

COMPRESSED CALENDAR - FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(last updated August 22, 2008)

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

The compressed calendar option has been adopted by many community colleges as a response to the student request for flexible scheduling. Research has shown many benefits to a compressed calendar. Currently 21 of 33 community colleges in LA, Orange, and Ventura counties have moved to an alternative calendar. A study done at Santa Monica College found that students on a 16 week schedule as opposed to an 18 week schedule were less likely to withdraw, had higher grade point averages, and earned higher grades. The article "What Can We Stay About the Impact of Compressed Calendars and Courses on Student Success?" by Susan Bangasser also describes additional positive results of alternative calendars which include decreased earlier drops, improved student success, decreased attrition, and greater flexibility in class scheduling. In previous years, Long Beach City College has gathered faculty input on the compressed calendar. Results of surveys (1999 and 2004) by the Alternative Calendar Committee, and the 16 Week Calendar Task Force (2008) showed that the college was in support of adopting a 16 week calendar.

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

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. 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 not result in significant differences for a typical schedule. An alternative calendar would still have the same number of hours in the semester as an eighteen week semester. A three unit class would still meet for a nominal 54 hours per semester ($3 \text{ hours} \times 18 \text{ weeks} = 54 \text{ hours}$), so if the semester were shortened, the class would have to meet for more than three hours per week ($3.4 \text{ hours} \times 16 = 54 \text{ hours}$).

Note that a term of instruction that minimally adheres to the Title 5 §55002.5 definition of a credit hour, would be three hours per week for 16 weeks equaling 48 hours of instruction. However, the goal is not to reach the bare minimum number of legally required credit hours, *but instead, to match the number of hours previously taught on the base calendar*. In this way, students, faculty, and the public are reassured that classroom instructional time is not lost in a conversion to a shorter term length and historic apportionment levels are not changed.

3. What is the difference between a class hour and a clock hour?

A class hour (student contact hour) is 50 consecutive minutes on any calendar. There can only be one student contact hour in each clock hour. A clock hour is 60 minutes. For apportionment purposes the State assumes that within each 60 minute clock hour, 10 minutes will be given over to some kind of break. This is how the State accounts for the class in determining apportionment. The regulations do say that these breaks may not be accumulated and taken all at once.

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

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, some scheduling patterns cannot match both instructional hours and attendance-accounting hours.

5. Will we have a finals schedule?

Results of the faculty poll showed that most faculty members preferred that there be no separate final exam week. Classes will be held until the last day of the semester and final exams will be held within regularly scheduled class times. Most colleges that have moved to a compressed calendar have the final exams in the sixteenth week.

6. How many flex days will there be?

There will be three flex days in the 16 week calendar. They have been scheduled so that the college can use 16.3 Term Length Multiplier which is beneficial to the college in terms of apportionment. Flex days can be embedded in the primary terms or not in terms of an effect on the TLM. However, if they are embedded, instruction would begin earlier in the term and end later in the term in order to maintain a 16.3 TLM. The consultants advised the 16 week Calendar Task Force to place flex days at the beginning and the end. Placing flex days outside the primary instructional terms has several advantages for students. Flex days are about faculty and staff professional development and placing them within the primary terms has the effect of lengthening the instructional year for students with no instructional benefit for them.

7. Will there be an intersession?

Yes, there will be a 5 week winter intersession. Results of the faculty poll showed that there was preference for a 5 week intersession as opposed to a 6 week intersession. A 6 week intersession eliminates the minimal downtime needed between semesters.

8. Why does the Schedule of Classes now show a 10 minute passing time?

This is a state regulation. Passing time must be expressed explicitly in the Schedule of Classes. There are also many benefits to passing time. For example, including a common passing time leads to consistency and standardization; the incorporation of common passing times into the scheduling configuration permits improved scheduling; passing time allows students to move from one class to the other without missing any portion of a class; and this configuration more closely resembles many local UC and CUS formats, facilitating the transition of transfer students.

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

No, the curriculum, unit value, etc. remains the same, thus no curriculum committee approvals to changes are necessary.

10. Will summer session be longer?

Summer sessions will primarily utilize two discrete five week sessions in the daytime and an eight week program at night. It is understood that “primarily” is the operative word because there are selected situations that will necessitate an eight-week day offering.

11. How will an alternative calendar affect faculty workload?

Faculty will still teach for the same total number of hours per semester so in that sense the workload per semester will be the same. The addition of the winter intersession would offer opportunity for additional employment for faculty. How the full time faculty is paid for an intersession is subject to bargaining.

12. What implications does this calendar have for classified staff, librarians, counselors, and coaches?

These are collective bargaining issues and the district will have to negotiate over the effects of a compressed calendar on work schedules.

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

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