



June 2, 2025

Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Assembly of the
Academic Senate
Faculty Representative,
UC Board of Regents
Academic Senate

Ahmet Palazoglu
Co-Chair, APC Calendar Workgroup

Richard Arum
Co-Chair, APC Calendar Workgroup

Office of the President
1111 Franklin Street
Oakland, CA 94607

Re: Draft Report of the Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic
Calendar Workgroup

senate.universityofcalifornia.edu

Dear Co-Chairs Palazoglu and Arum,

As requested, I distributed for systemwide Academic Senate review the Academic Planning Council (APC) [Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup's draft report](#). All 10 Academic Senate divisions and four systemwide Senate committees ([BOARS](#), [UCEP](#), [UCORP](#), and [UCPB](#)) submitted comments. These were discussed at the Academic Council's May 28, 2025 meeting, and the compiled feedback is attached for your reference.

On behalf of the systemwide Senate, I thank you and the APC workgroup for your thoughtful and thorough work to produce the draft report, which clearly outlines the potential benefits and drawbacks of various academic calendar options and calendar features to inform deliberations should UC wish to consider adoption of a common academic calendar in the future.

Strong Opposition to Calendar Change

Nearly all respondents agreed that now is not the appropriate time to pursue a common systemwide academic calendar. Many noted that the University is experiencing severe budget constraints—including hiring freezes, deferred maintenance, and staffing reductions. A calendar conversion would divert resources from core priorities and require significant faculty and staff effort to revise curricula, advising systems, and administrative operations. Numerous comments referenced faculty burnout and limited capacity to absorb new initiatives. Several reviewers also emphasized that launching a major institutional overhaul during a time of political uncertainty and post-pandemic recovery would be ill-timed and destabilizing.

CAMPUSES

Berkeley
Davis
Irvine
UCLA
Merced
Riverside
San Diego
San Francisco
Santa Barbara
Santa Cruz

MEDICAL CENTERS

Davis
Irvine
UCLA
San Diego
San Francisco

NATIONAL LABORATORIES

Lawrence Berkeley
Lawrence Livermore
Los Alamos

High Financial and Workload Costs

The report's estimate that transitioning all campuses to semesters would cost between \$288 and \$370 million in one-time expenses, plus additional ongoing costs, raised significant concern. Reviewers also highlighted hidden and intangible costs, including:

- Faculty time diverted from research, particularly for early-career faculty;
- Disruptions to graduate student funding and appointments;
- Strain on classroom space and facilities due to larger course sizes; and
- Loss of summer research and grant activity if the calendar shortens break periods.

Many Senate divisions stressed that converting from quarters to semesters would require a complete redesign of curricula, advising structures, and degree planning/audit systems. Campuses estimated that thousands of courses would need reconfiguration and rearticulation. For example, the UCLA Senate projected that it would need to revise over 15,000 courses and rebuild its entire degree audit system. The Santa Barbara Division warned that imposing such a change could also negatively impact faculty recruitment and retention, particularly at campuses where the quarter system is seen as central to the academic culture.

Concerns About Evidence and Justification

While several reviewers appreciated the report's clarity and balanced tone, others felt it implicitly favored the semester system without fully evaluating the strengths of the quarter system. Many expressed frustration with the absence of compelling, empirical evidence in support of a systemwide calendar change. Specifically, they noted the lack of: 1) data demonstrating improved academic outcomes or employability under a semester system; 2) an analysis of impacts on graduation rates, student GPA, and student learning; 3) peer-reviewed research or institutional case studies; and 4) assessments of long-term academic and operational impacts, including on research activity and faculty workload. Many reviewers called for a full cost-benefit analysis that accounts for both the direct and indirect consequences of any proposed transition.

Discussion of Semester and Quarter Systems, and Alternative Models

Senate reviewers engaged in robust discussion of the relative merits of semester and quarter calendars, as well as the feasibility of the alternative models presented in the report. While some acknowledged that the semester calendar may offer certain academic and logistical advantages, most questioned whether those benefits justify the disruption, cost, and potential loss of campus autonomy that a systemwide shift would entail.

Perceived Benefits of the Semester System: Reviewers noted that a common semester calendar could improve alignment with California Community Colleges (CCCs) and the California State University system, easing undergraduate transfer pathways. A semester schedule might also

give students earlier access to summer internships and jobs. Longer instructional periods were seen as potentially supporting deeper learning, stronger relationships with faculty, and more time for mentoring. Some also suggested that a shared semester calendar could enable cross-campus course offerings, joint academic programs, and alignment with federal grant cycles.

Defenses of the Quarter System: Conversely, many emphasized the quarter calendar's advantages, including increased course variety, flexible pacing, and alignment with research schedules—particularly for faculty who teach two quarters and reserve the third for research. Several noted that the quarter system is a distinctive and valued aspect of their campus's identity.

Alternative Models: Several reviewers expressed interest in the “alternate quarter calendar” described in the report, which would shift start and end dates to improve alignment with summer internships without requiring full conversion to semesters. This was viewed as a potentially lower-cost, less disruptive compromise.

While most campuses expressed a preference for their current calendar, there were some exceptions. UCLA's Teacher Education Program expressed support for the semester system, citing alignment with school district calendars and better support for their students. And although UC Berkeley uses a semester calendar and several of its committees endorsed its advantages, the Berkeley Division overall advised against a systemwide change due to cost and disruption.

The San Diego Division suggested adopting less disruptive schedule enhancements such as “Maymesters” or short intersessions. The Merced Division pointed to the benefits of RRR (Reading, Review, and Recitation) weeks at the end of its semesters as a structural feature that could better support academic success and student well-being.

Student and Equity Impacts

The potential impact on students and equity was a major concern. While many agreed that a semester calendar could facilitate student transfer from CCCs, most felt that this benefit alone did not justify a systemwide change. Concerns included disruption to degree progress for current students, disproportionate effects on early-career faculty, and risks to students on academic notice. BOARS cited evidence suggesting that transitions from quarters to semesters may result in reduced on-time graduation rates and lower first-year GPAs. Reviewers also raised concerns about increased stress and logistical challenges for students adjusting to a new calendar mid-degree.

Student perspectives were reported as mixed. Some acknowledged that a semester calendar may help with internships, while others opposed

adjusting to a new calendar system mid-degree.

Call for Divisional Autonomy

Many reviewers emphasized that academic calendar decisions should remain under the authority of each campus's Academic Senate. Several cited academic freedom and shared governance as core principles. The San Francisco Division specifically warned that a mandated shift could infringe on faculty autonomy. Most reviewers recommended pausing any further action until stronger evidence is available and broader consensus can be reached.

To underscore the importance of campus-level decision-making, the Davis Senate Division held a formal faculty vote of the Representative Assembly, in which faculty overwhelmingly opposed a systemwide calendar change. This was viewed as strong affirmation that any proposed shift should go through local approval.

Conclusion

In sum, Senate divisions and systemwide Senate committees strongly advise against changing current campus academic calendars. While some acknowledged that the semester model offers potential advantages, the financial, administrative, and human costs of such a transition are prohibitive. Most reviewers recommend maintaining calendar systems and campus-level decision-making. The Academic Council would like to underscore a key point emerging from the Senate's review: establishment of a systemwide calendar is not a matter that the Academic Senate supports.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Steven W. Cheung
Chair, Academic Council

Encl.

cc: Academic Council
Provost and Executive Vice President Newman
Vice President Brown
Senate Division Executive Directors
Senate Executive Director Lin



May 21, 2025

STEVEN CHEUNG
Chair, Academic Senate

Subject: Systemwide Review of APC's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Cheung,

On May 12, 2025, the Divisional Council (DIVCO) discussed the *Academic Planning Council's (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*, informed by written comments from the committees on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA); Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE); Budget and Interdepartmental Relations (BIR); Courses of Instruction (COCI); Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate (DECC); Faculty Welfare (FWEL); Graduate Council (GC); and Undergraduate Council (UGC).

The discussion surrounding the potential switch between quarter and semester systems revealed strong concerns about the timing and feasibility of such a transition. DIVCO emphasized that the current financial situation and limited institutional resources make this an inopportune time for such a large-scale change. There was widespread concern over staff and faculty burnout, low morale, and the overall strain such a shift would impose on a university community already dealing with significant challenges. The consensus, except for one committee (CAPRA), was that this is not the right time to pursue calendar reform. CAPRA, while acknowledging the timing issues, suggested that there might never be a perfect time and advocated for an opt-in model where individual campuses could choose whether to adopt the semester system. However, even this idea received pushback.

Despite the consensus against immediate action, there was considerable discussion of the merits of a semester vs. a quarter system. Many committees favored the semester calendar over the quarter system, citing pedagogical advantages, better learning outcomes, and improved alignment with other institutions across California's higher education system. These benefits were particularly relevant for transfer students, as a semester system was seen as facilitating smoother academic transitions. Nevertheless, the proposed transition was recognized as being resource-intensive and costly, further reinforcing concerns about the appropriateness of the timing.

Specific logistical issues were also discussed. One proposal for a semester calendar that would cut through the middle of the winter break was universally rejected, as it conflicted with the need for an uninterrupted break period. Experiences from other campuses, such as Berkeley, which had both quarter and semester academic calendars, were cited to provide context and historical insight. A former committee chair reflected on past shifts from semester to quarter and back, emphasizing that previous changes had come with high administrative costs and minimal net gain for the institution or students.

The conversation highlighted both the complexity and sensitivity of calendar reform. Although there may be academic benefits with one systemwide academic calendar, these crucial areas must be considered – logistical, financial, and human resources. Ultimately, while the semester system was viewed more favorably in terms of educational outcomes, the overwhelming concern was that UC is not in a position to absorb the disruption and expense of such a change at this time.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment.

Sincerely,



Amani Nuru-Jeter
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Enclosures

cc: Mark Stacey, Vice Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate
Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate staffing
Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
J. Miguel Villas-Boas, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation
Hector Rodriguez, Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
Samuel Otter, Chair, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
David Landreth, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction
Thomas Philip, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Nancy Wallace, Co-Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare
J. Keith Gilles, Co-Chair, Committee on Faculty Welfare
Mark Csikszentmihalyi, Chair, Graduate Council
Christopher Ansell, Chair, Undergraduate Council
Sumei Quiggle, Associate Director staffing Graduate Council & Undergraduate Council
Will Lynch, Manager, Committee on Budget and Interdepartmental Relations
Patrick Allen, Senate Analyst, Committee on Faculty Welfare
Linda Corley, Senate Analyst, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate
Milo Knight, Senate Analyst, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation
Rachel Marias-Dezendorf, Senate Analyst, Committee on Courses of Instruction



May 5, 2025

PROFESSOR AMANI NURU-JETER
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: CAPRA comments on the Draft Report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide
Academic Calendar Workgroup*

The Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA) discussed the Draft Report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Working Group on a Common Calendar for the University of California at its meeting on April 30, 2025. This memo addresses issues of academic and physical planning, budget, and resource allocation that emerged through the review process and our discussion, consistent with the charge of CAPRA.

The benefit of moving to a common calendar is to improve system-wide collaboration. The specific areas where a common calendar would enhance the educational experience for undergraduate students and professional goals after graduation include cross-campus enrollment for language courses or programs only offered on one or two campuses, equality of access to summer jobs and internships in terms of the time of application and the sharing of decreasing resources across campuses for teaching, research and public service.

In view of the fact that two UC campuses (Berkeley and Merced) currently have a semester system and seven UC campuses (Davis, Irvine, LA, Riverside, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz) have quarter systems, it may appear to be more efficient for Berkeley and Merced to switch to the quarter system. However, the report indicates that the semester system clearly has stronger advantages for the academic and professional experience of students. First, the semester system calendar is aligned with other California public institutions (CSU campuses and all but three California Community College schools), which enables ease of transfer from to the UC system and facilitates enrollment in CCC summer courses by UC students. Second, better calendar alignment with K-12 schools is beneficial to UC students with childcare needs. Third, most important, a semester calendar has greater advantages for paid summer internships and jobs in terms of recruitment and the period of internship/employment. Fourth, from an educational standpoint, the semester system is more beneficial. A longer academic term leads to a deeper pedagogical experience and more time to develop a strong relationship between students and teachers, more flexibility to accommodate students with difficulties and corresponds more closely to the students' experience of the academic year in high school, thereby facilitating ease

of transition, and greater preparation time for final exams that will improve success rates. Fifth, from the perspective of the faculty and administrative staff, the semester calendar involves less administrative “busy-work,” and the released time can be devoted to improving teaching and mentoring and advising students.

There are, however, several reasons against recommending conversion to a system-wide semester calendar. The proposal occurs during a time of severe fiscal constraints, already present at the state level and potentially at the federal level. The conversion will incur costs in the areas of attention from the leadership, faculty and staff, increased workload at all levels of faculty and staff. Since fewer courses will be offered by campuses currently on the quarter calendar, there is a serious concern about the lack of classroom capacity and resources to accommodate larger enrollment numbers for courses and to offer more courses. The costs of semester conversion are also a serious obstacle. Especially concerning here is the large variance between the low estimate and the high estimate (see p. 12 of report: \$288.62 million vs. \$370.96 million in one-time costs and between \$37.52 to \$49.07 million vs. \$48.22 to \$63.06 million in financing costs).

A system-wide conversion to a common semester calendar has the clear benefits of enabling more efficient and better coordination among the different campuses and enhance cross-campus interaction in teaching and research, thereby leading to a better experience for all UC students. This would return the UC system to its original common calendar. It is unclear whether the report envisions a suggested conversion as a mandatory UCOP directive or as a recommendation to which individual campuses have the choice of opting out. In view of the difficulties of a system-wide conversion to a common semester calendar noted above, we suggest that the best way to proceed is for each individual campus to decide whether it wishes to adopt a semester calendar. Although there are many current concerns about funding and instability, there is no “right time” to raise the issue of conversion to a common calendar. It may be better to face the issue promptly and to make a decision on the course of action after each campus has had adequate time to weigh the benefits of the conversion for the academic experience of its students. Improving the education of students must be the paramount consideration, economic resources permitting. Because state legislators are likely to support the alignment of a system-wide UC calendar with that of K-12, CCC and CSU institutions, we suggest that UCOP request funding to cover the costs of a system-wide conversion to a semester calendar from the CA state governor and legislature.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Miguel Villas-Boas", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

J. Miguel Villas-Boas
Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation



320 STEPHENS HALL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
COMMITTEE ON ADMISSIONS, ENROLLMENT, AND PREPARATORY EDUCATION (AEPE)

April 28, 2025

AMANI NURI-JETER
Chair, Berkeley Division, Academic Senate

Subject: AEPE feedback on Academic calendar work group report

Dear Chair Nuru-Jeter,

On April 18, 2025, the Berkeley Division Academic Senate Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education (AEPE) reviewed and discussed the UC systemwide Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report: *Should the University of California Return to a Common Calendar?*

AEPE members agreed that transitioning to a common semester calendar was of modest importance and did not support implementation within the UC system at this time of major budgetary uncertainty. Some members were surprised at the push toward for a semester system given the major budgetary implications of moving away from the dominant quarter system model. There was some discussion about the major limitations of having the Fall Semester span the winter break; AEPE members did not consider the option as being viable because it would be harmful to the wellbeing of faculty, staff, and students.

Members consistently expressed major concerns about the potential financial impact of common calendar implementation on the UC Berkeley campus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hector Rodriguez'.

Hector Rodriguez
Chair, Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Preparatory Education
Professor, School of Public Health

cc: Jocelyn Surla Banaria, Executive Director & staff to AEPE

April 22, 2025

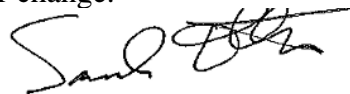
CHAIR AMANI NURU-JETER
BERKELEY DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

We are writing to respond to your request for comments on the Academic Planning Council's (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report, which reflects an information-gathering exercise about the current academic calendars and calendar features of UC's nine undergraduate campuses in relation to the University's teaching, research, and public-service mission. We understand that the workgroup aims to help answer the question of whether UC should return to a common academic calendar. Normally, we restrict our comments to those areas falling within our purview, but in this case we will offer more general observations. We were unsure of the relationship between the findings in the draft report and the Budget Committee's specific responsibilities other than the possible and indirect implications for faculty morale, faculty workload, and faculty recruitment.

We begin with the general conclusion that now is not the time for any UC-wide academic calendar changes, given the uncertainties and financial and other challenges the UC system is facing under the new federal administration, as well as the significant time and resources that system-wide calendar changes would incur.

That said, in reviewing the strengths and opportunities of the semester and quarter systems (delineated on pp. 5–6 of the report), on the whole we found those associated with the semester system (e.g., pedagogical advantages, calendar alignment with all CSUs and 113 CCCs) to be more compelling than those offered by the quarter system. And yet, even if the broader fiscal and political climate were more amenable to a consideration of system-wide changes toward a common academic calendar, several of the factors to consider in deciding whether to implement any changes (enumerated in the report on pp. 9–11) are very concerning. Among these factors, we note the significant workload and costs that would be involved in converting the calendar, possible negative effects on faculty and staff workload and morale, and issues of classroom capacity and condition that would be associated with moving toward a system-wide semester calendar. Although we prefer the semester calendar for the reasons suggested above, we also see value in further study of the “alternate quarter calendar” option, which minimizes some of the costliest factors in effecting a system-wide calendar change.



Samuel Otter
Chair

SO/wl



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

AMANI NURU-JETER
Chair, 2024-2025 Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

April 1, 2025

RE: APC SYTEMWIDE ACADEMIC CALENDAR WORKGROUP DRAFT

The Committee on Courses of Instruction briefly discussed the possibility of UC Berkeley moving to a quarter system. The Committee strongly recommends that UC Berkeley continue the use of the semester system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'DL' followed by a horizontal flourish.

David Landreth
Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction



May 6, 2025

PROFESSOR AMANI NURU-JETER
Chair, 2024-2025 Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: DECC's Comments on the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic
Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate (DECC) reviewed the
Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report.
DECC supports the report and did not have any comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Philip', enclosed within a large, loopy oval flourish.

Thomas Philip
Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Campus Climate

TP/lc



320 STEPHENS HALL
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

April 25, 2025

CHAIR AMANI NURU-JETER
Academic Senate

*Re: Draft report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic
Calendar Workgroup*

Dear Chair Nuru-Jeter,

On March 17, 2025, the Committee on Faculty Welfare (FWEL) reviewed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. The Committee commented on how the report is thorough and acknowledges the significant faculty workload such a transition would entail. While the proposal cites administrative cost savings, the actual transition costs appear to outweigh the benefits. Overall, FWEL members raised concerns that the proposal is unlikely to advance given financial constraints and widespread faculty resistance. For Berkeley faculty, the semester system is the current standard, and the proposed change in the academic calendar would not create any undue burden or impact on the campus. FWEL has no additional concerns or recommendations to offer at this time.

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment this report.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nancy S. Wallace'.

Nancy Wallace, Co-Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. Keith Gilles'.

J. Keith Gilles, Co-Chair
Committee on Faculty Welfare

NW/JKG/pga



May 7, 2025

AMANI NURU-JETER
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

*Re: GC comments on the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar
Working Group draft report*

Dear Division Chair Nuru-Jeter,

Graduate Council (GC) discussed the “APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Working Group draft report” at its regular meeting on Monday, May 5, 2025. We benefited from the presence of Ilan Adler, who was part of the System workgroup that prepared the report.

GC found there were several reasons that mandating a systemwide unified academic calendar was inadvisable.

The report was completed before several politically driven crises engulfed the UC system, and several GC members thought that this was the type of change would be disruptive at a time when responding to these new challenges would be paramount.

In terms of graduate education, the report has little to say. The one claim is that a quarter of graduate student funding would cost less than a semester of graduate student funding. However, since the number of days per year of the two calendars are comparable, this would all come out in the wash. In fact, in our meeting, graduate students on the committee had the most to say about changing to a quarter system, and they were strongly critical. While acknowledging that some grants required extensions to adjust to Berkeley’s calendar, for the most part they felt that longer terms were superior for mentoring and learning. Another constituency that spoke up for semesters were from the Humanities and Social Sciences. These members of the faculty felt the seminar and article-length seminar paper would be a casualty of a shorter term.

Finally, while there would no doubt be savings that come from a single UC calendar, some of the costs are invisible. It is tempting to compare the different schedules to those areas of Indiana and Arizona that have their own rules about daylight savings time and conclude that if all divisions were part of a more universal scheme, things would be more efficient. Yet adopting a uniform calendar is not just a matter of adjusting clocks. It would be a matter of changing syllabi, adjusting course sequences, and changing faculty and staff members' long-standing adjustments to the rhythms of the year.

This last argument is connected to an observation about this process. In our discussion, colleagues relied on anecdotes to support the status quo in an unusual way, one that suggested a loyalty to the semester system as something that makes Berkeley distinctive in the UC system. There may be quantifiable gains to be realized from a uniform calendar in terms of access to internships, for example. But viewing this as an optimization exercise only acknowledges one part of the issue. If semesters are optimal, then a year-long term would arguably be best, and if quarters are optimal, what about month-long terms? What became clear from the discussion is that this is also about habituation, ritual, and culture.

For these reasons, GC was not convinced this report needs further action and argues that calendar belongs on the divisional prerogative side of the UC system's federal-style structure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Mark Csikszentmihalyi', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Mark Csikszentmihalyi
Chair, Graduate Council



April 8, 2025

PROFESSOR AMANI NURU-JETER
Chair, Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate

Re: UGC comments on the Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report

Dear Chair Nuru-Jeter,

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) discussed the Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at its April 2, 2025 meeting. Committee members appreciate the significant work that has gone into this informative and balanced report. However, they also raised several fundamental concerns about the timing of this effort and the content of the report with respect to convergence on a single UC calendar.

Committee members appreciate that there could be benefits for students (especially those seeking internships from campuses that finish later in the summer). However, we agreed that this effort is ill-timed given the current fiscal and political situation of the University of California. While the draft report does a good job of laying out the relative advantages and disadvantages of semester and quarter systems, we did not feel that it persuasively made the overall case for the advantages of convergence in light of the significant financial outlays and administrative disruptions that such a strategy would entail.

In addition to this general concern, UGC members discussed certain liabilities associated with convergence of a semester calendar on a quarter calendar. Members believed that alignment with community college calendars (which are predominantly on a semester system) is vital for transfer students. Our committee has been concerned about smoothing the pathway of transfer students to Berkeley and believes a move away from the semester system would complicate already challenging pathways.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christopher Ansell'.

Christopher Ansell
Chair, Undergraduate Council



DAVIS DIVISION OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE
ONE SHIELDS AVENUE
DAVIS, CALIFORNIA 95616-8502
(530) 752-2220
academicsenate.ucdavis.edu

May 20, 2025

Steven Cheung
Chair, Academic Council

RE: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Draft Report

Dear Steven,

On March 5, 2025, a special Representative Assembly meeting was held to discuss the common semester calendar. At this meeting, the Representative Assembly approved the following Resolution with 77 in favor and 3 opposed:

Whereas, the Representative Assembly of the Davis Division of the Academic Senate appreciates the time and effort the joint Academic Senate/Administration Workgroup dedicated to exploring a common calendar for the University of California,

Resolved, The Davis Division strongly affirms its wish to remain on its current calendar system.

The Davis Division requests that the approved Resolution be transmitted to UC President Drake and the Board of Regents of the University of California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Katheryn Niles Russ".

Katheryn Niles Russ, Ph.D.
Chair, Davis Division of the Academic Senate
Professor of Economics
University of California, Davis

c: Monica Lin, Executive Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Michael LaBriola, Assistant Director, Systemwide Academic Senate
Edwin M. Arevalo, Executive Director, Davis Division of the Academic Senate

May 15, 2025

Steven Cheung, Chair
Academic Council

Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Irvine Division Cabinet discussed the Academic Planning Council's (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at its meeting on May 6, 2025. Considering the broad implications of a calendar change, I asked all divisional councils to review the report: Council on Academic Personnel (CAP); Council on Educational Policy (CEP); Council on Enrollment Management and Admissions (CEMA); Council on Equity and Inclusion (CEI); Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom (CFW); Council on Planning and Budget (CPB); Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries (CORCL); Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience (CTLSE); and Graduate Council (GC). The councils' feedback is attached for your review.

Cabinet members converged on a range of questions and concerns about transitioning from a quarter to semester calendar, including the faculty time necessary to redesign all courses and programs and its impact on research productivity especially for early-career faculty; lack of data-based evidence of improved academic outcomes and/or better job/internship placement for students beyond anecdotes; the likely need for larger class sizes, which most campuses are not equipped to meet without increasing utilization of more online instruction regardless of whether it is pedagogically warranted; and serious questions about the way transition costs were estimated and a failure to address the long-term financial implications of a calendar change.

Critically, all councils and the Cabinet were unanimous in their strong opposition to the university considering a change of this magnitude at a time when it faces unprecedented financial challenges, a shrinking workforce, and ongoing uncertainty from the current U.S. presidential administration's attacks on higher education.

Members therefore urge the University to pause any consideration of a calendar change and to commission a more comprehensive report that can inform data-driven and evidence-based discussions and decisions, especially concerning student outcomes and a realistic estimate of costs – both long- and short-term – including the cost of faculty labor, when the time is more opportune to revisit this matter in the future.

The Irvine Division appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Valerie Jenness, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

Cc: Jane Stoever, Chair Elect-Secretary
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director

April 24, 2025

**VALERIE JENNESS,
CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION**

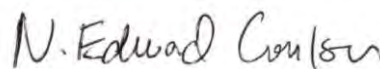
RE: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its meetings on April 10, 2024, the Council on Academic Personnel (CAP) discussed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup.

Members stressed that the transition to a new calendar would negatively impact faculty on their research focus as it would force significant effort and time commitment toward course reorganization. This would be particularly pressing for early career faculty on the tenure clock as they try to establish their research and teaching at the same time. Furthermore, a semester calendar would leave less research time in academic year, since faculty are currently often able to teach over 2 quarters and focus on research and creative activities in one quarter. Members also highlighted the significant cost estimate during the current environment of budget austerity and raised doubts about adequate resources and support for faculty to make the transition.

The Council on Academic Personnel appreciates the opportunity to opine on this important topic.

