

Study explores switch to semester system

By LARRY SIGURDSON
Of the Emerald

The University is considering switching from a quarterly calendar to a semester calendar and has commissioned Mary Dale Gail to investigate the advantages and disadvantages of such a move.

"Before we decide to

Bassett calls quarters 'more flexible'

implement a semester calendar we want to know what the benefits are of the system," says President William Boyd. "We want to know what the questions are that are associated with switch, and to have the answers to them, should the decision be made to go ahead.

How will morale, grades, registration, and other schools and colleges be affected? Right now I don't have the answers, and won't have until the study is completed."

"The ASUO position at the present time is to inform the students on the possibility of a semester switch," says Scott Bassett, ASUO President. "We are attempting to make contact with the fraternities, sororities, dorms and the media at this point, to make them aware of the issue."

Under a semester system the year is divided in half, and each half is comprised of about 15 weeks. The calendar under the semester system typically begins three to four weeks earlier than the quarterly, but ends in late April or early May.

While the Gail report is not due until some point in the future, many questions are sure to be raised at the prospect of moving to a different calendar. "The classes that are critical are the ones in your major," says Bassett. "Under the current system sequences can be stressed and the faculty members' hands aren't tied. Schedules and materials are more flexible, and students are allowed to experiment in a variety of classes. I am very concerned about the effect a semester calendar would have on programs such as ESCAPE and SEARCH."

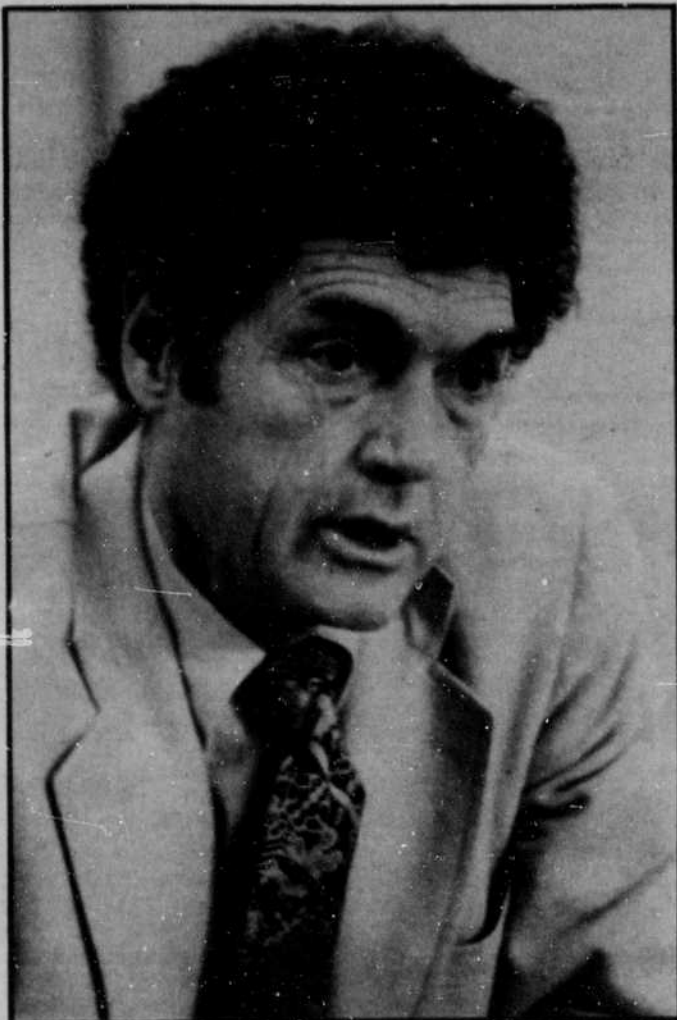
"It is true that students under a semester system would take fewer courses in a four year period," says Boyd. "However, by sacrificing some options, students may more nearly achieve what they want by reducing the variables. The probability of students getting their first choice of classes is a very real concern of this administration."

Boyd also noted he felt "a totality of courses in a complete program of regularity and coherency of relatedness is preferable to just a collection of classes taken at the end of an educational experience."

Many other questions remain to be answered such as: what effect will the switch, if made, have on Oregon's community colleges and high schools; will classrooms be more or less relaxed under the semester system; will University requirements have to be revamped and how much will the switch cost? In short, will it be worth it?

"We don't know the answers to these questions," continued Boyd. "When the report is completed it will be reviewed by the Vice Provosts, Affirmative Action, the Chief of Student Affairs, the Faculty Advisory Council, the Council of Deans, and the ASUO."

No decision will be made without active student input and interaction on the issue. If the findings are that it's not worth it, we'll be able to drop it and go on to other things. If on the other hand it proves to be advantageous, every year that goes by without it being implemented is a year lost that we could be under better situation," says Boyd.



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University President William Boyd announced that a new study will explore the effects of switching from the quarter system to a semester schedule. Under a semester calendar, students would be required to take fewer courses, he said.

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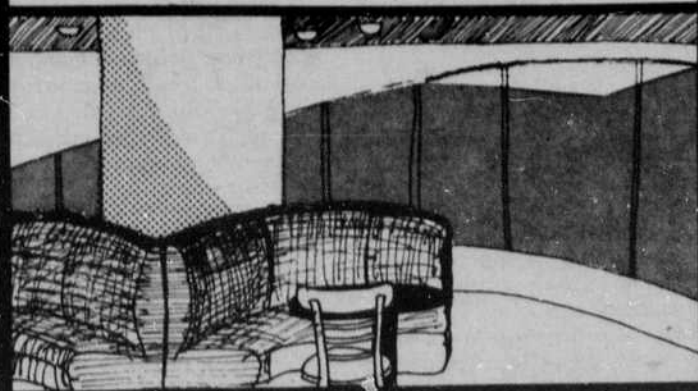
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