

Compressed Calendar

Burnout: students and faculty are losing motivation late in the semester. College is challenging in the best of circumstances. It appears that we are making an educational experience harder than it needs to be.



An 18 week semester results in 1 month more of annual class time than a 16 week semester. This is 1 month's worth of income which is unavailable for students who work.



In the Student Attendance Accounting Manual, Title 5, Section #55701 which states that an academic year may not be less than 32 weeks per year. This means that a semester may not be scheduled for less than 16 weeks.



As professors, we're mandated to work 175 days, which means that for every week we decrease our semester, we need to make up that balance with FLEX time. This will be a big adjustment.

Almost all colleges on 16 week schedule have a winter session. This allows for more classes, and adds to equity of adjunct professors; younger/newer part timers are a more diverse bunch of people, and it gives them more potential for teaching.



“The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges. (2000, April). Alternative calendars: Recommendations and a progress report.”

Based on the experiences of two colleges who transitioned right before year 2000. Both Santa Monica and Riverside Colleges reported on their results.

Advantages:

- later start may encourage greater enrollment;
- preferred by many students;
- allows for three intersessions, including two summer sessions;
- allows completion of three semesters' work in one year;
- fewest weeks taught in hottest weather;
- three intersessions may, depending upon negotiations, permit three opportunities for part time professors.

Advantages (continued):

- is closest to many unified school district calendars
- has longer break between two primary (or longest) semesters; and
- lengthened class sessions means no overall class time lost.
- full-time faculty may elect to teach their load in any two of the three, or may teach fewer courses in all three terms;
- is particularly favored by faculty seeking to do post-graduate work at another institutions.

Disadvantages:

- increases faculty contact hours per day, though because the semester is shortened as noted above, the total instructional time remains the same;
- spring semester ends in early June;
- assignments for counselors, librarians and certain classified positions must be carefully reconsidered and perhaps redesigned;
- some special programs and activities (nursing, vocational experiences, athletics, etc) may need to be specially scheduled beyond the shortened semester; and
- increased registration and grade collection periods may necessitate additional classified staffing or complex scheduling; offers fewest number of final exam days (5).
- At some colleges, the handling of flex hours is the most problematic. These calendars favor distribution of flex days or opportunities throughout the year as opposed to a concentrated period preceding the semester as often occurs. Santa Monica, for example has negotiated a single mandated flex day that precedes the start of the fall term.

Travenick, Ron. The Ohlone Story.

This document gives an overview of Ohlone's process- they did their transition in a year!



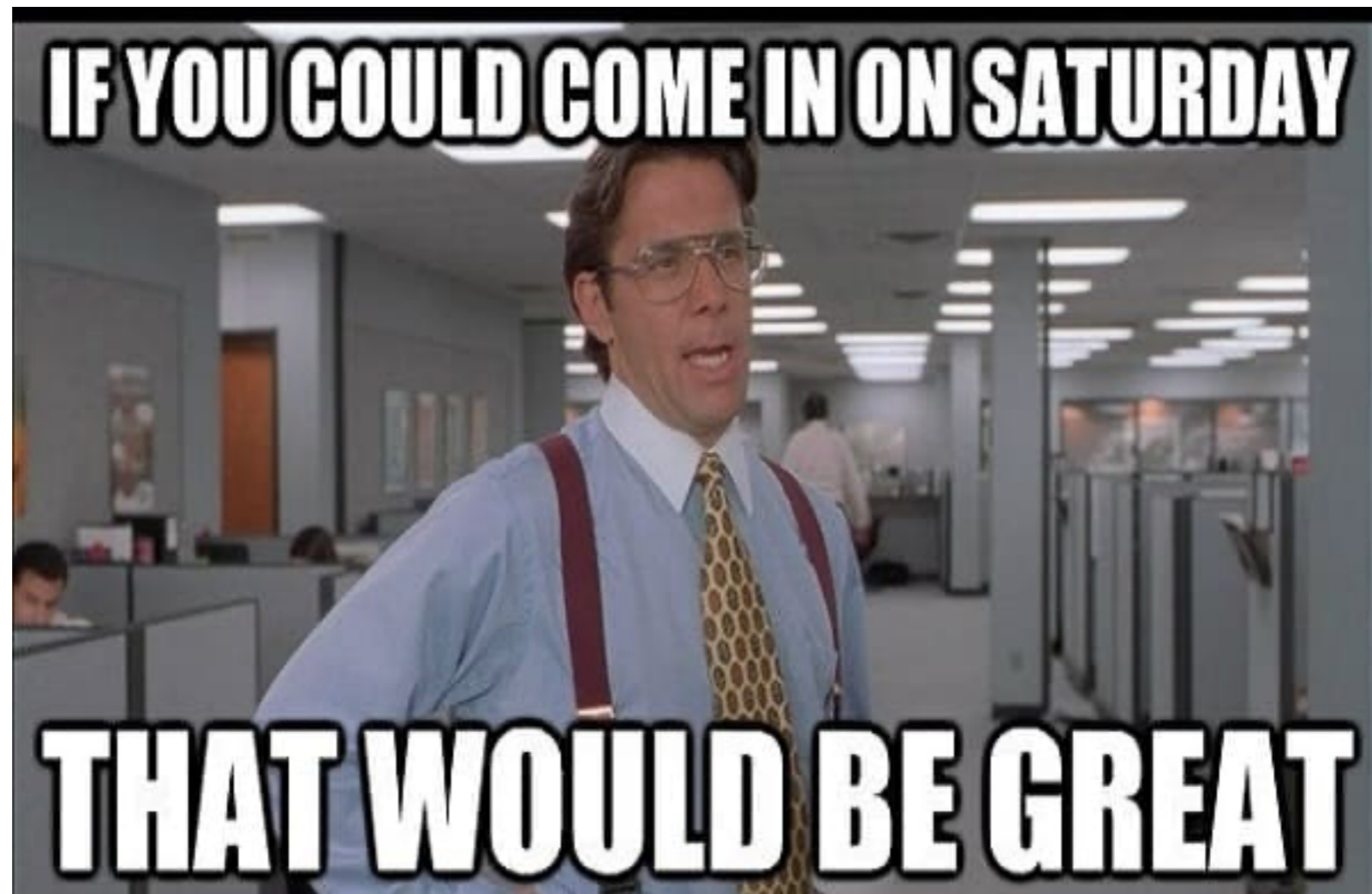
In getting feedback with those who are helping with the issue of a compressed calendar, it appears that one of the biggest obstacles to making this happen at LPC is the scheduling of science labs.



