Calendar Implementation Taskforce
May 4, 2020 Meeting

This meeting was recorded after introductions of members, and that recording can be viewed [here](#).

**Introductions of members/attendees:**

**Stacy Altman** – newly appointed as associate dean for graduate studies in Health and Human Performance, their college has a wide variety of courses and there are lots of concerns about the 8-week blocks.

**Leigh Cellucci** – associate dean in Allied Health Sciences, college has a wide variety of courses, lots of questions; she is here to represent programs and give feedback.

**Alethia Cook** – chair of Department of Political Science; she finds this daunting and thinks the best way to get a better understanding and to get the more nuanced info would be to thrust herself in it wholeheartedly.

**Timm Hackett** – teach in dept of English, chair of Distance Education and Learning Technology Committee; wondering where can distance education (DE) or hybrid solutions fall into play; thanks to all of you for showing how DE can work.

**Mark McCarthy** – chaired the Calendar Committee in the past, teach in the COB.

**Marianne Montgomery** – chair of Department of English in Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, eager to be part of the group because it is a daunting proposition; she has a department with a large number of faculty, a large number of writing intensive sections and a large number of fixed-term faculty. She notes that Timm Hackett brings valuable insight as a fixed-term faculty member in English. She is concerned about the workload, particularly with regard to fixed-term faculty, but also her own workload.

**Donna Roberson** – faculty member within the College of Nursing, charged with program evaluation and has a lot of knowledge about undergraduate, masters, and doctoral programs in that college. She is happy to be here to try to figure out a way that we can take care of this mess.

**Rachel Roper** – Brody School of Medicine in the Department of Microbiology and Immunology, has worked extensively on the SARS Coronavirus, brings the virus expertise.

**Jean-Luc Scemama** – Biology in the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, brings expertise and perspective of someone who routinely has to coordinate science labs, and has been the director of undergraduate education in that department for the last 15 years.

**Elizabeth Swaggerty** – Graduate Coordinator in the Department of Literacy Studies, English Education, and History Education within the College of Education. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses and coordinates the Master of Arts in Reading and Literacy Education. She has experience with launching their graduate program on the 8-week model and knowledge of how it could work. She does also bring a lot of trepidation about structuring their undergraduate methods courses in 8-week blocks.

**Jeff Popke** – Chair of the Faculty, asked if everyone was fine with the meeting being recorded. They were, and the recording commenced after introductions.

Jeff Popke acknowledged that not every college is being represented and asked for everyone to consider whether the group may need some additional expertise. He thinks it is a good size but is open to expansion if necessary. He went on to say that they would consider the purpose and function of this committee but thought it best to start with some background.
He was sole representative of the faculty on the Chancellor’s calendar group, though there were some faculty on it with concurrent administrative appointments. That group has met three times, brainstorming. This Calendar Committee involves people from the Registrar’s Office, and billing, housing and dining. They were doing hypothetical scenario planning (what happens if we start later, or earlier; multiple mini-terms of different lengths) and asking questions about whether a particular scenario was feasible and what should be considered. After the second meeting, Jeff reached out to Grant Hayes expressing concern about the lack of faculty involvement. At the early phase they were asked to keep these meetings quiet to prevent false information from getting out and spreading across campus. After that second meeting, at the April 28 Faculty Senate meeting, the Interim Chancellor announced that we were going to go to the 8-week model. There was a lot of concern about this and the Interim Chancellor will be speaking to this during May 5th organizational meeting. Jeff hopes the Interim Chancellor will lay out some of the benefits that he sees with moving to the 8-week model. Jeff and the officers have been discussing the lack of faculty input into these important decisions about the calendar. This Calendar Implementation Taskforce is the initiative of Jeff and the other officers to try to get that missing input.

The day after the Interim Chancellor’s announcement was the third meeting of the calendar group, and that is where Jeff was given the document that outlines three scenarios, which can be the start of some of the conversation here. The scenarios:
- Scenario A in which we are able to start face to face in the fall (what everyone is hoping for)
- Scenario B, in which students wouldn’t be able to come back until the 2nd 8-week session
- Scenario C, in which we can’t invite students back until January

Jeff then asked questions of the taskforce: how do we envision what our charge and tasks should be and how can we get results for whatever work we do into the wider campus process? He referenced an email he sent out earlier, in which he included the list of committees that are part of the Interim Chancellor’s public health plan. These involve things like a committee to consider PPE, relations with external constituents and visitors to campus, facilities, and the calendar committee that will still be meeting weekly on Wednesdays. He noted that the most obvious way to feed these things is to have close coordination with that particular committee. Jeff paused for thoughts and observations.

