

Walk alone

Student Escort Service is lacking volunteers and success

The Student Escort Service is in trouble. The service is only in limited operation now — already the sixth week of the term. Betty Moore, supervisor of the Student Escorts who operate the service, said this is due to a lack of volunteer escorts.

"In other years, we've been in operation right now," Moore said last week.

Last year, the service received between 800 and 220 calls for escorts, and had about 200 available volunteers. Moore said on Thursday there were only 19 available volunteers.

Although Moore said the escort service should serve as a last resort, it is an important service to the students. Already Moore said the service has received 35 escort requests it was unable to fulfill.

Any University student, male or female, can volunteer to be an escort. Volunteers are screened by a member of the Association of Residence Hall Students, Interfraternity Council, Organization for Town Independent Students or the Undergraduate Student Government, along with a Resident Assistant, house president or student counselor.

Calls for the escort service are taken by the Student Counselors who are on duty between 4 p.m. and midnight on weekdays and from noon to 8 p.m. on weekends. Moore said volunteers are usually asked to escort less than three times a term.

Despite an increase in advertising, Moore said the number of volunteers to date is down from last year because student safety awareness was increased last year after a number of attacks on campus that were highly publicized. But statistics from University Safety Services show no notable decline in the number of attacks this year. The statistics even show an increase in the number of reported incidents of indecent assaults.

The Student Escort Service is an important factor in ensuring the safety of students. Officer John Rideout of University Police Services said the escort program is certainly a deterrent to assaults.

Student safety will not be assured until the service is in full operation. And this cannot be achieved unless more students volunteer as escorts.



Op-ed Letters to the Editor

Semester union

Having taught under the 10-week system and before that under the semester system at Penn State and elsewhere, I am convinced that semesters are preferable for strictly educational reasons.

I would make an exception: intensive short-courses, such as the ones traditionally offered during the summer.

Years ago, Eric Walker's efficiency-minded administration forced the degrading combination of the term with the 75-minute class upon a faculty that could not or would not make up its mind.

As a result, undergraduate instruction became hasty and superficial. Ten-week terms go by so fast that there is little time left for reflection, discussion or related activities, such as student clubs connected with specific studies, for example, languages. The worst feature is the doubling of examinations, grades and registrations, all of them extraneous to true education.

Many members of the teaching faculty seem to be afraid that their loads will be increased and their salaries proportionately lowered by a return to the semester system.

Who will win?

I myself wonder why the Oswald administration has discovered the beauty of the semester all of a sudden. The administration could by those fears to resist giving solid guarantees to the faculty that there will be no reduction in income. If this is not done, the faculty has a sure remedy left.

Since I am not teaching anymore, I have no axe to grind.

Gerald M. Moser, professor emeritus of romance languages Oct. 10

There are several points to keep in mind when arguing the merits or demerits of a switch to an early semester system.

First and foremost is the fact that there is no best system. Having studied and taught under semester, trimester, quarter and — in Canada — a system having half and full year courses — I can attest to the fact that there are advantages and disadvantages to each system.

For example, if flexibility of scheduling

courses is most important, then the term or quarter systems provide that advantage. On the other hand, if maximum time for absorption of material is most important, then the semester (long — not short) plan has that advantage.

Therefore, which system is best depends upon what factor or factors are considered to be most important. One cannot have the best of all worlds under any one calendar system.

Second, to the best of my knowledge, there is no research data that directly bears on the point of what system is best under what conditions.

That is, if we ask the question "... what system produces the best learning..." there is no answer.

If we ask the question "... what system costs less..." there is no hard research data that provides an answer.

If we ask the question "... what system do students operate best in..." again there is no sourcebook that has the magical answer. Thus, the decision is based on research information that will not happen because it is nonexistent.

This, if it is really true that one system actually maximizes one important factor while another system facilitates another, and at the same time there is no research data to support

such a view, then it is my contention that the decision to change systems depends upon the people's preference or desire for what system they would rather operate under.

My feeling is ever since the term plan was implemented years ago there has been growing undercurrents amongst faculty that they do not like the arrangement. This uneasiness has filtered up to the administration and they are beginning to react to these concerns.

Whether the reasons being offered for a switch to a semester system are legitimate and real or not will not decide the issue. The bottom line will be what people want and desire. The real question, however, is what group will win out in having their desire implemented or maintained.

Dennis Roberts, associate professor, educational psychology Oct. 8

The United States still has 50 people being held hostage and the war continues, placing their situation in the back of the mind and on the back page.

