising, and orientation for students*

Response: The administration has carefully considered these operations in proposing three, 14-week semesters and determined that the standardization of term lengths throughout the year and scheduled breaks in the Fall, Spring, and end of Summer semester will allow predictable and adequate time for work requiring reduced occupancy or occupational intensity.

Additionally, the new academic calendar standardizes breaks, ensuring that all classes are off at the same time. Currently, classes are ongoing without uniform breaks. This change will provide much-needed breaks for faculty and students and allow administrators and facilities to conduct regular maintenance and other necessary operations efficiently.