

Reference Number: S07-242

Senate Approval Date: Monday, January 01, 2007

Academic Calendar Policy

#S07-242

The Academic Senate of San Francisco State University endorses the following academic calendar policy to replace the annual adoption of academic calendars. The Academic Senate further requests that this policy be used by Academic Affairs to construct and publish academic calendars for five years in advance. If Academic Affairs must propose a calendar that deviates from these principles the calendar must be approved by the Academic Senate; otherwise, individual academic calendars will not need senate approval.

The annual academic calendar will be constructed in accordance with state law, CSU regulations and the following principles:

- 1)The fall semester begins on the fourth Monday in August and that day will be a faculty development day Monday-only classes will meet on the fourth Monday in August in those years where it is necessary to have 14 semester sessions in those courses. Otherwise, the first day of instruction for all courses will be the Tuesday following the fourth Monday in August.
- 2)The week-long fall recess will be observed the week of the fourth Thursday in November.
- 3)Final exams must conclude by December 22.
- 4)The spring semester begins on the Thursday before the fourth Monday in January. Thursday and Friday will be faculty development days, and the first day of instruction for all courses will be the fourth Monday in January.
- 5)The week-long spring recess will be observed on the ninth week of the semester.
- 6)Commencement will be held on the Saturday following finals week.

The Academic Policies Committee and the Academic Senate retain their responsibility for the academic calendar and they can entertain proposals to amend this policy as they deem appropriate.

The spring semester begins on the Thursday before the fourth Monday in January Thursday and Friday will be faculty development days, and the first day of instruction for all courses will be the fourth Monday in January.

***** Approved by the Academic Senate at its meeting on April 17, 2007*****

Rationale for the Academic Calendar Policy Proposal

Each year the Academic Policies Committee proposes an academic calendar for approval by the Academic Senate. Given the constraints of state law and CSU policy, however, there is very little room for flexibility. Despite these constraints, the discussion over the calendar often takes a great deal of senate time as the same issues resurface year to year. As a consequence, academic calendars are rarely approved more than 2 years in advance. This proposal would make the construction of the academic calendar routine and would require the publication of our academic calendars at least three years in advance. This would better facilitate long-term planning for everyone especially those interested in using campus facilities during breaks, external entities (e.g. local school districts) who would like to coordinate their activities with our calendar and parents who would be better able to plan their childcare needs.

It is the strong sentiment of the APC that an academic calendar policy is a superior alternative to the traditional annual calendar authorization. In the February of 2007, the APC conducted a survey of the campus community to identify if the campus supported the idea of an academic calendar policy and, if so, what were their preferences with regard to the two

primary disputes that emerged in virtually every calendar discussion: the start of the fall semester and the location of spring break.

Two hundred and fifty people responded to the survey and of those 82.6% agreed or strongly agreed that the Academic Senate should develop a policy that establishes the parameters for the routine construction of the academic calendar. 72.8% agreed or strongly agreed that it was important to them that the academic senate should develop such a policy. The APC has concluded that there is broad campus support for a change from annual calendar authorization to an academic calendar policy.

The survey also provided valuable insight into the community's preference for the start of the fall semester. Respondents significantly preferred the current practice of beginning the fall semester on the fourth Monday in August, even though that will mean that Monday-only classes will have to meet on the faculty development day once every 5-7 years. That option is written into this proposal.

Additionally, the survey proposed three alternatives for the location of spring recess (week nine of the semester, tied to the Christian Easter holiday, or tied to Caesar Chavez Day). While there were some significant differences within groups (Faculty, Staff, Administration, Senate Members), there was no significant difference in overall preference. After reviewing the open ended comments submitted by survey respondents, the APC decided to recommend observing the spring recess in week nine.
