

**ME Open Forum
February 11, 2021
12:00 – 1:00 PM**

Attending:

Adrian Buganza-Tepole	George Chiu	Pam Graf
Ajay Malshe	Greg Shaver	Partha Mukherjee
Alex Chortos	Guillermo Paniagua	Patricia Davies
Amy Marconnet	Hector Gomez	Pavlos Vlachos
Arezoo Ardekani	Ilias Billionis	Ray Cipra
Besty Baxter	Ivan Christov	Richard Buckius
Bin Yao	Jackie Baumgardt	Sadegh Dabiri
Bob Lucht	Jay Gore	Sheri Tague
Carl Wassgren	Jim Jones	Sheryl Willison
Chuck Krousgrill	Jitesh Panchal	Song Zhang
David Cappelleri	Jong Hyun Choi	Steve Kessler
David Warsinger	Julia King	Stuart Bolton
Davide Ziviani	Klod Kokini	Tami Armstrong
Eckhard Groll	Kristin Deckard Dawson	Thomas Siegmund
Elizabeth Henning	Liang Pan	Xianfan Xu
Emma Cox	Marisol Koslowski	Xiaomin Qian
Farshid Sadeghi	Mike Logan	Yan Chen
Fu Zhao	Nicole Key	

Minutes

1. Announcements - Eckhard
 - Eckhard announced that today's ME Open Forum was being recorded for purposes of putting together the minutes. When the minutes are complete, the recording will be deleted.
2. January Term (J-Term) Proposal – Eckhard
 - Eckhard shared the 2022 Academic Comparison Calendar and proposal (working draft). See last pages.
 - Schedule to the left is how is it typically done.
 - Schedule to the right is the proposed schedule.
 - Includes four-week of instructional period in January.
 - Spring semester would start on January 31, 2022.
 - Spring semester would be reduced from 16 weeks to 15 weeks.
 - Spring break moved 2 weeks later than typical.
 - Instructional finals will end on May 23, 2022.
 - If accepted, the new schedule will reduce the following fall semester to 15 weeks as well.
 - This schedule would provide 12 weeks between the end of spring semester and the start of instruction in August.
 - From an AY year appointment – nothing changes.
 - Faculty will be appointed 2 weeks before semester starts in August. AY appointment will remain the same.

- Payment could be shifted slightly. Faculty may have to support themselves a little in January.
- Full 9-month appointment (3 summer months supported through research).

Comments:

- Jim: Are you saying the salaries will not be pro-rated?
 - *Eckhard: That is his understanding based on comments by Jay Akridge.*
- George: Will faculty be in pay status during the 4-week January term?
 - *Eckhard: Cannot answer right now. This is where he is a little confused. If you are not in pay status, it may mean that your pay status starts earlier in August and goes for the spring semester until the end of May (leaving the summer and the January term not in pay status).*
- George: If we are not in pay status and we teach in January term, assume we get paid. If we are in pay status, there would not be extra pay. We need clarification! Where do grad students and TA's fall into this? What do they do during this 4-weeks. A lot of financial stuff to figure out.
 - *Eckhard: Yes, these details need to be figured out.*
- Jay: Do any colleagues feel academically that it makes any difference in learning during the new fall and spring semesters?
- Carl: So, we have one less week during the semester, assume we wouldn't try to fit all the current material in.
 - *Eckhard: Would have to shave off content by one week.*
- Dave C.: This could be an issue in Sr. design
- Patricia: Jay's question is a good one. Is this a good educational plan for the students? Thinks the J-term proposal is bad for the students and bad for the faculty.
- Yung: At MIT they call their January break "Independent Term". They are paid from Sept. to May. June-Aug is considered summer pay. Thinks it works well for the students.
- Jim: Sounds like most courses during J-term will be online.
- Eckhard: There was some discussion on how to use the J-term. Most faculty may not teach. Dave's comment on Sr. Design is interesting. Could this term be used as an add-on for Sr. Design? Basically, it is moving the May Maymester from May to January.
- Jim: If they pursue this, we could look at workshops for January term.
- Eckhard: There is also talk of squeezing in a short-term study aboard.
- Greg: Going from 16 to 15 weeks is concerning. The upper administration wouldn't want us to cut down the number of credit hours by 1/16 because there is less learning. Or we jam 16 weeks work into 15 weeks. Feels that this proposal is DOA.
- Jay: If faculty are offered this as a structure, they will find a way to make it work. It would not come without modifications to the curriculum.
- Thomas: This is also at the Faculty Affairs Committee. The Educational Policy Committee has not discussed it. Thomas isn't sure when it will come back and move through the Senate. There was a lot of discussion on the topic. There are questions on the committee's mind that have not been clarified.
- Ajay: What is driving this J-term proposal?
 - *Eckhard: Not totally clear to him.*