What are the causes of this war, as you understand them to be? Is the U.S. involved? Should the U.S. become involved in the conflict in any way? How will involvement affect the economic and the political scene at home? On Tuesday, Oct. 21, The Daily Collegian will focus its weekly op-ed page on the Iran-Iraq War and its implications here. If you have any thoughts or comments on the subject, please submit them to the Editor's Office, 125 Carnegie. All letters must be typed, double-spaced and no longer than 20 lines. Deadline is Friday, Oct. 17 by 5 p.m.

The Graduate Student Association is a neutral to positive.

Many students contacted by the Graduate Student Association indicated that they had completed undergraduate and graduate studies in institutions following a semester plan.

More time to pursue classwork in depth, to conduct research and to participate in extracurricular activities were factors mentioned frequently by these students as advantages to a semester system.

The first term of many graduate students is a time of searching and decision making. Taking candidacy exams, selecting graduate committees and identifying potential research areas, as well as coursework and assistantship duties, are some of the many demands on the time and energies of the beginning graduate students.

More time would ease the pressure and hopefully improve the quality of some of these decisions.

Many specific concerns have been raised relative to coursework under the semester plan. Will the number of course hours carried per semester enable a graduate student to complete a degree in the same time span as the present system? How will the adjustment of faculty teaching loads affect the frequency of course offerings? What will happen to the summer schedule?

There is a strong feeling among graduate students that preparation for a

Collegian

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Results of the proposed calendar change from term to semester system.

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|---|-------------------------------------|
| Pros | Cons |
| Fewer registrations, examinations and commencements | Lack of scheduling flexibility |
| In-depth courses | Increased course load |
| Shorter class periods | Changes in research time |
| Less paperwork | Rebudgeting of research time |
| Longer Christmas break | Restructuring all existing programs |
| Review and update of programs | Cost of conversion |
| Longer research periods | Students caught in transition |
| | Fewer vacation periods |

Information gaps can cloud opinions

The administration did ask for student opinion prior to a final decision, there has been little concrete information made public by the administration explaining how the change will be made.

This information, in the form of the administration committee reports, impact studies and cost analysis research, can only be supplied by the administration, and if no such information is available then an informed student opinion cannot be made.

If such information is made available, the following should be considered: Classes may be larger because instructors may not be able to teach the same number of sections they do under the present system.

This may particularly effect lab classes. Credit loads may be increased disproportionately. Teaching loads may be increased making it difficult for faculty to do research, and therefore, lowering the University's reputation as a prestigious research university.

Students should also think about the cost savings in the change and whether the University will be able to afford the change with other universities for faculty.

These considerations are all valid, regardless of whether concrete information about the change is given by the administration. Students should take this chance for input to the University.

However, the Academic Assembly feels that more information is needed for an informed student opinion to be given.

Keep the term system; why stop a good thing?

As someone who has survived 11 terms at the University and is counting the days till graduation, I would like to point out some of the pros and cons I have discovered in my long tenure with the University's term system.

First, the pros:

- I would never have made it through most of my required classes if it wasn't for the term system. I have a very short attention span. Ten weeks is already too long.
- Term breaks are great. Everyone needs a break around Thanksgiving (an appropriate holiday to follow finals, to say the least), and the three-week period between Fall Term break and holiday break is the funnest time of the year.
- Holiday break is just long enough. What would I do for a month at home? I could not even find a summer job, let alone something for a month. Anyway, it gives me a good excuse not to have to take down the tree.
- The term system means that if I want to, I can take a leave of absence Winter Term and go skiing.

• With only 10 or 12 (or fewer) credits per term, I can concentrate on three or four subjects in greater depth. Well, what I really mean is I have fewer courses to cram for during the ninth week of the term.

• Speaking of cramming, the term system means that when cramming time rolls around, I am only nine or 10 weeks behind, not 14 or 15.

• The term system means three Daily Collegian end-of-term parties per year, not to mention an additional round of other parties for midterms and finals.

Now for the cons:

- The 10-week term is always too short when you have a class you really enjoy with a professor who really knows his or her stuff.
- The term is also too short when you get a class with the perfect "10" or even a decent "9."
- We have to go through registration one more time than everyone else. Ugh.
- Spring break is in the middle of nowhere. No one else except Penn State students are home at the end of February. But why should that bother me? My town is boring in the summer, too.

