

Shuttle program is looking up after successful Discovery flight

By LEE SIEGEL
AP Science Writer

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — Discovery came back from its much-delayed debut run yesterday after delivering three satellites to space, and NASA told its customers: "Now we are back on schedule."

The shuttle's sunrise landing on this desert lakebed was an upbeat end to a shakedown flight that suffered from pre-launch problems on the ground and troubles in orbit.

Discovery's five-man, one-woman crew accomplished all it set out to do. The astronauts launched the three communications satellites and made extensive tests on a solar array. The industry engineer who went along on the mission to manufacture a new drug came back with 83 percent of the sample he was after.

"Starting in October we will essentially be back to launching once a month for the rest of the year," said Jesse W. Moore, who heads the shuttle program for NASA.

NASA hopes the successful flight will mark a turnaround for the shuttle program. Bothered by three delays in the latest flight and three satellite launch failures on previous missions, potential customers have been looking to the European Ariane rocket as a vehicle to carry their payloads to orbit.

Even the U.S. Air Force, expected to book one-third of all shuttle missions, wants to buy 10 expendable launch vehicles for military satellites.

Discovery's debut was delayed for two months in June when a fuel valve problem caused automatic shutdown of the ship's engines only four seconds before liftoff. To please customers who had expensive satellites awaiting launch, NASA combined cargoes of two flights.

"That was the purpose of doing this combined flight," Moore said. "I believe now we are back on schedule."

Commander Hank Hartsfield and pilot Michael Coats guided the 102-ton Discovery through clear skies to a touchdown, 10 minutes after

sunrise. The spaceplane orbited Earth 96 times and chalked up 2.5 million miles during the six-day, 56 minute flight.

"Only in America can things like this happen," said Hartsfield, ending his second shuttle flight, as he and the others boarded two planes for the trip back to Houston, home base for the astronauts.

To Coats, the Discovery flight was "the experience of a lifetime"; mission specialist Richard Mullane said it was "absolutely a great thrill"; and McDonnell Douglas engineer Charles Walker, the first paying passenger on a shuttle, said he had "a tremendous opportunity to see what we as humanity can do out there."

Said Steve Hawley: "The word that summarizes how I feel today is pride . . . I'm proud to be part of an organization like NASA that can make it all happen, I'm especially proud to be a member of this crew, and I'm proud to be a citizen of a nation that can do an event like this and make it happen in front of everybody in the world."

And Judy Resnik, the second American woman in space, said she felt privileged to be part of the NASA program.

"We enjoyed ourselves," she said. "We worked very hard to do a job for all of you."

NASA requires all shuttles to land on the wide-open lakebed here on their first mission for an extra margin of safety. Starting with the next flight in October, most shuttles will return to a runway near the launch pad at Cape Canaveral in Florida, to avoid the cross-country trip on the back of a 747.

Mission Control wakened the astronauts 90 minutes early from their last sleep in space when flight controllers detected a leak in a set of tanks that supply oxygen for the cabin pressure and power-producing fuel cells. Hartsfield solved the problem by switching to a backup system.

A worry of much longer duration was a stubborn hunk of ice that formed on two valves that dump excess water and waste from the shuttle.



Michael Coats, pilot of the Discovery, greets his 11-year-old daughter Laura yesterday as the crew returned to Houston. AP Laserphoto

Semesters:

One year later, University administrators call conversion from terms a success

By KIM BOWER
Collegian Staff Writer

One year and many headaches later, University officials consider the transition from the term system to the semester system complete.

James R. Dungan, secretary of the recently dissolved Calendar Conversion Council, said although students who started under the term system will continue studying at the University for several years, "(the transition) is all done as far as I can see."

The CCC was successful at anticipating problems caused by the conversion, helping to make the transition smoother, he said.

Dungan said he believes the biggest problem encountered during the switch was that "human beings tend to resist change." The Calendar Transition Grievance Committee, which was established in March 1983 and dissolved a few weeks ago, received no complaints, Dungan said. The committee was established to deal with cases of students in jeopardy of not graduating on time because of the semester conversion. However, the committee was to be used only if the problem could not be dealt with first in the student's college, he said.

Henry J. Hermanowicz, chairman of the CCC, said, "From what I understand, it's been a remarkably smooth transition."

However, when such an extensive change is made at a university the size of Penn State, some problems are expected to be encountered, he said.

The change in calendar from terms to semesters was proposed to put an end to the "general stop-go system" of the University caused by having so many registration and exam periods, Hermanowicz said. The semester system has also alleviated the awkward interruption of the Winter Term during the Christmas holiday, he added.

However, Hermanowicz noted that many students and faculty members now object to beginning the semester before Labor Day. He said the early start often interferes with summer employment commitments and vacation plans.

Hermanowicz said the term system originated with the rationale that the University could operate at full capacity year-round and would make more efficient use of facilities. Also, with four equal terms, undergraduate students would have the option of completing their studies in three years instead of four, he added.

However, the University never operated at full capacity all year and few students took advantage of the opportunity to finish early, Hermanowicz said. In fact, more students left school for a year and returned to finish in five years, he noted.

"The expectations were reasonable ones at the time though, I guess," he said.

Despite a lack of complaints about the transition, John J. Coyle, assistant dean for undergraduate programs in the College of Business Administration, does not agree that the transition is over.

"I think perhaps it will take one more year to make the transition complete," Coyle said.