- Jim: Looks like it is coming from the administration (not faculty). It is a way for them to generate additional tuition dollars. An additional revenue stream for the University.
- Thomas: There was a discussion of what Purdue would look post COVID-19 and this came from that discussion.
- Jim: If it moves forward, it would be helpful to faculty and staff to delay it for 1-year.
 - Eckhard: *A motion to delay by 1 year was made in the last MELT Team meeting and approved unanimously. Everyone felt it was too rushed.*
- Eckhard: Fall semester 2021 ends on Saturday, December 18th, grades due on December 21st. This would not allow even 2 weeks break for those teaching during the January term.
- Greg: We are doing this on the back of what we are already doing well. Very worried about this proposal.
- Farshid: We should work on our strength. Just because another school does this, doesn't mean we should.
- Jay: Seems like very serious consideration is being given to this. First week of classes is usually syllabus week, rather than having content in first week. The J-term would jump right to the program.
- Pavlos: Much of this could be driven by post COVID-19 or anticipation of post COVID-19. One-week semester reduction might be a problem, but maybe we would be able to innovate and create and maintain the same level of educational content, even possibly with better outcomes, by leveraging all of the work we have done this past year. It doesn't mean we will lose our product value and quality if we go to 15 weeks. Agrees it is not well thought out, but doesn't mean we couldn't deal with it.
- Eckhard: Would like to be in the position to have time to look at what we are doing and how to move forward and do better. This all seems rushed. Would like to have a session this summer where we can look at the past year and learn from this and come up with a plan to move forward.
- David W.: If we have this large period of time, it would be great to have a plan for coursework on undergraduate research.
- Eckhard: We are still looking for clarity and input. This is being discussed at many levels. As we learn more, we will make it available to the faculty.
- Ajay: We are working on post pandemic, when we are still in the pandemic. This could be premature.
- Jay: Seem most colleagues have raised concerns on whether this will help our students and curriculum. Will it make it better?
- Patricia: If we change and we get somewhere, how much better is it? How much effort will it take to make this change? Needs to be some cost benefit analysis going on with this. Will it be any better than what we are doing now? And, how many hours will be spent on focusing on education and research that in the end, may not make a lot of difference.
- David C.: Why push in January instead of Maymester?
 - Thomas: *Thinks it is to create additional opportunities in addition to Maymester.*
- Jim: Could impact internships for students. They also need to think about what happens to the students that return early (after the holidays) and they have a month before the spring semester starts.

- Eckhard: During the Head's meeting with Jay Akridge, they did say why don't we just look at the Maymester and see how we can make that better.
- Stuart: Does this connect with the tri-mester model they tried a few years ago? It is an insane rush! We need clarity on the financials as well.
 - *Eckhard: The tri-mester proposal was discontinued. The J-term proposal could have some of the same people involved that pushed the tri-mester.*

From the chatroom:

