

joan nyland

semester system saves study

Time is of the essence in academia, Harry. A student rushes through four years, often drawn out to five, digesting too much material in too little time. What students thought was going to be four years of reading, thinking and writing, often seems more like three cycles of: registering, book buying, syllabus checking, mid-term taking, finals cramming, break.

The University Senate is voting today on a proposed conversion to the traditional semester system from the modified quarter system currently used here.

Undoubtedly, saving money is one reason the University is considering a two-term calendar: \$50,000 per year, the registrar's office estimates. The administration also realizes the time saving in one less Mac Court registration nightmare, billing, and grade reporting circus.

The more important reasons to adopt a semester system, however, are the academic advantages it offers.

The semester system offers students and faculty comparatively more time to study and less time to register. This means more time to read, think, research and write papers and less time to make excuses about being hurried.

Most topics cannot be covered in nine to 10 weeks. A 15-week term would help, if not eliminate, the superficiality of many classes. How many times have you omitted the last third of the syllabus? How many term papers are weekend "whip-outs?"

Opposition to the semester system stems from such pedagogical considerations as September weather and supermarket class taking (i.e. It's three, three, three classes in one year).

If the semester system, as the counterpoint to this opinion will undoubtedly point out, limits by one-third the choices of classes, it increases by one-third the depth in which a topic can be covered. For instance, micro- and macroeconomics require at least 15 weeks to cover the text.

Most all courses would better utilize textbooks in 15 weeks. Studies estimate a semester system also saves students \$50 a year in books.

Regretfully, the University, as my debate partner knows, is considering the traditional semester system. This calendar starts in late September, breaks winter vacation in two — Christmas vacation, followed by dead and finals weeks, followed by a winter break — and ends in early June.

An early semester system (used by the majority of colleges and universities in the United States) does not "split" Christmas break, gives students an advantage in finding summer work by ending the year in May and coincides better with the public schools.

The University should adopt the semester system, preferably the early semester system. The academic calendar should aim at maximizing teaching and researching time, instead, as lazy students will surely point out, class shopping and vacation time.

letters

Rebellious

On June 6, 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon, blasted the city of Beirut, demolished its buildings and massacred the Palestinians — all for the sake of getting the Palestinian Liberation Organization out of Lebanon!

76 days later, the PLO departed leaving a question behind: Why is Israel still in Lebanon with large military forces and heavy weaponry and causing chaos in the country and horror among its people?

Perhaps one may understand such a deep-natured terroristic behavior from their own holy scripture: God said in the Book of Ezekiel, 2:3 "I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me even unto this very day!" Certainly one cannot call such a holy passage anti-semitic.

Amer Alaghbari
senior, economics

It would be stressful for me to watch a show with the transients. Society does not cast misfortunes on people. Your personal motivation and direction in life determine the path you choose to take.

Shu-Shing Chen
sophomore, pre-business

Depressing

How long will this depressing basketball soap opera continue at Oregon? For the last five years coach Jim Haney has brought to the Oregon student body the boringest and most lackluster basketball this side south of the North Pole.

Although I am unfamiliar with the normal game plan of the Ducks, their strategy appears quite simple: have the guards stand 45 feet from the basket, dribble a few times then pass to another player who is no position to do anything with the ball. The player then looks around the court, sees no opening and passes back to a guard at mid-court.

This process is repeated at least seven times before the Ducks finally turn the ball over.

This is not basketball, it is boringball. It is a style of play that does nothing to enhance the quality of play nor the quantity of wins.

I'm also growing tired of hearing claims that the basketball is "on the rise." What rise? If it rose any faster it would come to a complete stop. Why doesn't the Duck personnel just come out and say "We'll probably finish near the bottom again," instead of coming out with foolish statements of a team on the rise?

The quality of basketball at the university reflects the sparse attendance too. There is only one way to get supporters and that's to win, not lose. Coach Haney was recently quoted as saying "there are reasons (for not getting fan support). We've changed our style. It takes time getting used to."