Sincerely,



N. Edward Coulson, Chair

Cc: Jane Stoever, Chair Elect-Secretary
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director



April 24, 2025

VALERIE JENNESS
CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE

RE: Draft Report of Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup

At its April 10, 2025 meeting, Graduate Council reviewed the Draft Report of the Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. This draft carefully laid out the non-financial pro and con arguments for four possible academic calendars.

Graduate Council Feedback

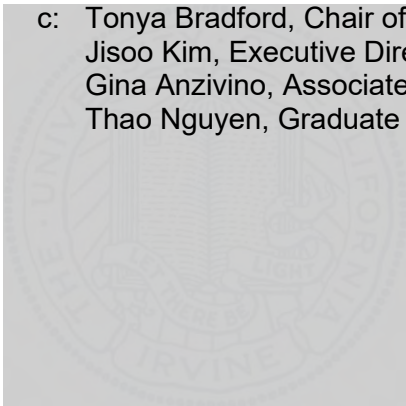
1. The proposal was very well written and made discussion of the options quite easy.
2. Although support for the main two options (UCB-type semester versus UCI-type quarter) was mixed, the majority of members preferred the UCI-type quarter system.
3. We thought that there was little scientific evidence regarding the best choice with regard to student academic performance and thus the decision is likely to be made primarily for administrative reasons.
4. A comprehensive cost benefit analysis of the financial and human costs of such changes to each involved campus, as well as the entire UC system, was not provided or analyzed.
5. We were unanimous in recommending that now is not the time to be making this decision for both budgetary and human compacity reasons. Making such a change will be very expensive in terms of both dollars and human effort. It is clear that the next four years are going to require many changes due to pressures from the US government. In addition, the current and likely future economic situation in California is such that making major calendar changes would not be the best use of either systemwide or local funds.

On behalf of the Graduate Council,



Ali Mohraz, Vice Chair

c: Tonya Bradford, Chair of Graduate Council
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director
Thao Nguyen, Graduate Council Analyst



April 14, 2025

Valerie Jenness, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Council on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) discussed the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report at its meeting on April 7, 2025.

Members recognized both advantages and disadvantages to quarter and semester calendars, and the Associated Students of UCI (ASUCI) representative reported that students are divided on this issue. However, all agreed that now is not the time to consider such a costly and significant change as the University of California faces serious fiscal constraints with future budget cuts expected as well as growing external pressures from the new U.S. presidential administration.

One member raised the cited study of student outcomes published in a [highly-regarded economics journal](#) as reason to be cautious about calendar conversion. It showed that switching to semesters reduced on-time graduation rates, led to lower first-year grades, and students on academic probation were less likely to recover. Other members noted that the workgroup's report was light on data, and they would like to see evidence-based arguments laid out more carefully.

Some members raised concerns about faculty workload and work-life issues. For example, they noted that redesigning the curriculum for semesters would place a heavy burden on faculty but that, in the current budget climate, there would be little administrative support for this effort. Some also disagreed with the report's claims that semesters allow more time for in-depth learning and felt that semesters are just too long and would lead to burnout among faculty and students alike. Additionally, some members were concerned about impacts to faculty -- especially early-career faculty -- as well as students and postdocs, who have young children in public schools and whose schedules could become misaligned or upended with such a change.

At the same time, several members agreed that the quarter calendar presents real problems for our students when it comes to competing for jobs, internships, and other opportunities. While one member felt there were ways to work around this, others noted that many employers and programs are not able to make accommodations, thus putting our students at a disadvantage for these opportunities.

Another member raised an important equity issue. Currently, faculty in some departments can fulfill their teaching load in two quarters and focus on research during the remaining quarter and summer. This would no longer be possible on a semester calendar and may dramatically reduce time devoted to research, leading to inequity among faculty whose teaching loads vary by department.

Finally, a member highlighted as a critical consideration the report's section on classroom capacity and condition, noting that converting from quarters to semesters will increase the need for online course offerings to support larger classes since some campuses lack the necessary physical infrastructure to accommodate larger class sizes.

The council appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebeca Helfer".

Rebeca Helfer, Chair
Council on Equity and Inclusion

Cc: Jane Stoever, Chair Elect-Secretary
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director & CEI Analyst



April 25, 2025

Val Jenness, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

RE: Systemwide Review of APC Common Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Council on Enrollment Management and Admissions (CEMA) reviewed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup at its meeting on April 8, 2025.

Several members expressed concern about the costs and workload that would be required for a transition from the quarters to a semester system. Concerns were also raised over the switch to semesters resulting in an increase in class sizes, adding to faculty workload and potentially impacting student learning. Members discussed the argument that the quarter system prevents students from competing for summer internships; they questioned whether this was a significant enough issue to justify such a large-scale change. CEMA members also discussed the option of remaining on the quarter calendar while moving the start of the school year to early September. While this option would be the least costly way of addressing the summer internships issue, one member of CEMA was concerned that student learning would be impacted if the winter break falls in the middle of the winter quarter.

The Council recommends looking into a targeted solution to allow students to take advantage of internship opportunities before committing to a calendar change.

CEMA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on this proposal.

Sincerely,

Yuri Shirman, Chair
Council on Enrollment Management and Admissions

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Yuri Shirman', with a horizontal line underneath.

Cc: Jane Stoeve, Chair Elect
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director
Andrea De Vizcaya Ruiz, CEMA Vice-Chair

April 14, 2025

Valerie Jenness, Chair
Academic Senate, Irvine Division

Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Council on Educational Policy (CEP) discussed the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at its meeting on April 10, 2025.

Members recognized that there are strong opinions both in favor and against moving to a semester calendar among the university community at large, but some found it difficult to evaluate the report since the APC did not take a position or make a case for either calendar. However, members agreed that the timing could not be worse for the University of California to consider such a change when facing serious fiscal constraints with future budget cuts expected as well as other external challenges from the new U.S. presidential administration. In fact, much of the council's concern centered around the transition itself and the time and cost involved, as redesigning all curriculum and rearticulating thousands of classes from community colleges and other institutions would be a massive undertaking. Some worried that course redesign would take faculty away from their research and scholarly activities which could be especially detrimental for early-career faculty. Additionally, a member noted that some institutions are rethinking semesters and therefore it may be wise to "wait and see" what other models emerge before considering a change.

In addition to concerns about the transition, members noted other areas needing more consideration. Some members said they have not seen convincing evidence that shows the student experience is qualitatively different on a semester calendar while others had concerns about impacts on student retention and graduation rates and would like to see more data. More specifically, one member urged that the cited study of student outcomes that was published in a [highly-regarded economics journal](#) should be seriously considered. It focused on graduation rates for 19 cohorts of entering students in 731 U.S. institutions, with about 10% of these institutions changing calendars. The headline finding was that switching to semesters reduced on-time graduation rates, even for cohorts that entered college well beyond the transition period. Mechanisms included lower GPAs, fewer course credits, and delayed major choices. Although six-year graduation rates in the two groups were not different, the extra costs of additional time in school were considerable, both for the institutions and for students delaying entry into the labor force with their bachelor's degrees.

Another member highlighted the report's section on classroom capacity and condition as an important consideration, noting that converting from quarters to semesters would increase the need to offer larger classes. However, many campuses do not have the physical capacity to do so and could be pushed into offering more online courses due to lack of space rather than for pedagogical reasons, which could have serious impacts on undergraduate education.

Lastly, the council's advising consultants reported that advising administrators could not come up with any benefits of the quarter calendar, adding that it is a difficult transition for transfer students. On the other hand, the Associated Students of UCI (ASUCI) representative noted that students chose to attend UCI understanding it was a quarter campus, and expressed concern about how a

transition to semesters mid-degree would affect current students.

The council appreciates the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Allison Perlman, Chair
Council on Educational Policy

Cc: Jane Stoever, Chair Elect-Secretary
Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director & CEP Analyst



April 21, 2025

**VALERIE JENNESS, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE – IRVINE DIVISION****Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

In September 2024, Provost Katherine Newman and Chair Cheung formed a joint faculty and administrative APC workgroup to examine the current academic calendars and calendar features that can advance the University's teaching, research, and public service mission. The workgroup was charged with gathering information to help answer the question of whether the UC should return to a common academic calendar, rather than to recommend one calendar over another, focusing on the academic calendars at UC's nine undergraduate campuses.

The Council discussed this issue at its meeting on April 8, 2025, and submits the following comments:

1. Members expressed mixed concerns and encouragements regarding the report.
2. The majority of the members of the Association of American Universities (AAU) are on semester calendars. Major research institutions have transitioned to the semester system from the quarter system in the last 15 years, whereas no other peer institutions have transitioned into the quarter system from the semester system.
3. Members expressed concern regarding current budget reductions across the campus and the UC. In addition, many faculty are already stressed due to workload, and any additional strain would be unreasonable.
4. A member suggested that the alternative quarter calendar may mitigate one of the principal disadvantages of the present system, which is the difficulty that students face when searching for jobs and internships during the summer. By moving up annual beginning and ending dates, this issue can be largely resolved with minimal impact for faculty to reorganize instruction.
5. Some members expressed frustration regarding the color of the text in the report, stating it was difficult to read and may pose additional difficulties for visually impaired individuals.

Sincerely,



Lisa Naugle, Chair
Council on Faculty Welfare, Diversity, and Academic Freedom



April 29, 2025

**VALERIE JENNESS, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION**

RE: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its April 17, 2025 meeting, the Council on Research, Computing, and Libraries (CORCL) discussed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council (APC) Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. We are grateful for the opportunity to provide feedback on this report.

As a preliminary matter, we note that though the title of the report poses a question – viz., “Should the University of California Return to a Common Calendar?” – the report does not attempt to answer that question. Instead, it offers considerations for and against an affirmative answer, without making a recommendation. It also does not attempt to address which of the various considerations raised are most important, which are ancillary, and which are spurious, nor does it offer an all-things-considered view on how to weigh the sum of the considerations raised.

For this reason, CORCL feels strongly that this report, and the commentary solicited from the community on its findings, should not be the last word from the Senate on this important question. We urge that before any final decision is made regarding the substantive policy question, it should be debated and, ideally, voted on by the faculty Senates at each Division. Considering the essential role of faculty in both the teaching and research missions of the University, and faculty expertise about how to best conduct their own teaching and research, faculty are uniquely well-situated to weigh the considerations raised in the report and make a final recommendation.

Turning now to concrete feedback, CORCL raised several questions and concerns about the report.

- Several claims were made in the report without evidence, even in cases where evidence should be available.
 - For instance, it is claimed that student affairs staff report that it is harder for students on the quarter system to find jobs and internships. Could that be quantified? Are there significant differences in rates of employment or internships for students on quarter campuses and semester campuses within our system? Do our quarter campuses fare worse as compared to peer institutions outside of the system?
 - Similarly, CORCL members felt that claims in the report about collaboration on the quarter system were simply false. Could data be presented on whether faculty on the quarter system collaborate less frequently than those on semesters, within the system and across peer institutions? Do faculty within the system tend to collaborate more with faculty on other campuses on the same calendar than with those on a different calendar? At the very least, a more balanced discussion of the advantages of the quarter system for travel to other institutions and international collaboration should be provided.
- While the financial impact of the transition is discussed, no attempt is made to assess the long-term financial implications of the change. Likewise, there is no discussion of the long-term impacts for academic planning, research activity, faculty workload, or other aspects of the University’s mission.
 - Are the proposed changes expected to have impacts on operational costs? Have CSUs

or other AAU institutions that have completed this sort of transition seen an increase or decrease in costs? What evidence is available from other institutions?

- Are the proposed changes expected to have impacts on faculty recruitment and retention, overall instructional workforce size, grant writing and administration, or research excellence? Have other institutions that have undergone this change seen significant changes in their workforce, research output, research expenditures, or other measures of faculty performance?
- How will junior faculty be affected by the workload associated with a calendar conversion? Will pre-tenure faculty have adequate opportunities to conduct research and secure grant funding if they are required to redesign their courses within a few years of joining the UC?
- Will these changes have impacts on demand for courses in particular disciplines, such as the humanities, given that changes in the calendar will force changes in curricula, including general education curricula? Again, what has happened at other institutions?
- The report does not discuss how faculty teaching loads would change under the transition, nor how that would affect both faculty workload and instructional costs. There are clearly multiple ways to implement the transition from a long-term workload perspective, and those options should also be weighed as part of this evaluation.
- Very little information is provided regarding how the estimated costs of the transition were calculated. It appears that the five cost categories reported by the CSUs and appearing in the chart on the upper right-hand side of p.12 were adapted to the UC context, and that estimates were based on that. If so, CORCL emphasizes that apparently no attempt is made to estimate the opportunity costs to research activity, including sponsored research, from this transition. Similarly, it appears no attempt was made to calculate costs arising from the UC instructional model, which differs from the CSU model.
 - Faculty time is a limited resource and time spent on reworking courses and curricula will not be spent applying for grants, expending research dollars, or conducting research. These opportunity costs, which will have impacts on faculty careers and on research funding, should be addressed more explicitly as one-time costs of the transition, with estimates included in the reported figures. As one example: CORCL members noted that for quarter campuses, the summer before the transition will presumably involve one fewer month of leave from teaching than a typical summer, which will likely mean fewer opportunities for summer salary, shorter GSR appointments, and less time for grant-writing. How will that impact F&A funds and short-term research expenditures on each campus?
 - Under the current CBA, TA salaries for a semester are higher than those for a quarter. During the transition year, TAs will work for two quarters and one semester, increasing overall instructional costs during that year. This will effectively shift graduate student support from extramural research accounts to instructional accounts, reducing F&A and increasing total instructional costs for the calendar year (though not the fiscal year). It does not appear that this was included in the one-time cost estimate. How is it assessed?
- A comparison is made with regard to *how many* peer institutions adopt different calendar models but there is no discussion of the relationship between calendar and various measures of academic achievement or research excellence. For instance, though the report notes that 55 of the 69 US-based AAU institutions are on semesters, whereas only 14 are on quarters (including UC campuses), it does not mention that universities on the quarter system are apparently disproportionately represented among the top 10 public universities and top 10 private universities. A systematic analysis of the relationship between academic calendar, rankings, and other measures of academic excellence should be included in the report, and an assessment should be made of the likelihood that UC campuses would fall out of their coveted top 10 public positions after a calendar change.

- The report discusses estimated costs for the transition. It offers two figures: one-time costs and financing costs. But it is not clear if these are two alternative models for paying for the transition, or if the total cost would include a one-time “down payment” in addition to the annual financing costs mentioned. This should be clarified.
- The report mentions that there is some research showing a reduction in 4-year graduation rates after semester conversion at other institutions. Is there data available on (a) whether that reduction persists in the long-run or is a short-term effect of the transition and (b) whether the reduction in graduation rates disproportionately affects students from particular groups (including legally protected groups)?

In addition to this specific feedback on the report, CORCL members expressed several opinions regarding the overall report and the question at issue. CORCL notes that no evidence is provided that student educational outcomes would be improved by a semester conversion at the quarter campuses, and some evidence is provided for negative effects. Moreover, impacts on faculty time are not properly accounted for, and for this reason and others, CORCL is skeptical that the costing exercise has yielded accurate figures. Overall, CORCL saw little reason to think the long-term benefits of a calendar conversion would outweigh the immediate costs.

On behalf of the Council,



James Weatherall, Chair

c: Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director
Michelle Chen, CORCL Analyst



April 25, 2025

VAL JENNESS, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE, IRVINE DIVISION

RE: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its April 9, 2025 meeting, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup.

The report outlines that any conversion of the academic calendar—whether moving to a common semester or quarter system or a combination of each—involves significant, multi-year financial investments. The budgetary review focuses on one-time conversion costs, ongoing financing arrangements, and the associated operational and workload implications for campuses. The conversion effort would require not only direct monetary outlays (e.g., for IT, advising, project management, and operational support) but also indirect costs tied to faculty and graduate students, staff workload, and potential facility upgrades. Both the costs and the faculty, staff, and graduate-student workloads to make these changes are exorbitant.

The report highlights the following:

- **Magnitude of Investment:** The switch to a common semester system requires a significant one-time investment – on the order of \$290–\$370M – with substantial annual financing commitments. In contrast, a common quarter conversion is markedly less expensive, though it may present alignment issues with other public education institutions. While many surveyed faculty don't support changes to new systems, there are some who believe student access to summer employment might increase with a move toward semesters.
- **Comprehensive Cost Factors:** Beyond direct monetary outlays, conversion costs encompass IT upgrades, advising infrastructure, curricular revisions, and facility adjustments. These indirect costs—and the associated opportunity costs of diverting resources from other institutional priorities—must be weighed carefully.
- **Long-Term Financial Planning:** Both conversion options demand long-term planning, as the financial burden is spread over multiple years and must be balanced against other strategic investments and operational challenges facing the University.

Overall, Council members raised significant concerns about the unfunded costs of transitioning to a semester system and emphasized the need to quantify the impact on faculty. A critical consideration is how faculty will manage to restructure entire programs while maintaining their current teaching and research responsibilities. There is a substantial risk that some faculty members, especially those approaching retirement, may choose to leave their positions rather than undertake such an extensive overhaul of their courses. Given the current hiring freezes, replacing these valued faculty members would pose a serious challenge. Implementing such a change under present circumstances could severely disrupt UC academic programs and overall institutional stability. Therefore, it is crucial that the report stresses the human cost of such a transition.

On behalf of the Council,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alyssa A. Brewer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alyssa Brewer, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

CC: Jisoo Kim, Executive Director
Gina Anzivino, Associate Director
Michelle Chen, CPB Analyst
Stephanie Makhoul, Cabinet Analyst



April 22, 2025

**VALERIE JENNESS, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE – IRVINE DIVISION****Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

In September 2024, Provost Katherine Newman and Chair Cheung formed a joint faculty and administrative APC workgroup to examine the current academic calendars and calendar features that can advance the University's teaching, research, and public service mission. The workgroup was charged with gathering information to help answer the question of whether the UC should return to a common academic calendar, rather than to recommend one calendar over another, focusing on the academic calendars at UC's nine undergraduate campuses.

The Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience (CTLSE) discussed this issue at its meeting on April 7, 2025, and submits the following comments:

1. The report mentions several pros and cons of each calendar option. If the Academic Senate were to make specific recommendations, what would be the most critical indicators?
2. The report mentions negative short term impacts on graduation rates during calendar conversions. How might the university proactively address or mitigate these risks? What are other ways in which students may be impacted during a transition?
3. Given the current administrative challenges, budget issues, and pressures higher education institutions are facing, now doesn't seem the right moment to make such a significant change on our campuses.
4. Members expressed concern regarding who the final decision maker may be for a common academic calendar.

Sincerely,



Sergio Gago-Masague, Chair
Council on Teaching, Learning, and Student Experience



May 8, 2025

Steven Cheung
Chair, UC Academic Senate

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Cheung,

The divisional Executive Board (EB) reviewed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report and divisional council feedback at its meeting on May 8, 2025. EB members provided the following comments for consideration.

Many members emphasized that a change from a quarter to semester calendar would require a massive academic undertaking to redo every single degree program requirement and associated curricula. This enormous undertaking would have massive costs (both time and money) that would not be feasible until and unless there is significant investment from the State of California.

Further, some members indicate it is tone-deaf to raise this prospect at this moment after years of crisis after crisis.

Several members observed that the report lacks sufficient data or other supporting evidence to back up its conclusions.

A member suggested that the University of California should consider reducing the number of days of instruction if it moves to a universal semester to better align it with non-UC peer institutions.

Thank you for the opportunity to advise on this matter.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Bawn
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

Encl.

Cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate

April 24, 2025

To: Kathleen Bawn
Chair, Academic Senate

Re: **(Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft**

Dear Chair Bawn,

At its April 1, 2025, meeting, the Faculty Welfare Committee (FWC) reviewed and discussed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. FWC noted the imposed teaching load for faculty would change drastically as the workgroup's report acknowledges the increases in workload and the changes in teaching that would be imposed, which is unbearable to imagine, given the current climate and constraints placed on faculty. FWC recommends that any change to the academic calendar and infrastructure would need to be accompanied by additional resources and support, including the redesign of courses.

Should the academic calendar change to a semester system, it will allow some programs (e.g., the sciences) to move at a slower pace of instruction. Members expressed concern about how a change would affect students' course sequence and time to a degree.

Members viewed the change as a benefit, allowing all UC campuses to operate on the same calendar system and providing centralization and synergy. In addition, aligning a semester system would benefit students who are exploring continuing their education within the CSU or UC systems, making the transfer process easier. Also, being on a semester system would better align with summer internship opportunities.

However, concerns about the upfront investment cost and the enormous planning required to change from quarters to semesters were voiced. Given the university's budget constraints and the need to remain fiscally responsible, it was suggested that the idea be placed on hold for now.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at jcaram@chem.ucla.edu or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,



Justin Caram, Chair

Faculty Welfare Committee

cc: Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/ Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Academic Senate
Members of the Faculty Welfare Committee

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

April 24, 2025

To: Kathy Bawn, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Lynn Vavreck, Chair, Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Relations with Schools

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting on April 18, 2025, the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions & Relations with Schools (CUARS) reviewed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council workgroup to consider changes to the systemwide academic calendar.

Members commented that the report seems to privilege the semester system and does not provide strong evidence for its favorability compared to quarters. If commonality is the primary goal, why convert most UC campuses to semesters rather than shift only two campuses to quarters? Members found the empirical evidence for the benefits of a semester calendar to be lacking, and note the need for deeper analysis of the real costs and impacts of conversion.

More broadly, we affirm that now is not the time to undertake an initiative of this magnitude. The University is facing urgent threats, from the current budget crisis, to federal actions impacting research and international students, to a weakening of faculty governance. Converting to a common calendar would not only add enormous financial pressure in an already resource-constrained environment; it would also create a tremendous burden on faculty and staff tasked with reforming the entire curriculum. The comprehensive costs of redesigning courses and degree programs appear to far outweigh any purported benefits of expanding opportunities for students. As our student representative pointed out, there is already robust infrastructure in place allowing undergraduates to successfully secure and complete internships at UCLA and other campuses on the quarter calendar.

Converting to semesters—thereby reducing course offerings during the academic year—may in fact prove detrimental to students' academic progress and hinder time-to-degree in the current landscape, amid existing enrollment pressures, space constraints, and cuts to graduate TA funding to support introductory courses. This effort thus stands in direct conflict with the systemwide goal to increase enrollment and serve more transfer students.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. With any questions, please contact me via committee analyst Julia Nelsen at jnelsen@senate.ucla.edu.

CC: April de Stefano, Executive Director, UCLA Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, UCLA Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, UCLA Academic Senate
Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, UCLA Academic Senate

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

April 23, 2025

To: Kathy Bawn, Chair, Academic Senate

From: Jeff Maloy, Chair, Undergraduate Council

Re: (Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting on April 18, 2025, the Undergraduate Council discussed the draft report of the APC workgroup to implement a common systemwide academic calendar. We were joined in discussion by University Registrar Kate Jakway-Kelly and Deputy Registrar Claire McCluskey.

Members broadly considered the advantages of both the quarter and semester calendars, from the perspective of student opportunities and faculty research. However, members overwhelmingly agreed that converting UC to a common calendar should not be a priority in the current climate. Moving all campuses to a semester calendar would come at an exorbitant and underestimated cost. At UCLA alone, the shift to semesters would require a complete redesign of the entire curriculum, including the revision of approximately 15,000 courses, as well as overhauling the degree audit system. The report hardly addresses the enormous scope of this endeavor and its impact, adding an untenable burden for faculty and staff in an already resource-scarce environment.

Members note that the report does not make a compelling case for conversion, beyond the rationale for alignment with the California State University system and community colleges. To even contemplate such a shift, we underscore the need for more robust data and empirical evidence that demonstrates where costs would be borne, how savings would be spent, and what real benefits converting calendars would entail. Rather than allocate massive financial and instructional resources toward this effort, the University should invest in improving existing curriculum and infrastructure to enhance undergraduate education for all.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine. If you have any questions, please contact me via the Undergraduate Council analyst, Julia Nelsen, at jnelsen@senate.ucla.edu.

cc: April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair Elect, Academic Senate
Julia Nelsen, Principal Policy Analyst, Undergraduate Council

3125 Murphy Hall
410 Charles E. Young Drive East
Los Angeles, California 90095

April 17, 2025

To: Kathleen Bawn, Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Deepak Rajagopal, Chair, Graduate Council

Re: Systemwide Senate Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting on April 4, 2025, the Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report* and offered the following for the Executive Board's consideration.

Given the current financial situation, members expressed concern about the timing of the report and any considerations for shifting to a common calendar. Members noted there may be bandwidth issues and disruptions to teaching and student experience. Some members queried the value of having a common calendar. Some members noted that Option F: Quarter with semester start date may be disruptive given the timing of Winter break and interruption to instruction. Members generally favor keeping the quarter system and noted that adopting a common calendar based on the quarter system would be less costly and disruptive as fewer campuses would need to shift to a quarter system.

We appreciate the opportunity to express our views on this matter. If you have any questions, please contact us via Graduate Council Analyst, Emily Le, at ele@senate.ucla.edu.

April 8, 2025

Kathleen Bawn, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: Systemwide Review – APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Bawn,

At its meeting on March 31, 2025, the Council on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed and discussed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. CPB underscored the many invariable costs that would be incurred in planning and executing calendar changes. Student representatives also voiced opposition to changes to the UCLA academic calendar because the entirety of the current student body would be subjected to redesigned degree timetables in terms of course numbers and course sequences. Overall, members recommend that the process of calendar shifts be paused given the current financial situation.

If you have any questions for us, please do not hesitate to contact me at smith@anthro.ucla.edu or via the Council's analyst, Elizabeth Feller, at efeller@senate.ucla.edu.

Best regards,



Monica Smith, Chair
Council on Planning and Budget

cc: Megan McEvoy, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Andrea Kasko, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Elizabeth Feller, Associate Director, Academic Senate
Members of the Council on Planning and Budget

To: Kathleen Bawn
Chair, UCLA Academic Senate

From: Professor Cassie Mogilner Holmes
Chair, 2024-25 Faculty Executive Committee

Date: April 28, 2025

Re: Response to APC Workgroup Common Calendar Draft Report

The UCLA Anderson Faculty Executive Committee (FEC) discussed the APC Workgroup Common Calendar Draft Report at our April 25, 2025 meeting. Based on what was presented in the comprehensive and thoughtful report, we do not believe there is sufficient justification for changing UCLA's quarter structure, especially at this time. We suggest that this proposal be revisited in future years, when the university faces more favorable economic and political circumstances. The reasons for a semester conversion seem to be relatively weak compared to the costs.