- from Nicole L Key: Seems like a fairly important aspect that should be nailed down by now if they really want to start this for Spring 22.
- from David E M Warsinger: MIT uses the short term to have a lot of soft-skill courses like "Leadership, Writing, etc." List here: <https://web.mit.edu/iap/listings/index.html>
- from Song Zhang: It makes sense to have soft-skill courses. Having regular courses does not make sense.
- from David E M Warsinger: Notably, we could offer an undergrad research course or program like the ME summer program. MIT has something similar.
- from Nicole L Key: Students will want tuition to go down if we drop a week from the semester.
- from Charles M Krousgrill: I agree with Nicole. Students will want to pay less for less instruction during Fall and Spring.
- from George Chiu: We have some experience in offering core ME courses (274 and 352) as part of a 4-week study abroad program. If we do this in J-term, students may have another opportunity to take a core course to catch-up or open-up their schedule and provide faculty opportunity to receive salary support.
- from Patricia Davies: Students often won't do classes if they don't get credit for them. So how does this affect our expectations about a student's total number of credit hours? Will they sign up if we are only offering soft courses without credit?
- from Amy M Marconnet: Sounds like many of the students targeted to take traditional classes during the 3-week term are the students who are struggling to catch up. A 3-week version of a 16-week course doesn't sound like the best opportunity for those students
- from Amy M Marconnet: In contrast, the study abroad students seem to be very motivated students and can handle the rapid pace.
- from Amy M Marconnet: Further, I'm concerned that time is being removed from the AY impacting what we can cover in our classes and potentially our pay structure! It seems faculty will be expected to pay more of our salary over the course of the year. While yes, you could teach in J-term and spring term that would make it 20 weeks or so of non-stop teaching
- from George Chiu: Yes, Amy. Very student dependent. Some students perform better when they only have one course to focus on a daily level. It is not for all students...
- from George Chiu: I think push back the implementation schedule to give the campus some time to discuss and adjust if needed.
- from David J Cappelleri: Has it been approved already?
- from David J Cappelleri: We should try to get it rejected.
- from Patricia Davies: Who spends the whole week on describing the class?
- from Nicole L Key: Maybe organizational leadership??

- from Jay P Gore: https://www.purdueexponent.org/campus/article_c7f0382c-bdc4-5068-9cb7-28d4625de4f7.html
- from Tami Armstrong: How many ME classes could be taught in that time period? I think any class requiring a lab would be eliminated from this J semester.

2022 ACADEMIC CALENDAR COMPARISON

2022 SPRING SEMESTER			
CURRENT		PROPOSED	
Weeks	Date	Weeks	Date
		WS 1	January 3
Wk 1	January 10	WS 2	January 10
Wk 2	January 17	WS 3	January 17
Wk 3	January 24	WS 4	January 24
Wk 4	January 31	Wk 1	January 31
Wk 5	February 7	Wk 2	February 7
Wk 6	February 14	Wk 3	February 14
Wk 7	February 21	Wk 4	February 21
Wk 8	February 28	Wk 5	February 28
Wk 9	March 7	Wk 6	March 7
	March 14 – Spring Break	Wk 7	March 14
Wk 10	March 21	Wk 8	March 21
Wk 11	March 28		March 28 – Spring Break
Wk 12	April 4	Wk 9	April 4
Wk 13	April 11	Wk 10	April 11
Wk 14	April 18	Wk 11	April 18
Wk 15	April 25	Wk 12	April 25
Wk 16	May 2 – Finals Week	Wk 13	May 2
	May 9 - Break	Wk 14	May 9
		Wk 15	May 16 – Finals Week
			May 23 – Break
2022 SUMMER SESSION			
Wk 1 (MM)	May 16		
Wk 2 (MM)	May 23		
Wk 3 (MM)	May 30	Wk 1 (MM)	May 30
Wk 4 (MM)	June 6	Wk 2 (MM)	June 6
Wk 5	June 13	Wk 3 (MM)	June 13
Wk 6	June 20	Wk 4 (MM)	June 20
Wk 7	June 27	Wk 5	June 27
Wk 8	July 4	Wk 6	July 4

