

A New System?

The "term system," as the University's academic calendar is called, within a few days will be the subject of a student-faculty poll.

Few topics have received such constant debate as the term system. Since Penn State discarded the standard semesters in 1961, both wrath and praise have been heaped upon the present system, which is based on four 10-week terms.

Now the Senate has proposed changes in the term system. Suggestions include returning to 15-week semesters.

But nothing is definite yet. And the Senate, before making a decision and relaying it to President Eric A. Walker and the Board of Directors, has wisely decided to solicit faculty and student opinion.

The trouble is that most students here don't know the difference between the term system and the semester system. Before student opinion is considered, therefore, the Senate should make sure that it has fully explained the operations and effects of the two calendar methods.

The basic difference is that the semester system calls for two 15-week periods between September and June. This would be equal to what we now know as the Fall, Winter, and Spring Terms.

Under the semester system, classes during the fall semester would break for Christmas vacation. Classes would then resume in January.

Opposed to this is the present Fall Term, which ends in December. Students are not burdened with school work during the holiday, as they return to the beginning of a new term.

For this reason, it is our guess that most students favor the term system.

Several complaints have been made against the term system, however. It has been accused of resulting in four mad rushes per year, causing a decrease in the quality of education.

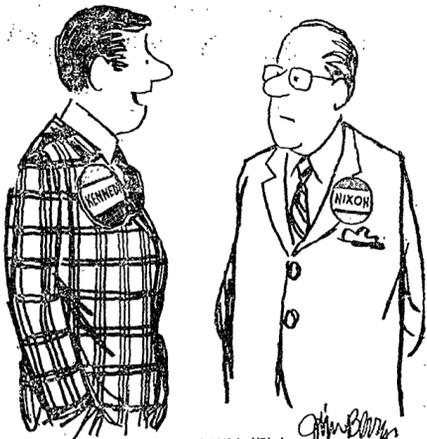
Faculty members have said that the term system doesn't allow enough vacation time between the Winter and Spring Terms. Other complaints include those against the system's disorganized final examination schedule, long Christmas break, and late termination of the Spring Term.

One overlooked difference between the term system and the semester system is the matter of class length and credits.

Two semester system plans now under study by the Senate allow for 55-minute classes. This might be a pleasant change from the present 75-minute-long classes.

The Senate has mentioned no differences between the two systems concerning credits. In most universities employing the semester system, students carry an average of 15 credits. Students here carry an average load of 10 to 12 credits.

It would be helpful if the Senate clarified its plans concerning credits. For that matter, the Senate should fully explain all aspects of the term and semester systems, before students and faculty members are asked to offer their opinions.



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"Is yours an old button, too?"

Individuals Cannot Transcend the Law

By LAURA WERTHEIMER
Collegian Staff Writer

You help your girl put her bags on the train, tell the conductor that you're getting right off, see him nod—then watch helplessly as he gives the signal for the train to pull out. You call to make an appointment, and the secretary's voice is warm and friendly until she hears yours. You are picnicking quietly in someone's far-off woodlot and the farmer drives up and curtly orders you off, and you know he'd have smiled and waved if you were white.

Maybe you're wrong. Maybe that farmer is nasty to everyone. Maybe the conductor really didn't hear you, maybe the secretary suddenly choked on a fishbone. Sure.

But the slight's pile up, and the irritation grows. What was unfair becomes prejudiced, then bigoted, then racist.

But the average white student at Penn State is neither bigoted nor racist, and is prejudiced only to the extent that average people, black and white, tend to congregate around what is the norm. What hurts is the average person's tendency to be cruel about it. Most people are horribly unkind to each other. This is true, although disproportionately so, whether the people involved differ racially, politically, or not at all.

It is unfair to say that every Penn State who detected a tinge of hypocrisy in the Administration's decision to cancel classes last week is a racist, just as it is unfair to say that everyone who opposes riots is. Some undoubtedly are, but so are some who favor both.

Most people, unfortunately, don't communicate the full extent of their thought in casual conversation. The expression "baloney" as a comment on canceling classes may mean that any gesture of honor for Martin Luther King is preposterous, or it

may represent the vastly more thoughtful position that phony gestures are no way to deal with a very real crisis.

The problem is: What DO people say when confronted with a situation of emotional or moral significance? Most people take refuge in a banality. There rarely seems to be enough time to explain a lifestyle, and serious thought is seldom communicated in brief conversations—but that does not mean it isn't there.