No days off for Easter. Couldn't we at least have Friday or Monday of Easter weekend off? How am I going to make the long trip home to collect my Easter basket?

December. This means journalism graduates can get in the unemployment lines before the graduates from Temple.

Although students are taking about the same number of courses under the term system that they would take under a semester system, there is also the psychological factor. You feel like you are taking more courses.

And if you decide to change your major, the term system means you can switch horses in mid-stream and not miss too much.

The term system also means that if a course you simply must have is only offered first period, you only have to endure it for 10 weeks. After that, you are liberated to take fourth, fifth and sixth and sleep until noon.

The University says switching to the semester system will help save money. But they have already stopped cleaning our rooms during the term and last spring they even took away our blankets. Lousy would stage a protest.

I did not choose Penn State for the term system. I came here because tuition was cheap. That did not last, and it looks like the term system may not, either.

But like the term system. In the past, I have (somewhat successfully) juggled four courses and two jobs per term; even with five extra weeks, two more courses would doom me. Procrastination knows no difference between a term and a semester.

Not to mention that a semester system would ruin all of my good jokes about serving my term at the state pen.

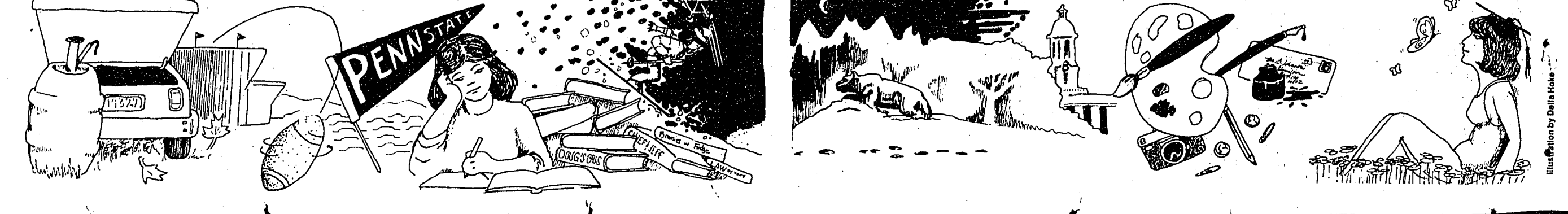
The term system allows a student to break down the year into three nice packages: Fall Term galgating, Winter Term studying and Spring Term vegetating. With only a fall and spring semester, we would lose valuable study time during the winter when nothing is going on in Happy Valley (or so I am told).

Terms are as much a characteristic of Penn State as the Obelisk and the Phi Psi 500 — a little bizarre, but they add to the flavor of the University. We've got a good thing going. Why ditch it?

Jan Corwin is an 11th-term Journalism major and a copy editor for The Daily Collegian.



Jan Corwin



Change poses critical questions

By JAMES R. DUNGAN
Special Assistant to the Director of Planning and Budget

A semester calendar divides the academic year into two approximately equal segments. The early semester version is planned so all of the activities of the fall semester, including examinations, are completed before mid-winter break. There are many different versions of early semester calendars — some start classes before Labor Day some years and others do not, some have extended mid-winter recess of five weeks or so and others do not, etc.

The early semester calendar as of 1979-80 was used by about 1,450 institutions or 53 percent of those reporting to the National Registrar and Records Organization.

The institutions using the early calendar include many of the large and prestigious universities such as the University of Illinois at Urbana, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, University of Wisconsin at Madison, University of Nebraska at Lincoln, University of Southern California, University of Missouri and University of Maryland.

As The Pennsylvania State University considers the question of converting from the current term calendar to an early semester calendar, there are a number of issues which need careful analysis to determine whether the particular issue is resolvable in an early semester calendar configuration.

Beyond the major issues requiring careful analysis and thoughtful discussion, there will obviously be hundreds of details to deal with if the decision to change the calendar is made.

Some, not all, of these major issues are:

Faculty instructional load: Presumably the number of student credit hours produced per faculty member remains constant but a heavier section load must be avoided if possible.

Faculty research: Two concerns: (1) whether the lack of comparability between summer session and a semester calendar will effect research funding and (2) whether ways can be found to have blocks of time available in a semester calendar for research.

Large classrooms: Because the large number of classrooms at University Park is a fixed factor, careful analysis needs to be made to make certain that the instructional program can be accommodated in those large classrooms in the semester system.

Laboratories: Essentially the same question as large classrooms, that is, can the available instructional laboratories accommodate the program under the different rhythm of a semester calendar.

