

October 17, 2017

Calendar Committee
President, Academic Senate
President, Associated Student Organization
President, AVCFT
President, AVCFCE
President, CSMA
Administrative Council
Executive Council

RE: Proposal for Change to the Academic Calendar

ISSUES

The college is faced with several issues that require an immediate, and proactive, response:

- Student Success requirements in basic skills, CTE and degree completion (Student Scorecard).
- Guided Pathways Initiatives.
- Movement to performance based funding this means greater emphasis on retention and completion.
- Declining enrollment for the past two years resulting in apportionment stabilization for next three years.
- Projections for flat enrollment in the coming five years.
- Increasing regional economic growth projections, which depresses FTES enrollment growth.

METHOD and ANALYSIS

In addressing the issues enumerated a thorough study of enrollment history, per term and session, was conducted as well as a review of the trends in enrollment, economic growth, legislative demands and initiatives, student progress on scorecard metrics, and retention and completion data. Because of the analysis of these data the following conclusions were drawn:

- Funding through the categorical programs of SSSP, Equity, BSI, and CTE Strong Workforce require progressive improvement in the metrics of the Student Success Scorecard
- The Strategic Vision (attached) for the Community College system as recently adopted by the Board of Governors is increasingly pointed toward completion and success data
- The state legislature in its budget allocation has funded programs such as Guided Pathways that center on completion
- Strong Workforce allocations already have 17% of its funding determined by a performance metric.

- AVC has had declining FTES enrollment over the past three years following the college having met the pent-up demand created during the forced workload reductions of the recession.
- Local business and industry are growing rapidly and adding new jobs. This usually means declining enrollments and the need to institute scheduling adjustments to meet the needs of working students. As examples, Northrop Grumman has announced a need for 1,700 additional jobs over the next two years after already hiring aggressively for the past eighteen months. BYD has already hired 350 and projects to grow to 1,000 employees over the next year to eighteen months. As major employers expand, so do needs in collateral, supporting industries.
- The demographics of graduating high school seniors has peaked. In California alone, high school graduates have dropped by 1.76% in just the last year. (Trend data for K-12 enrollment is attached)

The current academic calendar does not provide a continuous and contiguous schedule to encourage ongoing enrollment and completion. The interruption of intersession in January from the primary terms has very limited capacity and is a deterrent to ongoing progress to the working adult student. AVC increased the number of sections for intersession 2017, and enrollment remained flat from the previous years, however, summer session is the only session of the college to experience growth over the past two years. This points to the phenomena that is evident usually in times of economic growth; the need for scheduling flexibility due to work schedules.

The need to increase capacity through scheduling, for the greatest number of students is evident. This keeps the students engaged and moving expeditiously toward completion. Further, the scheduling compression that is created during the intersession of five weeks is an obstacle to students registering for more than one class due to the time consumption of a single class. A three-unit class meets 54 hours in a term to award the credit and meet the requirements of the COR. In a 5-week pattern in a class that meets five days a week, this is 10.8 hours per week or 2.16 hours per day. In a 4-day pattern, that class meets 2.7 hours per day. In an 8-week session, that 3-unit class meets 6.75 hours per week. A four-unit science class with a lab component will meet 54 hours for lecture and 54 hours for lab. In a 5-week pattern this is 21.6 hours per week, an 8-week pattern it would meet 13.5 hours per week.

For a 6-week class that three-unit class still meets 54 hours, but now it is 9-hours per week. A 12-week session requires the class to meet 4.5 hours per week. For a four-unit science class with a lab, the 108 hours of class time would require, in a 6-week pattern, 18-hours per week and 9- hours per week in a 12-week pattern.

In the researching colleges without an intersession, The Yosemite Community College District has 2, 16-week primary terms, and a 15-week Summer session with three 5-week sessions embedded. They have employed this calendar for some years, and it also eliminates spring break. Bakersfield College moved to a 16-week Fall semester, 16-week Spring semester, and a 12-week Summer session with two 6-week sessions and one 8-week session embedded in the 12-week summer session. According to the college President, the summer was very successful with enrollments up and outcomes strong. College of the Canyons is exploring a change to a 12- week summer session. (Examples of the calendars of Bakersfield and Yosemite are attached)

CONCLUSION

In responding to these challenges, by creating a student friendly academic calendar that recognizes the working student, and increases capacity for students to complete their programs of study efficiently. I am proposing the following changes to the academic calendar at Antelope Valley College.

- A 16-week Fall semester beginning on the third Monday of August and ending the second Friday of December with the entire week of the Thanksgiving Holiday as a fall break.
- The elimination of intersession.
- A 16-week spring semester beginning the first Monday in January following the New Year holiday and ending the first Friday in May with a spring break week in either of two weeks in March to coincide with area school districts.
- A 12-week summer session with two embedded 6-week sessions beginning on the second Monday in May and ending on the first Friday of August. The first 6-week session would end the third Friday of June. The second 6-week session would begin the fourth Monday of June.

Sample academic calendars for AVC with specific dates for the years 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 as examples of how the calendar would be affected is attached.

The proposed calendar change will not affect the working schedules of classified staff. It will require the adjustment of some administrative tasks in Enrollment Services, Scheduling, and Counseling.

There will be an adjustment necessary for faculty Department Chairs, as the work of intersession will shift to summer. However, the work is not being eliminated therefore an adjustment for stipend payment dates for the Chairs will need to be negotiated.

This calendar provides for 3-weeks between fall and spring semesters; 2-weeks between spring and summer session; and, 2-weeks between summer and fall. Further, for full-time faculty not wishing to teach during summer session there will be 14-15 weeks between spring and fall semesters, or increased flexibility of additional teaching during the multi-scheduled summer.

Moreover, as we seek to develop more options for students, the opportunity for expanding evening and weekend scheduling as well as embedding 8-week and 12-week options in the primary terms of Fall and Spring should be considered.

As we increase success, retention and completion, we will meet our enrollment challenges of the increasing emphasis on completion rates for statewide initiatives and the push for performance based funding.

In eliminating intersession and shifting to the summer, a greater capacity for section offerings to a larger number of students is created. The enhanced scheduling choice and flexibility for our students increases their ability to complete their programs effectively with less commitment of time and money. Further, this provides a greater opportunity for high school students who cannot access intersession; expands opportunity for students home for the summer from 4-year institutions; and, provides greater flexibility for our working students. This proposed calendar adds eleven weeks of instruction to our academic calendar significantly increasing access and opportunity for our students. Offering a wider range of evening and weekend courses is expanded during a more dynamic summer session, meeting the needs of our working students.

I look forward to the open discussion and consideration of adapting to meet the changing needs of our students and community.



Ed Knudson
President
Antelope Valley College