Wk 9	July 11	Wk 7	July 11
Wk 10	July 18	Wk 8	July 18
Wk 11	July 25	Wk 9	July 25
Wk 12	August 1	Wk 10	August 1
		Wk 11	August 8
		Wk 12	August 15
2022 FALL SEMESTER			
Wk 1	August 22		
Wk 2	August 29	Wk 1	August 29
Wk 3	September 5	Wk 2	September 5
Wk 4	September 13	Wk 3	September 12
Wk 5	September 19	Wk 4	September 19
Wk 6	September 26	Wk 5	September 26
Wk 7	October 3	Wk 6	October 3
Wk 8	October 10 (October Break)	Wk 7	October 10
Wk 9	October 17	Wk 8	October 17 (October Break)
Wk 10	October 24	Wk 9	October 24
Wk 11	October 31	Wk 10	October 31
Wk 12	November 7	Wk 11	November 7
Wk 13	November 14	Wk 12	November 14
Wk 14	November 21 (Thanksgiving Break)	Wk 13	November 21 (Thanksgiving Break)
Wk 15	November 28	Wk 14	November 28
Wk 16	December 5	Wk 15	December 5
Wk 17	December 12	Wk 16	December 12
	December 19 – Holiday Break		December 19 – Holiday Break
	December 26 – Holiday Break		December 26 – Holiday Break

DRAFT Proposal for Purdue 4-Week January Term

January 4, 2021

Working Group members:

Kris Wong Davis, Chair, Vice Provost for Enrollment Management)
Marion Underwood, Co-Chair, Dean of Health and Human Sciences
Keith Gehres, University Registrar
Tim Riley, Assistant Comptroller and University Bursar
Heidi Carl, Executive Director of Financial Aid
Joe Faulkner, Director of IT Enrollment Management Solutions
Linda Baer, Assistant Director – Change, Training and Process Improvement
Tyson McFall, Senior Academic Advisor in Aeronautics and Astronautics
John Gipson, Director of Summer Session
Chris Martin, Director of Purdue Online
Nan Kong, Associate Professor of Biomedical Engineering, University Senate EPC Representative

Proposal: We propose that Purdue University offer a new January term, a 4-week block of instruction in January, in which students could enroll for credit for a variety of types of academic experiences. A January term could allow undergraduate students to take courses needed to progress toward their degrees, enroll in immersive experiences (e.g., study abroad, experiential education) or take intensive courses (e.g., languages, coding, Python, Power Excel, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Internet of Things, and ethics). Courses could be offered in face-to-face, online, or hybrid modes of instruction. Offering January courses for undergraduate and graduate credit could offer faculty and students the opportunity to participate in a wider variety of academic experiences, shorten time to degree completion, and generate additional revenue. Tuition for these courses would be charged separately from spring tuition, and it is proposed that the business model employed for summer courses be used for the January term.

Why a January Term?

This four-week, self-contained January term would offer the university an opportunity to expand student access to high demand courses, allow students and faculty a chance to explore diverse academic experiences, enhance student success and augment departmental revenue. As with Summer courses, optional, voluntary participation in this new January term would allow students to catch up, maintain timely progress toward degree completion, take courses in areas of special interest, accelerate their progress in order to graduate early, or graduate on time while fitting in more extra- and co-curricular activities (such as co-op, study abroad, and research experiences). For students who opt not to participate in January term, the four weeks between long semesters could allow them to pursue focused, short-term internships or to work to earn money if needed. Optional, voluntary participation in a January term would allow faculty the opportunity to teach immersive courses, create new types of academic experiences, and earn additional income if they

so desire. A January Term would also create an additional source of revenue for colleges and departments. Faculty members who choose not to participate in a January term might appreciate the additional time between the long semesters to prepare their spring courses or to focus intensively on their scholarly work for these four weeks.

How would a January term affect the academic calendar?

Establishing this January term will require modification of the academic calendar in order to begin and end the January Term after the Winter Closure and holiday break. With some modest modification of the academic calendar and a slight shortening of each of the long semesters (Fall and Spring), Purdue could offer a 4-week term in January. Timing of this consideration is ideal because many faculty have participated in Impact and Impact X and have become more accustomed to varying modes of teaching. In addition, popularity of the Summer session has continued to grow for both students and faculty.

Research and performance data on winter sessions and January terms at peer institutions show that a short term between fall and spring can provide opportunities to increased access to courses, enhanced student success, increased student retention, academic innovation, and increased department revenue. Winter sessions and January Terms have been instituted at peer institutions such as Cornell, NYU, Rutgers, University of Arizona, Harvard, MIT, SUNY Stony Brook, Texas A&M, University of Iowa, Virginia Tech, Indiana University, Bloomington and University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign (UIUC). MIT, for instance, uses January as an Independent Activities Period, in which students and faculty can engage in innovative classroom, and out of class, experiences that augment regular term coursework. Information gathered from these peer institutions and others combined with interest from faculty, Deans, and Department Heads along with the January Term Working Group has culminated in a proposal to establish a January Term at Purdue.