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this important topic.

cc: Margaret Shih, Department Chair, Management
Aimee Drolet, 2024-25 FEC Vice Chair
Eugene Caruso, 2024-25 FEC Member
Mark Garmaise, 2024-25 FEC Member
Rakesh Sarin, 2024-25 FEC Member
Ivo Welch, 2024-25 FEC Member
Hillary Reichman, Senior Manager, Data & Insights; FEC Secretary

**UCLA School of Education & Information Studies
Faculty Executive Committee**

(Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup
Draft Report

Summary of Feedback 5/1/25:

Comments from UCLA Teacher Education Program (TEP, M.Ed.), UCLA Principal Leadership Institute (PLI, M.Ed.) and Educational Leadership Program (ELP, Ed.D.):

1. We all see the benefits to shifting to a semester calendar. This would be particularly helpful to TEP as it would allow our students to begin the program when school districts open for their academic year. The opening of a school year and the establishing of a classroom community are key learnings that most TEP students are not able to experience. Also, second year TEP students begin full-time positions teaching in August, however, we have limited ability to provide classroom support to them and courses do not begin until late September.
2. Both PLI and TEP are accredited by an outside body—the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. We have concerns about the resources needed to convert our classes and how much flexibility we would be given in course design, unit credit etc...We have standards that we need to meet that are particular to our programs. Moreover, given the financial state of the UC and that the “process of calendar conversion would require a significant investment of resources.” We are not sure if these resources will be available.
3. From PLI and ELP: Most colleges and universities are on semester systems. It has allowed Berkeley to partner with other universities to cross collaborate with courses. We are limited in our ability to collaborate because our calendar is so different. “The quarter system works because it allows for a shorter period of time to complete the courses required. Again, if we could play with the number of classes that might account for that concern. Right now, I am not sure semester is the way to go for ELP and PLI, I can see it for undergrad and TEP.”

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1. Curious how our faculty would see this move. It reduces the way they can take sabbaticals and cover course loads.
2. May extend the time EdD and PhD students take to get their degree. Faculty already complain that PhD students take too long to finish, they would have to really think about how semester classes will work.

**Separate Comment from a Faculty Member:**

For the common calendar report, I’m curious as to why information from a survey conducted by the faculty associations on faculty’s perceptions around this switch was not included. Is it possible to add data from that report? The below provides a nice overview.

<https://cucfa.org/2025/02/common-calendar-survey-results/> <https://cucfa.org/2025/02/common-calendar-survey-summary/>



**OFFICE OF THE ACADEMIC SENATE**

Kevin Mitchell, Chair of the Academic Senate  
[senatechair@ucmerced.edu](mailto:senatechair@ucmerced.edu)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 North Lake Road  
Merced, California 95343

**April 24, 2025**

**To: Steven Cheung, Chair, Academic Council**

**From: Kevin Mitchell, Chair, UCM Divisional Council (DivCo)**

**Re: [Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report](#)**

The *Draft Report of the Academic Calendar Workgroup* was distributed to the Merced Division Senate Committees and School Executive Committees. The following committees offered comments for consideration. Their comments are appended to this memo and summarized below. We encouraged you to refer to the appended memos for further detailed feedback.

- Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP)
- Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA)
- Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF)
- Undergraduate Council (UGC)

**CAP** recognizes both the pros and cons of quarter and semester systems for faculty and students, as well as the benefits of aligning academic calendars across campuses. While acknowledging the challenges and costs of such changes, CAP urges the Academic Calendar Workgroup to prioritize student learning and consider the impact on teaching quality, which is key to faculty and student success.

**CAPRA** finds the report provides a neutral assessment of four academic calendar options for the UC system. For UC Merced, which already uses semesters, most options would have minimal impact, except for the costly shift to a quarter system. While the report outlines pros, cons, and costs - largely based on CSU data - its methodology lacks clarity, especially around optional elements like RRR week. CAPRA suggests UC Merced consider piloting an RRR week to evaluate potential benefits for student well-being and learning, but notes that current cost estimates are not suitable for assessing this specific change.

**FWAF** supports the rationale for a unified UC academic calendar but notes that the change would have little effect on UC Merced. However, implementing it systemwide would be highly burdensome, especially for already overworked faculty. Due to the high costs and current political climate, the committee recommends maintaining the current calendar system.

UGC finds the report unconvincing and believes the proposed calendar change is too disruptive and costly without a strong justification. It warns that the report underestimates the extensive effort required for curriculum redesign and institutional restructuring. Past reforms have failed to improve outcomes, and no clear evidence links calendar type to student success. UGC stresses that each campus has unique needs and that a switch would demand thousands of faculty hours per program. Without clear benefits, UGC recommends against pursuing the change and calls for a detailed cost-benefit analysis before any action is taken.

At its April 22 meeting, the Divisional Council carefully reviewed the Report in conjunction with the thoughtful feedback submitted by multiple committees. After thorough discussion, the Council aligns with the concerns and perspectives expressed across these committees. It is clear that the proposed plan would have significant and far-reaching implications for students. Accordingly, the Divisional Council strongly advocates for preserving the current structure.

We thank you for the opportunity to review this Report.

Cc: DivCo Members  
UCM Senate Office  
Systemwide Senate Office

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL (CAP)  
MIRIAM BARLOW, CHAIR  
mbarlow@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343

**April 11, 2025**

**To:** Kevin Mitchell, Senate Chair

**From:** Miriam Barlow, Chair, Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP)

**Re:** Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

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CAP reviewed the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. We offer the following comments.

CAP acknowledges the advantages and disadvantages to quarter and semester systems for both faculty and students. CAP also acknowledges advantages to both faculty and students by aligning calendars as well as the difficulty and high cost of changing academic calendars at any campus. As the Academic Calendar Workgroup continues its analysis of a potential common calendar, we encourage them to prioritize student learning and take into consideration the impact on pedagogy of any changes that may be implemented. The quality of instruction offered by the UC is an important piece of both faculty and student success that CAP believes should be prioritized.

We appreciate the opportunity to opine.

cc: Senate Office



ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PLANNING AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION  
MICHAEL BEMAN, CHAIR  
mbeman@ucmerced.edu

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343

**April 11, 2025**

**To:** Kevin Mitchell, Senate Chair

**From:** Michael Beman, Chair, Committee on Academic Planning and Resource Allocation (CAPRA)

**Re:** Systemwide Academic Calendar Draft Report

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CAPRA reviewed the Systemwide Academic Calendar Draft Report and offers the following comments.

Summary

The Report discusses the advantages and disadvantages of four options for a common UC systemwide calendar (excluding UC San Francisco):

1. Common semester calendar
2. Common quarter calendar
3. Campuses currently on a quarter calendar move to an alternative quarter calendar
4. Status quo

The Report does not explicitly advocate for any one of the four options, but instead aims to provide something like a neutral overview of the major advantages and disadvantages for semesters and quarters in general and the four options specifically, as an “information gathering exercise” to support future deliberation (p. 2). The Report also provides estimated costs for options 1 and 2 (p. 12-13).

Overall implications for UC Merced

As UC Merced currently uses semesters, under options 1, 3, and 4 nothing here would necessarily change. The Report does estimate non-zero costs to UC Merced under option 1; this option, and the methodology for developing the cost conversion estimates, will be discussed separately below.

Option 2 would require UC Merced and UC Berkeley to adopt a quarter calendar, bringing our campuses into line with the rest of the system. Estimated conversion costs for UC Merced under this option are substantial, on the order of 14M-38M USD in one-time costs and 2M-6M USD annually in debt servicing. This option will be discussed further below.

The Report does raise the possibility that, under options 1, 3, and 4, UC Merced might adopt Reading, Review, and Recitation (RRR) weeks, as currently used by UC Berkeley (the other campus currently on semesters). This possibility will be discussed below.

#### Option 1: Common semester calendar

This option would not necessarily have significant impacts on UC Merced, unless our campus adopted RRR week.

The primary arguments in favor of a common semester calendar (pp. 5ff, 14) are:

- better alignment with other AAU institutions, CSUs, CCCs, and K-12 calendars, along with, eg, summer internships aligned with semesters, leading to improved opportunities for extramural research collaboration, cross-campus enrollment (at various levels), and so on
- pedagogical advantages of 15 vs. 10 weeks of instruction
- "Institutions that changed from quarters to semesters did not report major cost savings, but instead a reduction in workload once converted" (p. 6)

The primary argument against a common semester calendar is the significant overall expense, both financial (on the order of USD 300M across the system) and in terms of faculty and staff workload required for the transition. Major areas of necessary work would include modifying courses and program requirements; advising students; and updating registration and other IT systems.

#### Option 2: Common quarter calendar

This is the only option that would have a significant impact on UC Merced. Estimated conversion costs for our campus under this option are substantial, on the order of USD 14M-38M in one-time costs and USD 2M-6M annually in debt service.

The primary argument in favor of a common quarter calendar is that 10-week terms create "flexibility" in course offerings and faculty workload (p. 15). No argument was presented that a common quarter calendar would have overall budgetary benefits. The report argues that quarters offer "Faster pace to reduce burnout and prevent procrastination" (p. 15); but also that "Faculty and students may face burnout by week 10" (p. 5), presumably due to the fast pace required by 10-week quarters.

#### Conversion cost estimates

The Report provides campus-level estimates for conversion costs for options 1 and 2. The methods behind these estimates are provided in a separate document ("the Methods").<sup>1</sup>

The estimates were generated based on actual costs for 6 CSU campuses<sup>2</sup> to move from quarters to semesters, adjusted for inflation and salary differences from the UC campuses. For option 1, UC Merced and UC Berkeley estimates were then reduced by 90% and 95% (respectively) to account for the fact that we are already on semesters. These coefficients appear to be ad hoc. For option 2, conversion estimates were reduced for the other seven campuses in a similar way.

Note that these estimates are not based on any model of the conversion process. Instead, they are imputed from the costs observed by the 6 CSU campuses. The Methods does provide a "functional" breakdown of conversion costs, eg, "40% of non-tech costs for curriculum revision/redesign and course/program review" (Methods 3). Based on the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/content-analysis/academic-planning/uc-academic-calendar-estimating-uc-calendar-conversion-costs-for-community-input.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> CSU Bakersfield, CSU LA, CSU East Bay, CSU Pomona, CSU Santa Barbara, and Cal Poly SLO

wording, it's unclear whether this functional breakdown is an armchair estimate or a more empirical estimate provided by Cal Poly SLO (Methods 3).

The Report claims that the UC Merced option 1 estimate is non-zero because it "includes some expenses for implementing optional calendar features (e.g., RRR period for UC Merced)" (p. 12). But this appears to be incorrect, as the Methods are not this granular: there does not appear to be any information on whether any CSU campuses adopted the RRR week, and there are no examples of CSU campuses that were already on semesters and adopted RRR week.

All together, it is not clear whether and why there would be any significant campus-level conversion costs for UC Merced and UC Berkeley if we made no changes to our calendar under options 1, 3, or 4. While there may be non-trivial conversion costs for us to adopt RRR week, the Methods do not seem to provide a reasonable estimate of what those costs might be.

#### Reading, Review, and Recitation (RRR) week

UC Berkeley's semester calendar is virtually identical to UC Merced's, with the exception of Reading, Review, and Recitation (RRR) weeks at the end of the Fall and Spring semesters. RRR weeks count as instructional days, and coincide with the final week of course meetings at UC Merced.

A set of faculty guidelines for RRR weeks is available online, though undated.<sup>3</sup> During RRR weeks, students are expected to review material, study for final exams, and prepare final projects on their own schedule. Instructors may offer optional review sessions during RRR week; but may not hold mandatory class meetings, and are strongly discouraged from setting due dates during RRR week.

The intention of RRR week is to reduce student stress and thereby improve learning as they wrap up the semester. It seems plausible that UC Merced students might benefit from adopting RRR week. We would encourage UGC and GC to take up this question (assuming the system does not adopt option 2).

For reasons discussed above, the Report's conversion cost estimates should not be considered valid for UC Merced's adoption of RRR week. Our campus might consider a pilot project (and/or RCT) to examine both expense and student outcomes. For example, sections of WRI 001/010, SPRK, and high enrollment courses first-year courses in MATH, BIO, ECON, PSY might be randomly assigned to adopt a RRR week or not. Again, we encourage UGC to consider this possibility.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments.

cc: Senate Office

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<sup>3</sup> [https://teaching.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/rrr\\_guidelines.pdf](https://teaching.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/rrr_guidelines.pdf)

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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
COMMITTEE ON FACULTY WELFARE AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM (FWAF)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED  
5200 NORTH LAKE ROAD  
MERCED, CA 95343

**April 16, 2025**

**To: Kevin Mitchell, Academic Senate Chair**

**From: [Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom \(FWAF\)](#)**

**Re: [Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report](#)**

During the April 7, 2025 meeting, members of the Committee on Faculty Welfare and Academic Freedom (FWAF) reviewed the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report and offer the following comments.

FWAF believes the report provides a strong rationale for unifying the academic calendars within the UC System. Given UC Merced's current utilization of the semester calendar, there would be minimal impact on faculty welfare on our campus. That said, the amount of work required to create a unified calendar for our sister campuses would be enormous, if not prohibitive. As the report notes, given the unprecedented political moment and the general threats to higher education more generally, this project would not be the best use of time and energy for already-overburdened faculty on our sister campuses. Given the associated costs with any calendar change, the committee recommends the status quo option presented by the authors of the draft report.

FWAF thanks you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report.

Cc: FWAF Members  
Senate Office



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ACADEMIC SENATE, MERCED DIVISION  
UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL (UGC)

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, MERCED

**April 14, 2025**

**To: Kevin Mitchell, Chair, Academic Senate**

**From: Jay Sharping, Chair, Undergraduate Council (UGC)**

**Re: [Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report](#)**

The Undergraduate Council (UGC) reviewed the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report and offers the following comments:

UGC believes the report lacks a compelling rationale for the calendar conversion. Without strong justification, the change would be too disruptive and costly. Furthermore, the report has likely underestimated expenses by overlooking the cost of curriculum redesign.

As for rationale, the report offers three vague motives on page 14:

*Based on input received from campus colleagues, APC workgroup members identified multiple reasons to support a common calendar, including but not limited to:*

- *Greater systemwide collaboration among professional disciplinary and student extracurricular activities across the nine undergraduate campuses, along with conference and meeting sessions and planning for systemwide initiatives.*
- *Expansion of systemwide course and program offerings ... increased intersegmental course offerings ... and depending on the calendar selected, dual enrollment in high schools and concurrent enrollment with CCCs...*
- *More comparable student experiences across all nine undergraduate campuses, particularly related to experiential learning opportunities and for student athletes.*

UGC points out that past calendar reforms aimed at increasing classroom space utilization have been unsuccessful. It remains that each campus faces its own unique challenges and regional circumstances that dictate which calendar is most suitable.

UGC highlights that converting between semester and quarter calendar systems involves major institutional challenges and significant costs. While there are studies that highlight the benefits to both systems, there is no conclusive data linking either calendar to improved student success. In terms of quantifiable advantages, the report does not estimate financial advantages of sharing technology infrastructure of having one less course registration cycle.

## **Course Redesign and Curriculum Restructuring**

Changing the calendar will require a substantial redesign of all programs and their course offerings to fit the new format. This entails:

- Repackaging the content of courses into the new term duration.
- Re-sequencing prerequisites, major requirements, and minor requirements.
- Updating syllabi, assessments, and instructional materials.
- Redocumenting, reviewing, and approving course and program changes.
- An estimate of the effort required from faculty and staff could easily exceed 5000 hours per program. (20 hours/class for 25 classes to redesign the class at a high level, double that amount to account for program redesign, 2 extra hours/hour of class time to modify lecture material, rewrite catalog copy, review and approval for each course, and review and approval for each academic program).

In conclusion, while calendar reform may be worth exploring, UGC believes that the cost, labor, and logistical burden of switching should not be underestimated. A thorough cost-benefit analysis, including stakeholder input from faculty, staff, and IT specialists, is essential before moving forward. In the absence of compelling pedagogical or institutional necessity, such a disruptive shift is not the best use of the university's limited resources.

UGC thanks you for the opportunity to review the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report.

Cc: Senate Office  
UGC Members



CHAIR, ACADEMIC SENATE  
RIVERSIDE DIVISION  
UNIVERSITY OFFICE BUILDING, RM 225

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May 19, 2025

Steven Cheung, Chair, Academic Council  
1111 Franklin Street, 12th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

## RE: Systemwide Review of the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Steven,

The Riverside Senate Division addressed the [\*APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report\*](#) and matters therein through a virtual town hall (attended by 200 members), followed by a division survey, along with the normal Senate consultative review process launched on February 27, 2025. This engagement culminated in discussion by the Riverside Executive Council on May 12, 2025. I write to provide the full feedback from UCR on this matter.

The UCR survey, completed by 251 members, revealed a strong preference for maintaining the status quo due to concerns about disruption, cost, negative impacts on student learning and faculty research, and a lack of clear rationale for the change. A summary of this survey is attached.

Twenty six Senate standing and faculty executive committees were tasked with review and the overwhelming consensus is one of strong opposition to a systemwide conversion from the quarter system to a semester system. The primary concerns raised across the reports center on the significant financial costs, increased workload and disruption for faculty, staff, and students, and the lack of clear, empirically-supported benefits to student success and faculty productivity. Several committees also express concern about the timing of this proposal given current budget cuts and other political and institutional challenges facing the University of California system. There is a perceived lack of transparency and sufficient faculty consultation in the process leading to this draft report.

### 1. Financial Costs and Budgetary Concerns:

- **High Conversion Costs:** Multiple committees highlight the substantial estimated costs of converting to a semester system, with figures cited from the report ranging from "\$288.62-370.96 M cost plus financing costs" and a campus-level estimate of "\$40-46 million."
- **Inappropriate Timing:** Given the "impending budget cuts faced by the University of California," "current budgetary cuts and uncertainty," and "looming existential threats to the UC system," committees universally agree that undertaking such a costly transition at this time is fiscally irresponsible.

- **Cost of Additional Labor and Lost Productivity:** Concerns are raised about the need for "additional compensation" for faculty and staff to handle the increased workload of curriculum revision and implementation. Furthermore, committees anticipate a "loss in productivity associated with diversifying workload within a fixed timeframe," as faculty and staff will be diverted from their normal duties.
- **Facilities Upgrades:** The cost estimates in the report are seen as potentially insufficient, lacking details on "what facility updates would be needed and these costs," particularly regarding infrastructure to handle increased energy consumption for cooling classrooms during a hotter fall semester start.

## 2. Faculty Workload and Impact on Research/Creative Activity:

- **Increased Teaching Assignments:** A major concern is that "It is unlikely that the number of courses per faculty will decrease under a semester-based system, likely resulting in decreased faculty research and creative activity outputs."
- **Loss of Flexibility for Research:** The quarter system allows for greater flexibility in scheduling teaching, such as "bunching" or "stacking" one's teaching schedule over the course of two quarters and freeing up time from teaching to allow for greater focus on research and writing." This flexibility would be lost in a semester system.
- **Difficulty in Taking Time Off:** Under the quarter system, it is "common for faculty to have a quarter off teaching," enabling "creative activities during the academic year." This is deemed "unlikely that faculty would have the opportunity to have a semester off teaching" in a semester system.
- **Curriculum Revision Burden:** Faculty will face an "immense impact on the work...as all courses and curriculum would need to be revised to fit a semester system," requiring "a large amount of funding and resources" and causing "undue burden to faculty and staff without mention of appropriate compensation, or consent."

## 3. Student Impact and Pedagogical Concerns:

- **Potential for Delayed Graduation and Increased Costs:** There is "evidence-based concern that students whose time to degree is increased during the transition period would ultimately pay more for their degrees/lose income due to later entry into the job market."
- **Higher Course Load and Dropout Rates:** With a semester system, "students will have a higher course load to complete program requirements, will also likely need extra time to graduate and will fall behind. This will likely lead to higher student dropout rates."
- **Loss of Breadth in Learning:** While semesters allow for "courses to engage a wider expanse of material with added depth," faculty and students often favor the quarter system for "the advantage of taking a broader range of classes" and the ability to "sample a broader range of material."
- **Transition Challenges for Existing Students:** "For three years or more, there would remain student cohorts who were admitted on the quarter system and would graduate with a combination of quarter and semester courses," creating complications for advising and graduation requirements.
- **No Clear Evidence of Improved Student Success:** Several committees note the lack of evidence that a semester system correlates to better student success or learning outcomes.

#### 4. Lack of Transparency and Shared Governance:

- **Insufficient Faculty Consultation:** Concerns are raised about the lack of faculty consultation "prior to or after the survey was distributed." The process is described as "not been consistent with genuine shared governance with substantial faculty input."
- **Top-Down Initiative:** There is a strong perception that the proposed change is a "top-down mandate" from UCOP, which is "against the principles of shared governance, and the lack of transparency and initial consultation have made faculty suspicious about ulterior motives."
- **Missing Background Information:** The report is criticized for not providing sufficient "background information is provided about where this process originated and why it is presented at this time."

#### 5. Questionable Benefits and Alternatives:

- **Limited Evidence for Stated Benefits:** Committees find "little evidence to support possible benefits of changing the calendar for students, faculty or administrators," particularly regarding improving the transfer student experience or gaining a "competitive advantage for summer experience."
- **Quarter System Advantages:** The quarter system is highlighted for its "faster-paced movement," allowing for a "broader range of classes," and greater flexibility for students to "temporarily withdraw in the advent of an emergency."
- **Alternative Solutions:** The possibility of a "more practical solution" like "slid[ing] the schedule of the quarters to align with the semester offerings" is suggested as a way to achieve some benefits without the disruptive effects of a full conversion. A "gradual onramp" approach over several years is also proposed.
- **Focus on More Pressing Issues:** Many committees feel that resources and attention should be directed towards addressing "more pressing demands," including "staff and faculty positions, support for graduate students who lost funding, bridge funding for research projects terminated," and dealing with "the politicization of academic research."

#### Additional Themes and Specific Concerns:

- **International Education:** While acknowledging some challenges for students studying abroad, committees believe "flexibility in arranging international study generally had worked to overcome these different calendars" and do not justify a calendar change.
- **University Extension:** Conversion would require adaptation of courses and programs, increasing resource needs, but would benefit visiting students from semester-based institutions.
- **Physical Resources:** Specific concerns about "Classroom temperatures during the summer months" and the need for "additional large classrooms" or "supplemental online modalities" are raised.
- **Information Technology:** The transition would require supplementing ITS staff and utilizing outside consultants.
- **Faculty Welfare:** Notes that aligning with CCs and CSUs could ease transfer for students, but this is not seen as outweighing the costs and disruptions.

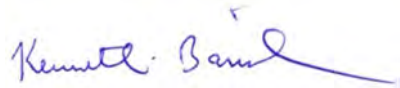
- **School of Medicine:** Notes that while their academic schedule is independent, the change would affect shared teaching space and does not see clear evidence of improved student experience or learning.
- **School of Public Policy:** Highlights the quarter system as a "recruitment advantage for UCR" due to its flexibility for faculty workload. Notes potential advantages for some in-depth courses in a semester system but emphasizes the loss of course variety.
- **School of Education:** Expresses concerns similar to others regarding time and practical costs, including increased energy costs due to a hotter fall start.
- **College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences:** Highlights the need for clarification on teaching loads, especially concerning advising and mentoring transfer students.
- **College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences:** Calls for a report from UC administration detailing the origin and justification of the task force and addressing the power structures and consultation processes involved. Cites the lack of grounding in peer-reviewed research in the draft report.

### Conclusion:

The feedback from the Riverside Division Academic Senate committees strongly opposes the proposed systemwide calendar conversion to a semester system. The committees find the potential benefits to be unclear and insufficiently supported by evidence, while the financial costs, workload implications, and disruptions to faculty, staff, and students are seen as significant and ill-timed given the current institutional context. The lack of transparency and perceived disregard for shared governance principles further contribute to the negative reception of the proposal. The overwhelming sentiment is that the existing quarter system, while not without its challenges, offers distinct advantages that would be lost in a conversion, and that resources should be focused on more pressing issues facing the University.

The Riverside Executive Council's robust discussion this week echoed the responses from their colleagues as summarized above and found in the attached committee response letters and summary document regarding the UCR divisional survey.

Sincerely yours,



Kenneth Barish

Professor of Physics and Astronomy and Chair of the Riverside Division

CC: Monica Lin, Executive Director of the Academic Senate  
Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of UCR Academic Senate Office

Attachments:

Committee Response Letters  
UCR Common Calendar Survey Summary



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

April 24, 2024

To: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Quinn McFrederick, Chair  
Committee on Academic Freedom

Re: **Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report**

The Committee on Academic Freedom reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at their April 8, 2025 meeting on behalf of their charge of academic freedom. The Committee noted concern that the report did not address how faculty teaching assignments will be modified for the semester system. It is unlikely that the number of courses per faculty will decrease under a semester-based system, likely resulting in decreased faculty research and creative activity outputs. It is also unlikely that faculty would have the opportunity to have a semester off teaching, whereas it is common for faculty to have a quarter off teaching, which allows creative activities during the academic year. The Committee recognizes that peer semester-based institutions have devised methods to protect faculty time with relief from teaching during the academic year. We therefore recommend that this issue be considered by the System.



**COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL**

May 2, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Jingsong Zhang, Chair  
Committee on Academic Personnel

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jingsong Zhang", written over the printed name.

**Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

On Monday, April 28, 2025, the Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) discussed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. As was the goal of the report, CAP assessed both the advantages and complications of moving from a quarter system calendar for the majority of University of California campuses for alignment with the two campuses (UC Berkeley and UC Merced) currently operating on the semester system.

The advantages and complications of a shift from the quarter system to the semester system (or vice-versa) are manifold. As made clear in the report, a shared calendar would prove advantageous for both faculty and students who may find themselves oscillating between two or more campuses or taking on internships which conflict with a term—in the case of campuses on the quarter system—that extends, for example, beyond the month of May.

With respect to instruction, the semester system allows for courses to engage a wider expanse of material with added depth as compared to quarters in which a ten-week term moves much too quickly. However, faculty and students often favor the quarter system for its faster-paced movement and the advantage of taking a broader range of classes. The quarter system also allows for students to temporarily withdraw in the advent of an emergency to then return earlier as opposed to waiting for the beginning of a new semester.