Rachel Roper asked whether we expect any guidance from the UNC System. Jeff replied that President Roper said campuses own the calendar. There may be system-wide considerations for things like safety, but he doesn’t know whether they will want to coordinate social distancing guidelines in classrooms. Calendars are regarded as an institution decision.

Crystal Chambers expressed concerns about course types like thesis, dissertations, experiential learning, etc. She noted that in Education, more than half of the programs are graduate programs. Most of the students work full time or are teachers that need to work with their own students, so it is hard for them to do things in a compressed schedule. She liked the idea Jon Reid (see the Team files) proposed of being able to opt out, especially for courses that were already DE. There isn’t the same worry about lost costs in keeping those DE courses on the same 15-week calendar, because they were already billed at the lower DE rate.

Marianne Montgomery raised concerns about the group’s work and timeline. She does not like the idea of freshmen registering into schedules that we know do not exist anymore. Freshman orientation puts this group on an extremely short timeline. She asked Jeff what indication he has of how this Interim Chancellor’s calendar group is operating. What are the Calendar Implementation Taskforce’s goals in terms of the timeline?

Jeff Popke said that with regard to a timeline, the Interim Chancellor’s calendar group was working under the general assumption that June 1st was when public info would need to be disseminated. The first of the virtual orientations is June 8th, so that is when the schedule would need to be built and ready.

Marianne Montgomery pointed out that is just a week between the calendar committee having official messaging and the freshman getting their schedule. One week is not enough time. She said she understands that we’re working on a faster timeline, but she doesn’t think the Calendar Implementation Taskforce has until June 1st to come up with a plan
unless freshman registration is pushed back. She said there has been messaging about orientation that seems too
certain.

Jeff Popke acknowledged that he was not sure how much that registration timeline can be pushed back.

Alethia Cook says we need this information as soon as possible. She has students already asking about fall classes. They
do not want to be in a position where they have to cut a class that students need. It is going to make a big difference to
students to know whether they need to be here once a week or twice etc. She said maybe it is best to keep graduate
course considerations separate from undergraduate course considerations.

Marianne Montgomery noted that how we clean the classrooms is not a secondary concern; if it is necessary to have
breaks between sessions, then that will impact how many we can offer in person.

Amanda Klein noted that she has yet to have a conversation with a single faculty member who thinks the 8-week block
will be helpful. She asks whether there can be a committee that is devoted to resolving major conflicts, like graduate
courses that need to be structured a certain way or internships, etc. Can there be a separate committee to deal with
these scenarios that could potentially destroy particular programs due to this change? Everyone is going to be
inconvenienced, but there are some for whom this schedule will make it impossible for them to effectively run their
program.

Jean-Luc Scemama raised the point of social distancing between students and the issues that presents in a lab
environment. In lab sections, they have 24 students in a room and that will be too many. They have already filled the
available lab space schedules with sections and they will require time to deal with splitting them up.

Alethia Cook expressed dismay about enforcing social distancing. She said that if we are coming back to campus she
doesn’t know how we can do that without cutting classes in half. Some of these questions have to be answered first. We
need to know whether they assume there is social distancing or not because that will impact how our schedules will be
formed and how many seats will be in each class. If we don’t know the answer to that question, she does not see how
we can move forward with much else.

Puri Martinez has put together a list of questions, but has trouble sharing it within Teams. She agrees with the points
being made, and thinks we cannot start this process without assuming that all classes are going to be hybrid. So how
many times a week is a professor going to be on campus, how often are they going to have to clean the room, how long
does that cleaning take, and are there situations in which it will take a different amount of time? Usually students
congregate outside classrooms to wait for classes to begin, so where are they going to go? A decision about the calendar
can’t be made until we have responses to those questions. We can create a perfect scenario of 8-week blocks that at the
end can’t be done because we can’t adequately address the health concerns. It is irresponsible of us to assume that
those health concerns aren’t going to be taken into consideration. It is not possible.

Jeff Popke reminded the group (and himself) that Angela Anderson, Registrar, was present and he said he should defer
to her when it comes to some of the calendar information.

