

3. Winter Intersession Report – Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education Phil Kraemer

The Chair invited Kraemer to introduce the topic. Kraemer said that the report emphasized educational quality, in part because some individuals were concerned about the compressed calendar for the winter intersession (WI). He said that the idea stemmed from a visit he made to the University of Maryland to learn more about their WI. Kraemer reported back to then-Provost Nietzel that it was developed to allow students to catch up on progress toward a degree, not to be an additional revenue stream.

Kraemer then gave a presentation on the WI. During the presentation, there were a couple of questions. With regard to the jump in dissatisfaction over library services and in response to Greissman's question, Aken responded that there was no change in hours of availability, but that there were fewer professionals available to help students during WI. Wood noted that the grade distributions were extremely skewed. Kraemer said it could be the result of great instructors or highly motivated students. Wood replied that it could also be a result of easy grading.

Kraemer said that when he taught a statistics course in a four-week session, it was a good experience – there was no time for students to forget what was learned the week before, he had a lot of contact with the students, and it was likely that the student was only taking one course, allowing for more concentration. Wood noted that smaller class sizes also encouraged better performance.

After the presentation, Witt said that feedback he had received about WI was positive, overall. He heard from students that more course offerings were desired, especially for courses over-prescribed in the spring semesters. Lesnaw wondered if anyone had attempted to assess learning outcomes in the WI versus a fall/spring semester or a summer session, particularly in courses that were content driven. Kraemer responded that such assessment was not done for regular semesters, but that it would need to be done in the future. He said UK suffered from only evaluating seat time and credit hours – there was a need to accommodate good learning. He added that there was nothing sacred about 16 weeks of three hours of classes per week – learning could be more compressed while other courses might need 22 weeks.

Lesnaw agreed and said that some courses could be compressed. She asked for data regarding the time needed to assimilate and work with course material for compressed courses. Kraemer said that there was no such data available and that there was no rubric; if an instructor wished to teach a compressed course during WI, he would work with them. He thought the system at Colorado College, where students were taught only one course at a time during eight-week sessions, was advantageous to faculty and had collateral benefits.

Wood said that she would also like to see an assessment of learning outcomes, especially in light of the data in the presentation. She said she was concerned about the grade distribution in the WI statistics course. She said she had taught in a variable format before – STA 291 was taught in three two-week modules in which a student had to earn a grade of C before moving to the next module. She said it was pedagogically tremendous and a great teaching experience but an absolute nightmare for scheduling.

Kraemer said that Bluegrass Community and Technical College taught some eight-week sessions. For students who did poorly, they could retake the course right away, a situation in which compression was an advantage.

Greissman noted that at the University of Montana, the WI was free for fit students who were enrolled for the fall and spring semesters. He said it would be good for students to allow faculty to use WI as one course for their year's load. WI courses also helped students graduate in a timely manner.

Lesnaw asked for Kraemer's opinion, from the perspective of a professor of psychology, on what effect WI would have on a student toward the end of their undergraduate career. During a recent discussion in the Senate about a change to the university calendar, a portion of the discussion dealt with the need for a break for students mid-semester; she wondered what effect would be had if a student did not get a break over the winter holidays, but instead was enrolled in WI, a much more intense classroom experience. She asked for his opinion on four-week modules and noted that within the context of the discussion regarding add/drop previously in the meeting, such modules would magnify the add/drop problem tremendously.

Kraemer said that he was referring to one course during a four-week session, which would be no more intense than five courses taken at once (over the course of a semester). The cognitive investment would be different, though. He said there was compelling data regarding spacing and memory retention in such schedules. With regard to students who utilize the WI, he said some students looked for that type of activity and stimulation. He said another need was to identify which students were good candidates for the WI. He said that questions about who was dropping WI courses needed to be answered.

In response to Harley, Kraemer thought that there was at least one distance learning course offered. Although it could be expanded, Kraemer said that distance learning in the WI would not be effective for all courses and added that especially for distance learning courses, faculty (as opposed to graduate students) should be teaching them.

There being no further questions, the Chair thanked Witt and Kraemer and they departed. The Chair noted that the written progress report on WI had yet to be received – the SC would likely vote to formally receive it at the next meeting.

There was then a discussion about the wording of the motion to approve the WI calendar. Wood subsequently **moved** that the SC recommend that the Senate approve another three-year pilot (WI for 2007 – 2008; 2008 – 2009; and 2009 - 2010) of the WI so long as the courses involved were included in the Provost's learning outcomes assessment and that such data will be provided to the Senate Council and Senate in time for re-approval. Yanarella **seconded**.

The SC chose not to include language in the motion that would mandate the types of courses or the frequency of specific courses offered during WI, since the courses taught stemmed from the prerogative of faculty and their departments and colleges. In addition, the original approval did not include any restrictions on courses. There was also a discussion regarding faculty teaching loads and the wish that an appropriate incentive come from university administrators to encourage new courses be taught during WI. Currently, WI courses are an extra course, over the normal load of courses faculty were required to teach every year.

Lesnaw noted that some universities' WI did fall such that they were not broken by the Christmas holiday. In light of many comments about how to be creative with teaching schedules, she suggested that the entire calendar be revisited. She expressed distaste with the current four-year tyranny of college academics and said it should not be the force driving action; academics and learning should drive decision-making. She thought other entities on campus would be able to accommodate academic concerns if the calendar were drastically revised. A **vote** was taken and the motion **passed** unanimously.

4. Winter Intersession (2007 – 2008) Calendar

The Chair said that a motion was needed to approve the 2007-2008 WI calendar. Lesnaw **moved** thusly. Wood **seconded**. The Chair asked if there was any discussion, and also noted that the motion should include language that approval was recommended, pending approval by the Senate of the extension. Lesnaw and Wood **agreed** to the modified motion.

Finkel noted that there was a grammatical error in the second entry for December 19 in which the plural form should be changed to possessive – “students” should be “student’s.”

There being no further discussion, a **vote** was taken on the motion to approve the 2007 – 2008 winter intersession calendar, pending approval of the three-year extension of the WI by the Senate. The motion **passed** unanimously.

5. Proposed Changes/Combining of *Administrative Regulations II-1.0-1* (“Faculty Appt., Reappt., Promotion & Tenure”)