While recognizing the advantages of aligning the calendar among the campuses, several CAP members commented on the issue of the overhead for faculty to convert their teaching to a semester format and its likely substantial impact on faculty workload. Concerns were also expressed around the loss of flexibility in terms of scheduling teaching to create space for research (e.g., “bunching” or “stacking” one’s teaching schedule over the course of two quarters and freeing up time from teaching to allow for greater focus on research and writing). CAP viewed the proposal to slide the schedule of the quarters to align with the semester offerings as a more practical solution that can achieve some of the benefits of the proposed conversion while avoiding some of the most disruptive effects.



CAP's discussion, however, consistently returned to whether any kind of calendar conversion was a feasible endeavor at this particular moment given the impending budget cuts faced by the University of California. While there is much to be gained in aligning each campus in accord with the same academic calendar, the difficulties of making this a reality—particularly for those presently operating on the quarter system—may prove complicated with resources allocated for more pressing demands.



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY**

April 22, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Stephen Kane, Vice Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

**Re: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report**

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at their April 4, 2025 meeting. The Committee is not supportive of implementing a semester system at UCR. The Committee notes concern that the cost to transition from a quarter-based system to semesters would require a large amount of funding and resources. Specifically, the Committee noted that their workload would largely increase as all academic programs would need to propose changes to their curriculum as would the Academic Senate Committee on Courses, which would necessitate additional resources for the Committees to complete reviews of curriculum and course proposals. The Committee also questioned how a transition to semesters would help increase course availability and how student cohorts would transition from quarters to semesters.



## *Academic Senate*

### COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

April 7, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Michele Salzman, Chair  
Committee on International Education

Re: **[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on International Education reviewed the [Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report at their meeting held on April 3, 2025. There was a clear consensus that changing the calendar was not warranted at this time. Neither the benefits nor the costs were of sufficient merit to win support from the committee.

In fact, there was concern about both the timing of these proposed changes and their budgetary implications. Given the economic situation, any money spent would be better used to facilitate international education programs and the ability of students to undertake study abroad or at home.

The committee acknowledged that students in a quarter system who wanted to study abroad usually had to contend with negotiating dates and credits, but flexibility in arranging international study generally had worked to overcome these different calendars. Again, all agreed, that increased flexibility would allow such coordination and that even these challenges did not merit changing the academic calendar from quarters to semesters.

Even though some saw advantages to a longer period of study in the semester system, as did one graduate student representative, this view was not universal. Many felt that shorter classes allowed for more subjects to be studied and more intense bursts of study. Again, even those who valued a longer period of study in the semester did not feel that this justified changing the present quarter system.

Finally, it was noted that FLEAP programs that occur during summer sessions B may not allow students on semesters to enroll. But there is no indication if those courses would be of interest. Nor were these of sufficient value to justify changing the calendar.

To repeat, there were not enough benefits to justify a costly and disruptive change as represented by the new calendars.



**COMMITTEE ON COMMITTEES**

April 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Sean Cutler, Chair  
Committee on Committees

**Re: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report**

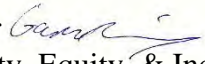
The Committee on Committees (CoC) discussed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report at their April 24, 2025 meeting. Members were not in favor of a common calendar or moving to a semester system. Members argued that a semester system will amount to a considerable expense to campuses and will include a lot of time and energy for faculty, as well as a potential (and arguably likely) increase in faculty teaching loads. Given the current budget crisis UC is facing, as well as all the political challenges and pressures we are dealing with, the timing of this discussion is unfortunate. Some members mentioned that the climate in Riverside in August through late September is not conducive in many respects for the fall semester starting in August, which would also create an increase in energy costs. Members agreed that the quarter system allows for more time for faculty to do research. Members were puzzled by the argument to move toward a semester system because the sources cited in the report associated a semester system with worse academic results for students. CoC would like to see evidence that supports a semester system correlating to better student success. CoC was also concerned that faculty were not consulted prior to or after the survey was distributed. It seems it would have made more sense to ask for faculty input before the survey was distributed, or after the survey results were compiled and distributed so that the survey responses could be considered in committee and faculty discussions. The whole process has not been consistent with genuine shared governance with substantial faculty input.



**COMMITTEE ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION**

May 2, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division Academic Senate

From: Gareth Funning, Chair   
Committee on Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

Re: **[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) has reviewed the above proposal and notes several points of concern. Generally among faculty, this proposed change is not well received and represents a hasty departure from the principles of shared Governance. In addition to being ill-timed and a strain on current University resources, this plan would cause undue burden to faculty and staff without mention of appropriate compensation, or consent. The committee is concerned with the apparent lack of empirical data addressing immediate and future potential impacts of this massive transitional undertaking, or tracking of faculty, staff and student opinions within this proposal. Moreover, within this proposal, UCOP administration and the UC Regents' orientation is bereft of collaborative Senate input and influence and thereby is lacking the necessary engagement for an initiative such as this to be a worthwhile investment.

As a recommendation, the Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion imparts the imperative nature of affirming a posture of joint decision-making between, non-Senate faculty, staff, students, and importantly, Senate sentiment on this issue.



## *Academic Senate*

### **Committee on Research**

March 25, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Rachel Wu, Chair  
Committee on Research

Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The committee on research reviewed the report and agreed that given the financial challenges systemwide and discussion from the systemwide committee on research that the common calendar proposal likely will not be pursued.



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON COURSES**

May 2, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Erin Rankin, Chair  
Committee on Courses

**Re: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report**

The Committee on Courses reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at their April 24, 2025 meeting. The Committee noted concern that a proposed change to a semester system would have an immense impact on the work of the Committee and department course preparers as all courses and curriculum would need to be revised to fit a semester system. Additionally, the Committee noted that the cost of such a transition would not be prudent with the current impact to the Division's budget.

**FACULTY WELFARE**

April 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Salman Asif, Chair  
Committee on Faculty Welfare

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Salman Asif".

**RE: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report***

The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*. CFW has the following comments:

The committee acknowledges that in the long run, the benefits of synchronizing calendars among the UCs could outweigh the costs. More specifically, moving to a semester system compared to a quarter system would match California's CCs and CSUs schedules. This could make transferring easier for students from a CC to a UC.

There was general agreement among the CFW members that the workload involving the transition will be too substantial at a time when we are facing unprecedented stress from the politicization of academic research. Perhaps, the workgroup could propose a 4 to 8-year timeline/plan on how to implement these changes little by little. For example, in the first year, universities could focus on simply matching their academic years' start and end dates, which would be relatively easy. Then, in subsequent years, UC campuses may start implementing the two-week winter period and adjusting all holidays and breaks. Then, finally, we could switch to a common calendar, which could be more aligned with CCs and CSUs in California. This gradual onramp would give faculty enough time to prepare to teach longer courses and add additional material to their already existing 10-week courses.

The committee also observes that the quarter system is beneficial in terms of pedagogy. This is especially true for upper division courses, where students can get a broader perspective by taking 50% more courses. A serious in-depth coverage of just about any field takes more than 15 weeks, anyway. Having 3 upper division courses per year as opposed to 2 gives students a better opportunity to sample a broader range of material. The quarter system also helps students to make up courses in which they do poorly while staying on track to graduate on time. Students can take a greater breadth of courses, more efficiently switch majors, and



accelerate their time to graduation if needed. Student attention spans are more well suited to the 10-week course timeline.

The quarter system is infinitely more flexible for faculty as well. Faculty can take brief one-quarter sabbaticals to focus intensively on research with minimal disruption to teaching/service. Teaching can also be more easily balanced with research activities (e.g., avoiding teaching during a field season or taking on a double teaching load in one quarter and freeing up the rest).

Finally, the committee feels that in coming years the faculty will not be able to devote any time to changing to a semester system when we are facing a dismantling of our research programs and federal funding entities. Beyond pedagogical arguments (which are solid), this makes the switch nearly impossible. Financial burden and personnel disruption alone does not justify the change at this time.



## *Academic Senate*

### **GRADUATE COUNCIL**

April 21, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Viji Santhakumar, Chair  
Graduate Council

**Re: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Graduate Council reviewed and discussed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report at their April 17, 2025 meeting. Council members were not in favor of all campuses changing to the semester system. At UCR, there is no space or capacity to accommodate this type of change. It is a costly change without any promise of adequate resources to support it. With this change, students will have a higher course load to complete program requirements, will also likely need extra time to graduate and will fall behind. This will likely lead to higher student dropout rates. This proposed change also drastically increases faculty workload and teaching hours without compensation, which may lead to even higher faculty turnover and personnel changes. This will also have an environmental cost for UCR due to expanded classroom cooling needs in summer.



## *Academic Senate*

### **Committee on Information Technology**

May 2, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Ilya Brookwell, Chair  
Committee on Information Technology

**Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

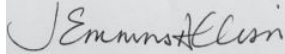
The committee discussed the proposed workgroup draft and had a few comments. One comment is regarding the total expense of the transition and if this is the best time to pursue such an expensive change. Additionally, it would require ITS staff to be supplemented and outside consultants to help offset their overall workload. Overall, the committee felt like this is not the right time to consider these changes.

**PLANNING AND BUDGET**

May 1, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Juliann Allison, Chair  
Committee on Planning and Budget

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Juliann Allison".

**RE: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report***

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*. CPB has the following comments:

- Given the committee's charge to address budgetary matters, we call attention to the "appropriate investment of time and support for faculty and staff" required for semester conversion noted on page 10. The \$288.62-370.96 M cost plus financing costs noted on page 12 are significant. Without numbers on what facility updates would be needed and these costs, it is challenging to get a whole picture of the total cost but clear that it is significant. With current budgetary cuts and uncertainty, it is a particularly inappropriate time to undertake such a cost.
- Additional educational costs/loss of postgraduate income for students associated with delays in degree completion: There is evidence-based concern that students whose time to degree is increased during the transition period would ultimately pay more for their degrees/lose income due to later entry into the job market.
- Cost of compensation for additional labor: There is concern about the budgetary impact of such a calendar change and the additional labor it will require. Additional compensation would be required for faculty and staff to implement this proposed calendar change. There should be a thorough analysis of what these costs will be.
- Cost of lost productivity associated with additional labor: Even if faculty and staff are fairly compensated to implement the calendar change (including revising every single class, major, and program, and all the consequent discussion and approvals), there is concern that faculty and staff will not have time to accomplish the necessary work as funding will not create more hours in the day to do work beyond one's normal (high) load. We expect an overall loss in productivity associated with diversifying workload within a fixed timeframe.



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON PRIVILEGE & TENURE**

May 2, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

Fr: Louis Santiago, Professor and Chair *Louis Santiago*  
Committee on Privilege & Tenure

Re: **[Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Privilege and Tenure reviewed the draft report of the Academic Calendar Workgroup, and had the following comments:

Given the estimated cost of the conversion (estimated at \$40-46 million) and the potential for significant budget cuts (8+ %), the Committee believes this is not a reasonable time to discuss this proposal from a budgetary perspective. Rather, any new funding should be spent on staff and faculty positions, support for graduate students who lost funding, bridge funding for research projects terminated, etc.

A main concern is that the report did not address how faculty teaching assignments will be modified for the semester system. It is unlikely that the number of courses per faculty will decrease under a semester-based system, likely resulting in decreased faculty research and creative activity outputs. It is common now for faculty to have one of three quarters free of teaching during the academic year, whereas it is unlikely that faculty would have the opportunity to have a semester off teaching. This would result in no periods of pure creative activities during the academic year and ultimately a reduction in publications and grant funding.

Team teaching is not a solution because even if a faculty member is not lecturing for a given week or several weeks, things come up in a course and it is impossible to completely disconnect. Stacking multiple courses into a long semester is also not a solution because faculty would be so burnt out after that, it would take half of the next semester of no teaching to recover.

Peer institutions have developed solutions for this, such as by offering half-semester courses or by reducing the number of courses faculty teach to allow for actual semesters free of teaching. Without this, UC Riverside would begin to resemble a Cal State.



## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON PREPARATORY EDUCATION**

May 5, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Jianzhong Wu, Chair  
Committee on Preparatory Education

Re: **[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Preparatory Education (CPE) reviewed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup's Draft Report at our meeting held on May 5, 2025, and are not in support of changing from quarters to semesters and deem it would be a poor use of the increasingly limited funds. Another disadvantage of moving to semesters is that students currently have 3 quarters to satisfy the Entry Level Writing Requirement (ELWR). Moving to semesters, students would be limited to 2 semesters to satisfy the ELWR.



## Academic Senate

### PHYSICAL RESOURCES PLANNING

April 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair, Academic Senate  
Elizabeth Watkins, Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

From: Brian Siana, Physical Resources Planning Committee Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Siana", is written over a light blue grid background.

**Re: [Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

The Physical Resources Planning Committee (PRP) reviewed the March 2025 *[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report* document that proposes options and opportunities for changing the UC calendar for consistency across the system. PRP appreciates the work done by the workgroup to collect, present, and evaluate pros and cons of a common calendar. Nevertheless, the committee notes several points of concern with the proposal as it stands:

- Classroom temperatures during the summer months present a significant challenge for the UCR campus. They also bring up questions regarding facilities: Is infrastructure on campus (grid connection capacity, central plant chillers, distribution, etc.) capable of maintaining temperatures in all spaces during peak heat events in August and September? If inadequate, significant cost would be associated with infrastructure upgrades and increased energy consumption to maintain instruction.
- As noted in the draft report, the need for additional large classrooms (or supplemental online modalities, or delayed student degree progression) would require the addition of these classrooms before the transition to semester systems to maintain the current quality of education. This cost would also need to be factored into the total cost of transition for the UCR campus and the UC system at large.
- The fiscal uncertainty facing the UC system creates an environment in which the discussion of undertaking a voluntary transition of this financial magnitude is inappropriate.
- With the looming existential threats to the UC system, current approximations serve to “divert attention from UC Leadership, faculty, and staff from addressing other issues,” and do not adequately address undue burden to faculty, staff, and students. Additionally, the benefits of this transition do not clearly outweigh the costs and challenges presented.




## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON RULES AND JURISDICTION**

Date: April 30, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Kathleen Montgomery   
Chair, Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction

### **RE: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Rules and Jurisdiction has carefully considered the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. The Committee appreciates this review is meant to provide Divisions of the University of California with the preliminary draft report from the APC Workgroup. While R&J has no formal response to the substantive advantages and disadvantages to the move to a common UC calendar, the committee notes that the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report contains several omissions that we recommend be included before a final report is prepared and sent for deliberation by all parties.

#### **Suggested inclusions:**

1. Page 1 describes the Academic Planning Group established by Provost Newman and Senate Chair Cheung, but no background information is provided about where this process originated and why it is presented at this time.
2. The statement on p. 11 that “State legislators will likely support...” is made without foundation. Further, on that same page is the comment that “The Governor’s Office and Legislature would likely support efforts...to operate on the same calendar.” Yet these statements of “likely support” need to be accompanied by concrete estimates of State support to the University to cover the costs of conversion.
3. While the report provides estimates of the conversion costs at the campus and system level (p. 12), no estimates are given for the workload burdens — financial and otherwise — at the department level, and for faculty and staff. There also is no discussion about faculty retention if a conversion were to go forward.

Lastly, R&J notes with grave concern that undertaking such a conversion in the current political



climate seems unwise, with profound uncertainty about future University funding from the Federal Government. This emerging issue requires much more attention in subsequent versions of the report.




## *Academic Senate*

### **COMMITTEE ON UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS**

April 28, 2025

To: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Peter M. Sadler, Chair   
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions

Re: **[Systemwide Review] (Report Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Undergraduate Admissions (UAC) reviewed the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup's Draft Report at our meeting held on March 21, 2025. UAC found it to be a thoughtful account of arguments for and against transitioning to a semester calendar. Members were most concerned about the workload of transition that would fall upon faculty and staff. UAC also realizes that there are faculty members with no first-hand experience of semester courses, neither as instructors, nor as students. It is not clear that there will be sufficient benefits to justify the enormous upheaval of transitioning to semesters.

Not only would instructors need to redesign all lectures, labs and field sections to fit a 15-week format, but the general catalog and course registration systems would require extensive revision. New course numbering and descriptions would burden the approval process for new courses and for new graduation requirement statements across all majors and minors. For three years or more, there would remain student cohorts who were admitted on the quarter system and would graduate with a combination of quarter and semester courses. To graduate according to either catalog would require counselors and deans to approve individual variances.

The Draft Report explains that in 1966 the UC system switched from semesters to quarters to accommodate the large "baby boom" generation. Now UCR is planning for more growth. The 1966 motivation would suggest that this is the wrong time to transition back to semesters. The Draft Report recommends not transitioning when there are other stresses. Wouldn't the current White House treatment of university funding be a concurrent stress? Also, UAC members shared that faculty are currently struggling to educate the "anxious generation" (Haidt, 2024) of students, which has a high rate of mental health problems. The Draft Report indicates that even the prospect of transition is already adding to anxiety among faculty members.

UAC hears the argument that alignment with CSU and Community College semester calendars will allow smoother and faster transfer admissions. A counterargument is the known pedagogic value of gaps in coursework for students to pursue other intellectual activities. Haidt's (2024) book

recommends a gap year between high-school and college, for example. A comparable stress might apply to adjusting to new levels of instructors' expectations after transferring to a UC campus. Short gaps would likely be beneficial there too.

There are pedagogical arguments in favor of 15-week semester courses instead of shorter 10-week quarter courses. Fifteen weeks allow more time for term paper assignments, for example. UAC notes, however, that UCR Summer Sessions chooses to run 5-week courses. Semester-based UC campuses choose to split some 15-week terms into 7-week parts ("minimesters"). Longer terms mean fewer administrative restarts in a year. Shorter terms allow students to experience more faculty. Would the proposed statewide, semester-aligned calendars mostly appeal to a bureaucratic preference for simplicity and uniformity? The Draft Report appears to be a response to an administrator's initiative, but it indicates options for aligning calendars across semester- and quarter-based campuses. How should we balance pedagogic and bureaucratic advantages? It would seem to be less stressful to realign starting dates than to change the course durations.

#### **Reference**

Haidt, J., 2024. *The anxious generation: How the great rewiring of childhood is causing an epidemic of mental illness*. Penguin Press, ISBN 9780593655030 (hardcover) ISBN 9780593655047 (ebook).



**COMMITTEE ON UNIVERSITY EXTENSION**

April 23, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

From: Vagelis Papalexakis, Chair  
Committee on University Extension

**Re: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on University Extension reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report at their April 2, 2025 meeting. The Committee notes that the proposed change to a semester system would present challenges to University Extension as their courses and programs would need to be adapted from the quarter system to a semester system, which would require an increase of resources and funding. However, the Committee notes that University Extension students visiting from semester-based institutions would benefit from a conversion to semesters.

March 17, 2025

To: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

From: Elodie Goodman  
Chair, School of Business Executive Committee

Re: Report Review: *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*

Please let this memo serve as an official notification that the School of Business Executive Committee reviewed the report and noted several concerns with the considered move to a semester-based system. We found little evidence to support possible benefits of changing the calendar for students, faculty or administrators. Statements such as, “improve the transfer student experience” were included, but without supporting evidence of what or how improvement would occur. There is no evidence provided that students learn more (or even the same total) under the semester system. We did not find evidence that the May end date provides “a more competitive advantage for summer experience.” It is possible, but there no evidence (other than staff suggesting it—which is not evidence).

Furthermore, it seems that the move to a semester system would increase the need for large classes. In addition to the facilities problems that are pointed out in the report, it will be important to understand the impact of offering more large-enrollment classes on student learning and engagement.

Given the lack of evidence for strong benefits, and given the evidence of significant costs (in terms of financial impact, short-term impacts on student success, faculty and staff time, workload and stress), in our opinion the case is not made for making this change, particularly at this time.

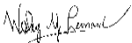
The alternate quarter option with a break in the middle of the winter quarter has no clear benefits and has costs. Schools widely turned away from that option because it hurts students’ learning and success to go home for the holidays and then come back to campus to finish the term and take exams.

One small suggestion would be to start the Fall quarter on Wednesday (instead of Thursday) and give three days off for Thanksgiving, aligning with the UC semester schools and alleviating some of the problems with the Thanksgiving week in terms of students' desire to travel on the Wednesday and faculty challenges in terms of what to do during classes on the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving.



May 1, 2025

TO: Ken Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division of the Academic Senate

FROM: Wesley Leonard, Chair   
CHASS Executive Committee

RE: Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

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The CHASS Executive Committee extensively reviewed the Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report, and **we follow the majority of faculty we represent in strongly opposing a calendar change, especially during a UC-wide hiring freeze**. We are aware that many reasons for opposing a change, such as the adverse effects on faculty and UCR's lack of the needed financial and infrastructural (e.g., classroom) resources, have already been expressed through multiple avenues. We agree with those who have raised such concerns, and therefore focus this memo on broader themes the Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report raises, for which we would like to go on record.

We note that there is technically no actual proposal to change the calendar. We, instead, are opining on an "information gathering exercise" by an ad hoc UCOP workgroup that provided a report exploring possibilities of various common calendars and their pros and cons.

However, the message that has actually come through to faculty about this report, and which has contributed to a demoralized climate in CHASS, and anger toward the administration, has largely been that 1) there is unofficially a proposal by UCOP for all general campus UCs to adopt a common calendar and 2) that this common calendar will be semester-based, thus requiring a change by UCR. We believe that UCR's Senate, in addition to advocating for UCR's needs (which at the moment we believe point to maintaining the quarter system), should engage *why* this task force was put together and how what officially is an "information gathering exercise" came to be interpreted as a UCOP proposal that is a "done deal." In particular we call on UCR's Senate to focus on addressing power structures and consultation processes (or missing processes) that may have led to this eventuality.

Furthermore, aside from a 2019 study by Bostwick et al., the report lacks sufficient grounding in peer reviewed research on semester versus quarter systems and their effects on student success and faculty workload. Any information gathering exercise by university personnel must be grounded in research and faculty expertise. This report does not meet this standard.

We also understand there is a history that is not addressed in the report: that UCOP unilaterally promoted adoption of a common calendar, to which the system-wide Senate pushed back and demanded a consultative process – hence the report we are opining on now.

This idea that the move toward a common calendar is a top-down mandate, which has circulated in CHASS discussions, is against the principles of shared governance, and the lack of transparency and initial consultation have made faculty suspicious about ulterior motives. Second, we emphasize that something like a calendar conversion for a large state university system, such as the UC, is a *very big deal*, not a point for which an ad hoc workgroup should be convened because “[r]ecent discussions about ways UC can improve its student experience and support postgraduate outcomes have raised questions about returning to a common calendar.”

We are requesting a report from the UC administration that:

- details the broader background into how and why this task force was initiated
- provides concrete, empirical examples of what these “raised questions” are, where they stem from, and why the potential move to a common calendar was the proposed solution, and why such significant changes are being proposed at this moment in time

As a more general point, and in the spirit of shared governance, we believe that any time a high-level administrator pursues an initiative like this, they must write a report that is well-documented, thorough, and transparent. Furthermore, we believe that any time a hiring freeze is implemented, any such large, costly structural changes to the UC system must also be placed on hold, given the realities of budget constraints and increased workload of existing faculty and staff to implement such changes.





April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025

TO: Kenneth N. Barish, Ph.D., Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Harry Tom, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

SUBJECT: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Prof. Barish,

The recent discussion regarding semester memos and surveys distributed by UCOP (University of California Office of the President) has highlighted key considerations in the complex transition to a semester system. These discussions, including the need for further clarification on teaching loads, particularly concerning the additional time required to advise and mentor transfer students and the comparative flexibility (or constraints) of quarter versus semester systems, have the potential to significantly impact our academic community.

The committee will receive the task force's survey link and relevant contact information to ensure all concerns are addressed. This will allow members to submit any essential questions they believe should be raised during further discussions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Harry Tom".

Harry Tom, Ph.D.  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, College of Natural and Agricultural Sciences



4/1/25

**To:** Kenneth Barish, Division Chair of the UCR Division of the Academic Senate and Cherysa Cortez, Executive Director of the UCR Academic Senate

**From:** Katherine Meltzoff, Ph.D., Faculty Chair of the School of Education Executive Committee

**Subject:** Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The SOE Executive Committee reviewed the Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. Comments/feedback were solicited at our executive committee meeting and via email.

There are concerns from members of the SOE FEC about the proposal to switch to a common calendar. Reasons for this are similar to those raised by others on campus and include: Time costs to switch (e.g. how are instructors expected to switch their courses without any reimbursement or relief from teaching?), and practical costs (e.g. in locations where it is extremely hot during late summer months, having the academic year start in August would likely lead to higher campus costs to run air conditioning).

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback.

Sincerely,

Katherine Meltzoff  
Faculty Executive Committee Chair  
School of Education  
University of California, Riverside

April 28, 2025

TO: Ken Barish, PhD, Chair, Academic Senate, UCR Division

FROM: Marcus Kaul, Ph.D., Chair, Faculty Executive Committee, UCR School of Medicine

SUBJECT: **[Systemwide Review]** Report Review: *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*

Dear Ken,

The Committee reviewed the Report Review: *APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report*.

The FEC would like to state that the policy pertains primarily to the undergrad student population and impacts them. While the School of Medicine is a professional school with an independent academic schedule, the calendaring change will affect teaching space allocated for various programs, including in locations important to the educational function of the School of Medicine.

In addition, the report doesn't provide clear evidence that a change from quarters to semesters will improve the students' experience and learning. However, the implementation of the change would generate significantly more work for instructors and administration, and significant expenses. Together with the challenges the university faces currently, a calendaring change seems an unfavorable option.

Therefore, a thorough discussion needs be considering the potential risks and benefits before any decision to change calendaring.

Yours sincerely,



Marcus Kaul, Ph.D.  
Chair, Faculty Executive Committee School of Medicine

TO: Kenneth Barish, Chair  
Riverside Division

FR: Richard M. Carpiano, Chair  
Senate Executive Committee, School of Public Policy

RE: [Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report

Date: May 5, 2025

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The School of Public Policy (SPP) Senate Executive Committee reviewed the document “[Systemwide Review] Report Review: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report.”

