Preparatory: This special meeting was called to order at 3:20pm to continue discussion related to the first reading of the Calendar resolution.

I. Minutes: None

II. Communication(s) and Announcement(s):

A. Academic Senate Chair: No report

B. President's Office: Dan Howard-Greene reported on his discussion with staff who were involved with Humboldt's change to semesters from 1984-86. Costs of conversion included reprogramming computer systems, revising publications, revising agreements with external agencies, providing release time for curriculum committee chairs and for a conversion coordinator. The estimate of actual direct costs was $220,000 or less over two years.

Question: What was the rationale for the Humboldt change? Answer: The reasons were basically the same as those we've discussed at Cal Poly.

Question: How did they accomplish this change? Answer: They developed a fairly detailed body of information that governed the transfer and that this is available to Cal Poly, SLO.

Question: Any sense of additional time required of faculty and staff for the change? Answer: No.

Question: You mentioned budget reallocation. What exactly did you mean by that? Answer: Presumably there would be some meaningful savings resulting from a calendar shift so there might be shifts of resources from one area to another based on need.

Question: What about impact on facilities? Howard-Greene had no information on this.

Greenwald: E-mail from Humboldt's Academic Senate chair indicated there was not enough time allocated for transition. The bulk of the burden fell on department chairs and those who already had release time (e.g., chairs of department curriculum committees).

Question: How were the students affected? Greenwald noted that he'd been informed by the chair of Humboldt's Academic Senate that there was a stampede to graduate before the transition and that students did suffer, especially in terms of the learning they achieved. The transition also resulted in low enrollment which turned out to be a problem.

Budget Committee Chair: The Budget Committee estimates that the real conversion costs for the faculty contribution would be between $1 million and $5 million. During the transition, faculty will work ten months rather than nine.

Staff Council representative: The Staff Council is focusing on support service costs. Questions revolve around training evaluators, programming the computers, etc. Will there be additional support? Another question is how would the change affect those on ten-month contracts? No one responded to answer these questions.

Greenwald--question to Dan Howard-Greene. If enrollments drop during the transition, do we have agreement from the system that we will not be penalized during the transition
time? Howard-Greene said that we don’t but that we don’t have an understanding that we will be penalized either. The question has just not been asked.

III. Business Items:

The Chair ruled that discussion of the Resolution on Change of Grades will be held over until the next meeting if there is time at that meeting.

IV. Discussion Item(s): The Calendar--discussion of issue areas previously identified.

Short and Long-term Impacts on Faculty:

Possibility of increased time for faculty to do research, consulting, etc. because there is one less academic work week (2 weeks on exams instead of three). There might be fewer preparations because a faculty member is teaching fewer different courses per year and presumably giving fewer exams over the course of a year.

93% of four year, public comprehensive universities like Cal Poly are on the semester system. That figure drops to 87% when major research universities are included. (Source: July, "Campus Trends," a study by the American Council of Higher Education.)

Class size: Will it increase under the semester system? The Academic Senate Chair distributed copies of his paper entitled "Twenty Questions." In his view a change would not affect lecture classes as long as three quarter-unit classes would not become three semester-unit classes, but that there would be an impact on labs.

Stress and burnout are real costs of a quarter system. Such stress may be comparable to that which students encounter in the real world after graduation.

Students don't want to be caught in a transition period.

If we decide against moving to semester, we should seriously think about converting from three-unit classes to four-unit classes across the university as currently exists in the College of Business.

Breadth of offerings can be maintained in a semester system while offering the opportunity to go into more depth where desirable. Regarding depth and breadth within required and support courses, if a department has determined the specific body of knowledge that majors must acquire while at Cal Poly, it makes no difference whether this information is provided over three quarters or two semesters.

A semester system provides faculty and students an opportunity to get to know each other as human beings.

Costs: The Chair’s view that this had already been adequately dealt with during Dan Howard-Greene’s presentation was not contested and discussion moved on.

Summer Session: Compacting the same number of hours from a semester course into a shorter time period results in less student learning, especially in technical areas.

Currently some faculty have the luxury of choosing to teach during summer and taking another quarter off which provides the possibility of having six months off without having a sabbatical.

Summer FTE’s are low. It takes more students during the regular year to make up for low summer numbers.
In terms of throughput, many universities that went to a quarter system during the 1960's did so in order to improve throughput of the large numbers of “baby boomers.”

A winter session would be possible between fall and spring semesters. It would allow for some unique opportunities such as study abroad for those who can’t afford a full quarter, and bringing in students from industry who cannot take off an entire quarter to come to school.

Information is needed about how the 93% of campuses (cited previously) which are on semester deal with summers. Shortened summer sessions of six weeks would not work for agriculture labs that revolve around growing cycles.

Fee-supported summer programs are already happening at Cal Poly. (For example, the College of Architecture is running courses through Extended Education.

An Ornamental Horticulture student representing some of the students in the College of Agriculture was recognized by the Chair so that she might read a statement in support of retaining the quarter system.

Impact on Labs: The most serious problem caused by a switch to a semester system will be in the area of labs and the degree of difficulty will vary among different programs.

Articulation: In general, articulation will be easier since most schools are on semesters.

Effects on Minors: No comments.

Co-curricular Program: Students have voiced that they wouldn’t use the more “relaxed time” that theoretically will result from a switch to semesters for reflection but would spend the time either working or getting more involved in co-curricular activities. According to Student Life and Activities 85% of students already are involved in student activities. Semesters might result in a higher participation rate.

Management of Courses for Improving Student Throughput: There would be between 25% to 30% reduction in classes under semesters.

Other Concerns: Enterprise projects in the College of Agriculture probably would be negatively affected.

Companies would rather have students in Coop for a longer period of time--six months or longer according to the Director of Career Services.

V. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:45 pm. The Academic Senate will meet again on 11-29-94 to complete its second reading of the Calendar resolution.

Recorded by:

[Signature]

Sam Lutrin, Secretary
Academic Senate