Class schedule: The 75-minute, three-times-a-week will presumably change. The type of class schedule seems to be critical in terms of instructional programming and also in the context of blocks of time for research and in the level of utilization necessary for large classrooms and laboratories.

Course and program reexamination: If the calendar conversion is made, it appears that a complete examination of all major programs and most, if not all, courses will be required.

Beyond the major issues requiring careful analysis and thoughtful discussion, there will obviously be hundreds of details to deal with if the decision to change the calendar is made.

restructuring into two courses of more than three credits each would be necessary.

Cost factors: There appear to be three aspects of the cost question. There will be some direct cost in the conversion process. In addition, there will be what can be called "opportunity cost" of the conversion; in other words, a faculty member devoting time and energy to restructuring several courses will be doing that instead of some other activity.

Finally, there will be long range savings in a semester calendar as a function of the reduced frequency with which activities such as mailing of grades occur.

And then there are less significant matters. Commencement will presumably occur only three times a year with some savings to the University as a result. The leases on downtown apartments will need to be redrawn to reflect the different rhythm of a semester calendar.

The summer session, being studied separately, will be separated from the current requirement for comparability to a regular term and may provide opportunities for innovative and creative programming.

The cash flow rhythm for the University and for the individual student will change as a function of the twice-a-year tuition payment.

Finally, other institutions which have changed the calendar recently suggest that the year proceeding the first year, a convalescent year, is necessary. "convalescent" courses" to cover the student otherwise caught in the transition from three three-credit courses to two four-credit courses.



Proposed semester calendar

1. A period in August for orientation and registration.
2. A 15-week first semester.
3. Classes suspended on Labor Day (if necessary).
4. Classes suspended on the Wednesday afternoon preceding the Friday and Saturday following Thanksgiving.
5. Final examinations at the end of the first semester.
6. A winter break between the semesters.
7. A period for orientation and registration for the second semester.
8. A 15-week semester.
9. Final examinations at the end of the second semester.
10. A Friday, Saturday and Monday spring holiday, classes suspended on Memorial Day (if necessary).
11. A class schedule such that a three-credit lecture course involves three 50-minute class periods per week.
12. Commencement at the end of the second semester and of the summer session.

Critical issue studied

By Henry J. Hermonowicz
Dean, College of Education

The division heads and the faculty of the College of Education are considering various academic issues related to converting from our present term calendar to an early semester calendar.

