Date: December 21, 2015

To: McKinney Austin
    Sarah Barber
    John Booske
    Catharine DeRubeis
    Emily Dickmann
    Wei Dong
    Kris Eschenfelder
    Karen Evans-Romaine
    Quinn Fullenkamp
    Arashjot Kaur
    Karen Kopacek
    Christopher Lee
    Carren Martin
    Kristen McRoberts
    Scott Owczarek
    Carol Pope
    Steven K. Smith
    Nancy Westphal-Johnson
    Brian Yandell

CC: Jocelyn Milner
    Laura Ingram

From: M. Elizabeth Meyerand, Chair, University Committee

Re: Appointment letter for the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar

With this memo, I am formally inviting you to become members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Academic Calendar.

Authority for establishment of the UW-Madison academic calendar is vested in the faculty (FPP 1.20.C.3.) and approved in 5-year increments by the Faculty Senate. Setting the calendar is bound by a number of constraints stemming from state law, UW System policy, UW-Madison faculty legislation, and established patterns of practice. At its October 2015 meeting, the Faculty Senate passed revisions to the 2016-2021 calendar to incorporate two additional constraints: regularizing the start of the fall semester to always be on a Tuesday or Wednesday and regularizing the spring semester so that commencement is always on the second Saturday in May. These additional constraints were created as the easiest way to address several pressing issues with the current calendar. (See “Academic Calendar Report” attached.)

Even with the above changes, several issues remain unaddressed by the current method of creating the academic calendar. Some of the existing constraints date back several decades and
thus predate online registration, changes in teaching and assessment, computerization of grading systems, and so on. This committee is charged with exploring additional opportunities to streamline the rules for setting the academic calendar and devising an academic calendar that best serves our academic goals.

Changes to consider include, but are not limited to: aligning the standard semester length with federal financial aid regulations and accreditation guidelines, adjusting the exam and grading periods to reflect current pedagogical and administrative practice and capacity, providing flexibility for emerging forms of instruction, creating additional study days, and maximizing summer learning opportunities and facility use. The committee will consider, among other items, existing UW System and UW-Madison policies that affect the academic calendar and possibly make recommendations for aligning these various policies. In addition, this committee is charged with making recommendations on the implementation of the recently passed changes to the academic calendar. Issues related to the new calendar include, but are not limited to, timing of semester changes with regards to grade submission and academic appeals, sequencing of housing contracts and orientations activities, coordination of new and expanded summer terms, and timing of the faculty contract year.

The committee will convene regularly (as a whole and/or in subcommittees) over the course of the Spring 2016 semester. The committee is expected to submit a report with recommendations to the University Committee by April 30, 2016.

Membership

McKinney Austin, APIR, ex officio
Sarah Barber, DCS/Summer Term, ex officio
John Booske, ECE/ENG, faculty representative
Catharine DeRubis, OHR, ex officio
Emily Dickmann, Academic Advising, ex officio
Wei Dong, Design/SOHE, faculty representative
Kris Eschenfelder, SLIS/L&S, faculty representative
Karen Evans-Romaine, Slavic/L&S, faculty representative
Quinn Fullenkamp, Pop Health/SMPH, Academic Staff representative
Arashjot Kaur, L&S, student representative
Karen Kopacek, Associate Dean, Pharmacy, ex officio
Christopher Lee, L&S Academic Deans’ Services, ex officio
Carren Martin, CFYE/Div of Student Life, ex officio
Kristen McRoberts, Assistant Director, Financial Aid, ex officio
Scott Owczarek, Registrar, ex officio
Carol Pope, Division of Student Life, University Staff representative
Steven K. Smith, Secretary of the Faculty, chair
Nancy Westphal-Johnson, Summer Dean/L&S, ex officio
Brian Yandell, Horticulture/CALS, faculty representative
Professional school student representative, TBD