Angela Anderson said that for student registration, they already have about 20,000 students registered so far. She
related that one person had suggested that we drop everyone and have students re-register. She thinks that would be
catastrophic, and it is not part of the equation at this point in time. They are hoping to have a script written that could
migrate the courses like they did with summer courses. They received a script from UNC Charlotte that they had used,
but had to modify it so there was a delay on that. The Registrar’s Office has a project team tasked in Information
Technology and Computing Services (ITCS) to work with them on that. They also have a call scheduled for tomorrow with
the software vendor to help them. They are trying to get ahead of that curve, because all schools across the nation are
looking at this, and they want to secure the one that has worked with Charlotte before. They are looking at all of these
things, but they can’t write the script until they know what the parameters are.
Angela Anderson said it would be really easy for her to suggest that they put Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes in first 8-week block and Tuesday-Thursday classes in second 8-week block, but she knows that doesn’t work with faculty workloads. Returning students have registered and Honors students are already registering. They did not feel like they could move back the orientation date any later because other schools are already doing their orientation and registration for fall. Everyone is struggling with these questions, no one has any good answers yet. She appreciates that faculty are doing this. She said that every time she is asked about the calendar, she knows that she has a good grasp of it because of her work with the Faculty Senate’s Calendar Committee, but it is another thing entirely to be teaching according to the calendar and for students to be learning according to it. She is happy to provide information as much as she can, and she is listening to concerns so she can take them forward.

Donna Roberson suggested that we keep our online courses online and on the 15-week schedule.

Angela Anderson agrees that is a good suggestion, just like Crystal Chambers’s earlier suggestion. If this group can identify those courses that would suffer if it was moved to the 8-week schedule, that would be a good recommendation to come out of this group.

Donna Roberson said that for graduate programs in Nursing, all their students are working nurses who are working on the front lines of this virus outbreak, and they don’t want to burn them more than they are already burned. To tell those students they have to cram their 15-week course into 8 weeks when there is really no reason to do that other than the rest of the university is doing it makes no sense. We need that exception.

Angela Anderson said she would be glad to take that forward. She said there is a committee on public health at Facilities, and she is part of it. She is happy to start those conversations with them as well. That committee has several public health experts on it as well as facilities experts.

Alethia Cook pointed out that the same reasons to keep DE courses DE apply to some of our graduate programs with students who work in a field already. The work is already accelerated, so compressing it to 8 weeks might cause us to lose students. Can we leave them on a 15-week schedule? Departments need to know if there is going to be flexibility for some programs to stay on a different pattern. The messaging they have seen so far seems like that flexibility is not going to be allowed.

Leigh Cellucci called attention to Stacey Altman’s comment in the chat window, which said that we have a few programs that will be the square peg trying to fit into the round circle and it is causing a lot of angst. There are some programs that have particular factors that make this disruptive and really hurts them. We can talk about those specific programs. Can we come to some agreement about which classes/programs can we go ahead and agree not to disrupt, like those with fieldwork courses, graduate courses, etc. We aren’t going to dictate their timing.

Stacey Altman said that we should have a blanket exception for all DE programs that are already running and those shouldn’t need to do any special justification. Then we would just need something like a Qualtrics survey or some process where there are approvals happening on a running basis. She said fieldwork is obvious, to her. Maybe the request for exception goes on a spreadsheet, and the department can put a justification on the side and send it up. This seems sufficient. Interim Chancellor Mitchelson said flexibility is going to be emphasized, so if we hold him to his word, then the DE programs should get exceptions. For accrediting, some of their programs do not specify a certain number of hours, but rather a certain number of days that they are on site. She said she did not know what Angela would do if they asked to have two different classes to meet that requirement, or how they could organize it to satisfy those requirements across the two blocks. What happens with the transcript? It would be a nightmare, and they need an organized system of dispensations after the blanket ones. If they could figure out the blanket exceptions, and then the process of dispensation, they would be making a lot of progress.

Angela Anderson said that if you think about prior to Banner and when there were internships in the summer, those courses had 0 credit hours and the student paid for half the class in one session and half the class in the other. If we have one part of a course face-to-face and have the next part as DE, they can charge face-to-face for part of it and DE for
the next part. She noted that ECU is part of a class action lawsuit because students were charged the face-to-face rate and had to finish up DE.

Crystal Chambers brought up the fact that there were programs ECU would probably lose money on. She referenced a military cohort we would probably lose if we didn’t keep a 15 week option. The university put in a lot of work to get that partnership and it would be gone.

Jeff Popke said this had been a helpful conversation. He suggested that they may want to proceed by identifying the issues or the questions that need to be resolved first, and then they can parse out the questions and begin to think of solutions. He noted that two of the big questions that had come up so far were: “are we assuming social distancing or not” and “can we exempt certain kinds of programs.” He said he certainly doesn’t think existing online programs need to change.

