

Proposed Calendar Option: Winter Block Plan
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Fall 2009

Overview: The winter block calendar option centers on the idea of dividing the winter quarter into two equal 5½-week blocks while keeping fall and spring quarters the same 11-week period. Winter session A would occur before the holiday break while session B would occur afterwards. There would be no carry over from session A to session B, meaning session A courses would be completed entirely prior to the holiday. Courses in each block would be self-contained and each block would have a ½ week of finals. Students would normally take 2 courses per block. Registration for both blocks would occur at the same time during fall quarter.

Winter Block Plan - details

- Adjust the fall quarter start date so that winter ‘quarter’ is equally distributed before and after holiday break. This requires a fall start that is in the last few weeks of August.
- Fall and spring quarters remain 11 weeks each.
- Eliminate the winter quarter and replace with two winter blocks – Winter Session A and Winter Session B. Each block would be 5 ½ weeks long with ½ week for finals. The actual courses would meet for 5 weeks.
- Courses in each block would meet more in a given week than a course in a normal 10-week quarter *or* class sessions in a block would be longer.
- Students would normally be encouraged to take two courses per block and each course would be entirely completed within the block.
- Faculty would normally teach 1-2 courses per block.
- Students could also use blocks for study abroad, undergraduate research, co-ops, etc.
- Faculty could free up a winter session for research.
- Students would register only once - at the approximate same time as they currently register during fall quarter. The back office changes are fairly minimal.

Pros

- Intended to support student success. Current winter quarter shows an increase rate of D/F grades. By eliminating the awkward break, students may show increased success. Could result in higher retention without a major calendar change.
- Students and faculty would be able to enjoy the holiday break without the burden of academic work
- Instructors would not have to accommodate a major break in studies for the holidays
- Students could use fall quarter and winter session A to have a study abroad opportunity or more flexible co-op experiences. (Similarly by grouping

winter session B with spring quarter.) Similarly, faculty could structure their workload to have a block dedicated to research.

- Academic convocation gets out earlier in May so students are more competitively positioned for jobs and summer co-ops. Faculty will have more opportunities for early summer conferences.

Cons

- Would require some course and curriculum revisions to accommodate 5 week block
- Fall start would be before Labor Day; Rochester schools typically start after Labor Day.
- Courses would move at a faster pace; classes would meet more frequently.