Chris Dudzik who is part of the Senate was at DVC when they switched to 16 weeks and said it was a tough transition.

For math, the scheduling issue is computer lab rooms, but that is potentially less of an issue now that Building 1000 is open.

There was some discussion about needing to offer courses that end up on weekends. If there's a demand for that kind of thing amongst our student population, and somebody wants to teach on weekends, then that's a great thing to discuss. Personally, I wouldn't want weekend classes imposed on a department unless it's really a great thing for students/departments.



While I understand that shifting to a compressed calendar poses a variety of challenges, at the end of the day I'm of the opinion that this is something that can be done and should be done. From what I've read, and from my conversations with other professors and students, it's the best thing for our student population, which should remain our highest priority.



Most colleges in the country have a semester which are shorter than 18 weeks. If they can do a great job teaching the same content in a shorter time, we should be up to the task.



I think the issue of compressing our calendar is a matter of will.

There is certainly more to discuss, but as far as I can tell the pros for a compressed calendar vastly outweigh the cons, which seem mostly logistical and bureaucratic in nature.



One thing I love about teaching at a community college is the constant conversation about how we can help our students. We are constantly asking ourselves: What do our students need? How do we help our students succeed?

It appears to me that a compressed calendar will benefit our students and is therefore something worth making a priority.

Other districts and colleges have made this transition successfully, I'm positive that Las Positas College can change make a transition as well.



Resolution Requesting Convening of the District Compressed Calendar Exploratory Workgroup

WHEREAS, The Las Positas College Academic Senate represents the interests of the Las Positas Community College Faculty; and

WHEREAS, The Las Positas College Academic Senate recognizes that a shift to a shorter, more compressed academic calendar, may provide benefits for our students (academic alignment with other educational institutions, an additional intersession term, and a shortened time commitment); and

WHEREAS, The Las Positas College Academic Senate acknowledges that the Chabot-Las Positas Community College District was taking steps in 2019/2020 to address the feasibility and impacts of the implementation of a compressed calendar; and

WHEREAS, The Las Positas College Academic Senate understands that this process will necessitate a broad multi-level approach that will involve all sectors (faculty, classified staff, and administration) of each college, labor organizations, and the district to implement; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Las Positas College Academic Senate requests the district to convene the compressed calendar exploratory workgroup to explore all aspects of moving to a compressed calendar; let it be further,

RESOLVED, That the Las Positas College Academic Senate requests that this process be transparent, timely, and with representation from the above-mentioned groups; let it be further,

RESOLVED, That the Las Positas College Academic Senate will support this effort with our broad expertise and experience, and in the spirit of collabor