



MEMORANDUM

PROVOST & VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

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TO: Dr. McLain
FROM: Morrie Walworth
DATE: September 2, 2013
SUBJECT: One Class At A Time

In your Directive of June 24th, 2013, you asked that I coordinate the reporting for initial investigation into One Class At A Time (OCAAT). I asked the Vice Presidents and three members of the Provost's Council to research OCAAT at other institutions. I have received information from VP Brooks, VP Eilola, Dean Hutchins, Dr. Keller, Dr. Myton, and Dr. Peress. Those reports are attached.

At this point in the review, no insurmountable obstacles have been identified, but a great number of questions still need significant investigation before LSSU could implement an OCAAT model.

In our research of OCAAT, approximately ten other institutions were examined. In some cases, calls were made and conversations were conducted with areas such as admissions, student services, housing, food service, provosts, and faculty. In other cases, faculty visited other campuses and spoke with faculty and staff. Finally, information available on the institution's websites was reviewed. We found that a variety of models exists and therefore believe that LSSU should examine its own needs and develop a model that best fits with our institution - rather than simply adopt an existing model, if we choose to pursue OCAAT.

VPs Eilola and Peress indicated that although an OCAAT model would have a very visible impact on student scheduling and participation, their underlying areas of responsibility would remain semester based. In other words, housing, food service, registrar, financial aid, etc. would process students on a semester basis, acknowledging the fact that students are participating in 3 or 4 learning sessions (blocks) during a semester. Of course, many details still need to be examined. Some of those include: timing of financial aid disbursement, grading (mid-term, final, etc), grading policies for "N", "I", and "W" grades, and the few students that attend for less than all four sessions during a semester. VP Eilola noted the BANNER systems updates needed to support block scheduling and VP Peress noted the need for better faculty training when dealing with students, since faculty will now be more directly involved in the day-to-day life of the students in their classes. Faculty members now become the most important link between stressed students and the LSSU support systems. Perhaps MapWorks will help in this instance.

VP Brooks presents an analysis and discussion on elimination of the plateau and differential tuition. She concludes that OCAAT would work best without the plateau and that differential tuition is a separate issue that can be implemented at any point in time provided appropriate dialog and planning occurs first.

All VPs stated that a move to OCAAT would take considerable time and effort. A summary of all the reports - as tied to your request for information is noted below.

Vice President for Enrollment Services:

- Review impact on financial aid disbursement.
 - It is expected that most students will attend for the entire semester. Students would declare their intent at the beginning of the semester and aid would be dispersed accordingly.
 - The Financial Aid and Registrar's Offices would need to carefully coordinate their tracking of students to ensure proper disbursement of aid.
- Review impact on add/drop periods, scheduling, room utilization, and Registrar related areas.
 - The BANNER system is capable of handling the block scheduling model, however the impact on classrooms is yet to be determined.
 - New add/drop, grading, midterm periods, grading, and related policies would need to be developed.
- Review impact on student admission and the timing of orientation.
 - Admissions would continue to admit for semesters and is looking at online orientation sessions that could be used for students entering mid-semester.

Vice President for Finance:

- Develop models that eliminate the tuition plateau and reduce per-credit tuition.
 - A simple model has been developed and can be expanded upon as further investigation takes place.
- Develop models that utilize differential tuition.
 - Differential tuition could simply take existing program and course fees into account or it could include other factors as we gather better information on the cost of instruction. OCAAT and differential tuition are separate issues and can be treated as such.
- Review the impact on tuition payment deadlines and refund dates.
 - As with all aspects of OCAAT, policies for all due dates, refunds, etc. will need to be revised. Policy revision is not a difficult process, but ensuring the policies are revised correctly and that all policies are reviewed in a time consuming activity.

Vice President for Student Affairs:

- Review the impact on housing and food service.
 - For the most part, the current semester model would continue. New procedures for part-time (less than four blocks) students would be developed.
- Review potential impact on student involvement in extracurricular activities.
 - Input from other institutions actually found an increase in student involvement on campus with the OCAAT model.