Overall, it is unclear why such a drastic and extremely costly idea would even be pursued by the System Provost, Office of the President, and any other party/parties at the present time given the many, far more pressing political, legal, and financial challenges facing the UC system and its individual campuses in terms of federal executive orders and the state budget.

We submit the following comments that pertain to the impacts of the policy for the UC system, the UCR campus, and SPP.

We appreciate the extent of detail and cost estimations of different scenarios provided in the report. However, from the standpoint of a common tool in Public Policy analysis—cost-benefit analysis—the short- and long-term benefits do not come close to the immediate and enduring costs for this initiative. Furthermore, the cost estimations, while heavily focused on technological costs of such a transition to semesters, do not sufficiently consider the monetary and non-monetary costs that will be incurred by faculty, staff, and even students with such a transition. The justifications for undertaking this highly expensive endeavor (which, despite the different scenarios presented, realistically, seem to favor converting seven campuses to be like Berkeley and Merced’s semester system) are insufficient to justify such tremendous direct costs and diverting scarce funds towards this standardization endeavor. Thus, such a proposal seems more like a proposed solution in search of a problem. As such, we believe that the old adage holds: “If it is not broken, don’t fix it.”

More specifically, we raise the following issues:

1. **The existing quarter system offers a recruitment advantage for UCR.** Conversion to a semester-based calendar would risk losing our recruiting advantage. The quarter system

allows consolidation of teaching responsibilities into two quarters (20 weeks) rather than two semesters (30 weeks). In a market where the University of California has historically paid faculty less than peer institutions as outlined in previous UCOP reports, including most recently the [2025-26 University of California Budget for Current Operations](#), this workload recruiting advantage has been of critical importance to UCR overall and SPP specifically.

2. **Transition from the current quarter system to a semester system has significant tradeoffs.** The semester system has some advantages and disadvantages. For example:
  - a. Regarding curriculum covered:
    - i. Pro: in SPP, a semester-based system could offer some advantages for specific classes such as research methods classes, allowing instructors additional time to cover subjects more comprehensively.
    - ii. Con: transitioning to semesters would undermine the educational experience we offer students, reducing the variety of courses offered/that students could take while pursuing their degree. In our B.A. and Master of Public Policy programs, the quarter system allows students a broader exposure to a variety of both instructors and course topics/materials.
  - b. Regarding internships:
    - i. Pro: students with summer internships may benefit from an earlier summer conclusion to courses
    - ii. Con: this same advantage could potentially be achieved through the alternate quarter calendar, as outlined in the report
3. **Classroom Space Constraints due to a transition to the semester system.** As the draft findings indicate, a transition to semesters will increase the need for large classrooms. SPP offers several lower-division undergraduate courses that use these classrooms and relies in part on these large sections to sustain its operations. Given current space limitations on our campus, a change to semesters would negatively impact our ability to offer large classes. For our campus, this would mean the need to invest in building construction.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Richard M. Carpiano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being the most prominent.

Richard M. Carpiano, Ph.D., M.P.H.  
Professor of Public Policy

## Review of UCR Senate Faculty Survey Feedback on Proposed UC Calendar Changes

May 2025

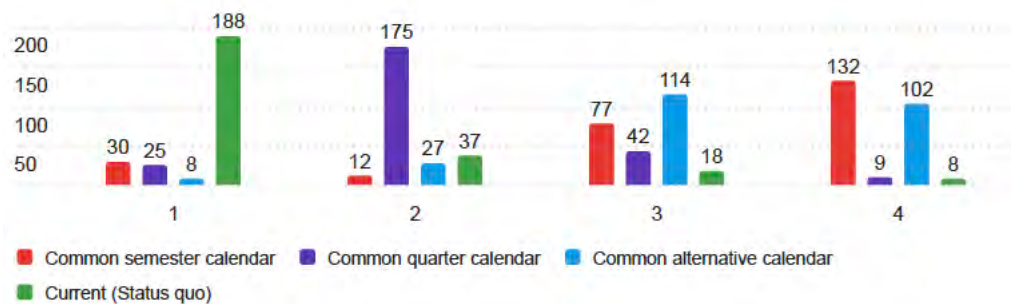
**Background:** All UCR Senate faculty were invited to complete a survey and poll regarding Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup's draft report and interest in making a calendaring change. The survey and poll was open from April 28 to May 7, 2025, during which 251 faculty responded. The complete survey responses can be found [here](#).

### Summary:

The responses from the survey reveal a strong preference for maintaining the status quo due to concerns about disruption, cost, negative impacts on student learning and faculty research, and a lack of clear rationale for the change. While a minority (10% in today's environment, 20% if resources were not an issue) of respondents expressed openness to a semester system, the overwhelming sentiment highlights significant opposition to any calendar conversion, particularly given current financial uncertainties and the perceived lack of demonstrated benefits.

### Poll Questions Results:

Q6. Please rank your preference from among the four named scenarios in the report



Q7. In today's environment, would you be in favor of changing from UCR's current quarter calendar to a semester calendar?

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Yes | 10% | 24  |
| No  | 90% | 227 |

Q8. If resources were not an issue, would you be in favor of such a change (either to a semester or an alternative calendar)?

|     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| Yes | 20% | 51  |
| No  | 80% | 200 |

## **Key Takeaways for Survey and Poll Questions**

### **1. Overwhelming Preference for the Status Quo:**

- The survey results indicate a strong preference for the current quarter calendar. In Q6, a significant majority ranked the current status quo as their first or second preference among the four scenarios presented.
- Q7 explicitly asked if respondents were in favor of changing to a semester calendar in today's environment, and the "No" responses vastly outnumbered the "Yes" responses (227 vs. 24).
- Even when resources were hypothetical not an issue (Q8), opposition remained high, though slightly less pronounced (200 "No" vs. 51 "Yes"). This suggests that the concerns extend beyond just financial considerations.

### **2. Significant Concerns Regarding Costs and Resources:**

- A major theme is the perceived high cost of transitioning to a different calendar, particularly to a semester system. This includes not only financial costs but also the immense time and effort required from faculty and staff.
- Respondents repeatedly expressed concerns about the financial constraints currently facing the UC system and the state, deeming this an inopportune time for a costly overhaul.

### **3. Negative Impact on Student Learning and Success:**

- Many respondents believe that a semester system would negatively impact student learning and success, particularly for UCR's diverse student body, including first-generation, transfer, and working students.
- Concerns were raised about reduced course flexibility, limited course access, hinderance to academic recovery, and potential delays in graduation rates.
- The quarter system is seen as providing flexibility for students balancing work, family responsibilities, and commuting.
- Research is cited suggesting detrimental effects on student learning in shifts to semester calendars and a potential decrease in on-time graduation rates.

### **4. Detrimental Effects on Faculty Research Productivity:**

- A significant concern, particularly among STEM and research-intensive faculty, is the potential negative impact on research productivity.
- The quarter system is seen as allowing for dedicated research time between quarters or through course "bunching."
- A move to semesters is perceived as leading to a net increase in teaching load and a reduction in research time, potentially affecting the ability to secure grants and impacting faculty recruitment and retention.

#### **5. Lack of Clear and Compelling Rationale for Change:**

- Many respondents felt that the provided report and the overall initiative lacked a clear and compelling justification for such a significant change.
- The supposed benefits, such as aligning with other institutions or improving internship opportunities, were questioned and seen as minor compared to the disruption and costs.
- There is a sentiment that this is a "solution looking for a problem" and a "forced issue" originating from outside UCR's specific needs.

#### **6. Concerns about Implementation and Disruption:**

- The practical challenges of implementing a calendar change were highlighted, including the massive undertaking of redesigning all courses and curriculum.
- Concerns were raised about potential bottlenecks in course offerings, difficulties for continuing students during the transition, and the strain on undersized staff.

#### **7. Climate and Environmental Considerations:**

- The hot climate in Riverside, particularly in August and September, was raised as a significant concern regarding starting the academic year earlier under a semester system.
- This was seen as potentially impacting student focus and straining campus infrastructure and energy consumption.

#### **8. Questioning the Motivation and Process:**

- Some respondents questioned the underlying motivation for the change, suggesting it might be driven by external pressures or a desire for uniformity rather than genuine educational benefit.
- Concerns were raised about the perceived lack of meaningful faculty consultation from the outset.

#### **9. Faculty Workload and Retention Concerns:**

- Faculty expressed concerns about increased workload, particularly for teaching professors and those who currently benefit from course "bunching."
- Some indicated that a move to a semester system would make them seriously reconsider staying at UCR, highlighting the quarter system as a recruitment and retention tool.

#### **10. Limited Support for Alternative Calendars:**

- While alternative calendars were presented, there was limited enthusiasm for these options.
- Concerns were raised about specific aspects of the proposed alternative quarter calendar, such as breaks in the middle of quarters.

#### **Conclusion:**

The feedback strongly indicates that UC Riverside faculty are overwhelmingly opposed to a calendar conversion. The concerns are multifaceted and deeply rooted in the perceived negative impacts on student learning, faculty research, and the immense costs and disruption involved. The lack of a clear, data-driven rationale for the change further fuels the opposition. The current financial climate and the unique characteristics of the UCR campus, such as its climate and student demographics, are significant factors in the strong preference for maintaining the existing quarter system. Any future consideration of calendar change would need to address these



concerns comprehensively, provide compelling evidence of benefits outweighing the costs and disruption, and involve extensive and meaningful consultation.

**Survey Questions:**

1. What is your college or school? (Based on home department).
2. Please indicate what best describes you. (faculty rank, etc)
3. What are your thoughts on the substance of the report, which provides an analysis of different calendaring options? Are there elements missing from the report?
4. How will a calendar change impact UCR student learning?
5. How will a calendar change impact UCR faculty?
6. Please rank your preference from among the four named scenarios in the report. [1 most preferred / 4 = least preferred]
7. In today's environment, would you be in favor of changing from UCR's current quarter calendar to a semester calendar?
8. If resources were not an issue, would you be in favor of such a change (either to a semester or an alternative calendar)?
9. What other information would you like to share?



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May 16, 2025

Professor Steven Cheung  
Chair, Academic Senate  
University of California  
VIA EMAIL

Re: Divisional Review of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Cheung,

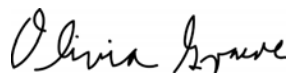
The Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup draft report was distributed to San Diego Divisional Senate standing committees and discussed at the May 12, 2025 Divisional Senate Council meeting. Senate Council opposed the idea of a common systemwide academic calendar, particularly if there is a requirement to transition from quarters to semesters. Council offered the following comments for consideration.

Although the report was thorough and unbiased, Council had significant concerns regarding the practicality, timing, and operational impact of a major calendar change. Given the current budget constraints, the benefits of adopting a common calendar are outweighed by the costs. Moreover, the estimated transition costs are likely underestimated, as they appear to exclude all faculty time required to redesign courses and curricula. Council noted that the resources needed for such a transition could be more effectively utilized in addressing the institution's more pressing priorities.

Reviewers noted that implementing a semester system would likely have far-reaching and detrimental consequences for the most vulnerable students, faculty, and staff. The quarter system has been shown to be beneficial for both students and faculty, with research suggesting that it may even be more effective than the semester system. Some of the cons are so critical that they cannot be reasonably accepted: a precipitous drop in four-year graduation rates, increased workloads for faculty and staff, disruptions to existing curricular structures, and exacerbated issues such as waitlists and classroom space. Furthermore, the loss of benefits provided by the quarter system, including faculty research time and flexible scheduling options, could have significant impacts on academic productivity and student success. Alternative schedule options, such as Maymasters or short intersessions, seem to be less impactful and more feasible to implement. Additionally, transitioning to a common calendar raises concerns about environmental impact, advising costs, and effect on transfer students, all which were not adequately addressed in the report. Given these concerns, Council recommended that the university does not proceed with calendar changes at this time, instead preserving the quarter system that has become an integral part of the UC system.

The responses from the Divisional Committee on Academic Personnel, Committee on Diversity and Equity, Committee on Faculty Welfare, Committee on Planning and Budget, Committee on Research, Educational Policy Committee, Graduate Council, and Undergraduate Council are attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Olivia Graeve". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Olivia A. Graeve  
Chair  
San Diego Divisional Academic Senate

Attachment

cc: Rebecca Jo Plant, Vice Chair, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Lori Hullings, Executive Director, San Diego Divisional Academic Senate  
Monica Lin, Executive Director, UC Systemwide Academic Senate

May 01, 2025

Olivia Graeve, Senate Chair  
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: CAP Review of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report

CAP appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report, which presents a thoughtful analysis of existing and proposed academic calendar models and outlines factors for consideration in any potential calendar change for all but one of the UC campuses. CAP discussed the report at its April 16, 2025, meeting.

While CAP commends the report's attempt to remain neutral and present a range of options, the committee expressed serious reservations about the feasibility, timing, and justification for any major calendar shift at a time of significant institutional stress. Concerns were raised about the substantial administrative and faculty workload such a change would entail, including course redesign, scheduling shifts, and IT system modifications, all during a period marked by budget cuts, post-pandemic recovery, and ongoing labor-related challenges. There was strong consensus that this is not an appropriate moment to invest in a resource-intensive transition with uncertain benefits.

Several members noted the lack of robust empirical evidence in the report to support the case for calendar conversion. While the report references some data, the committee felt it lacked sufficient analysis on faculty workload impacts, administrative costs, or academic outcomes. CAP notes that the fiscal impacts appear to exclude all faculty time required for course redesign, which assumes that the effort required for accommodating the calendar change can be accomplished without negatively impacting other faculty roles and responsibilities such as scholarship and service. There was interest in obtaining more specific information from institutions currently undergoing or who have recently completed similar transitions, such as Cal Poly, to better understand the real-world implications of a wide-scale academic calendar shift.

Although the idea of a common calendar across the UC system has some merit, particularly for a small subset of students seeking intercampus opportunities or summer internships, CAP believes these benefits to be limited. Furthermore, there was concern that any "gains" would be outweighed by the short-term and long-term costs to faculty, students, and staff.

In summary, CAP appreciates the workgroup's tremendous efforts to gather and present relevant information for systemwide consideration, however, CAP does not support moving forward with any calendar changes at this juncture. The current fiscal and political environment and institutional workload demands suggest this is neither the right moment nor a sufficiently compelling case for such a major undertaking.



Lynn Russell, Chair  
Committee on Academic Personnel

Cc: Senate Vice Chair Plant  
CAP Vice Chair Schneider  
Senate Director Hullings  
Senate Analyst Coomer

April 29, 2025

OLIVIA GRAEVE, CHAIR  
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: APC Workgroup Common Calendar Report

The Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE) reviewed the APC Workgroup Common Calendar Report at its April meeting. The CDE opposes changing from quarters to a semester common calendar. The committee members doubt that now is the time to invest staff and resources on a major change. The CDE thinks there are more critical battles/programs to support at this time amidst the budget situation. The committee members believe undergoing such a switch now would likely harm the most vulnerable students, faculty and staff. Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the report.

Sincerely,

Ross Frank, Chair  
Committee on Diversity and Equity

cc: R. Plant

April 29, 2025

OLIVIA GRAEVE, CHAIR  
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: APC Workgroup Common Calendar Report

The Committee on Faculty Welfare (CFW) reviewed the APC Workgroup Common Calendar Report at its recent meeting. The CFW strongly opposes changing from quarters to a systemwide semester calendar. Reviewing the lists of pros and cons it is immediately apparent that the line items cannot and should not be equated. Each line item can be reason enough to reject (or in theory support) a proposal for a switch. Some of the cons seem to be so critical and important it would not be a good idea to accept them (e.g., a precipitous drop in successful four-year graduation rates for many). The quarter system allows students a variety of rich experiences that makes an undergraduate education here so unique and valuable.

Sincerely,

Patrick Mercier, Chair  
Committee on Faculty Welfare

cc: R. Plant

April 30, 2025

**OLIVIA GRAEVE, Chair**  
**Academic Senate, San Diego Division**

**SUBJECT: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

The Committee on Research (COR) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report at their April 21, 2025 meeting. COR appreciated the report's balanced approach and thanks its authors. While COR acknowledges that a shift to a unified calendar for the entire UC system seems inevitable, and while the Committee is not specifically opposed to such a change, it feels strongly that the timing is not appropriate. As outlined in the report, a transition to common calendar will require an extraordinary investment of time, financial, and human resources at a time where UC is facing a budget crisis and higher education is at a crossroads. COR offers the following comments for consideration, should the conversation to transition to a common calendar continue at a future date:

- The Committee would like clarity on the current costs of operations as-is, versus the projected costs of operations under a common calendar. Ultimately, how much money would be saved by adopting a common calendar? Will there be a way to recoup savings earned from the transition to a common calendar?
- It was unclear who was advocating for a common academic calendar. Was this an initiative based on efforts from the UC Regents, from UC students, or from legislators?
- COR would appreciate more granular estimates of the cost of transitioning to common calendar that include costs associated to redesign courses, schedule rooms for courses, develop or modify online courses, etc.
- There will be a significant impact on research, as a quarter system allows for faculty to conduct research and teach, while a semester system requires more time spent teaching. Additionally, there is more flexibility for funding graduate students on research grants in a quarter system, while a semester system does not offer the same flexibility.
- Some COR members would like to see reassurance that faculty and staff workload will not increase if the campus transitions to a semester system. However, if there is an increase in workload, will that time be compensated?

With more work put on staff and faculty due to personnel leaving, a hiring freeze, and projected budget cuts for the coming years, the justification for a move to a common calendar *right now* is not clear. We thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report, and look forward to the continued discussion.

Sincerely yours,

Julie Burelle, Chair  
Committee on Research

cc: J. Coomer  
L. Hullings  
R. Plant



April 29, 2025

OLIVIA GRAEVE, CHAIR  
Academic Senate, San Diego Division

SUBJECT: APC Workgroup on Common Calendar Report

The Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) reviewed the APC Workgroup on Common Calendar Report at its April meeting. The committee members appreciate the workgroup's efforts to provide unbiased information in the report. The CPB opposes the idea of changing to the semester system. The committee believes such a change would be too costly especially at this time. The change would also place an undue burden on faculty and students.

Sincerely,

Terry Gaasterland, Chair  
Committee on Planning & Budget

cc: R. Plant

April 30, 2025

**PROFESSOR OLIVIA A. GRAEVE, Chair**  
**Academic Senate, San Diego Division**

SUBJECT: Review of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its April 21, 2025 meeting, the Educational Policy Committee (EPC) reviewed the draft report from the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. EPC commends the Workgroup for producing a thorough report that outlines different options for consideration of a common calendar. However, after careful consideration, EPC does not support the adoption of a common calendar. The Committee offers the following feedback:

- While EPC acknowledges the potential advantages of a common calendar and a semester system, the costs associated with such a transition are, in the Committee's view, too prohibitive and ultimately outweigh the benefits. A systemwide shift would significantly disrupt existing curricular structures, potentially increase time to degree, and exacerbate existing challenges related to waitlists and classroom space availability.
- The draft report effectively summarizes the respective strengths and weaknesses of the quarter and semester systems. EPC notes, additionally, that students aiming to complete their degrees in fewer than four years are more likely to succeed under the quarter system.
- The concept of a "shifted" quarter calendar—beginning in August—is recognized as innovative; however, EPC views the proposed two-week holiday break shortly after the quarter begins to be unfeasible. From both pedagogical and administrative perspectives, such a schedule would pose serious, potentially insurmountable, challenges.
- Finally, EPC observes that the stated goal of "expanding systemwide course and program offerings" appears to suggest a significant increase in online course offerings. As the report itself acknowledges, a transition to a semester system would likely necessitate more online instruction due to limited physical classroom space on campuses. An increase in online instruction implies additional costs and labor.

Sincerely,

Carrie Wastal, Chair  
Educational Policy Committee

cc: J. Coomer  
S. Dasgupta  
L. Hullings  
R. Plant

April 29, 2025

**PROFESSOR OLIVIA A. GRAEVE, Chair**  
**Academic Senate, San Diego Division**

SUBJECT: Review of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its April 14, 2025 meeting, the Graduate Council reviewed the draft report from the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. The Council offers the following comments:

- The Council is concerned that the report does not adequately address the environmental and climate-related impacts of transitioning to a common academic calendar that begins in August. These considerations are particularly relevant in light of increasing attention to sustainability and campus climate conditions.
- Additionally, given the current fiscal uncertainties and budget constraints, the Council finds that a transition to a common calendar is impractical at this time. The financial and operational burdens associated with such a shift would be difficult to justify under present circumstances.

Sincerely,

Sarah Gille, Chair  
Graduate Council

cc: D. Barner  
J. Coomer  
L. Hullings  
R. Plant

April 25, 2025

**PROFESSOR OLIVIA GRAEVE, Chair**  
**Academic Senate, San Diego Division**

SUBJECT: Review of the Systemwide Report for Common Calendar

Dear Chair Graeve,

At its April 11, 2025 meeting, the Undergraduate Council reviewed the Systemwide Report for Common Calendar. The Council finds the draft report to be thorough and generally unbiased. The analysis of calendar options is well-organized, and the potential benefits and drawbacks of each alternative are thoughtfully explored. The Council offers the following feedback:

The analysis of calendar options is well-organized, and the potential benefits and drawbacks of each alternative are thoughtfully explored. The inclusion of diverse stakeholder perspectives is appreciated, although the logistics of the community input process—especially the use and distribution of the Qualtrics survey—remain unclear. There is concern that not all faculty and staff will have an equitable opportunity to provide input.

There is a shared understanding among faculty that a common academic calendar may bring certain advantages. These include improved systemwide coordination, greater consistency for students, alignment with national internship and hiring timelines, and extended breaks between terms that would assist with grading and end-of-semester processes.

Faculty also expressed concern over the existing quarter system's impact on students, particularly the difficulty some students experience with the rapid start-stop rhythm of the academic year. A more unified and extended calendar structure might alleviate some of these challenges.

That said, the Council is not convinced that the benefits of a common calendar outweigh the costs. Faculty widely believe that the reported systemwide estimates—reaching up to \$370 million—likely underestimate the true financial and operational impact of such a conversion. These figures do not appear to fully account for the scope of curricular overhauls, advising demands, or long-term institutional strain. Given the substantial faculty and staff workload already in place, many Council members strongly feel that the resources required for this transition would be better directed toward more urgent institutional priorities.

Other general comments included unanimous dissatisfaction with the proposed winter quarter spanning across winter break and general support for alternative schedule options, such as Maymesters or short intersessions.

The Council appreciates the opportunity to weigh in on this important issue and looks forward to continued dialogue.

ACADEMIC SENATE: SAN DIEGO DIVISION  
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(858) 534-3640  
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Sincerely,

Kimberly Schurmeier, Chair  
Undergraduate Council

cc: D. Borgo  
J. Coomer  
R. Plant  
L. Hullings

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Steve Hetts, MD, Chair  
Errol Lobo, MD, PhD, Vice Chair  
Elizabeth Rogers, MD, Secretary  
Kathy Yang, PharmD, MPH, Parliamentarian

May 16, 2025

Steven Cheung  
Chair, Academic Council  
Systemwide Academic Senate  
University of California Office of the President  
1111 Franklin St., 12th Floor  
Oakland, CA 94607-5200

**Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Chair Cheung:

The San Francisco Division of the Academic Senate is pleased to comment on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. Academic Freedom (CAF) commented on this report.

Although UCSF is exempt from this policy due to our unique status as a non-undergraduate campus, the UCSF Academic Senate believes it is important to express our concerns within the broader University of California system.

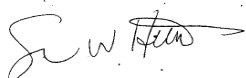
The UCSF Senate does not support the adoption of a common academic calendar across UC campuses. Our primary concern is the potential infringement on academic freedom, which is a cornerstone of the UC's mission. Academic freedom allows faculty the autonomy to structure their courses, research activities, and service commitments in ways that best suit their disciplines and pedagogical styles. A uniform academic calendar across all campuses could undermine this autonomy by imposing a one-size-fits-all schedule that may not align with the diverse needs and priorities of different academic departments and disciplines.

Each UC campus has its unique culture, academic strengths, and logistical considerations. A standardized calendar could hinder faculty's ability to innovate in their teaching and research. For instance, certain fields of study may benefit from alternative scheduling that allows for intensive fieldwork, internships, or international collaborations, which might not fit neatly into a uniform calendar framework. Additionally, the flexibility to modify academic schedules to accommodate specific local needs or emergencies would be significantly reduced, potentially impacting the quality and responsiveness of academic programs.

While we appreciate the workgroup's efforts to gather extensive feedback and consider various factors before making any recommendations, the UCSF Senate strongly believes that preserving the autonomy of each campus to determine its own academic calendar is essential to maintaining the integrity of academic freedom. We urge the workgroup to carefully weigh the potential impacts on academic freedom and the unique needs of each campus before moving forward with any recommendations for a common academic calendar. Furthermore, we recommend having detailed consultations with faculty at each campus prior to implementing any decisions.

Thank you for the opportunity to opine on this review. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Hetts", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven Hetts, MD, 2023-25 Chair  
UCSF Academic Senate

Enclosures (1)

Cc: Andrea Hasenstaub, Chair, Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF)

## Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) Andrea Hasenstaub, PhD, Chair

May 16, 2025

Steven Hetts, MD  
Division Chair  
UCSF Academic Senate

### **Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Chair Hetts:

The Committee on Academic Freedom (CAF) wishes to comment on the [Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report](#) that is out for systemwide review. While CAF understands that this review does not affect the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), as UCSF is exempt from this policy because it does not have an undergraduate campus, we believe it is important to voice our concerns broadly within the University of California (UC) system.

CAF does not support adopting a common academic calendar across campuses. Our primary concern lies in the potential infringement on academic freedom. Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the UC's mission, allowing faculty the autonomy to structure their courses, research activities, and service commitments in ways that best suit their disciplines and personal pedagogical styles. Mandating a uniform academic calendar across all campuses could undermine this autonomy by imposing a one-size-fits-all schedule that may not align with the diverse needs and priorities of different academic departments and disciplines.

Each UC campus has its own unique culture, academic strengths, and logistical considerations. A standardized calendar could hinder the ability of faculty to innovate in their teaching and research. For instance, certain fields of study may benefit from alternative scheduling that allows for intensive fieldwork, internships, or international collaborations, which might not fit neatly into a uniform calendar framework. Additionally, the flexibility to modify academic schedules to accommodate specific local needs or emergencies would be significantly reduced, potentially impacting the quality and responsiveness of academic programs.

