**OPTIONS TO REVISE THE FALL 2024 CALENDAR FOR UMBC**

**Dr. David P. Dauwalder, Interim Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs**

**February 8, 2024**

During Fall 2023, President Valerie Sheares Ashby charged me with finding a path whereby the Fall 2024 academic calendar might be adjusted and to begin a process to examine academic calendars for the future. The specific adjustments sought for Fall 2024 would (a) extend the Thanksgiving Break one additional day and (b) identify one or two additional days that might be identified as a fall break during the month of October. For expediency, I’ve separated the consideration for a potential change for Fall 2024 from the overall examination of academic calendars.

**Potential Limitations**—Several limitations emerge when considering such a move. These limitations include potentially varied interpretations of the USM policy on academic calendars, the previous approval of academic calendars for 2022 through 2028 through established processes at UMBC and in the USM, the need to conform to MSCHE credit-hour policy, and the four points raised by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on December 18, 2023, and detailed for me in an email the following day.

* *Parameters of USM Policy*—Review of the USM’s II-5.00 Policy on Academic Calendar suggests that the following four elements must be met by the fall-semester calendar: A fall semester that (a) begins before Labor Day, (b) accommodates the requirements for class meeting time, (c) is interrupted by a recess for Thanksgiving, and (d) concludes final examinations no later than December 23.
* *Prior Establishment of Academic Calendars in USM and at UMBC*—The *UMBC Faculty Handbook’s* section titled “Academic Calendar” presents only the six provisions of the USM policy in the words appearing inn USM policy. No additional UMBC policies exist. Therefore, providing whatever changes are deemed appropriate by UMBC appears to be permissible as long as those changes conform to USM policy. USM policy requires that the USM common calendar “be adopted at least two/three years in advance.” However, USM policy also calls for each institution to inform the Office of the Chancellor by June 1 annually with a copy of the detailed academic calendar for the upcoming year. Therefore, room for adjustment to the details appears to exist.
* *Conform to MSCHE Credit*-*Hour Policy—*The USM policy on academic calendars requires each USM institution confirm to the MSCHE credit-hour policy. To meet the clock-hour definition for lecture or recitation, the policy requires a minimum of 50 minutes of scheduled class times per week for 15 weeks for each credit hour earned. That equals 2,250 minutes of class meeting time per semester for a 3-credit course. The MSCHE credit-hour policy is silent on whether final exam meeting times count or don’t count toward the 2,250-minuted requirement. The degree to which the Fall 2024 UMBC calendar meets or falls short of these requirements for the most typical schedule times for 3-credit courses follows:

**TABLE 1**

**Current Fall 2024 Calendar Compliance with**

**MSCHE Clock Hour Requirements**

**Minutes per Class Meetings. Total Minutes Total Minutes. Minutes Over**

**Days Class Meeting per Semester w/o Finals w/Finals or Under**

MWF 50 43 2,150 2,270 + 20

MW 75 29 2,175 2,295 + 45

TTh 75 29 2,175 2,295 + 45

M 150 14 2,100 2,220 - 30

T 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

W 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

Th 150 14 2,100 2,220 - 30

* *Consider Faculty Senate Executive Committee Concerns*—(1) In response to the first concern [a preference not to start fall semester earlier], two potential options were presented for consideration at the Faculty Senate Tea: Option A would start the semester two days earlier while maintaining the current timeframes that courses meet; Option B maintained the current start and end dates but revised the length of class meeting times to cover the minimum requirements in the MSCHE Credit-Hour Policy. The three other concerns from the FS Executive Committee were about (2) considering impact on services and resources, (3) maintaining consistency in the number of course meetings on each day of the week, and (4) considerations regarding future Spring Breaks—not a factor for Fall 2024 but instead for the future discussions.

Discussion at the FS Tea resulted in a decision to present Option A for consideration by the Faculty Senate. Option B was set aside as creating too many issues for continued consideration for Fall 2024. However, by extending each one- and two-day-per-week classes by 5 minutes each reduces passing times between classes from 15 minutes to 10 minutes, allows Thursday, December 12 to be a reading day, allows final exams to begin on Friday, December 13, and end on Thursday, December 19. Graduate commencement can occur on Thursday, December 19, and undergraduate commencement can occur on Friday, December 20. Therefore, an Option C has been added for consideration.