I suggest the coach change his style again to a more productive-oriented one offensively. As to the comment it takes time getting used to, he is correct... however, time is limitless and it will take more time than my mortal age can handle.

If the Ducks would win games instead of almost winning games and if the offense would stop mimicking a senior citizens track meet then McArthur Court would resemble the boisterous, rowdy place it once was in the years of Ballard and Lee.

Dan Goulet

Conducive

I have taken the time to look around the campus lately. Justice has been exercised for the good of the student population. They now have a place to study as well as relax without the fear of intrusion of a group of individuals with little or no political power. The group of individuals with little or no political power that I am referring to are the vagabonds of society — the transients of the Emerald City.

In response to David Cree's open letter, I would say these transients must have gone further down the road of life.

The absence of the transients at this university creates a more conducive environment for academic pursuit. These four years of our lives are dedicated towards this end. If it is our responsibility to help these individuals out, bringing back the television room for these wayward souls is not a solution.

I will be honest with you. When I do badly on an exam, the sight of 10 or more transients huddled by the television will not all of a sudden take the shitty feeling away. I know that there are a lot worse things in the world than a bad grade, but the fault lies within me for not studying well.

I have observed that parties are just one of the outlets for tension; an undergraduate has to keep his or her sanity. A friend has told me once that any attempt to pretend to be what I am not will put unnecessary stress on me.

harry esteve

...and limits choices

Joan, you heartless wench.

It's all very easy for you to sit in front of your VDT and comment on what's best for undergraduates. You've finished your undergraduate work.

Put yourself in our shoes — or should I say our desks. Think back to the most boring class you've ever taken. Maybe it was Econ. 202. Maybe it was fulfilling your health ed. requirement.

Now, imagine starting that class a week earlier than usual, when the grass is still dry and the Willamette River is still warm enough for tubing.

The weeks drag on. The only time you've opened your health book was in the University Bookstore to check the price. By the fifth week you're sitting in the farthest corner of the room. By the seventh week you're wearing a Sony Walkman to class.

And Joan, you're not even halfway through the term.

Under the proposed semester system, classes would last 15 weeks. That's five weeks longer than our current longest term. Fifteen more sessions for most classes.

Try thinking back to what one of your professors told you 15 weeks ago. You will be asked to do just that during finals week under the semester system.

One of the most enjoyable aspects of our current four quarter system is that by the time a class becomes intolerably tedious, it's almost over.

A second big attraction is the variety of courses students are able to take — if they want a variety. In my three-year tenure at the University I've studied everything from Chaucer to chimpanzees. I've taken acting classes in which I've had to impersonate a Hostess Fruit Pie and I've

learned how to compute second order derivatives.

And I've been able to study journalism — in depth.

Taking sequence courses allows for as much depth as the semester system allows. Having a short break between each quarter is refreshing, alleviates the ennui and lets the brain recharge.

Admittedly, the thought of having to go through the Mac Court melee one less time is appealing. However, if the University comes through with computerized, advance registration, the registration rat race will be pleasant nostalgia.

Under the proposed semester schedule, two weeks of winter break fall right before "dead week." One week after vacation's over — finals. Some vacation.

I can see it now: sitting in the lodge at Mt. Bachelor sweating through eight chapters of pre-renaissance history.

The same ridiculous schedule is proposed for spring semester: spring break, dead week, finals.

Some other, more objective, advantages of the quarter system are listed in a report compiled by the University of Akron:

- It provides one more term for students to start their educational programs or to transfer in from another institution.

- It reduces the costs both in money and time to the student who must withdraw from school during a term.

- It provides more terms for scheduling such activities as leaves of absence, faculty exchange programs and terms of study abroad.

But Joan, don't take my word for it. Students have been writing comments to the Student University Affairs Board for the past two weeks. An overwhelming majority opposes it.

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