January Term – Calendar, Details and Logistics

Calendar:

Attached is a draft calendar of the academic year changes necessary to accommodate a 4-week January Term. Fall and Spring semesters would be shortened by one week each, establishing a 15-week teaching term while still including the respective fall and spring breaks for a total of 16 weeks.

- The start of the Spring Term will move later to the end of January and in some years February depending on the calendar.
- The turn-around time for rolling grades between January and Spring Terms will mimic the time currently between Summer Terms.

Any new initiative requires coordination with a wide range of partners on logistics and processes. Key details include:

- A 4-week January Term will fall entirely in the month of January between the fall and spring semesters. Note that two options for the length of January Term, 3-weeks, and 4-weeks, were explored.
- No department or instructor will be required to participate.
- Initial course offerings will focus on high-demand, lower-division courses that meet student needs, but offerings will not be limited to these courses.
- Faculty would be encouraged to use this January term to create a variety of types of innovative new courses, credentials, immersive experiences, study abroad opportunities, coops, and more.
- The faculty and instructors will decide on the format of their courses, as well as the appropriate number of credits. Nevertheless, it is expected that courses delivered via online and digital methods are expected to be a sizeable proportion of the offerings during this term. Due to the short length of the January Term, we expect that most courses taught will be 3-credit courses taught over 4 weeks.
- It is proposed that the funding model for instructional costs will follow the same model that Purdue currently uses for its Summer Session.
- The tuition and fee schedule/model for January will also be the same as the University's model for summer, which is a per-credit hour rate between 1-5 credits.
- After each January term, student outcomes will be assessed: completion rates, grades compared to similar courses in other semesters and student success in subsequent courses where appropriate. Systematic feedback will be collected from students, staff, and faculty.
- This term will be for continuing students only and will not be available as a new admit term.

Potential Concerns

Establishing a January Term at Purdue would follow the Maymester and summer models.

However, we recognize that with any new term comes the need to address the following potential concerns.

- *Academic Rigor and Quality* – Purdue currently teaches courses over a short term during Maymester including forty, 4-week, 3-credit online courses. Nevertheless, a fast-paced short term does require students to employ exceptional time-management skills, as they do in other intensive courses. Academic rigor and quality will be a priority for Purdue's January Term. In UIUC's January Term, most students (80% of 470 respondents) rated the overall quality of January Term courses as good or excellent and also rated their

overall experience as good or excellent (78%). Around half of the students (51%) found the course to be very or extremely engaging. Also, the majority of students (84%) felt the quality of interaction with their instructors was the same as or better than most face-to-face courses they have taken during the traditional academic year (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).

- *Enrollment in Other Semesters* – We acknowledge the possibility that some students will use January Term to achieve a more balanced load, which could reduce enrollment during other sessions, or to retake a Fall course to get a higher grade instead of retaking the course during the Spring. However, at UIUC the introduction of a Winter Session resulted in an increase in total credit hours for the year (University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign).
- *Faculty and Department Interest* – Several departments and faculty members have already expressed interest in teaching a course as part of a new January Term. In 2017, conversations with Purdue faculty regarding a proposed Winter Session resulted in approximately 40 faculty members interested in potential offerings. Faculty interest will continue to be investigated, including instructors who are already comfortable delivering online content.
- *Academic Term Teaching Contracts* – Human Resources, the Graduate School and Financial Services are already involved and investigating implications of a January Term for Teaching Assistants, Lecturers, Adjunct Faculty, and other academic term teaching contracts should implementation of a January Term move forward.
- *Registration* – Some may express concern over the timing of registration as many academic advisors do not have the capacity to accommodate additional advising appointments. Based on feedback from academic advisors and discussion with the Registrar’s Office, students will register for January Term classes at the same time as Spring semester courses. **This strategy eliminates the need for additional advising appointments.**
 - **Registration – As January term would add a fourth registration cycle there is a concern for advising and registrar staff capacity for additional students support for January term. Additional resources are strongly recommended in these areas to maintain a quality student experience with academic advising and registration. Advising for January term can initially begin at the spring registration appointment in the fall, however, full academic support for this term would extend to assisting in the registration and academic planning until the term begins (note: this would overlap with a critical time in December at the close of the semester- grade posting and candidate clearances).**
 - Once grades post, students may also decide they want to take a J-Term.
 - **Additionally, this would implement a fourth schedule build and registration management cycles for the Registrar staff. All of which would need additional resources within BICC support.**
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Commented [EOC1]: Sandy commented that this is not accurate statement.