Academic Report (Provost Council):

- Provide models for course offerings; identifying areas of concern and opportunities for collaboration.
 - Models were developed for singular 3, 4, and 5 credit courses in one block. The 5 credit model is not recommended - as it translates to 20 credits per semester.
 - Preliminary modeling of courses in chemistry shows that it is possible to shift from large lecture sections to smaller lecture/lab pairings compatible with the OCAAT model
- Gather any existing data, from current OCAAT schools, that provides insight into the impact of OCAAT on student learning.

- There is not a large body of empirical evidence in support of the OCAAT model, in spite of its innovative use beginning with Colorado College in the 1970s.
- The anecdotal and qualitative evidence however is quite strong in identifying the key advantages of the OCAAT system (see detailed report).

In conclusion you asked that I make recommendations on continuing (or discontinuing) the dialog, estimate resources needed to continue discussion/implementation, and provide an estimated timeline for subsequent action if justified.

Schools using the OCAAT model occupy a unique and distinctive market niche, which appears to have been successful for the two institutions using this approach for the longest time. LSSU could utilize this same marketing approach and become the second public institution to utilize this model. Furthermore, no insurmountable obstacles were identified in this cursory review. For these reasons, further dialog is recommended. Items not covered in the initial review, but are necessary for moving forward include consideration of the impact on the collective bargaining agreements, and discussions with the faculty concerning the substantial curriculum review that will be necessary for successful implementation.

The change to an OCAAT model would represent a radical redefining of the university, its focus on student learning outcomes, and pedagogical innovation. The University culture is typically unaccustomed to sweeping change and it can be expected that it will require considerable time for deliberation, review and debate to build consensus for any action other than to maintain the status-quo. Since faculty buy-in will be key to this endeavor's success, I suggest meeting with Jason Garvon or the Faculty Executive Council to seek their membership's support before continuation. If we find there is support to continue the investigation then a complete Shared-Governance based review of the OCAAT plan and its implications should be undertaken in the fall of 2013 with a target decision date for implementation at the end of spring 2014. Should the institution continue discussion, the planning for policy, financial aid, and the necessary curriculum reforms could be expected to take until December 2015, with the implementation no earlier than the fall of 2016. In order for the changes to impact student recruitment it will be necessary to begin promotion as soon as the decision to make the conversion has been announced.

Presidential Directives Report

One Class At A Time

Vice President for Finance Report on One Class at a Time (OCAAT) Programming

The Vice President for Finance was asked to provide a report that specifically addresses the following with respect to the One Class at a Time (OCAAT) model:

- Develop models that eliminate the tuition plateau and reduce per-credit tuition.
- Develop models that utilize differential tuition.
- Review the impact on tuition payment deadlines and refund dates.

In this analysis, models that eliminate the tuition plateau and reduce per-credit tuition or utilize differential tuition are not exclusive to the OCAAT model but could be considered under the current traditional model as well.

In considering eliminating the tuition plateau, a simplistic approach was used and is not to be considered a complete analysis but a place to start this conversation. It will explore some of the pros and cons of eliminating the tuition plateau and/or utilizing differential tuition rates.

Certain assumptions have been made which are not precise but are close enough for the purpose of this initial analysis. Much more research needs to be done and the data to be used would need to be drilled down to more detail and for longer periods of time before making an actual recommendation on tuition pricing.

One would think that there would be an optimal pricing structure for all public universities which might work for most, but no standardization is evident. Some universities use a plateau and some do not and the credit hours within the plateau vary from institution to institution. In fall 2013, Michigan Tech decided to go back to a plateau model almost a decade after changing from that model. There are now six public universities in Michigan that have adopted plateau tuition plans; Grand Valley, Lake Superior, Michigan Tech, Northern, U of M, and Western. Both Michigan Tech and Northern have set plateaus that range from 12 – 18 credit hours. LSSU's plateau ranges from 12 – 17 credit hours.