While we appreciate the workgroup's efforts to gather extensive feedback and consider various factors before making any recommendations, CAF strongly believes that preserving the autonomy of each campus to determine its own academic calendar is essential to maintaining the integrity of academic freedom. We urge the workgroup to carefully weigh the potential impacts on academic freedom and the unique needs of each campus before moving forward with any recommendations for a common academic calendar. Furthermore, CAF recommends having detailed consultations with faculty at each campus prior to implementing any decisions.

Thank you for taking the time to review CAF's comments. Please contact me or our committee's analyst, Sophia Root ([Sophia.root@ucsf.edu](mailto:Sophia.root@ucsf.edu)), if there are questions.

Sincerely,



Andrea Hasenstaub, PhD  
Committee on Academic Freedom Chair





# UC SANTA BARBARA

Academic Senate  
Rita Raley, Chair  
Shasta Delp, Executive Director

1233 Girvetz Hall  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050  
<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu>

May 19, 2025

To: Steven Cheung, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Raley", is placed next to the "From:" line.

Re: Community Input on the Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Santa Barbara Division distributed the Academic Planning Council Academic Calendar Workgroup's Draft Report to the Undergraduate Council (UgC), Graduate Council (GC), Council on Planning and Budget (CPB), Council on Faculty Welfare, Academic Freedom, and Awards (CFW), Committee on Diversity and Equity (CDE), Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Relations with Schools (CAERS), Committee on Research Policy and Procedures (CRPP), Committee on Library, Information, and Instructional Resources (CLIIR), Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP), Committee on International Education (CIE), Committee on Information Technology (CIT), Committee on Courses and General Education (CCGE), Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections (RJ&E), Committee on Committees (COC), and the Faculty Executive Committees (FECs) of the College of Letters and Science (L&S), College of Engineering (COE), College of Creative Studies (CCS), and the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management (BREN). CLIIR and CCS and elected not to opine. The Division also distributed the Report to its Faculty Legislature in advance of its meeting on March 13, 2025, during which substantive feedback was solicited and recorded in the minutes. Each group's individual response is appended to this memo.

With bureaucratic understatement, I will note that the idea of a calendar conversion has been cause for significant concern on this campus. Because there has been some uncertainty this academic year as to the status of the idea, which we now understand to be shelved, the documentation of these concerns is condensed in some of the committee reports. Should a discussion of a systemwide academic calendar come back to campus in the form of an actual proposal, one could reasonably expect full elaboration of these and other concerns—although CRPP's "wish that this issue of systemwide calendar conversion be brought to a close without further study or deliberation" does fairly encapsulate general campus sentiment.

Even before the transition to a new federal administration, faculty remarked on the unfortunate timing of the idea, both because of the accelerated timeline and because the disruptive conditions described in the [APC workgroup report on the post-pandemic](#) remain unresolved. But now, when universities are under attack, the timing is "terrible" for a new academic calendar, as CPB notes.

Even were the timing to be optimal, this campus does not at present have the resources necessary to support a calendar transition. We are chronically understaffed, with a significant structural deficit and inadequate technological infrastructure. We can little afford further financial destabilization, which is why the L&S FEC concludes that the “present moment [is] the wrong one” for this discussion. The direct and indirect costs of a hypothetical transition would likely far exceed present estimates, and the challenges would “overwhelmingly outweigh the benefits,” as CPB concludes.

It is important to acknowledge that some faculty recognize the advantages of semesters in the abstract; for example, CIE observes that international and EAP students might be better served on a semester calendar. Other faculty found merit in a standard quarter calendar and the adjustment of start dates. In order to have a substantive discussion of these and other ideas, however, we would first need work enough, and time—as well as proper cost-benefit analyses.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

UC **SANTA BARBARA**  
Academic Senate

DATE: May 7, 2025

TO: Rita Raley, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Jason Duque, Chair  
Undergraduate Council



RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic  
Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Undergraduate Council (UgC) reviewed and considered the Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report during their May 1st meeting. While it seems like no initiative is likely to move forward right now, the Undergraduate Council wants to communicate clearly that it is not in support of a transition of all University of California (UC) campuses currently on the quarter system to the semester system. While UC's current budget challenges offer reason enough to abandon this idea immediately, the Council believes it will be extremely difficult to ever justify the cost of a transition while there are so many other emergent needs within the system. In order to avoid repeating feedback that will already be shared from our divisional Senate, the Council also reviewed the notes regarding this Draft Report from the UCSB Faculty Legislature's March 13 meeting.

One of the most serious concerns of Council has to do with our campus infrastructure, which many Council members see as already dangerously strained. Any progress on any proposal for a calendar change would require a comprehensive analysis of our classroom and laboratory infrastructure to determine whether there is adequate safe space available to accommodate the expected increase in the number of courses offered.

In general, the Council is concerned about the impact of any change in calendar on student learning and success. In general, there is a worry that a switch from the quarter system to the semester system would likely increase the time to degree. In fact, studies confirm that "switching from quarters to semesters negatively impacts on-time graduation rates."<sup>1</sup> The impacts on first year students could be especially challenging, especially for students needing additional support. Council members have observed that many first year students are still

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<sup>1</sup> Valerie Bostwick, Stefanie Fischer, and Matthew Lang. American Economic Journal: Economic Policy 2022, 14(1): 40–80  
<https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190589>

learning how to live independently, how to navigate a new institution, and, most significantly, how to engage with college-level material and instruction. In short, they are learning how to “do college.” Some have made the case that a semester’s additional weeks would better enable students’ acclimation. Council members worry, however, that with fewer academic terms to work with, a semester-based calendar could make it more difficult for a student experiencing academic setbacks to get “back on track.” For the similar reasons, students could be more hesitant to take remedial classes on the semester system due to their perception that taking such courses would put them too far behind. Council recognizes the complexity required in any full account of the benefits of a given system. For example, the system that works better for student learning will vary by student but also by area of study. For some areas of study, a quarter-based system (i.e., with courses lasting ten weeks) may be better because it offers faculty and students the opportunity to explore a range of topics over time and offer courses of study that cover a diverse array of ideas and questions. For other areas of study (e.g., engineering), a shorter term may not give students sufficient time to master core concepts.

Council has broader concerns about the feasibility of implementing a change as substantial as a shift from quarters to semesters (or vice versa). Any such change would demand a tremendous dedication of time and effort by faculty and staff. This demand could pull resources away from students, not only during the transition but in the months, or even years, following. The Council worries that where a campus lacks the requisite resources to achieve a smooth transition, some established programs might not be able to be translated from quarter to semester at all.

Finally, a switch to the semester system is likely to impact faculty research by eliminating the possibility of a non-teaching quarter. Most faculty rely on non-teaching quarters to conduct and complete research activities. Without the time, we can reasonably expect that faculty will by necessity seek more opportunities for course releases and other forms of leave. This will have predictable outcomes for undergraduate instruction; more faculty on leave will mean greater demand for replacement instructors and less interaction between ladder faculty and students.

Ultimately, Council concludes that while there may be some advantages to the semester system for some disciplines, the cost, disruption, and long-term consequences of the switch overwhelmingly outweigh any potential benefits

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

**Academic Senate  
Santa Barbara Division**

April 25, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Alexander Simms, Chair  
Graduate Council



**Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report**

At its meeting of April 21, 2025, Graduate Council discussed the draft report from the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup and has the following comments.

The UC community has been informed that the calendar conversion is not going forward at this time. Given the ongoing attacks on higher education and increasing budget cuts, the Council sees this as a matter of prioritization and believes there are more important issues at hand. Therefore, the Council does not feel it is a good use of its time to continue to discuss this topic.

If it is decided that the calendar conversion is truly going forward, the Council will be invested and will be happy to offer comments at that time.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
**ACADEMIC SENATE**  
**SANTA BARBARA DIVISION**  
Council on Planning & Budget

May 12, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Chair  
UCSB Academic Senate

From: Francesco Bullo, Chair  
Council on Planning & Budget

Re: Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Council on Planning & Budget (CPB) has reviewed the draft report of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup. Convened in September 2024 by Provost Katherine Newman and systemwide Academic Senate Chair Steve Cheung, the Workgroup includes 24 representatives from across UC campuses, including Senate faculty and administrators. We appreciate the efforts of the Workgroup to draft this thoughtful and detailed report, which provided four options for our consideration: "1) a common semester calendar, 2) a common quarter calendar, 3) a hybrid option of semester calendar and alternate quarter calendar with aligned start dates (described later), and 4) maintaining the status quo." We note that the Workgroup did not provide a final recommendation; their charge was to gather information to help deliberations on desirable calendar features and if or when campuses should move to a common calendar.

CPB focused its memo on two of the above options: 1) moving to a common semester calendar and 3) creating a hybrid option of semester calendar and alternate quarter calendar with aligned start dates. With regards to moving to a common semester calendar, CPB views the challenges as outweighing the benefits. Given the current budgetary pressures from the state and federal governments, CPB does not think that this is the time for a common semester calendar conversion. With regards to aligning start dates, CPB calls for further exploration of this option. It seems to address some of the reasons a common calendar was suggested without the insurmountable cost and work.

**Benefits and Challenges of Moving to a Common Semester Calendar (Option 1)**

CPB recognizes a number of benefits in moving to a common semester calendar. 1) While the Workgroup did not report the possibility of major cost savings, it did find a reduction in workload were a conversion to occur, providing faculty and staff more time to focus on activities related to supporting undergraduate student success and institutional performance. 2) Synchronization of calendars across UCs, CSUs, and CCs could lead to cost savings and better collaboration in planning conferences and other systemwide initiatives. 3) Opportunities for winter intersession, Maymesters, and longer minimesters would offer a greater diversity of course schedules and

types that could lead to more in-depth learning experiences. 4) Longer breaks and holidays would allow greater opportunities for reflection and rest for both faculty and students than exists between quarters. 5) An earlier end to spring instruction would help students to obtain summer jobs and fellowships by getting ahead of some present deadlines. 6) Other universities that have converted from a quarter to a semester system experienced little impact on six-year graduation rates (but a negative impact on four-year rates).

Before moving to the challenges, CPB raises questions about the first benefit identified above: Would moving to semesters indeed reduce faculty workload? CPB requests further clarification about this proposed benefit. As one example, if faculty teach 4 courses in a quarter system (a total of 40 weeks of instruction), a move to teaching 3 courses in a semester system (a total of 45 weeks of instruction) appears to be an increase in workload rather than a reduction.

Despite the above list, CPB views the challenges of converting to a common semester calendar as outweighing the benefits. While the number of challenges does not exceed the number of benefits, they appear more substantial and consequential. Challenges include the following:

- 1) The timing of this request to entertain a calendar conversion, simply put, is terrible. The UC system is facing substantial cuts to its budget from both the state and federal governments.
- 2) The financial cost needed to convert to a common calendar is high. The UC system would need to pay between approximately \$290 and \$370 million in one-time costs (not including financing estimates) for all campuses to be converted to a common semester calendar. The state did not provide financial support to the CSU system for its calendar conversion process; it is unlikely it would provide the UC system financial support either. In addition, in moving from three quarters to two semesters, additional costs might be incurred to build new instructional buildings, to expand the current number of classrooms and labs, and/or to create larger classrooms.
- 3) The conversion process places a heavy burden on already overworked faculty and staff. The amount of time and effort needed and the negative impact on morale to make the conversion and to support students through the transition should not be underestimated. If a calendar conversion were to take place, faculty involved in transitioning course content should be compensated for their time with reductions in course workload.
- 4) There is a possible negative impact on graduate students who serve as GSRs and TAs as well. For GSRs, faculty with limited grant funds are more likely to provide research opportunities over a quarter compared to a semester. For TAs, they will likely have concerns about unpaid work to help with course conversions, potential increases in the number of students taught in a given course, a reduction in the total number of courses offered each year, and thus, a reduction in the total number of TAships available. The conversion might exacerbate tensions between the university and graduate students in the face of increased financial pressures.
- 5) Converting to a common semester system could negatively impact faculty recruitment and retention at the quarter-system campuses. The quarter system is currently used as a recruitment tool: Some faculty find the possibility of having two quarters of teaching and

one devoted solely to research appealing, a schedule offered in many UCSB departments. Current quarter-system campuses might also lose faculty, who would prefer to move elsewhere than spend the time and effort required for the conversion. CPB acknowledges that other faculty might be attracted or retained if all campuses move to a semester system, relishing the opportunity to have extra weeks to delve into a topic during a course and/or finishing the regular academic year in May.

- 6) A conversion to a common semester calendar eliminates our alignment with a number of other highly regarded institutions that are also on a quarter system, including Stanford, Cal Tech, University of Chicago, and Northwestern.

### **Benefits and Challenges of Aligning Semester and Quarter Calendars (Option 3)**

Given the current state budget crisis, the Workgroup's finding that conversion to semesters would be very expensive precludes a conversion at this time. However, there was general agreement that aligning the calendars of UC, the state universities, community colleges, and K-12 schools would be beneficial. The Workgroup presented a third hybrid option, aligning the semester and quarter calendars, which might come in at a substantially lower price, yet accomplish the main goals of calendar alignment. CPB felt that this option should be studied further.

In particular, CPB requests that the alignment of the semester calendar with the quarter calendar – as opposed to shifting the quarter calendar to match the semester calendar (a modified version of option 3) – should be considered. Starting the common calendar in mid- to late-September (a feature of the quarter system) would make sense considering the concerns raised about high temperatures and cooling costs in late August and early September. Compressing the semester schedule by avoiding a month-long break between semesters would avoid pushing the spring term past the first week of June. Later end dates would negatively impact student employment and research during the summer. This proposed aligning semester-to-quarter calendar would leave the December holiday break in the middle of the fall semester, but would make more sense than adding a two week break into the middle of the winter quarter. The idea being that the trade off between 'the value of a break' and the 'disruption of a break' tilts toward the former the longer the duration of the term.

cc: Shasta Delp, Academic Senate Executive Director



**Academic Senate  
Santa Barbara Division**

May 12, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

*Laurie Freeman*

From: Laurie Freeman, Chair  
Council on Faculty Welfare, Academic Freedom and Awards

Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting of April 2, 2025, the Council on Faculty Welfare, Academic Freedom and Awards (CFW) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report regarding a potential transition from the quarter system to the semester system. The Council appreciates the opportunity to provide early feedback on this important issue. Following a detailed and thoughtful discussion, CFW wishes to communicate the following major concerns and perspectives:

1. Timing and Current Institutional and National Context

Given the University's current financial situation—including a significant budget deficit and many unknowns about the future given the broader political, economic, and social upheaval occurring nationally—the Council believes it would be irresponsible to pursue a calendar transition at this time. In a period marked by profound change and uncertainty both locally and nationally, stability is critical for maintaining academic excellence, supporting students, and protecting institutional resilience. The financial and operational burdens of undertaking such a major transition now would impose unacceptable risks.

2. Underestimated Costs and Opportunity Costs

The Draft Report significantly underestimates the true costs of a transition. These include not only direct financial expenses (e.g., IT reconfiguration, infrastructure needs, increased classroom space demands) but also substantial opportunity costs associated with the additional labor expected of faculty and staff to redesign courses, restructure degree plans, and revise institutional operations. No clear plan for compensation or workload mitigation is offered.

3. Transition Process and Need for Careful Planning

Regardless of the long-term merits of a semester system, a successful transition would require a deliberate, carefully orchestrated, well-resourced, and extended process. The Council is

concerned that the Report underestimates the timeline necessary to plan, implement, and evaluate this transition. A viable and responsible approach would require a minimum of 10 to 15 years: including at least five years for comprehensive planning and preparation, followed by phased implementation and ongoing evaluation. Attempting to abbreviate this process would endanger the quality of education and institutional operations.

#### 4. Additional Specific Concerns Raised:

- Faculty and Staff Workload: Faculty and staff would bear substantial uncompensated labor burdens, with serious impacts on morale and institutional function.
- Graduate Student Hiring and Pedagogy: Certain operational advantages under the quarter system, including flexibility in hiring graduate instructors and diversity in teaching experiences, could be lost without careful mitigation.
- Student Experience and Infrastructure: The shift could inadvertently increase class sizes due to infrastructure constraints, disadvantaging students.
- Climate and Scheduling Challenges: Proposed changes would require faculty and students to be on campus during the hottest months of the year, introducing further logistical difficulties.
- Potential Alternative to the Semester Calendar: Adjusting the quarter calendar's start and end dates could achieve many student-centered improvements at significantly lower cost and disruption. We encourage the administration to consider such options.

May 7, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Teresa Robertson Ishii, Chair  
Committee on Diversity & Equity



**Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

UC has a tripartite mission of research, teaching, and public service. As a system of research universities (with all ten campuses now having R1 status), our teaching and public service are driven by research. For this reason, the impact of a calendar conversion on research should be the paramount consideration.

**Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**, while providing a wealth of relevant data and presenting a number of important considerations, **provides no information concerning what exactly a conversion would mean to the teaching loads of research faculty. Without that information, it is impossible to make a reasonable judgment as to what effect such a conversion would have on research, and hence on UC's tripartite mission.**

Suppose that the average course load for research faculty at a campus that currently operates on a quarter calendar is 4 per academic year. *What would the course load be if switched to a semester calendar? The answer to this question has a huge effect on whether a systemwide semester calendar makes sense.*

- If the course load were 2 per academic year (as it is, for example, in Philosophy at the University of Pittsburgh and Princeton), then the switch would result in a 25% reduction of in-class hours.<sup>1</sup> It seems overwhelmingly likely that under these terms, the research productivity at UC would increase. Given the nature of research universities, this would in turn benefit both the teaching and public service mission of UC. It is also possible that under these terms, there would be a direct benefit to the quality of instruction that each member of the research faculty would be able to provide.
- If the course load were 4 per academic year, then the switch would result in a 50% increase of in-class hours. It seems very likely that under these terms, the research productivity at

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<sup>1</sup> The calculation is based on an average of 3 in-class hours a week for each of 4 10-week courses as compared to an average of 3 in-class hours a week for each of 2 15-week courses.

UC would decrease drastically, concomitantly harming the teaching and public service mission. In fact, these terms would severely compromise UC's ability to maintain its standing as a leading research institution. California would obviously not be well served by that.

- If the course load were 3 per academic year, then the switch would result in a 12.5% increase of in-class hours. In this scenario, it is harder to be sure about the effect on research productivity. (The Draft Report contains many considerations that bear on this.) One pertinent question is whether in this scenario there would be the possibility of a faculty member meeting their teaching load in one semester?<sup>2</sup> Absent that possibility, a 12.5% increase in in-class hours is unlikely to result in more research productivity.

Similar questions arise about the teaching load for teaching professors. An increase in their workload would likely mean that the benefits to teacher student relationships envisioned by the Draft Report cannot be realized.

It is vital that the Final Report of the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Calendar Workgroup address these questions. **At a minimum, the Final Report should provide information about the actual course load of research professors and teaching professors at all of the institutions mentioned in the Draft Report, and most importantly for the institutions that UC regards as peers.**

In addition, CDE thinks that it would be useful for the report to contain information concerning differing impacts (if any) to first-generation students at campuses with semester calendars vs. those with quarter calendars.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate


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<sup>2</sup> Because women tend to perform more than their fair share of domestic work—taking up time in evenings, weekends, and breaks—the possibility of a non-teaching term (a possibility easily realized in a quarter calendar with a load of 4 courses per year and in a semester calendar with a load of 2 courses per year) is vital to ensuring that women faculty are able to sustain their research.

UC **SANTA BARBARA**  
Academic Senate

DATE: May 8, 2025

TO: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Vanessa Woods, Chair   
Committee on Admissions, Enrollment & Relations with Schools

RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic  
Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on Admissions, Enrollment, and Relations with Schools (CAERS) has reviewed and considered the Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report during their meeting on April 24th. CAERS appreciated that the report was detailed and thorough. CAERS would have liked to see a long-term cost/benefit analysis for the proposed changes. Given the significant uncertainties and disruptions facing the UC system, from both the federal government and the state budget shortfalls, CAERS felt strongly that now is not a wise time to initiate a transition of this magnitude, independent of its potential merits.

With respect to commenting on the merits of a change, CAERS also had concerns. CAERS raised multiple concerns, including how the course load would change under such a transition (and how these decisions would be made). Teaching loads vary by discipline, and in some cases the transition from quarters to semesters could increase expected teaching loads. An effective increase in teaching load would come at the direct expense of research and service; moreover, the reduced flexibility in scheduling teaching would disproportionately impact research that is field-based, archive-based, or requires extended travel.

A drawback to the transition from quarters to semesters is that students will have fewer course options, by nature of 15-week courses vs 10-week courses. Transfer students could be particularly impacted by the reduced number of courses they could expect, even though the total instructional contact time would not change. Irrespective, the transition from quarter to semester system would be highly disruptive to students enrolled during the transition (documented from other institutions who have undergone such changes), and would require a well-resourced and well-thought out structure and plan to support students during this transition. CAERS feels that the UC system is not at a time and place to support a well resourced and thought out structure for a change of this magnitude.

There is a consistent concern about who is going to be doing all of the work to make this transition happen – clearly, an incredible amount of work will be required of both faculty and staff, and faculty and staff are both feeling stretched very thin. There is real concern that faculty and staff will be expected to simply add these additional responsibilities to their already over-stretched schedules. CAERS posits that faculty research will suffer – and hence the institutional reputations of each UC campus would then also be negatively affected. Staff morale would likely suffer, and would also necessitate the deprioritization of other tasks. For a transition of this scale to be successful, the contributions and well-being of all stakeholders must be accounted for. It seems likely that additional faculty and staff would need to be hired to ensure mission critical activities are actually completed – which is incompatible with the current UC-wide hiring freeze. When and if this transition does happen we will need space and time to make the necessary changes.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

May 2, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Stephanie Malia Hom, Chair  
Committee on Research Policy and Procedures



Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting of April 18, 2025, the Committee on Research Policy and Procedures (CRPP) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. The committee expressed serious concern about the timing and cost of any change to the systemwide academic calendar at this moment of budgetary uncertainty and tectonic change in the federal landscape. Concerns were also voiced about unforeseen costs, unremunerated labor, low morale, change fatigue, and undue burden placed on faculty and staff to implement such a transition. Committee members noted a calendar change would also have a deleterious impact on research, diverting time and energy away from research projects toward ancillary training and administrative tasks associated with conversion. In sum, CRPP does not support any of the calendar conversion scenarios outlined in the report (quarter to semester, semester to quarter, or alternative quarter calendar), and expresses a wish that this issue of systemwide calendar conversion be brought to a close without further study or deliberation.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director, Academic Senate

**UC SANTA BARBARA**  
**Academic Senate**

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DATE: May 12, 2025

TO: Rita Raley, Chair of the Academic Senate - UC Santa Barbara Division

FROM: Committee on Academic Personnel

RE: CAP Response to Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on Academic Personnel (CAP) has reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report for Community Input, and its members were unanimously in favor of "maintaining the status quo." Members expressed concern over yet another disruption to campus life for faculty, staff, and students following the challenges of COVID-19. The committee expressed further concern about the immense cost and where the money to pay for the conversion would come from, given the expected budget cuts and hiring freezes.

With the many issues impacting UCSB and the UC System, the committee felt that resources and energy would be better used on more pressing issues impacting education, academic freedom, and campus life.

For the Committee,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Geoff Raymond", written in a cursive style.

Geoffrey Raymond, Chair



TE: May 9, 2025

TO: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair of Academic Senate

FROM: Christopher Krugel, Chair  
Committee on International Education

RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on International Education (CIE) has reviewed the "Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report" taking into consideration the impacts on international education and international students. The committee thoroughly discussed the four options outlined in the report: 1) common semester calendar, 2) common quarter calendar, 3) maintaining semester calendar and implementing alternative quarter calendar, 4) maintaining status quo. While some members expressed concern about the cost of this transition and other forms of challenges, many agreed that a semester system could benefit international students and UCSB students participating in Education Abroad.

Following input provided from the Education Abroad Program (EAP) and the Office of International Students and Scholars (OISS), the committee noted several components that should be considered. International students would likely benefit most from the semester system. Many international students participate in internships, which require work authorization. Most of these internships are aligned with the semester system. The quarter system creates complications for international students who want to participate in a summer internship. They must be enrolled in a course that requires an internship component to be able to participate in an off-campus internship. Unlike their Semester counterparts, they need to be enrolled in a course in Spring quarter in order to be authorized to begin the internship. The lack of alignment also means many international students are unable to participate in important events like orientation and would have less time to acclimate or to adjust to the US education system and culture. For EAP students, most of the international programs are on a semester system. Because the quarter and semester timelines do not align, this can make it difficult to participate in EAP in winter/spring quarter and requires conversion of credits regardless of when the student attends. Additionally, there is an imbalance of credits earned based on when the student attends due to the systems not being aligned.

In considering the report and information provided during discussion, the committee agreed that changes could be costly and complicated, but could not settle on one resolution. While the committee did not come to a consensus on one of the four choices being most beneficial to all faculty, students, and scholars, the committee agreed that components that could impact international students and EAP students will need to be considered.

UC **SANTA BARBARA**  
Academic Senate

May 12, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair

From: Igor Mezic, Chair  
Committee on Information Technology

Re: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on Information Technology (CIT) has considered the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup's Draft Report and offers the following comments.

CIT is strongly opposed to the idea of a conversion to a common campus calendar. One of the Committee's key concerns is the conversion's impact on campus software systems and the immense amount of work that would be required to manage the necessary adaptations. A survey of campus IT units estimates that approximately 200 systems would require updates, a portion of which would include extensive modulations or, in fact, decommission.

The members expressed a lack of confidence in the estimated costs the campus would bear in the conversion. Even if the stated estimates were proximate to the actual costs, the idea that the campus would spend close to \$50M on such an initiative in the current budgetary climate seems incomprehensible.


Overall, the challenges associated with a conversion to a common calendar far outweigh the benefits, particularly at this time.

CC: Shasta Delp, Executive Director

UC **SANTA BARBARA**  
Academic Senate

DATE: April 28, 2025

TO: Rita Raley, Chair  
Academic Senate

FROM: Andy Merolla, Chair   
Committee on Courses and General Education

RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic  
Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on Courses and General Education (CCGE) reviewed the Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report during their meeting on April 1st. We thank the Workgroup for their efforts and for offering CCGE the opportunity to comment on the report. CCGE members discussed the potential benefits and drawbacks of the proposals. After weighing the opportunities and costs of the transition to a semester schedule, CCGE found that the change is not appropriate at this time. Thus, CCGE is not in support of the change.