Instructors are still getting used to semesters and so are the juniors and seniors who started under terms, he said.

Coyle said the semester system caused a 50 percent reduction in student scheduling opportunities in his college.

Under the term system, half of the freshmen entering the college could be scheduled for entrance level courses during the Fall Term and half during the Winter Term. But now all freshmen must take the courses during the Fall Semester or they cannot declare a major, Coyle noted.

'From what I understand, it's been a remarkably smooth transition'

— Henry J. Hermanowicz, chairman of the Calendar Conversion Council

The internship program also had to be changed under semesters, he said. In accounting, students now intern during the first half of the Spring Semester and take three accelerated courses when they return to the University the second half of the semester, Coyle said. Before the switch, students participated in internships during Winter Term.

Spring Semester went much smoother than last fall, he said.

Coyle said it has been difficult again this fall to get students into classes, but that was

partly because of the new computer system.

"It was difficult to solve the problems (with scheduling)," he said. "With the (Academic Information System) it was hard to pinpoint where the difficulties were."

John J. Romano, associate dean for undergraduate studies in the College of The Liberal Arts, said most of the transitions in that college are in place now with no major problems.

"I think the problems by and large were minimal," he said.

He said that it was necessary to adjust to the 50-minute class periods and that course adjustments were made by faculty members during the year leading up to the transition.

The faculty is still fine-tuning courses, but that is always being done and will continue in the future, Romano said.

"The semester works. We knew the semester would work," he said.

However, questions have been raised about conducting the first day of classes on the Friday before Labor Day, he added.

"It's an odd calendar arrangement from an academic point of view. It needs to be looked at," he said.

William H. Gotolski, assistant dean for resident instruction in the College of Engineering, said the transition in that college went smoothly, except for some changes in course numbers and curricula.

It was necessary to study the curricula before the transition, but modifications are always being made to keep up with advances in technology, he said.

Gene M. Love, associate dean for resident education in the College of Agriculture, said his college did not experience many problems during the conversion.

However, many departments did have to rework their curricula and solve problems with space limitations in laboratories, he said. For example, courses using growth chambers had to be rearranged to accommodate more students.

"The term system made better use of limited resources," Love said.

He said he believes the semester system is better than the term system because learning is spread out over a longer period of time and class periods are shorter.

Some students have complained that it is more difficult to carry 16 credits over a longer period than it is to take 10 credits in a shorter period of time. However, not all students feel that way, Love noted.

Greg Ewing (senior-industrial engineering) is one student who is not happy with the change.

"You have too many classes now. Even though it's spread out a little more, it's still hard to keep track," he said.

Ewing added he also missed deer hunting season last year because of the switch.

Charlene Hitchings (junior-rehabilitation education) does not agree with Ewing.

"I like it better with the two semesters instead of the terms," she said.

Hitchings said her term breaks did not coincide with the breaks of many of her friends at home who attend colleges using a semester system.

Chernenko makes public appearance

By CAROL J. WILLIAMS
Associated Press Writer

MOSCOW — President

Konstantin U. Chernenko yesterday made his first public appearance since July, at a ceremony honoring Soviet cosmonauts. His long

absence from public view had provoked rumors he was seriously ill.

But the 72-year-old Soviet president was shown on Soviet television at a Kremlin ceremony to honor three cosmonauts and in a brief speech he renewed Soviet calls for a ban on space weapons.

The official Soviet news agency Tass reported Chernenko's participation in the ceremony and several hours later Soviet television broadcast film of the Kremlin event. Tass also released still photographs of the ceremony.

Western reporters in Moscow were not invited to the ceremony. The Associated Press and other Western news organizations asked the Foreign Ministry Press Department if they could attend but were told there were "no arrangements for foreign journalists to be accredited to such an event."

The Press Department, which handles relations with foreign correspondents, declined to confirm that the ceremony was to take place.

On television's evening news program, Chernenko was shown walking into the Kremlin Palace slowly but steadily. He appeared

slightly tanned and was wearing spectacles. The Soviet leader held the pages of his five-minute speech close to his face and read in a soft, clear voice.

Chernenko, known to suffer breathing difficulties, was said by a Foreign Ministry official on Monday to be carrying out his duties. But he had not been seen in public since July 13, when he was photographed in the Kremlin greeting U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Tass on July 15 said Chernenko had left Moscow for his summer vacation. But when his absence stretched toward two months, there was speculation in Moscow and in Western capitals that the Soviet leader was seriously ill.

On television, Chernenko appeared normal, but toward the end of the ceremony he appeared to be breathing rapidly.

Rumors that Chernenko's absence signaled declining health probably arose in part due to the secrecy that surrounded the illness of the late Soviet leader Yuri V. Andropov. Andropov wasn't seen in public for nearly six months before he died in February, but official documents regularly carried his name.



AP Laserphoto

Soviet leader Konstantin Chernenko making his first public appearance since July.

thursday

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- Franco Harris, only 363 yards shy of breaking Jim Brown's NFL career rushing record, reached an agreement for a contract with the Seattle Seahawks yesterday, just two days after the Seahawks lost star running back Curt Warner with a severe knee injury.....Page 9
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fyi

Sophomores with semester standing of three or four may obtain ID stickers from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. today in 301 HUB.

weather

Mostly sunny today with a high near 70. Clear and cool tonight. Low of 48. Sunny tomorrow and a bit warmer with a high of 75. Fair tomorrow night with a low of 50.....by Andy Sekura