**Request for Endorsement of Option A , Option C, or Endorsement of Making No Changes to Fall 2024**. Options A and C omply with USM and UMBC policies. Endorsement of either Option A or C will allow the administration to move ahead to implement the plan, notify the USM through the president’s notification to the chancellor by June 1, and make whatever changes are necessary on the university website. Option A would deliver the following number of class meetings each day of the week, M-T-W-Th-F . . . 15-15-15-15-14, as compared with the current Fall 2024 calendar which delivers the following; 14-15-15-14-14. Option C delivers the same pattern as the current Fall 2024 calendar: 14-15-15-14-14.

**Option A**—Option A would modify the current Fall 2024 calendar in the following ways:

* Fall 2024 classes would begin on Monday, August 26, two days earlier than currently planned for Wednesday, August 28.
* No classes would be held on Monday and Tuesday, October 14 and 15. These days would be identified as Fall Break.
* No classes would be held on Wednesday, November 27. Thanksgiving Recess will be extended to Wednesday, November 27, through Sunday, December 1.
* Wednesday, December 11, will not be a reading day but will instead be a day of classes.
* Thursday, December 12 will be a day of classes.
* Friday, December 13, would follow the Monday schedule. Classes would meet on December 13 as if it were a Monday. December 13 will be the last day of classes for Fall 2024
* The final exam schedule would begin Monday, December 16, and end on Friday, December 20. It is currently identified as running from Thursday, December 12, through Wednesday, December 18.
* Graduate Commencement would move from Wednesday, December 18 to Friday, December 20.
* Bachelor’s Commencement would move from Thursday, December 19 to mid-afternoon on Friday, December 20; Saturday, December 21; or Sunday, December 22.

Table 2 show the extent to which the proposed changes comply with the clock-hour requirements of MSCHE.

**TABLE 2**

**Option A—Fall 2024 Calendar Compliance with**

**MSCHE Clock Hour Requirements**

**Minutes per Class Meetings Total Minutes Total Minutes. Minutes Over**

**Days Class Meeting per Semester w/o Finals w/Finals or Under**

MWF 50 44 2,200 2,320 + 70

MW 75 30 2,250 2,370 +120

MF. 75 29. 2,174 2,295 + 45

WF 75 29. 2,174 2,295 + 45

TTh 75 30 2,250 2,370 +120

M 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

T 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

W 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

Th 150 15 2,250 2,370 +120

F 150. 14 2,100 2,220 - 30

**Option C**—Option C would modify the current Fall 2024 calendar in the following ways:

* Fall 2024 classes would begin on Monday, August 26, two days earlier than currently planned for Wednesday, August 28.
* No classes would be held on Monday and Tuesday, October 14 and 15. These days would be identified as Fall Break.
* No classes would be held on Wednesday, November 27. Thanksgiving Recess will be extended to Wednesday, November 27, through Sunday, December 1.
* Wednesday, December 11, will not be a reading day but will instead be a day of classes. December 11 will be the last day of classes for Fall 2024.
* Thursday, December 12 will be a reading day.
* All two-day-per-week courses will be extended 5 minutes per meeting, from 75 minutes to 80 minutes.
* All one-day-per-week courses will be extended 5 minutes per meeting, from 150 minutes to 155 minutes.
* The final exam schedule would begin Friday~~,~~ December 13 and end on Thursday, December 19. It is currently identified as running from Thursday, December 12, through Wednesday, December 18.
* Graduate Commencement would move from Wednesday, December 18 to Thursday, December 19.
* Bachelor’s Commencement would move from Thursday, December 19 to Friday, December 20.

Table 3 show the extent to which the proposed changes comply with the clock-hour requirements of MSCHE.

**TABLE 3**

**Option C—Fall 2024 Calendar Compliance with**

**MSCHE Clock Hour Requirements**

**With 5-Minute Extensions to Two- and One-Day-per-Week Courses**

**Minutes per Class Meetings Total Minutes Total Minutes. Minutes Over**

**Days Class Meeting per Semester w/o Finals w/Finals or Under**

MWF 50 43 2,150 2,270 + 20

MW 80 29 2,320 2,440 +190

MF 80 28 2,240 2,360 +110

WF 80 29 2,320 2,440 +190

TTh 80 29 2,320 2,440 +190

M 155 14 2,170 2,290 + 40

T 155 15 2,325 2,445 +195

W 155 15 2,325 2,445 +195

Th 155 14 2,170 2,290 + 40

F 155 14 2,170 2,290 + 40