Among the potential benefits of a semester system that committee members identified is ease of transfer credit allocation. Given that most community colleges are on the semester system, it would likely be easier for courses to transfer into UCSB as there would likely be greater content alignment. This is especially true if students attend multiple community colleges prior to attending UCSB. That said, there was also discussion about whether this issue could be satisfactorily addressed by strategic moves less drastic than a move to the semester system.

Drawbacks to the change to a semester system for transfer students were also identified. Although the transition from the semester system to the quarter system can be difficult for transfer students to adjust to, they do likely benefit from having three quarters in which to take courses. This allows them to take introductory courses (e.g., to their major) more quickly. For instance, within the quarter system, required pre-major courses might be more likely to be offered by departments within the same year across three quarters as opposed to two semesters. The quarter system thus seems to support more timely degree completion for transfer students, particularly if students need to retake courses and/or are in impacted majors.

Another potential benefit of changing to the semester system is that it would give departments across campus the opportunity to rethink and reevaluate their curricula from the ground up. Such an endeavor would likely spark pedagogical innovation. Along with such innovation, however, some members noted potential unintended consequences, such as a reduction in elective course offerings if faculty do not view courses as transferable from a 10-week to a 15-week format.

There also seems to be some major institutional and procedural roadblocks to the change to a semester system. For this committee (CCGE), members do not believe the committee would have the requisite capacity to review changes in courses (e.g., credit amount, format) across the

## Academic Senate

entire campus. More generally, CCGE does not believe that UCSB's student information systems (SIS), such as eGrades, Gaucho Blue, and Gold, are capable of handling such massive changes to the campus's courses, majors, and minors. Our understanding is that unlike the Cal State Universities that use the same SIS across campuses, UCs use their own unique SIS. This would seem to further complicate a semester transition not just at UCSB but for other UCs, as each UC would likely have to devise unique solutions to their SIS challenges. Members also raised concerns about physical space, including whether or not UCSB has enough large classrooms to accommodate courses that might need to increase enrollment under the semester system.

It remains unclear to CCGE, then, if the value of the changes described in the draft report is sufficiently great to warrant the upheaval involved in making the change. Students attending UCSB during the change would certainly face confusion. Admittedly, that type of challenge is short-term. But the strains this change could put on staff, faculty, information systems, and physical infrastructure appear more immense and ongoing. In recent years, the campus navigated the COVID-19 epidemic and is currently responding to various other novel challenges (e.g., AI), all while dealing with significant budgetary constraints and staffing shortages. A transition to semesters could therefore tax an already taxed system.

Given these challenges, it does not seem feasible right now to move to a semester system. Perhaps, then, aiming for calendar alignment (while remaining on quarters) is a way forward. There was a potential pathway described in the draft report regarding calendar alignment between semester- and quarter-based UC campuses. But there, too, challenges exist. The abbreviated winter break and the break integrated into the early weeks of the winter quarter, for example, could make for a disjointed educational experience for students and faculty. We again thank the Workgroup for extensive work on this proposal and for offering CCGE the chance to respond to it. We see much utility in further exploration of calendar alignment, and we also recognize the difficulties involved in scheduling changes.

**Academic Senate  
Santa Barbara Division**

April 28, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Kevin W. Plaxco, Chair  
Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction & Elections



**Re: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup  
Draft Report**

The Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections (RJ&E) reviewed the draft report from Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup and has the following comments.

After working under it for more than 50 years, the quarter system is so deeply ingrained in every aspect of campus operations that changing to a semester system could have widespread and unintended consequences. There are, for example, 51 occurrences of the word "quarter" in our divisional Senate Regulations, and 162 occurrences of the word "unit." It would take months of deliberative effort to even begin to understand the consequences the move to a semester system would have on the regulations by which our division runs, and, likely, several years to appropriately identify, vet (through the many stakeholders involved), propose, debate, and pass the necessary modifications. A task rendered all the more difficult at present due to staffing and funding shortages.

Cc: Shasta Delp, Executive Director



**UC SANTA BARBARA**

Academic Senate  
Rita Raley, Chair  
Shasta Delp, Executive Director

1233 Girvetz Hall  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-3050  
<http://www.senate.ucsb.edu>

April 18, 2025

To: Rita Raley, Divisional Chair  
Academic Senate

From: Amber VanDerwarker, Chair  
Committee on Committees

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amber VanDerwarker".

Re.: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report

The Committee on Committees (CoC) reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. While CoC members agree that aligning the UC academic calendar with the California State University and California Community College systems is a compelling reason to shift to a semester-based system, our discussion raised a number of issues. The comments below reflect the content of our discussion and are organized into the following categories: Financial Considerations, Student Issues, Instructional Issues, Research Impacts, and Childcare. Perhaps the most pressing concern is the financial one. Changing the academic calendar at UCSB would be a costly endeavor in terms of both labor and dollars; given our developing state budget crisis and the uncertainty of both existing and future federal funding, we feel that such a change would be mistimed.

CoC members were also concerned about the potential negative impacts to both undergraduate and graduate students and felt that the Workgroup report did not sufficiently account for issues related to student welfare. On a semester system, undergraduate students would take fewer courses overall and have fewer opportunities to participate in internships, limiting both their academic breadth and potential for resume development. The latter is critical for graduates on the job market. For graduate students, a semester system limits their ability to take on new research activities. Moreover, fewer courses means fewer TA-ships, which affects graduate student funding and the ability of faculty to recruit and retain graduate students. Additionally, how would changes in TA support articulate with Union rules for TAs? This issue was not explored by the Workgroup.

CoC members identified Instructional issues related to teaching evaluations, infrastructure, and climate change. A shift to a semester calendar comes with the expectation of more assessment of students, as the typical quarter-system structure of a midterm and a final is not sufficient for longer academic terms. CoC members speculated that more testing could potentially have negative effects on faculty teaching evaluations. Additional concerns pertain to classroom infrastructure. The shift from quarters to semesters entails a trade-off between number of

courses and overall class size, leading to fewer courses with increased enrollments. Currently, the UCSB campus has very few large classrooms, and we question whether the campus has the infrastructural capacity to accommodate such a change in class sizes. A second infrastructural issue relates to shifting the start/end times of the Academic calendar from September/June to August/May. August is typically the hottest month of the year in central and southern California, with new record temperatures annually as a result of climate change. The reality is that most UCSB classrooms are not equipped with air-conditioning to mitigate these extreme temperatures.

We anticipate that a shift to a semester calendar would significantly impact faculty workload, reducing research output. In the short term, the time and effort to re-design all campus courses represents an enormous undertaking for faculty. This takes focus away from research, which threatens our status as a Tier 1 research institution. Given the current political climate towards universities, reducing research output would reduce our legitimacy as well as our sources of external funding, exacerbating the existing budget crisis. In the long term, a shift to the semester system means that faculty must teach all academic year, without the option to stack classes and take a non-teaching quarter. Many faculty rely on a non-teaching quarter to advance their research agendas, and without dedicated time to think and write, their output will decline.

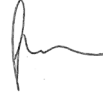
We would like to close with a final comment about childcare and the calendar alignment between the university and local school systems. It was noted in the Workgroup report that a change to semesters would bring better alignment between these calendars, making childcare easier to manage. However, several CoC members are parents and remarked that these calendars are already in alignment. Spring breaks occur simultaneously and the academic year ends at the same time as well. The local school calendar begins in August, which means UCSB faculty have an invaluable month to conduct research/write and plan classes for the next academic year after their children return to school.

Cc: Shasta Delp, Executive Director

April 29, 2025

To: Rita Raley  
Chair, Divisional Academic Senate

From: Jeffrey Stopple  
Chair, L&S Faculty Executive Committee



Re: Request for comment on-Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic  
Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

At its meeting on April 24, 2025, the Faculty Executive Committee of the College of Letters and Science (FEC) reviewed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. This proposal presents the results of extensive consultation, surveys, and discussion within the workgroup on potential options for shifting campus academic calendars to more closely align both between UCs and with other schools in the State, and possible advantages and disadvantages of each approach.

Our committee's views on this subject were mixed, but, in general, while members appreciated the potential value of more closely aligning academic calendars both between UCs and between UC and other schools in the state, the committee universally viewed the present moment as the wrong one to pursue such a costly and complex overhaul. While it is true that such an overhaul has the potential to create opportunities for productive innovation and new approaches in individual programs, our committee feels the scope of the effort and the pressure that would be put on faculty and staff carrying out a complete re-envisioning of all quarter-based course structures and degree programs in the UC system at the same time is too great, particularly in a situation of precarious budget stability. We view the potential fallout that could occur from pursuing this now, beyond the financial burden, to extend to serious morale issues across the affected campuses and a potential exodus of personnel.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

cc: Michael Miller, AVC and Dean of Undergraduate Education  
Charlie Hale, Dean of Social Sciences  
Daina Ramey Berry, Dean of Humanities and Fine Arts  
Shelly Gable, Interim Dean of Science



April 21, 2025

TO: Rita Raley  
Divisional Chair, Academic Senate

FROM: Carl Meinhart,  
College of Engineering, Faculty Executive Committee

RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Signed by:  
  
884262A07C384CC...

The College of Engineering FEC met on Monday, April 7<sup>th</sup> and Monday, April 21<sup>st</sup> and discussed the Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report.

Committee members noted concerns about the intent to change the university to a new calendar system:

First, of particular concern, is the timing of the change. Although it may never seem like a good time to embark on a change of such upheaval and significance, this particular moment is particularly poor:

- Due to budget cuts and hiring freezes, staff and faculty workloads are at an all-time high. Therefore, an extra load revolving around managing the transition would be difficult at this time.
- The report presents a substantial cost estimate to accomplish this change. The funding would put further stress on depleting university budgets.
- The committee feels the planners have failed to account for opportunity costs, particularly in external funding, that will be lost while faculty and staff turn their focus to this task for a number of years.

The committee unanimously states that it would be a fundamental error in judgement for the University of California to pursue such an ambitious and time-consuming task as this during this period of unprecedented stress on the institution, including but not limited to budgetary issues.

Second, the committee asks to revisit the very core issue as to whether there are educational benefits to the semester system versus the quarter system. The committee notes that the arguments in the report are weak and the report does not provide research to support the claims that semesters provide better outcomes for students compared to quarters. Committee members debated the impact of the semesters versus quarters. Some committee members felt that the semester system would allow students more time to catch up if they fall behind in their classes. Others felt that on the quarter system,

students get more feedback more quickly and can retake a course immediately to catch up. The committee requests that future proposals present research on the impacts on student success and pedagogy on both the quarter and semester systems.

Committee members advocate to remain on the quarter system for a number of reasons. The quarter system allows departments and students flexibility and adaptability. Engineering and technology are rapidly changing and the quarter system allows faculty to revise the curriculum and courses to meet changes in the discipline and advancements in society. Likewise, students take more courses on the quarter system resulting in a richer portfolio of electives and required courses. Students are able to explore the discipline more quickly and discover and hone their interests. Additionally, the committee mused that having universities on different systems within California is beneficial to students and faculty.

Third, when considering the different options presented, committee members felt Option #3 was preferable to a semester system but many had questions about how it would work and the feasibility of the calendar. One potential advantage of Option #3 is that it would allow students to start summer internships at the same time as students on the semester system. However, the additional complexity of the calendar in Option #3 would make it difficult to improve learning outcomes. Significant clarification would be needed to further consider this option.



BREN SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & MANAGEMENT  
ANDREW PLANTINGA, PROFESSOR

SANTA BARBARA, CA 93106  
<http://www.bren.ucsb.edu/>

May 5, 2025

RE: Input on the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

To Whom it May Concern:

I am the chair of the Faculty Executive Committee in the Bren School of Environmental Science and Management. The Bren School is a professional school at UC Santa Barbara offering two professional masters degrees and a PhD degree. The Bren School's interdisciplinary nature and the complexities of managing multiple professional master's degree programs would present difficult challenges for a transition from a quarter to a semester calendar.

As a professional degree-granting institution that integrates multiple social and natural science disciplines, the current 10-week quarter system allows for a wide array of disciplinary core courses that would be impossible to maintain if content were combined into 16-week semesters. Furthermore, the school's curriculum is specifically designed around shorter timeframes, with many professional skills classes optimally structured for 5 and 10-week sessions. This format also enables the Bren School to have visiting lecturers who are active professionals and can only teach during brief breaks from their primary responsibilities—a flexibility that would be lost with longer semesters. In addition, the condensed one-year format of the Masters in Environmental Data Science (MEDS) program necessitates shorter intensive "bootcamp" courses at the start of the year, which do not map onto the semester system.

The quarter system is particularly important to the Bren School since it provides important academic adaptability for the diverse master's student population. The Masters in Environmental Science and Management (MESM) program contains multiple academic specializations, where students take specific elective courses tailored to their areas of environmental interest. Longer semesters would force the Bren School to combine several current courses, eliminating this customization option and reducing the ability of the MESM degree to serve the diverse incoming student population. Additionally, since students arrive from varied backgrounds, the current structure allows some to test out of specific core classes based on prior knowledge. If courses were to be combined due to the requirement to conform to the semester calendar, students would lose the ability to test out of the portion of those courses which overlaps with their existing expertise, further impacting their academic experience.

Quarter-long terms also enhance research opportunities for faculty and students, and for research interactions between faculty and students. Teaching loads at Bren under the quarter

system allow faculty to spend more time during the school year conducting research and mentoring students in research because faculty are not required to teach every quarter. Instead, they can load certain quarters with relatively heavy teaching and reduce other quarters. Time not spent teaching courses is then dedicated to research activities which include mentoring MESM students in research internships. MESM students greatly enhance their education at Bren through these internships, as well as find needed extracurricular employment. A change to semesters will substantially reduce the time available for mentoring through research internships, as well as reduce overall research productivity at Bren.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Plantinga', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Andrew Plantinga

From the Faculty Legislature Minutes of March 13, 2025:

## Academic Planning Council Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Chair Raley invited the members to share their thoughts on the report, *Should the University of California Return to a Common Calendar?*, which was authored by a joint Senate-Administration workgroup of the Academic Planning Council. A summary of the comments is presented below. Many of the ideas expressed were echoed or supported by additional voices from the floor.

- Two issues have not been fully thought through. The first is the impact of a semester calendar on undergraduates who are juggling work while trying to complete their degrees in a reasonable amount of time. If courses are offered less frequently, as they would be in a semester system, students may have to wait a full year or enroll in a summer session to take courses that they need to graduate. The second issue is the relationship between faculty workload, sabbatical credits, continuity of course offerings, and research possibilities.
- There is not enough evidence-based research to support the idea that the transition to a semester calendar would be beneficial to student success. At present, it appears that the costs of a semester conversion would outweigh the benefits.
- The report does not make clear what the normal faculty workload would be in a semester system. A 2:1 or 2:2 model would result in a massive increase in faculty workload that could debilitate the University's research mission. The issue should ultimately be decided by the faculty first of all, as they will be the ones who have to make the change.
- The process and manner in which this initiative has been carried out so far is concerning. There is a lack of clarity about how decisions will be made, and how the current review process will inform administrative decision-making.
- Counseling, Clinical, and School Psychology has historically relied on the quarter system for students to accumulate their practicum hours before beginning their internships. The semester system would disrupt this process, and there is no clear alternative structure that would allow students to meet the requirements, which would likely extend their training significantly. They would not be able to accumulate enough hours within the permitted timeframe, which would delay their internships and the completion of their degrees and professional accreditation requirements. The transition would require extensive restructuring of clinical training and would likely lead to disruption in clinical partnerships. The transition would require renegotiation of training expectations that would not be feasible.

- The transition to a semester system would impact recruitment and retention. Newly hired faculty are sometimes assigned a lighter teaching load, or teaching concentrated in two quarters in order to allow more time for research as they work toward tenure. New faculty have stated multiple times that if our campus was on the semester system, they would have seriously considered other offers.
- The quarter system is better aligned with K-12 schools than the semester system. Those most affected by the transition will be women with school-aged children, especially during times when the children need care. A semester system will adversely impact their changes for tenure and post-tenure professional development. The issue cannot easily be mitigated by some assistance with childcare, particularly with the major childcare shortage in our local community.
- Courses will have to be wholly restructured.
- Departments with impacted majors are already facing significant challenges with course capacity, room scheduling, and frequency of offerings. Students are struggling with timely degree completion, and a transition to the semester system will only exacerbate these issues.
- Employees are experiencing burnout. A significant portion of the onerous work associated with a semester transition would fall on staff. With an already depleted workforce at the breaking point, the additional burden would be unconscionable. The campus's staffing level is not sufficient to take on this initiative.
- There are benefits, costs, and tradeoffs associated with both the quarter and semester systems.
- Decisions and tasks related to classroom scheduling, teaching assistant appointments, and funding would be reduced were we on a semester system.
- The vast majority of universities are on semesters, and as such, the system cannot be all negative. Neither the quarter system nor the semester system perfectly aligns with childcare needs.
- Students in some programs on a quarter system have trouble securing internships because most positions recruit on a semester schedule. Students must sometimes apply to programs that start before they finish their undergraduate degrees.
- Though the transition to a semester system would be admittedly terrible, the system itself, once the transition occurred, would not be that bad.
- Courses on the quarter system are too short and feel transactional. Moving through course content in ten weeks is difficult. Instructors don't get to know the class until week three, deliver several more weeks of material, and then it is time to wrap up the course. It is no wonder that students are feeling so much stress.

Moving to the semester system would be painful for several years, but could also allow for a transition from a transactional culture to a relational one.

- The transition may impact the materials students must purchase, particularly in book fields.
- We might begin to imagine what measures would be helpful if this initiative does move forward. How could we help bring about the best case scenarios for students, staff, and faculty?
- The argument for a transition should be premised on the quality of education that our students are receiving. Faculty often complain that students seem less engaged since the pandemic. It behooves us to have that debate in relation to the quality of student learning. Can we improve the quality of the students' intellectual development and experience? This principle should be the only thing that should guide us.
- There are strong arguments to be made that longer terms make for a better intellectual experience, though the change would entail a massive amount of work.

In general, members expressed frustration regarding the lack of information about the potential benefits and material costs associated with the transition to a common academic calendar. They further noted that it is difficult to make decisions absent enough information to make an educated assessment.

Chair Raley thanked the members of the Legislature for sharing their perspectives. She noted that the day's discussion will suffice in lieu of a Town Hall meeting, given the amount of time that we were able to dedicate to the issue. Chair Raley informed members of their opportunity to pass their comments along to our councils and committees, or to submit them directly to the Academic Planning Council's Workgroup via the [website](#). On the website you will see that feedback is solicited through [email](#) or a [Qualtrics instrument](#) until May 30, 2025.



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SANTA CRUZ DIVISION  
125 CLARK KERR HALL  
(831) 459 - 2086

May 14, 2025

STEVEN CHEUNG  
Chair, Academic Council

**RE: (Systemwide Senate Review) APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Steven,

The Santa Cruz Division has reviewed and discussed the APC System wide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. The Committees on Educational Policy (CEP), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (CODEI), International Education (CIE), Planning and Budget (CPB), Teaching (COT), and Graduate Council (GC) have responded. We would like to thank the Academic Planning Council (APC) workgroup for the time invested in collecting information and producing this comprehensive report.

Overall, the Santa Cruz division noted significant reluctance within our campus to seriously consider changing our academic calendar, in particular at this time. The most significant factor, mentioned by essentially all committees, was the current California and UCSC budget situation, coupled with faculty bandwidth in this time for such a massive undertaking. For example, CEP writes, "Systemwide and on our own UC Santa Cruz campus, we are confronting a stark budget situation that makes the transition to a semester calendar nearly impossible given the enormous resource implications such a transition would have. In addition to classroom and other academic and administrative space constraints, we note the massive workload issues this change would have on faculty and staff....we remain certain that UC Santa Cruz does not have the resources or bandwidth to entertain such a tectonic change in the foreseeable future." A similar sentiment was echoed essentially unanimously by responding committees.

In addition to the overriding concern about impact on both faculty and financial resources, many of the responding committees also noted advantages of remaining on a quarter calendar outlined in the APC report, including more focused educational experience, the ability to take more diverse courses on a more flexible schedule, and flexibility for both research and graduate education. Additional concerns surfaced included potential impacts on graduation rates, possible diminution of the role of summer sessions, and accelerating a shift away from in person learning (CODEI); issues with



graduate student support and summer support, classroom space capacity (GC), and potential impacts on teaching professors and lecturers (CPB).

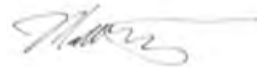
At the same time, most committees also noted potential advantages to a calendar conversion. These included better alignment for study abroad opportunities, summer sessions and internships, in addition to creating better alignment with the California Community College (CCC) system and the California State University (CSU) system (CEP, CIE, CODEI). CODEI also noted the advantages in giving students more time to develop study skills.

A final aspect several committees stressed was that any potential exploration of a possible calendar shift must be campus specific (GC and CBP). Given the large differences in classroom and other space, internships and other ancillary programs, and research profiles, a one-size-fits all approach may be the worst option. GC in particular suggested that a campus-specific study of modified or hybrid quarter calendars might provide many advantages of aligning start and end dates for transfer students, summer programs and internships, while also allowing additional flexibility for study weeks or other programming to support student success.

Given the extensive work that clearly went into the APC draft report, we are enclosing all of our committee responses, to provide the most complete view of aspects that might be considered if this proposal moves forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our divisional perspective..

Sincerely,



Matthew McCarthy, Chair  
Academic Senate, Santa Cruz Division

Enc: Senate Committee Responses (Bundled)

cc: Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Camilo Gómez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Chad Saltikov, Chair, Graduate Council  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

April 17, 2025

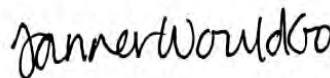
MATTHEW McCARTHY  
Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

The Committee on Educational Policy (CEP) has reviewed the materials and systemwide draft report put forth by the Academic Planning Council (APC) workgroup regarding the returning to a common academic calendar. Systemwide and on our own UC Santa Cruz campus, we are confronting a stark budget situation that makes the transition to a semester calendar nearly impossible given the enormous resource implications such a transition would have. In addition to classroom and other academic and administrative space constraints, we note the massive workload issues this change would have on faculty and staff. While we understand that there could be potential benefits for faculty, students and staff, as the report cites regarding better alignment across divisions (e.g. summer internships, study abroad opportunities, time for a study week before final exams, etc.), we remain certain that UC Santa Cruz does not have the resources or bandwidth to entertain such a tectonic change in the foreseeable future.

Sincerely,



Tanner WouldGo, Chair  
Committee on Educational Policy

cc: Senate Executive Committee  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Chad Saltikov, Chair, Graduate Council  
Camilo Gomez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections

May 5, 2025

MATTHEW MCCARTHY  
Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide Review of Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

At its meeting of April 8, 2025, the Committee on International Education (CIE) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. When considered through the lens of Education Abroad exchanges, conversion to the semester system would make things much easier in terms of administrative logistics, since most other institutions domestically and internationally operate on a semester system, and for reducing costs for the institution and, in some cases, for students. A study abroad student from UCSC pays UCSC tuition, but their cost of living expenses can be substantially less at many foreign locations. Of course, they might also be higher, for example, in major international cities. Currently, if UCSC students study abroad for one semester during the fall, they pay tuition for one academic quarter only, which is a good value for the additional instructional time for a semester-length study-abroad program. Conversely, if they enter a semester-length program starting around February for a semester overseas, they pay two quarters of tuition for winter and spring.

Changing to academic semesters would also make building MOUs with foreign universities and calibrating course units far simpler compared to trying to convert between academic quarters and academic semesters. With regards to course calibration, UCSC students are expected to take 12 units per quarter, but if they go away for spring semester, they miss two academic quarters here at UCSC. It is unlikely that students would complete a course load of 24 units during the spring at a semester-based institution abroad, and that has the potential to lengthen their time to degree completion.

Beyond the usual academic calendar, another concern is that, under the current quarter system, summer terms frequently don't align with the summer instruction period at institutions on a semester calendar. Most summer academic programs as well as many internships begin on or around June 1, when UCSC is still finishing up the spring quarter and has not reached final exams week.

In addition to issues related to academic credit, calendar alignment, and other logistical issues, switching to a semester calendar would simplify the process of forming financial-aid packages (both for students planning to study a semester abroad and students on campus). The financial aid department is perennially understaffed, and having them determine financial aid packages twice a year rather than three times a year would lighten their workload significantly.

For students taking part in the UC DC program, moving to semesters would allow them to have a full semester experience in Washington DC and make them more competitive in applying for internship opportunities because they would be able to make a longer 15-16 week commitment.

In summary, moving to academic semesters would make the arrangements for exchange much

easier. We have focused on the possibility of converting to a semester schedule because it would have the most far-reaching effects, but we note that some, though not all, of the issues outlined above could be addressed by the third possibility considered in the report—alignment of the annual instructional calendar without conversion to a semester schedule.

As the Committee of International Education, we have focused on the potential impact on international education of transitioning to a semester schedule. But as Senate faculty, we would like to close by highlighting potentially harmful effects of converting to a semester calendar for both students and faculty. The most substantial and obvious, as the report notes, is cost. The cost of transitioning eight of the ten UCs to a semester calendar is prohibitively high at a time of budgetary crisis and high levels of uncertainty for the system as a whole and for the individual campuses. Switching to a semester calendar could also have a negative impact on UCSC's ability to recruit and retain faculty in the future. The ability of some faculty at UCSC to focus on research for six months of the year without major teaching obligations is a low-cost asset in recruiting and retaining faculty and boosts research productivity on a campus where financial support for faculty research is very limited. Moving from quarters to semesters would require far more than just IT changes; it would impose significant additional demands on faculty to make the necessary adjustments to their teaching and courses. The requirements and offerings for each undergraduate major would need to be completely revamped, including required prerequisites. In a time of uncertain federal grant support, it is also much easier for a faculty member to provide Research Assistant support for their graduate students for a quarter, rather than a more expensive semester-length commitment.

