

**Curriculum Committee Minutes  
March 3, 1999**

**Present:** Barnett, Cannon, Goleeke, Grunberg, Kirkpatrick, Kline, Livingston, Mehlhaff (Chair), Proehl, Stevens, Sugimoto, Warning, Bartanen, Tomhave, Washburn

**Absent:** Hooper, Pinzino, Heavner

Mehlhaff began the meeting at 5:07 p.m.

*Minutes.* **Warning M/S/P approval of the minutes for the meeting of 24 February 1999.**

**MEETING ON 10 MARCH.** Mehlhaff commented that a meeting on 10 March (next week) would be the last committee meeting at which curricular actions could occur in time to get changes into the 1999-2000 *Bulletin*; for this reason, the committee must meet next week. Washburn added that the agenda will include the five-year review of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature; the review package includes proposals for the core curriculum and thus involves the following subcommittees: Comparative Values-II, Fine Arts, Humanistic Perspective, and Communication II.

“FALLOW YEAR” REVIEW OF THE CORE CURRICULUM: MEMORANDUM TO FACULTY. Mehlhaff said that he had planned to devote today’s meeting entirely to discussion of guidelines for setting the academic calendar, but we have Bartanen’s draft memorandum to faculty members teaching in the core curriculum and should take action on it now.

**ACTION: Kline M/S/P that we accept the draft document as the document to send late this spring to those faculty members who are teaching in the core.**

Comments by Stevens and Kirkpatrick focused on the need to clarify exactly what the committee requires in order to review each core course. Bartanen refined the phrasing of the request for materials, and some final editing may occur prior to sending the memorandum.

“GUIDELINES FOR SETTING ACADEMIC CALENDAR.” The committee resumed consideration of this document with Mehlhaff’s inquiry about whether our central concern is with the calendar for the *fall* semester (the sense of the committee seemed to be “yes”). Mehlhaff then called attention to relevant principles expressed in the document: (1) The fall semester is to “end no later than December 20,” includes a four-day reading period, and also has a five-day period (Monday-Friday) for final examinations; (2) the fall semester includes a one-day break; and (3) excluding exam week, the fall semester is fifteen weeks long.

Discussion focused on creating a full-week break in the fall term, either a *fall break week* or a *week-long break at Thanksgiving*. Toward finding days to apply to an extended break, committee members offered and explored several ideas, including the following:

1. Shortening final exam week to four days (Stevens)
2. Beginning and ending the semester according to *dates*, not days of the week (Stevens and others). This procedure would mean, for example, always ending the final exam week on 20 December, rather than on the relevant Friday before 20 December, and always starting classes on the same date. This procedure also could involve final exams on weekend days.
3. Extending exams beyond 20 December OR beginning the semester earlier than we do now *and* extending exams to later than 20 December.
4. Shortening the Reading Period by two days (Kirkpatrick)

5. Extending the number of days from the end of the Thanksgiving break to the last day of classes (Mehlhaff)

The committee also briefly explored the idea of two Fall Break Days (Monday and Tuesday) and the following idea expressed by Washburn:

A week-long break in the first or second week of October and *no break* at Thanksgiving other than on Thanksgiving Day. In this scheme, classes would take place on the day after Thanksgiving (Friday); and students would remain on campus throughout the week, with a special big dinner on Thanksgiving Day.

Committee members generally were cautious about such a change, and Livingston argued against it on the basis of the necessity of adhering to the "current social norm" informing the Thanksgiving holiday; Kline seconded this line of argument.

Other considerations that surfaced in discussion included the possible response of parents to changes in the pattern of breaks (Tomhave asked, for example, if a week-long break in October would suggest bringing a student home--and bearing the costs of travel--*three* times in the semester). Another consideration, expressed by Proehl, is the difficulty for faculty of giving up any more of August by starting the semester earlier.

Bartanen and Washburn will devise some calendar models encompassing ideas expressed in this meeting and will present them for discussion by the committee at a later point.

**At 6:01 p.m. Stevens M/S/P that we adjourn.**

Respectfully submitted,

Suzanne W. Barnett  
5 March 1999  
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