Jeff Popke asked the group whether they should have a strategy for communicating to the campus that they exist, communicating about the work that is going on, and for gathering information. He noted that the existence of the group could be put in the announcements of the Senate meeting tomorrow. He also suggested sending out a communication from the Faculty Senate office and invite people to contact the members so they can funnel their concerns into these conversations. He also suggested that they could try to be more systematic and reach out to each college and gather feedback from their particular perspective. He said a survey feels a little messier than the group needed to be, and they need to offer people opportunities beyond the bounds of the task force to contribute. One option he noted was to reference a PowerPoint presentation developed by Chairs of the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences that has information about key issues and concerns that need to be addressed. He also received something from the College of Health and Human Performance. He might reach out to them to see if others are developing similar things.

Crystal Chambers said she thinks the DE exemption idea needs to be communicated to Interim Chancellor Mitchelson, because a decision on that would let them know if they had at least one thing off the table.

Jeff Popke said someone could ask Interim Chancellor Mitchelson about it at the Senate meeting, and Crystal Chambers: said she thinks it needs to be brought up some other way.

Leigh Cellucci explained that her college has some undergraduate programs that would undergo accreditation issues under this schedule. She would not want to exclude undergraduate programs from the exemption—there are two that are very concerned about their status. The concerns are tied to experiential learning, internships, and clinical time. Like Stacey Altman said, it is a number of days, not a number of hours. She said they fight for those internships and days, and competition for them is very high. To endanger those relationships would be scary for these programs.

Crystal Chambers noted that she does not have experience with the teacher education side of things in the College of Education, but that is another area where the 8-week block calendar would be problematic.

Puri Martinez asked whether these undergraduate programs that they are talking about, like Nursing—are they such that at end of two years, the student only takes classes in Nursing? Otherwise, they could run into problems with students who are not exclusively taking courses in their major and would be split between taking some 8-week block courses and 15-week regular calendar courses.

Donna Roberson said it is not a problem for Nursing because they move from east campus to west campus. They are concerned because some of their undergraduate courses have 120 students and moving those to a compressed 8-week block would be difficult. If they lose those clinical partners and agencies, that is the end of their program. Hospitals are inviting nursing students back in as of next week, but they can’t go until our university says they can. The undergraduate Nursing students would only be in nursing classes, so they would want the dispensation for them.

Puri Martinez said that for those types of students who take only classes in their major, exemptions and flexibility are easy—but students in the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences who have a BA with a double major are more problematic. They would need to identify incidences when a student’s schedule would force mixtures of 15-week and 8-
week schedules. Undergraduate programs who will need exemptions for 15 weeks would need to make sure the only students taking their courses are the ones in that program.

Crystal Chambers said that most of the time those types of students are double majoring in Nursing and Public Health. They have a different time schedule than someone going for that one degree. She thinks they need to be careful when making flexibility statements. A person who is a double major probably has a bit more time of their hands.

Leigh Cellucci said they have some students trying to major in Health Administration, but planning to go to dental school. They may need to take one of those courses on east campus, so they would take the 15 week health class as DE. Every time there is a little something additional to consider, so with the blanket statements, sometimes they have little workarounds to help the student achieve his or her goals.

Rachel Roper liked Jeff Popke’s idea about communicating with campus, and she says they should pay attention to physical distancing as much as possible, but especially to protect faculty from the students. Faculty are in the age group of more serious health outcomes, and that should be a priority. OSHA sent something out.

Crystal Chambers said they need to think about using some of the underutilized large spaces, like Wright Auditorium, Mendenhall, or rooms in the new Student Center.

Jeff Popke said maybe he can work with Puri Martinez to compile the list of key questions and look over materials from the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences. He suggested that next time, they tackle one topic at a time, and think about whether they will need a subgroup. He will try to compile everything in one document and get that to their inboxes soon. He can bring ideas and notes to the Interim Chancellor’s calendar committee and put forward the idea that there will be a lot of programs that will want an exemption. They can begin to think how feasible it is and how will it work. He suggested that everyone look at some of those documents. He also encouraged everyone to ask any lingering questions you might have at the Senate meeting or send them to their Senator.

Jeff Popke then asked when the group wanted to meet again and whether they could plan again for next Monday at 1?

Marianne Montgomery said the group needs to be ready next week to make some real decisions. She pointed out that there were only two weeks to help the Registrar and this other calendar committee. They can’t drag this out until June 1st.

Crystal Chambers said that if Angela Anderson is going to ask the Interim Chancellor about exceptions, they can maybe meet on Wednesday or Thursday to at least take some of those questions out of the running.

Jeff Popke suggested they wait a week this time but meet more often thereafter. If there is anything pressing that would be good to run before that calendar committee sometime before next week, he will try to bring it to their attention on Wednesday. He will try to compile the feedback he received in terms of themes of concern.