When a rational person puts a personal judgment above the law, as Martin Luther King did, he is attempting to supplant one law—an unjust one—with a just one. His purpose is to create a just law, and he then expects people to uphold it or be punished. It is irrational to hold that because you are opposed to a law you can "transcend" it, because someone who is annoyed at you can use the same logic to "transcend" the homicide laws in your direction.

The horror of 35 dead in recent rioting is a manifestation of a problem that every Negro faces: Is the law friend or foe?

A cool examination of the problem suggests that the laws are the best protection Negroes have. Equality is demanded. Civil Rights legislation, on the books, finds discrimination in jobs, housing, schooling and services punishable by law. The de facto situation is less lovely, but the laws stand. It is unequivocally forbidden by law to do what Hitler's Germany decreed by law.

Carl Oglesby, former president of Students for a Democratic Society, predicted last week that this summer would see genocide for the blacks. The only things that stand between that unspeakable idea and actuality are moral sensibilities and the law. The only thing that can be relied on, in the wake of the predicted riots, is the law.

The situation is strained, at best. But terror and destruction cannot improve it, and, much as it goes against current sociological notions to say so, only time and education can.

The vast majority of people on campus and in the country are people of good will, who are doing their best to avoid both prejudice and any trace of paternalism or tokenism. The cretin who shot Dr. King will be punished, not in lip service to King's vocal followers, but because it is the law.

Letters to the Editor

He Looked Us Over Last Week

TO THE EDITOR: I have just finished looking through last week's Collegians for about the tenth time, thinking I may have missed the story the first nine times. What I'm referring to, of course, is Jim Clark's death. In case you're confused, Jim Clark was a two-time world champion race driver and a major sports figure. He won Indy once, finishing second twice. He also holds the record for most Grand Prix races won in a career (25), surpassing Juan Fangio.

It's not that I like "blood and gore and guts and veins in my teeth," but I would never have known if a friend hadn't told me. I really don't see how you can miss a story like this and still call that thing you publish a newspaper.

By the way, I also missed the first letter I wrote on this subject: that's two strikes. I did find a thrilling story on the Pirates' win over San Francisco. Who the hell cares? I sure don't, particularly since you don't mention the Phillies or the other seventeen teams.

I also found about fifteen stories on Martin Luther King's death (most of them justifiable), along with the same number of letters asking why Friday classes weren't canceled. The answer to this is obvious; it took something of a nitwit to ask in the first place.

Then there were Miss Stewart and Mr. Vassel who accused me of being a bigoted racist. Well, I must admit, I try my damndest not to be, but probably don't quite succeed. I don't understand how people like Miss Stewart can write letters such as they do, accusing white America of being bigoted, when it is obvious from the content of their letters that they are just as bigoted (at least) in the opposite direction.

At any rate, I wish you'd let someone get a word in edgewise to eulogize Jim Clark, because he was a great driver and a popular personage, well known out of his field as well as in it, and died in his greatness, so to speak, doing what he wanted to do.

Leonard M. Herring '69

Obituary of a McElwain Roach

TO THE EDITOR: At 2 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16, 1968, McElwain R. Roach was pronounced dead by a competent team of resident coeds. The cause of death was stated as a sudden and crushing blow, inflicted while Miss Roach ascended the left leg of a student, who was showering.

Funeral services will be held at the Department of Housing, 101 Shields Building. Friends of the deceased are invited to visit the vast Roach family which is mourning throughout McElwain Hall.

Estelle Creed '69
Ellen Volusher '69

How Much Does It Take To Care?

TO THE EDITOR: Neal Anderson, Assistant Professor of Biology, is quoted in the April 11 Daily Collegian as having said "... we aren't getting paid enough to care," in reference to a plea for teachers who care at Penn State. I ask you, Mr. Anderson, how much would it take to make you care?

David W. Stevens
Assistant Professor of Economics

Sane Policy

The Daily Collegian office was bursting at the doors last night as student politicians attempted to publicize their preferences for Undergraduate Student Government positions. Because of past experience, and considering the relative worth of such endorsements, the Collegian is not printing any political opinions from so-called student leaders.

Since petty personal grudges rather than reason guide many a political endorsement, the Collegian feels it a saner policy for each student to form his own opinions.

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Paper Asks for Faculty Writers

University faculty are invited to submit articles to Collegian's "Faculty Forum." Columns of opinion from all members of the faculty are welcome.

The articles should be typewritten and triple-spaced and should not exceed 75 lines in length. Interested faculty should bring their articles to Collegian office, 20 Sackett Building.



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