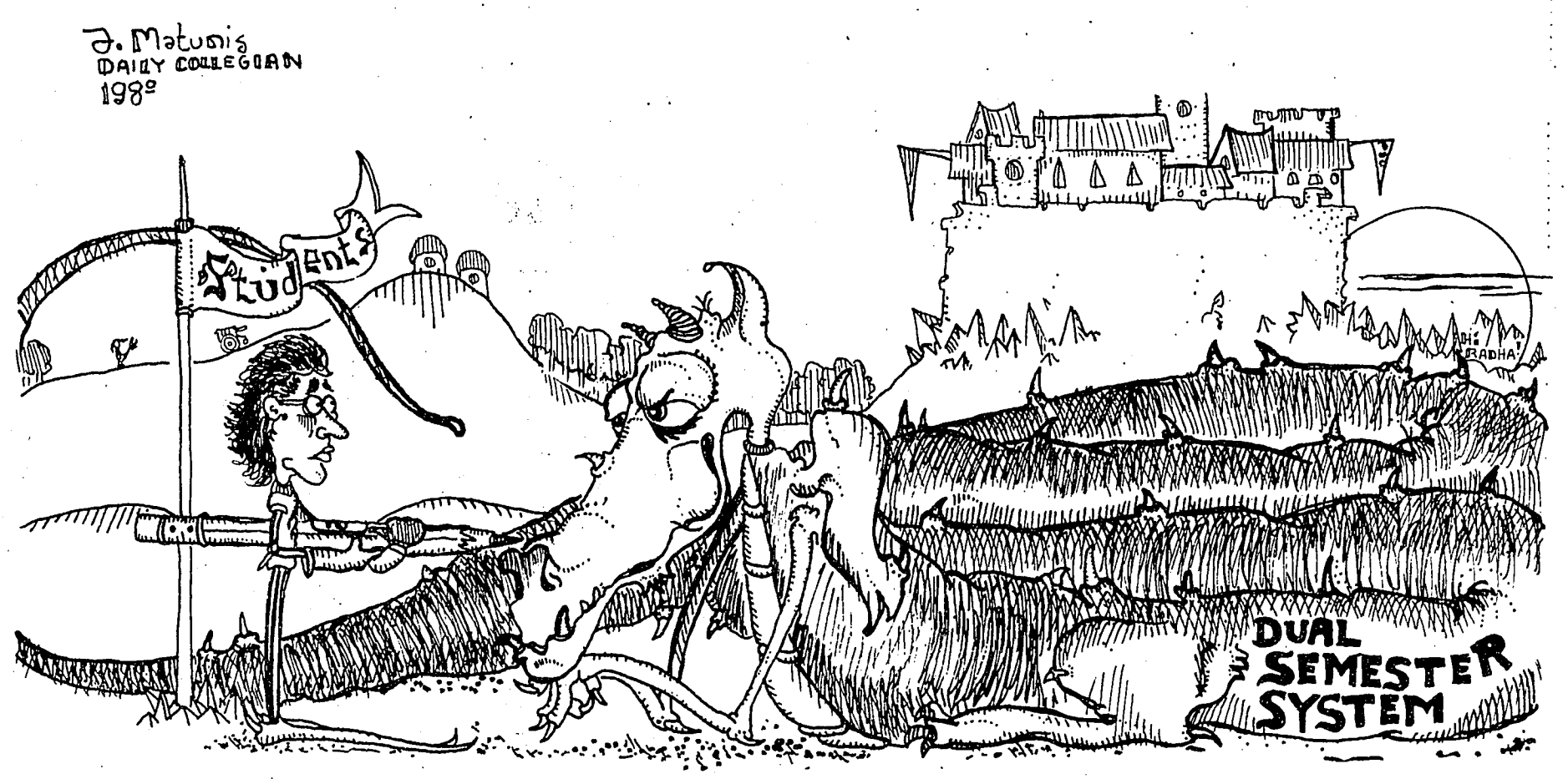
Such issues are related to possible course and program changes, faculty load and contract implications including research activities, modifications in the instructional program, and possible changes in the summer session and the like.

While we have not developed explicit answers for such issues, I do not see any of these issues as being insurmountable problems related to such a calendar conversion. Most major universities across the country operate under a semester system, and Penn State should be able to reconvert to one without major difficulty.

Although I can understand student opposition to calendar change, I would think that students would find advantages to an early semester system. For example, the number of registrations and final exam periods during an academic year organized on the term system strike me as not in the best interest of sustained study.

The winter holiday period is an awkward interruption rather than a break that blends into an organized academic calendar. Of course, the structure of an academic calendar alone cannot guarantee improvements in our educational environment but an early semester system appears to have some advantages.

As a faculty member and academic administrator, I see one of the principal fringe benefits of the calendar conversion being the opportunity it provides to re-examine courses and programs throughout the University with the expectation of improving such offerings while considering eliminating those that may have become redundant, obsolete or superfluous over the years.



Grad reaction positive

By Kathleen Flanagan
Academic Division Head

and Lisa Lemke, vice president
The Graduate Student Association

Graduate student reaction to the proposed calendar change ranges from neutral to positive.

Many students contacted by the Graduate Student Association indicated that they had completed undergraduate and graduate studies in institutions following a semester plan.

More time to pursue classwork in depth, to conduct research and to participate in extracurricular activities were factors mentioned frequently by these students as advantages to a semester system.

The first term of many graduate students is a time of searching and decision making. Taking candidacy exams, selecting graduate committees and identifying potential research areas, as well as coursework and assistantship duties, are some of the many demands on the time and energies of the beginning graduate students.

More time would ease the pressure and hopefully improve the quality of some of these decisions.

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Three part program planned Group seeks opinion on change

By MARK BEIG
Chairman, Committee for Credible Student Input

On Sept. 3, University President John W. Oswald once again placed the calendar in the public forum by announcing to the Faculty Senate that the University should change to an early semester plan.

The term-semester issue is not new to Penn State. The University moved to a term system from semesters in 1961-62. The justification for this was the facilities could, on a four-term system, be used year-round.

The term system has been under continual examination since that time. In 1972, in response to problems related to June graduation, the system was again up for discussion. The problem was the split Winter Term.

A semester system was recommended by a slight majority of the committee and in December 1975, it was decided that the term system would remain in effect at least until July 1983.

