

## **COMPRESSED CALENDAR**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

(as of)

**March 7, 2006**

#### **1. Why are we considering a change in the academic calendar?**

Answer: The block-scheduled compressed calendar option has been adopted by many community colleges as a response to the student request for flexible scheduling. In our own colleges, where a 16 week calendar has been offered (e.g. in Centers) it has been very well received and highly enrolled. In both 2002 and 2005, the exploration of a compressed calendar was a high priority item for the LRCFT membership. In 2002, the lack of facilities was a hindering factor that led the team to halt negotiations on this subject. In 2005 negotiations, it was agreed to carry this item forward and negotiate it this year. The process described in the memos to the various groups is the agreed upon methodology to reach the point where a vote of the faculty might occur.

#### **2. Will the change to fewer instructional days affect retirement through STRS?**

Answer: No, the compressed calendar will not affect STRS retirement.

#### **3. Have the minutes per session been worked out so that instructors will not teach way over or way under the minutes they do now?**

Answer: Yes, we have developed meeting lengths to replicate as closely as possible the same amount of instructional time as we have under the current semester length. The variances are generally small, plus or minus one hour over the semester. Although, as also occurs under the current calendar, instructional time varies based upon the days of the week the classes are scheduled. However, the scenarios we have built do no result in significant differences for a typical schedule.

#### **4. What about classes that now meet three times per week? Those that meet 4 or 5 times per week?**

Answer: Dependent upon unit values and type (lecture or lab), many classes will still retain the option to be scheduled from one to five days each week. However, the three-unit lecture class is one example where a three-day schedule does not work under this calendar. That is the primary reason why block scheduling is generally associated with a compressed calendar. For classrooms that are scheduled for using the block mode for four days, the fifth day is available for one-day classes. Those could be on Fridays or interspersed.

**5. Will we have a finals schedule?**

Answer: Yes, we plan to retain the 5-day finals schedule we have now. ARC's and CRC's 7-day finals calendar can also be accommodated.

**6. How many flex days will there be?**

Answer: Two each semester, the same number that are in our current calendar.

**7. Will we have to increase auxiliary and other services (e.g. food service, business office, R & A services) if we teach more Saturday classes?**

Answer: Most colleges have services on Saturdays now. Whether or not those will increase will be a college decision based upon the scheduling at that college and the determination of what services are needed.

**8. We teach a lot of 5 unit courses. How many minutes each week would these courses meet under this proposal? How could they be block scheduled?**

Answer: In general, a lecture class under our current schedule offered twice per week will require an extra five minutes per session, although there are some meeting patterns where the added minutes may then require an additional break. A three-unit lecture currently scheduled twice each week for 75 minutes goes to 80 minutes. A five-unit lecture is 140 minutes compared to 135. Five unit lectures can also meet four times per week for 65 minutes each session. Again, as stated in #4, there are different options for scheduling. Most labs require an extra 15 minutes per session but lower lab values such as a one-unit lab will only require five additional minutes, and the two-unit lab will require 21 additional minutes per session under a two-day block.

**9. Will night classes be scheduled longer so that the classes get out later than they do now?**

Answer: Most scheduling options do not require night classes to meet later than 10:00 p.m.

**10. Do I have to go to the Curriculum Committee to change my course?**

Answer: No, the curriculum, unit value, etc. remains the same, thus no curriculum committee involvement is necessary.

**11. Do I have to change my syllabus?**

Answer: Most likely, yes, you will have to change your syllabus because the number of class sessions will change.

**12. What does block scheduling mean?**

Answer: Block scheduling generally means sections are offered in two-day blocks such as Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. Block schedules generally run later into the afternoon but offer students the option to take a full load while only needing to attend two days per week. Colleges who have moved to this schedule also find students will enroll three days per week where a Friday or Saturday offering is blended with two other weekdays.

**13. I've heard this is a 4-day a week calendar for faculty. Is that the case?**

Answer: No. The language of the current contract remains in force: "Except as noted in 4.7.4.1, 4.7.4.2, and 4.7.4.3, the work week will consist of five (5) consecutive days (typically Monday through Friday), with a minimum of twenty-five (25) hours per week on campus..." Also, it is the intent to have Friday/Saturday block classes be taught by a mix of full-time and adjunct faculty in accordance with contract provisions.

**14. How does the compressed calendar affect students?**

Answer: The block scheduling offered with this calendar means that students may be able to reduce the number of days per week that they attend classes. For many reasons, students find this attractive (less child care, less travel, easier to fit in work schedules, etc.). We know that ARC and SCC have experienced high enrollments in 16- week classes in the current schedule, indicating student preference for this model.

We have also looked at available data on student success and retention. In regard to student success, these data show varied results, depending on discipline and programmatic offerings. In most cases, student retention is better under the compressed calendar. The district plans to monitor both student success and retention.

**15. Will there be an intersession?**

Answer: No, there will not be an intersession in this proposal.

**16. Will summer session be longer?**

Answer: It is possible that a 10 or 12 week session could be offered, but that will be a function of the negotiations which would follow this decision.

**17. What implications does this calendar have for classified staff?**

Answer: Classified staff will experience no reduction in their regular annual work schedule as a result of this calendar. The district has agreed to meet and negotiate over the effect(s) of a compressed calendar on work schedules.

**18. Will there be a Spring break?**

Answer: Yes, there will be a spring break.

**19. What will the start and ending dates be for the 2007-08 calendar?**

Answer: We don't know yet, because the academic calendar is determined each year by the Academic Calendar Committee and can vary. This calendar option gives us two weeks to either start terms earlier or end them earlier. Either way, the result is two weeks additional time between terms or to be used for a longer summer term while maintaining our current recess periods.

**20. Will the calendar adversely affect parking on campus?**

Answer: Parking should not be impacted. For example, we aren't adding more classes to Tuesday/Thursdays that are already heavily scheduled. Or, if more sections are added, they would be later in the day and so the total volume at any given point in the day is not increased over the current schedule.