In terms of delivering a high-quality instructional experience and enhancing undergraduate student success, the ability of students to choose from a diverse menu of courses, the ability of the university to offer smaller courses that fit in our current sized classrooms, and the ability to offer courses more frequently, makes it easier to “catch up” if students must drop or repeat a course. These are significant advantages of the current quarter system. Quarters offer a more concentrated educational experience and the ability to focus on a specialized topic, avoiding the “fatigue” and concomitant drop in attendance and participation as the term goes on under a semester system. Additionally, starting in late August would mean that the academic year would begin during the hottest part of the summer, and then instruction would be interrupted by the Labor Day holiday. High temperatures at some UC campuses in August, including Santa Cruz in recent years, would become a major and growing challenge as a consequence of moving to semesters. Finally, we note that these negative effects of converting to a semester schedule would be felt more acutely at UCSC than at many, if not all, of the other campuses currently on the quarter system because of our limited financial resources, current physical and technology infrastructure, and the high cost of living in Santa Cruz in combination with lower salaries for faculty and staff.

Sincerely,



Camilo Gómez-Rivas, Chair  
Committee on International Education

cc: Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Raphe Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Chad Salitkov, Chair, Graduate Council  
Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

May 5, 2025

MATTHEW McCARTHY

Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide APC Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

The Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (CODEI) has reviewed the Academic Planning Council (APC) workgroup's charge to examine whether UC's nine undergraduate campuses should return to a common academic calendar. In writing this letter, CODEI highlights the valuable feedback from our graduate and undergraduate committee representatives. Given the teaching mission of UC Santa Cruz and the UC system as a whole, we acknowledge how a shift to a common calendar would impact students. In this letter, we examine the benefits of both the semester and the quarter system. We also raise questions about this charge.

**Benefits of switching to semesters.** Semesters hold some utility when it comes to student needs. Sharing a common calendar with California Community College (CCC) could help in being more useful to our transfer student population. Semesters provide advantages for students to have a longer time to develop study skills. Semesters range approximately 15 weeks, thus ensuring a longer time to provide instructional and learning support. Students may benefit from longer breaks between semesters. Semesters also provide more access for summer internships, summer employment, and study abroad opportunities.

**Benefits of keeping quarters.** The quarter system currently used by UC Santa Cruz offers several distinct advantages. Despite the potential benefits of sharing a common calendar with CCC, keeping the quarter system means not having to convert current transfer articulation agreements (which could have a negative and immediate impact on those transfer students). The quarter system enables the ability for students and faculty to focus intensively on a smaller number of courses in any given term.

Additionally, the quarter system benefits graduate students and undergraduate students. Graduate students move through their programs at an accelerated pace, allowing them to reach their educational milestones faster. GSIs benefit from fast moving courses, reporting enjoying how quickly the quarter goes by. Undergraduates report liking the engagement allowed by the quarter system. They report the combined benefits of having a faster pace along with a deeper dive into the coursework is possible with fewer courses to juggle. Coursework and grading for undergraduate and graduate offerings finish in time for winter break and spring break – that is to say, they don't have to come back to finals as with some semester systems.

CODEI is concerned about the potential impact of shifting to semesters on graduation rates (as students have to carry more courses at once), as well as on the reduction/disruption of general education courses (quarter system efficiently allows departments to meet required numbers of GE courses for accreditation while ensuring sufficient numbers of course offerings for the

major). Moreover, the quarter system allows opportunities to offer multiple iterations of required courses for a major without having to scale up to untenable sizes.

CODEI is concerned that the move to semesters would decrease the role of summer session both in curricular terms and in budgetary terms. We note there are two summer sessions, so reductions could potentially be compounded with the reduction of summer offerings. For example, students in departments who currently offer summer session classes depend on those courses to help ensure normative time to graduation. These courses also help students balance their courses with work commitments throughout the academic years. In addition, income generated from both summer sessions sustains department operations including curriculum and graduate student support during the other three academic terms. Beyond departments, academic divisional budgets are augmented by summer session monies. The potential loss of revenue both for departments and divisions would require augmented funding from central administration.

**Questions to raise about this charge.** CODEI raises the following questions regarding the charge of a potential shift to semesters:

*Faculty morale in converting from quarters to semesters*

- What resources will be provided for faculty having to restructure their courses?
- What about acknowledging the pedagogical implications of transitioning from quarters to semesters and the need to ensure appropriate support is allocated? As a committee, we are also concerned about the extra challenges associated with developing program-level initiatives such as majors, minors, and certificates that would be incurred during a likely very long transition to semesters.
- What about the impact on faculty research? Quarters allow for “stacking” of courses, thus enabling one quarter without teaching (to support research), if supported by department and curricular needs.

*Why now*

- This question is very important, particularly in the midst of hiring freezes and layoffs.
- We question why this is being proposed. Given that UCSC is already dealing with significant and severe budget constraints, we ponder the resources and workload for faculty and staff given such an enormous undertaking for a conversion process to take place. What would be covered systemwide, versus what would be covered from the divisions? What would be the implications behind the constraints of the “fresh air budget”?
- Documentation provided by the APC mentions “leveraging resources.” What does this mean, particularly if tremendous resources will be required to make the transition in the first place?
- What about implications for student financial aid? How would the system handle disruptions during the conversion process?

*Larger push for more course modalities*

- CODEI discussed that conversion to semesters would potentially lead to more online courses, as well as cross-campus course offerings, due to limitations on classroom capacities. Classroom capacity is already a concern at UCSC, which could only get worse with the move to semesters. So we ask:

- What about the implications for large-scale training of departments and programs?
- What about resources to support faculty in developing these kinds of offerings and actually teaching them?
- What about the implications for graduate student professionalization and support positions, such as GSIs and TAs?

In conclusion, we raise questions about the charge to shift the entire system to semesters. CODEI outlined above the many reasons we recommend that we remain with the existing quarter system on those campuses who already have it. CODEI holds significant doubts about switching to a semester system, particularly in light of the extreme costs involved, regardless of the current budget situation. CODEI foresees tremendous impact on the cost of conversion faculty and staff training, on student access to courses and graduation rates, as well as on our institution's overall teaching and research mission.

Sincerely,



Gabriela Arredondo, Chair  
Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

cc: Senate Executive Committee  
Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Camilo Gomez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections



April 21, 2025

MATTHEW McCARTHY  
Chair, Academic Senate


**Re: APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

The Committee on Teaching (COT) has reviewed the materials and systemwide draft report put forth by the Academic Planning Council (APC) workgroup regarding the returning to a common academic calendar. We understand that no proposal is being made at this point, and that any proposal that could materialize would be unlikely to be adopted, in part because adoption would cost money. Additionally, in the 2020-21, [Campus Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor put forward Campuswide Initiatives for 2020-21](#) that included as one of four topics: “study the change to a semester-based academic calendar.” No report was generated for campus or Senate review, suggesting little campus appetite for calendar change.

If there were a proposal to alter our teaching calendar, whether from quarters to semesters or to change the timing of the quarter system, COT would carefully review and respond fully to the proposal. However, when no proposal seems likely to materialize, our committee is choosing not to opine extensively on purely hypothetical possibilities. The only note we will make at this point about the current report is that while it notes costs of moving from semester to quarter or vice versa, it is less clear about the challenges that could emerge even from a move to an alternative quarter calendar. Even adjusting the timing of the quarter system (without even moving from quarter to semester) could have considerable impacts at the curricular level and for individual instructor’s course designs, which would have to be taken into consideration as costs.

Sincerely,



Megan Thomas, Chair  
Committee on Teaching

cc: Senate Executive Committee  
Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Raphael Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget  
Chad Saltikov, Chair, Graduate Council  
Camilo Gomez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction and Elections

April 30, 2025

MATTHEW McCARTHY  
Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide Review of Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

At its meeting of April 3, 2025, the Committee on Planning and Budget (CPB) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. The committee appreciated the comprehensive analysis of both positive and negative aspects of different calendars, in the context of most common calendar systems in both California as well as nationally. CPB felt that there is merit in possibly exploring alternative calendars, however with some major caveats, as well as several important concerns.

First, the committee felt that timing would be key for any change, and in the current political and fiscal environment a proposal to begin a major calendar shift should be an absolute non-starter. The combination of extreme disruption, very large cost, uncertain student success implications, and opportunity cost/reduced bandwidth for other matters together very clearly point to not taking on such changes in the current budgetary and broader environment of extreme stress and uncertainty.

The committee also agreed that pedagogical and student success issues raised may be significant. Anecdotal experiences among committee members supported the idea that the pace and content expectations of the current quarter system may pose serious challenges to success and graduation timelines of some students. In addition, some innovative features of other calendars featured in the report (such as RRR periods, or mini-mesters) might contribute to student success and add real flexibility to experiment with new programs or initiatives.

At the same time, the committee felt strongly that considerations and specifics of any future proposal, and in particular its implementation, *must be campus-specific*. In particular, considerations about requirements on teaching space and the impacts of moving high demand or lab courses from three instances to two, would depend strongly on the currently available space portfolio in the context of future projects, enrollment growth, and planned building. In addition, the availability and trajectory of alternate teaching modalities, as well as internships and international education would likely be critical, but realistic projects for these also would be campus specific. CPB also notes that a semester system could result in reduced research productivity, since under the current system it is possible to meet teaching expectations with two of three quarters of instructional time. Moving to semesters at some point in the future would also require consideration of sabbatical credit accrual to ensure that faculty have a reasonable pathway to maintaining research productivity on par with other R1 universities.

Finally, CPB felt that the impact of any shift in calendar on lecturers and Teaching Professors should be studied and considered more carefully. In particular, in an era of reduced ladder faculty hiring, how any calendar shift would impact different categories of instructors, including the

relative impacts on stability of employment, would be very important.

Overall, the committee felt that the hybrid quarter proposal, with start and end dates closer to the semester calendar, had merit for further study. While this time is clearly not a time to implement any major system-wide change, it could be worth standing up campus-specific working groups to think about 1) how an altered quarter schedule could work at each campus, both in terms of space and teaching modalities, and 2) the potential for implementing RRR or other periods, and how these might impact student success and open opportunities. While the committee was sympathetic to the administrative arguments regarding articulation to community colleges, or support of two vs. three main course cycles, they felt strongly that this should not be our central consideration, but rather which calendar is most beneficial for core functions of teaching, faculty research, and graduate student research and funding.

Sincerely,



Raphael M. Kudela, Chair  
Committee on Planning and Budget

cc: Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Camilo Gómez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections  
Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction  
Chad Salitkov, Chair, Graduate Council  
Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching  
Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy  
Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate

May 6, 2025

MATTHEW McCARTHY  
Chair, Academic Senate

**Re: Systemwide Review of Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report**

Dear Matt,

At its meeting of April 24, 2025, Graduate Council (GC) discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report. The Academic Planning Council is soliciting systemwide feedback on whether the University of California should consider adopting a common academic calendar across its nine undergraduate campuses. Their draft report outlines multiple options, ranging from a unified semester or quarter system to a hybrid or status quo approach, while highlighting logistical, financial, and pedagogical trade-offs.

Our discussion emphasized that the report is exploratory, not prescriptive, and that any change would require a substantial investment of time and resources. Members raised key concerns around the cost of graduate student support (e.g. GSR/TA salaries per academic term), greater instructional load for faculty and graduate students, impacts on union bargaining, and classroom capacity (e.g. need for larger class space). GC recommends that the Academic Calendar Workgroup look into each of these issues. Some questioned whether a calendar shift would also reduce access to summer support for graduate students. Others noted the potential benefits of alignment with community colleges and the CSU system for dual enrollment, but emphasized that the administrative, instructional, and morale costs, especially in the current financial climate/administration, warrant careful consideration.

GC considers that a calendar change on our campus would be a monumental undertaking with no clear pedagogical benefits for graduate students in particular being raised in the report; as such, GC cannot endorse a shift to a new calendar for our campus and we recommend that the workgroup fully assess the impacts for graduate students. Finally, we believe that each campus should perform their own evaluation of how any future recommendations from the Academic Calendar Workgroup would apply to their campus, so the full effects can be realized prior to final decision-making.

Sincerely,



Chad Saltikov, Chair  
Graduate Council

cc: Gabriela Arredondo, Chair, Committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Camilo Gómez-Rivas, Chair, Committee on International Education  
Raphe Kudela, Chair, Committee on Planning and Budget

Eleonora Pasotti, Chair, Committee on Rules, Jurisdiction, and Elections

Amanda Rysling, Chair, Committee on Courses of Instruction

Megan Thomas, Chair, Committee on Teaching

Tanner WouldGo, Chair, Committee on Educational Policy

Matthew Mednick, Executive Director, Academic Senate



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BOARD OF ADMISSIONS AND RELATIONS WITH SCHOOLS (BOARS)

Deborah Swenson, Chair  
[deswenson@ucdavis.edu](mailto:deswenson@ucdavis.edu)

May 12, 2025

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Steven W. Cheung  
Chair, UC Academic Council

RE: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar  
Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Cheung,

BOARS' membership is unanimously opposed to any change towards a Common UC Calendar in the near future. When queried at BOARS' May 2, 2025 meeting about their willingness to change their local campus calendar to a new common campus calendar that differed from their current calendar, not a single BOARS member was in support. While BOARS members have many concerns about any efforts to implement a common calendar at this moment based on local factors, the unanimous view is the following: given the academic costs imposed on students if a common calendar moves towards semesters for all campuses, and given the transition costs for faculty and departments who are required to change their courses and departmental programs if a common calendar is implemented, a change of this magnitude should only be contemplated after California's resources and/or tuition support for UC returns to a significantly stronger setting. In other words, since current challenges will make funds exceedingly scarce, any change towards a common calendar, will only create small benefits that pale in comparison with more urgent UC needs to support its fundamental contributions to the education of California students and to its advancement of research that is crucial to the dynamic growth of California's economy.

Although BOARS views any discussion of change towards a UC-wide academic calendar as one that should be removed from consideration until university conditions improve dramatically, the remainder of this letter summarizes BOARS' concerns about the challenges campuses would face and the resources that would need to be marshalled, if their local

campuses were asked to change their academic programming. This response also highlights research the negative impacts on students that are likely to arise if quarters are replaced by semesters.

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When BOARS reviewed the report from the Common Calendar working group in its April 2025 meeting, BOARS expected that any departure from the status quo would most likely involve a shift of the seven campuses on the quarter system to a UC-wide semester calendar. The universal view of BOARS faculty is that such a change should be avoided, as the benefits appear to be very small, while the costs in terms of student academic success and faculty workload would be considerable. Since external pressures on the UC system are already extreme, no calendar shifts should be entertained until ample resources are available to assist students, faculty and staff in creating a successful transition that maintains UC's high expectations for quality, without eroding morale.

The costs of a successful transition would be considerable, as courses have been designed within larger programmatic ecosystems which sought to optimize academic outcomes given current campus calendars. In particular, every program would have to be replanned and every course renumbered so as to fit a 3-course sequence into 2, or the other way around. Some courses might add unnecessary padding while others might cut material that doesn't fit into the new timeframe. This restructuring, which would involve major time and effort is not a wise plan given the shrinking budget environment and more pressing needs.

If a move to a semester system yielded major academic benefits, our views would be different. However, a large body of academic research shows the opposite, as evidence suggests that switching from quarters to semesters leads to negative outcomes. In the short-term, students experience (i) lower first-year grades, (ii) a decreased probability of enrolling in a full course load, and (iii) delays the timing of major choice ([Bostwick, Fischer, Lang, 2022](#)). Further, there is no evidence that students stand to benefit from the switch: there is no evidence that students are negatively-impacted by short-term (i.e., quarter) versus long-term (i.e., semester) learning formats, a result has been found in mathematical learning, English composition ([Caskey, 2011](#)), and accounting ([Ewer, Greer, Bridges, & Lewis, 2002](#)). Moreover, there is some evidence that the quarter format may be better. For example, Gibbens et al. ([2015](#)) find *better* biology performance in the quarter system than the semester system. Indeed, in a study of student transitions from a southern California community college, Sheldon and Durdella (2009) found—contrary to their expectations—that:

*"Students enrolled in compressed-format courses were more likely to*

*succeed than students enrolled in regular-length courses. Higher successful course completion rates for compressed courses were observed across all departments, with the highest successful course completion rates in the eight-week format in English. Further, students—irrespective of age, race, or gender—were more likely to successfully complete compressed-format courses than their counterparts in regular-length courses"*

(Sheldon & Durdella, 2009)

And what of the benefits of the transition itself? [Smith & Tipton](#) conclude:

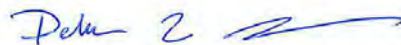
*This analysis began by asking whether making the transition from quarters to semesters improved student outcomes, as measured by graduation rates. While it seems attractive to suggest that a dramatic change like the transition from quarters to semesters will lead to improvement in student success, the lines of evidence that have been collected here do not support that conclusion. The "common sense" idea that spreading classes out over more weeks and rethinking the curriculum will lead to greater student success is not borne out by the data.*

While the move to a semester calendar might benefit students seeking internships in the national market, it should be noted that many internships in local markets adjacent to UC campuses are likely to be structured with the current calendar in mind. Nonetheless, while the value of internships is not to be discounted, the negative academic consequences strike us as a more important consideration.

In addition, we highlight concerns about the effects of climate on the desirability of a semester-based calendar. UC campuses that are not located on the coast experience extreme summer temperatures that often extend from late August through September. This high heat is likely to continue and get worse in the future, making semester operations very uncomfortable for the non-coastal UCs.

Finally, we are skeptical about the logistical benefits of a move to a common calendar. Are there many students who would seek dual enrollment options, and what resources would be saved by a move to a common calendar? These benefits are not well-defined, and may be vanishingly small.

Sincerely,



Deborah Swenson





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UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON PLANNING AND BUDGET (UCPB)

Robert Brosnan  
[rjbrosnan@ucdavis.edu](mailto:rjbrosnan@ucdavis.edu)

May 21, 2025

Steven Cheung  
Chair, Academic Council

RE: Community Input on Academic Planning Council's Systemwide  
Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Steven,

UCPB recognizes the potential benefits of a “common calendar” of academic coursework for administration and to students. At present, the start and end of the academic terms now include both a mid-August-start semester calendar (at Berkeley and Merced) and a late-September-start quarter system calendar (at the other campuses). But even many of the quarter-system schools have embedded within them semester-length programs of graduate and professional schools. The diverse calendars have implications for overall UC system governance, meeting schedules across campuses, the ability of students to easily cross-enroll in specialized courses within their own campuses and across the sister campuses of the UCs, or to transfer from semester-based institutions.

The Academic Calendar Workgroup's Draft Report (dated March 1, 2025) identified several scenarios that could lead to a common calendar, including conversion for all campuses to quarters, all campuses to semesters, a hybrid model, or retaining the status quo. Within the “status quo” option is a potential to move the start date of quarters to mid-August to match semester schools' start and end dates, which would result in Winter quarters starting in early December with a long break in late December and conclusion of the academic year in mid-May for all campuses.

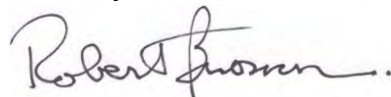
The budgetary considerations for academic calendar synchronization across the UC system include both direct costs (such as the reprogramming of registrar and transcript-management systems and other IT needs related to the repackaging of courses) and indirect costs of faculty

and staff time and student adjustments. Every campus that converts to a new academic calendar can anticipate significant costs including but not limited to: providing support for student success under conditions of new parameters of course length and degree articulation; supporting faculty success as they redesign their courses and curricula while maintaining their research and service commitments; supporting staff to restructure degree requirements to ensure equivalence from the legacy calendar to any new calendar; and physical plant support for right-sizing classroom spaces or altering modalities to enable students to fulfill requirements in a timely way (for example if required courses are offered only twice a year instead of thrice), as well as augmenting cooling capacities particularly at inland campuses where changes in the academic calendar can bring people to campus during the warmest part of the year.

As of 2026, the entirety of the CSU system and 97% of California community colleges will be on a semester system. The report noted that public and legislative sentiment would probably support streamlining the UC system into semesters, thereby enabling more straightforward transitions from K-12 and community college education to the UC. It therefore seems that the most likely scenario in any calendar conversion is to have the quarter-system UC campuses convert to semesters.

However, the sources of budgetary support for the direct and indirect costs of conversion are not obvious. The report notes that the CSU system did not receive any support from the state of California for the conversion of six of their campuses to a semester system (a conversion process that took 13 years and cost \$90 million). The draft report suggests that the costs to the UC would be between \$290 and \$370 million dollars to convert to an all-semester system and between \$70-100 million to convert to an all-quarter system. Given the current funding crisis, such a costly investment would be an imprudent use of our University's limited resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert Brosnan", followed by a period.

Robert Brosnan  
Vice Chair, UCPB

cc: UCPB



# UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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## UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH POLICY (UCORP)

Susanne B. Nicholas

Email: [sunicholas@mednet.ucla.edu](mailto:sunicholas@mednet.ucla.edu)

May 21, 2025

STEVEN CHEUNG  
CHAIR, ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report

Dear Chair Cheung,

Regarding the Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup Draft Report, UCORP agrees with the comments expressed by campus Committees on Research, which are included with each division's response. We also reiterate the points in our [memo to the APC Workgroup of February 18, 2025](#). For faculty from the eight campuses currently on the quarter system, concerns about the change include excessive cost, significant short-term burden to reconfigure courses, short- and long-term impacts on faculty time, and undue disruption, all resulting in decreased morale in an already fraught time. Those on a quarter schedule continue to have concerns about reduced flexibility for hiring graduate students and arranging research collaborations with other institutions (especially international institutions), and a cut into research time in general. Some UC campuses are already in the midst of changes to new financial, teaching, and travel reimbursement systems, and it would be excessive to add a radical calendar change to the other transitions. It is important to point out that faculty at quarter campuses have witnessed the appeal that the quarter schedule holds in recruiting new faculty and fear the negative impact on faculty hiring.

UCORP feels that the report of the APC Systemwide Academic Calendar Workgroup does not provide adequate evidence for many of its most important claims, including educational outcomes, barriers to collaboration, and challenges for students in finding summer jobs and internships. It seems to ignore a number of important considerations in the costing exercise, including any assessment of the long-term financial impact of this decision. We hope that a more systematic and evidence-based analysis precedes any decision on this important matter.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this report.

Sincerely,

Susanne B. Nicholas

Chair, University Committee on Research Policy



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UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL POLICY (UCEP)

Rachael Goodhue, Chair  
[goodhue@primal.ucdavis.edu](mailto:goodhue@primal.ucdavis.edu)

May 7, 2025

Steven W. Cheung  
Chair, UC Academic Council

RE: Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Work  
Group Draft Report

Dear Steven,

UCEP discussed the Academic Planning Council's Systemwide Academic Calendar Work Group Draft Report at its April 7, 2025 and May 5, 2025 meetings. This continued ongoing UCEP discussions, beginning in Fall 2024, over the adoption of a shared academic calendar across UC divisions. Members of UCEP appreciated the report's overview of the benefits and disadvantages of semesters and quarters and its consideration of the upsides and downsides of a UC common calendar.

UCEP members determined that the Work Group's Report did not provide a compelling rationale for a calendar conversion and identified the following concerns that led to this conclusion:

**Research:** The Report did not provide clear data or other evidence that shifting from quarters to semesters would improve learning outcomes for undergraduate students. The one academic study cited in the Report found that the transition from quarters to semesters has had a negative impact on time to degree for undergraduate students, lowers student grades, delays the timing of choice of major, and diminishes student capacity to enroll in a full course load (Bostwick, Fischer and Lane, 2022<sup>1</sup>). Absent a clear

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<sup>1</sup> **Reference**

Bostwick, Valerie, Stefanie Fischer, and Matthew Lang. "Semesters or quarters? The effect of the academic calendar on postsecondary student outcomes." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 14, no. 1 (2022): 40-80.

pedagogical rationale for adopting semesters systemwide and persuasive research to demonstrate that such a move would not negatively affect undergraduate students, UCEP determined that a conversion could pose potential harms to students matriculating at campuses currently on the quarter system.

**Rationale:** The Report lacks a compelling rationale for doing a calendar conversion. The three primary reasons listed to support a common calendar are: (1) greater systemwide collaboration across the nine undergraduate campuses for professional, disciplinary, and student extracurricular activities; (2) expansion of systemwide course and program offerings; (3) alignment with community colleges and the California State University system; and (4) more comparable student access to experiential learning opportunities and expectations for student athletes. The Report does not offer data or other evidence that students on the quarter system lack comparable experiential learning opportunities. Given the substantive costs (discussed below) to be accrued from calendar conversion, the Report does not offer evidence-supported reasons to undertake conversion that would provide meaningful academic, pedagogical, programmatic or experiential gains for our undergraduate students.

**Classroom Capacity:** The Report also flagged that calendar conversion would increase demand for larger enrollments and larger classrooms and noted that conversion would require expanded classroom capacity or adoption of new modalities of instruction such as hybrid or online. UCEP members raised concerns both about students' ability to complete their degree requirements in a timely manner given space constraints and that changes in instructional modalities for large enrolling courses would not be driven by pedagogical considerations.

**Costs:** Without a very good reason, this initiative is far too disruptive and expensive to implement. The Report estimates that conversion to quarters would cost at minimum over 280 million dollars and at maximum approximately 370 million dollars. It is likely that these figures are too low, as they do not fully take into consideration faculty labor in substantially revising current and creating new courses and in redesigning all degree programs.

This process would at minimum require:

- Courses: substantial redesign and/or creation of fully new syllabi for the new term duration; updating and/or creation of lectures, activities, assessments, and other instructional materials. In particular, converting a quarter course to a semester course requires adding up to 50% new material.
- Requirements: re-sequencing and redesigning of course prerequisites, major requirements, and minor requirements; cross-

program coordination required to address degree requirements that involve multiple academic departments

- Degrees: reconstitution of every degree program, potentially involving substantive curricular changes
- Approvals: redocumenting, reviewing, and approving course and program changes at department, school, and division levels.

**Timing:** The Report wisely recognizes that given the many threats facing the UC system— inclusive but not limited to budget cuts, faculty and staff workload, attacks by the current presidential administration, and the ongoing ramifications of the COVID-19 pandemic—that the timing may not be opportune to undertake such a massive transformation. UCEP very much agrees with this assessment. However, the concerns raised in the rest of this memo would still remain even in more propitious times and UCEP cautions that such a massive shift should only be undertaken if rooted sound evidence that it would improve student outcomes.

UCEP appreciates the opportunity to opine on this matter. Don't hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Rachael Goodhue, Chair  
UCEP