It is now October 1980 and the decision is at hand. Oswald has asked that all input and reaction reach him by Dec. 1. The decision will be made by Feb. 1, 1981.

Pursuant to the belief that students should present some form of unified, credible input to the University on the calendar decision, the Undergraduate Student Government Executive Council — representing the Academic Assembly, the Black Caucus, the Hetzel

Union Board, the Interfraternity Council, the Organization for Town Independent Students, the Panhellenic Council, the USC Senate and the Veteran's Organization — formed the Committee for Credible Student Input to look into the possibilities.

The committee decided that the most credible and valid presentation would be an educated opinion survey. By objectively educating ourselves and the University, the committee desires to turn a meaningful survey and to obtain meaningful results.

The committee's program consists of three phases. First is education. There will be a series of workshops dealing with the issues and effects of the proposed calendar change.

Direct involvement by the students, faculty and administration is most important here. Anyone who has questions about the proposed semester system or who would like to learn about the possible effects of a switch should plan on attending.

The workshop format will be one hour of presentation of the issues and effects and one hour of questions and answers.

A workshop dealing with the academic side will be sponsored by the Academic Assembly from 7 to 9 Wednesday night in the HUB main lounge.

A general workshop dealing with all issues and effects will be run on two nights — Monday, Oct. 20, in the HUB main lounge and Tuesday, Oct. 21, in the HUB north lounge.

Effects of the change up for discussion at the general workshop include stops, student activities, dormitory life, intramurals, business downtown, Greek life and off-campus housing.

At both workshops, the presentations will consist of explanations, information, pros and cons. At the same time these workshops are going on, the Commonwealth campuses will be running similar workshops. In this way, all of the University will be involved.

The second part of the program is the survey. A random sample of University students will be surveyed on their opinion of the term-semester decision after the workshop series.

The final phase of the program is the report. A description of the workshops and the issues discussed will be written up. The results of the educated survey will also be included in the report. Oswald will have the valid opinion of the students of Penn State at the time the decision is made.

All of this, of course, depends upon the University community. Come to the workshops. The survey results are only as credible as the turnout at the workshops.

The proposed semester system is one of the most important changes to hit PSU in a long time. Let's have our opinion heard. We all have a lot to learn.

Switch offers few advantages

By JULIAN HECKLEIN
Department of Chemistry

Dear Dr. Oswald: In your letter of Sept. 9 to the Penn State community you requested opinions regarding a calendar change. The purpose of this letter is to urge you strongly not to abandon the term system and return to the semester system.

In your letter you mention general disenchantment with the term system. This comes as surprising news to me and some of my colleagues, who are not disenchanting at all. Since you have surveyed the University community, I do not know how you could have arrived at such a conclusion.

The possible saving of money by a switch to the semester system you acknowledge in your letter to be minimal. The other advantage you mention is that the fall term would end before the winter break.

Since the terms would be 17 weeks (15 weeks of classes, one week for orientation and registration, and one week for exams), it is impossible to end the fall semester by mid-December, unless the term begins before Labor Day, which would be very disadvantageous to students who need to work during the summer session.

Thus there appears to be no advantage to a switch. In fact it is easier to end the term in mid-December under a three-term system.

On the other hand the disadvantages are numerous. The general disadvantages are the expense involved with the conversion of courses and the fact that laboratories could be used only twice, rather than three times, during the academic year.

There are disadvantages for the students as well. They would have to take more courses at one time. If the 20-minute break between courses is to be maintained, then less teaching time is available during the day.

The 20-minute break between classes is to be reduced to 10 minutes, then students could not take courses in consecutive periods that are scheduled far from each other.

Now some freshmen have the opportunity to attend the University if they start in the Summer Term rather than the Fall Term. I suspect this option will be lost if the Summer Term fails to remain a full term.

Finally as you admit, the students were overwhelmingly opposed to a change, when last polled.

There are also drawbacks for the faculty. Sabbatical leaves are granted for six months, which fits conveniently into our term system, but which would be chaotic under a semester system. Now in many departments, such as chemistry, faculty engaged in research teach two lecture courses a year.

Perhaps of greatest concern to many of us is that a switch to a semester system may permit some of us to earn only two-thirds of our M plan salary in the summer, rather than the one-third we can earn now. This could cost some of us one-twelfth of our yearly salary, not to mention the lost overhead that the University would not realize.

Finally I must express my concern that a final decision will be made by you rather than the Faculty Senate. It seems to me that body should have final authority over academic procedures. Please reconsider your decision.

