

## **Academic Calendars: Quarters to Semesters**

### **Submitted by Dr. Lyla Maynard**

In the fall of 1981 Dr. Joseph Borgen, DMACC President, proposed a review of the academic calendar to the President's Cabinet. Following discussion by the group Dr. Borgen presented a proposal to the DMACC Board of Directors that recommended the college convert from a quarter academic calendar to a semester academic calendar, effective September 1983. He presented the following as a basis for his decision.

1. Better articulation. More than 20% of the incoming students (approximately 1,300 per year) attended another college before enrolling at DMACC. The majority of the private schools and all of the Regent's institutions in Iowa were on the semester system.
2. Registration savings. The registration workload would be decreased by 25%. Instead of having four registrations, there would be only three. Those employees now spending the majority of their time in registration would be better utilized under a semester plan. There would be some monetary savings as fewer part-time employees would be necessary for semester registration.
3. Publication savings. By reducing the number of times the schedule would need to be produced, the College would realize a cost savings.
4. Promotion savings. The College would save promotion dollars and college relations staff time by promoting with general advertising three times a year, as opposed to four.
5. Cross enrollment. The unique cross enrollment cooperative agreement with Drake University and Grandview College would be enhanced and students would be better served.
6. Telecourses. Telecourses were all designed for the semester system.
7. Book orders. Time spent coordinating textbook needs with student and class needs via the bookstore would be reduced by one-fourth.
8. General tie-talent advantages. The proposed calendar would provide proportionately more time to faculty for class development, rethinking courses, student evaluation and student support.
9. Space utilization. While going through the necessary process of revising the curriculum from quarters to semesters, there would be a chance to review the curricula to fulfill the needs of more students. By using more time options other than those utilized in the past, space would be used more effectively.
10. Revitalization of programs. With the semester system, advisory committee members and faculty would be able to integrate new and fresh ideas concerning the curriculum. This gives students the benefit of modern concepts and up-to-date marketplace needs.

11. Improved accessibility. After converting from quarters to semesters, there would be more flexibility with regard to course offerings and time scheduling. This would enable the college to meet a wider variety of student needs.

12. Increased flexibility. By reducing the number of schedules, promotions, book orders, registration, time required keeping records, etc., the college could reallocate valuable staff time to conduct follow-up studies, student research to respond to the market place and to explore new concepts.

The Board of Directors at DMACC approved the recommendation by the President's Cabinet and the transition period began. Because the faculty had no active role in this decision, meetings were held in each division at DMACC to inform faculty and staff of the decision.

During the transition, prior to the conversion deliberations and planning for the semester system, the concerns of students were noted and efforts to minimize those concerns were undertaken. The school held several information sessions where students had the opportunity to ask questions about the transition process and the new semester system.

A coordinator was named to assist faculty in advising students who were scheduled to graduate during the year of the transition. The coordinator had the authority to create unique course sequencing in the new semester format that would allow them to complete the program as scheduled under the quarter system. The coordinator also met with faculty to assist them in working out course equivalencies between the quarter and semester formats. A booklet showing these equivalencies was produced to assist faculty and counselors develop schedules for students.

There was general acceptance of the semester calendar shortly after it was implemented.