

## Winter Intersession Executive Board Concerns

Shortly before first Academic Senate Executive Board meeting, Senate President Nick Strobel conversed over email with Dean Bill Moseley about a possible winter intersession that would start in the 2022-23 academic year at the soonest. Dean Moseley has been tasked with researching the winter intermission in order to relieve scheduling bottlenecks in programs with multi-course prerequisite sequences in STEM, particularly Biology, as well as, to provide additional scheduling options for other disciplines and increase FTES generation. The initial discussion had either a five-week intersession (with no change in fall/spring semester dates) or six-week intersession (with fall or spring semester shifting one week). Implementation in the 2022-23 academic year would require a full Senate discussion to *begin* no later than the October 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in order to meet Board of Trustees approval timelines for the academic calendar (BOT would need to approve by their December meeting).

Strobel decided before the Senate's first meeting in September that the *full Senate* would begin deliberation on the intersession proposal in October and that it would be the *full Senate* who would decide if BC would continue forward with the intersession idea. Strobel (wrongly) assumed the five-week option up to October 5.

On October 5, all three Senate Presidents and college VPs met to look at the administration's proposal: a six-week intersession with one-week buffers on both ends requiring two or three week shifts in fall or spring semester start dates. All three Senate Presidents said they would bring the proposal back to their Senates for discussion. Strobel presented the two basic models for the six-week intersession in his President's Report at the October 6<sup>th</sup> Senate meeting and in two follow-up emails to the Senate through Monday, October 11.

The Academic Senate Executive Board met with Dean Bill Moseley on October 13. Here are their concerns/questions and recommendation to the full Senate.

- 1) What data do we have in student success and retention of knowledge (for use in the next courses in the sequence) for students in a compressed six-week session vs. an eight-week or full semester version of the proposed intersession courses? There's some doubt about the academic quality and rigor of a three or four-unit course done in six weeks, especially if the course has a lab.
- 2) Have we surveyed the broader student body (outside of those taking the Biology sequences) to see if there's a demand? Strobel has asked SGA to discuss the intersession proposal and give feedback, particularly on whether there is student demand outside of STEM and which of the two models is preferred. SGA President Mata said that SGA would begin discussing it at their October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- 3) Why can't we handle the Biology bottlenecks in the 4-week, 6-week, 8-week, 12-week late start classes during the semesters and/or during the summer?
- 4) A number of faculty are under the impression that the new classrooms/labs in the Science Engineering building and BCSW are going to take of the bottlenecks, so administration

would need to address why the new SE building and BCSW are not going to solve the bottleneck in the Biology sequence at least.

- 5) Having another term to schedule will mean extra work for faculty department chairs because there's a certain minimum base of time needed to schedule for any number of courses in any term. A collegewide intersession could lead to a significant work load increase for faculty chairs if the winter intersession becomes popular with students and we have more courses offered in that winter intersession. Perhaps a lot of this concern will go away when Ad Astro solves all of the scheduling headache but we may need a year of using it under our belt to see if the headache really does go away before taking on another term of scheduling due to a winter intersession.
- 6) Could biology solve their bottleneck issues by increasing the sizes of classes like what happened with English and Math when the remedial courses went away? They went from 78 students in a class to 104 students in a class (month?).
- 7) Student who work in the rural communities use the month of June and most of August to help their families. The winter intersession models have either a very early August start or a very late June end time. The models shared do *not* seem to be better for—they would be worse for—our students of color who have to coordinate their lives with siblings.
- 8) Are there going to be enough faculty willing to teach in the winter intersession to make it worthwhile to have a collegewide change in the academic calendar?
- 9) The data that needs to be gathered are who would benefit from this change, what departments need to participate in this, what effect would the intersession have on the school and what effect it will have on faculty and students. Will the intersession benefit all of the students or is it really just for a smaller population of students taking the Biology sequences. If it's primarily just Biology, then can we do a pilot for a couple or three years with just Biology rather than changing the entire college's academic calendar?
- 10) What other California Community Colleges have a six-week winter intersession and what type of success are they having with it (student demand, student achieving SLOs, retention of knowledge for next courses in a sequence, etc.)? *[See separate document created by Strobel about other colleges.]*
- 11) We need to look into how the winter intersession and the shifting of the fall/spring start dates would affect our use of the classrooms in the rural high schools of our Rural Initiatives program. For the rural populations, the shift in the fall / spring semester dates might relegate a lot of the rural students to taking only night courses because of coordinating with family members on different school calendars and working the fields in June and August.

### [Recommendation to Senate](#)

The Executive Board recommends to the full Senate that any implementation of a winter intersession be postponed to no earlier than the 2023-24 academic year and that a task force be created to explore whether or not BC should have a winter intersession and if the answer is yes, which model or other possible models should we have.