- *Student Interest* – Will Purdue students want to take a course during January Term? Student interest in Maymester and Summer Session offerings has been increasing each year. With students continuing to seek opportunities to augment Fall and Spring courses to complete second majors, minors, certificates, and high demand courses in their primary major, we believe there will be student demand for a January Term. As we move beyond the pandemic, students who missed semesters of a traditional residential education might welcome the chance to be on campus in January, to enjoy time with peers, to attend athletic events, and to participate in campus organizations and activities. Working with PSG and PGSG the Working group will continue to assess and explore student feedback on this proposal.
- *Student Performance* – Some may express concerns that it will be difficult for students to learn, perform well and successfully complete a course in a short time frame (4 weeks). In published research on a study that addressed this question, on average students actually performed better in a shorter winter term course than in the same course with the same instructor during other (longer) sessions during the year (Harkness, S., Laves, E., & McClure, B. (2014)). Perhaps because the short winter term format limited students to a single course, they were able to focus and learn the material well.

Request for Consideration and Suggested Points for Discussion

We respectfully request that the University Senate consider, discuss and collaborate with us, and vote to approve the creation of a January Term beginning in January 2022. In order to establish a January Term, the Working Group along with faculty, staff, business offices, Student Life, the Provost's Office and the University Senate will need to explore and address a number of the following concerns and considerations, including but not limited to those listed below. It is plausible that in doing the preparation work and investigation that initial term may need to be delayed until January 2023, but a January 2022 start is strongly preferred. Should that change be necessary, we would work with the Senate on the new timeline. We suggest the following points for discussion, but are certainly open to addressing other issues.

- a. What are the academic implications of altering the Fall and Spring terms each by one week?
- b. If a January Term begins in 2022, then fall 2021 will be 16 weeks and spring 2022 will be 15 weeks. This will mean that the 2021-2022 academic year will be slightly imbalanced. Are there contract/pay implications caused by this?
- c. Are there any accreditation issues or concerns that must be addressed if altering the length of each semester?
- d. Will the modification of fall and spring terms have an impact on reading week (formerly 'dead' week) and finals timing?
- e. How will 8-week course modules be modified under a 15-week semester?

- f. Continued conversations with University Residences will address the needs of students who need to be on campus during January Term but who may not take classes as well as students who only wish to live on campus during January.
- g. What are the faculty and staffing implications of a January Term regarding expected workload?
- h. What is the impact to the timing of spring break in coordination with local school calendars?
- i. How will FY versus AY contracts be handled for faculty and what will be impact for summer salary be?

Conclusion

A new January term would be an excellent opportunity for academic innovation at Purdue. Although this project will require modifying fall and spring terms, there will be little negative impact to instruction in the regular academic year. This proposal offers faculty and staff a new term with which to develop and plan coursework, experiences, and other academic engagement. Because the January Term does not impact the Winter Closure, it will be feasible for the university to provide the full suite of support services for students, faculty, and staff throughout the term.

The working group looks forward to engaging with faculty, staff, students, and administrators in conversation and collaboration around this proposal and the related elements. Provided attached is both a draft calendar for 2021-2022 and beyond as well as class time draft for the proposed term. While there is much work to do, given the many benefits of the January Term, we propose to work toward a first January term in 2022, knowing that issues will arise that need to be worked out.

Harkness, S., Laves, E., & McClure, B. (2014). Implementing a Successful Winter Session. *Summer Academe: A Journal of Higher Education*
University of Illinois – Urbana Champaign: Winter Session White Paper, 2015-2016