It would seem that it would be beneficial to eliminate the plateau if the university moved to the OCAAT model because the resulting lower per credit hour cost may be attractive to those wanting to pick up a course or two during a semester. This may be particularly true in the summer. Eliminating the plateau and lowering the credit hour price would be a positive for the non-traditional student that typically takes less than 12 credit hours per semester. It would likely be much more flexible and easier to manage the OCAAT model with a fixed credit hour pricing as classes within a semester start at different times and a student that missed the first round of courses could begin in the middle of a semester without penalty. In considering eliminating the tuition plateau, one of the difficulties in coming up with a price neutral tuition rate per credit hour is projecting how this change could affect how students perceive this change as applicable to their situation and how they enroll.

In the following table, all LSSU undergraduate students and credit hours for fall 2012 and spring 2013 terms are listed. The prior year was used because this is the most recent full year that enrollment data is available. For this simple analysis, we are treating all as if they are Michigan residents being charged the

FY13 in-state tuition rate of \$397.50/credit hour. The actual percentage of resident students is about 95%. The FY13 rates are used in all analysis in this report.

Table 1: Comparison of per-credit-hour Cost - Revenue Neutral

	Fall 2012	Spring 2013		Total Credit	With Plateau	Without Plateau
Credit	Enrollment	Enrollment	Total	Hours Paid	\$ 397.50	\$ 341.50
Hour	Count	Count	Credit Hours	(Plateau 12-17)		
1	24	4	28	28	11,130	9,562
2	8	5	26	26	10,335	8,879
3	144	149	879	879	349,403	300,179
4	99	43	568	568	225,780	193,972
5	8	6	70	70	27,825	23,905
6	78	107	1,110	1110	441,225	379,065
7	57	47	728	728	289,380	248,612
8	28	41	552	552	219,420	188,508
9	64	43	963	963	382,793	328,865
10	57	48	1,050	1050	417,375	358,575
11	45	44	979	979	389,153	334,329
12	305	271	6,912	6,912	2,747,520	2,360,448
13	320	290	7,930	7,320	2,909,700	2,708,095
14	327	296	8,722	7,476	2,971,710	2,978,563
15	337	311	9,720	7,776	3,090,960	3,319,380
16	325	256	9,296	6,972	2,771,370	3,174,584
17	273	251	8,908	6,288	2,499,480	3,042,082
18	57	64	2,178	2178	865,755	743,787
19	20	25	855	855	339,863	291,983
20	12	14	520	520	206,700	177,580
21	1	1	42	42	16,695	14,343
22	2	-	44	44	17,490	15,026
	2,591	2,316	62,080	53,336	\$ 21,201,060	\$ 21,200,320

As illustrated above, a price neutral tuition rate, considering all credit hours would be about \$341.50 per credit hour. Approximately 83% of all credit hours are within the plateau so perhaps a price neutral cost within the plateau would be better received by students. A credit hour rate of \$330 would be neutral within this range. However, students at the higher end of the range would still pay more tuition than under the plateau. For students taking 15, 16, or 17 credits they would pay 3.8%, 10.7% and 17.6% higher tuition, respectively, than under the plateau system. As you can see, there would be winners and losers in changing from a plateau tuition structure.

Another way of looking at this is to look at the number of credit hours required to obtain a bachelor's degree. To graduate with a bachelor's degree, a student must earn 124 credits. Academic programs require 15-18 credits per semester to complete the program within four years. If full-time tuition was based on a standard credit load of 15 credits and the current 12-credit rate was recalibrated for 15 credits, the per credit hour rate would be \$318.

When Michigan Tech changed back to their plateau model, the flat-rate within the plateau was adjusted up to a 15 credit hour price. It is more difficult to eliminate a plateau than to move to a plateau system. Some universities have increased part-time rates as an incentive to encourage students to move to full-time status. Having a plateau has a similar effect so that may be something to consider if the plateau is eliminated.

Only about 7 percent of students are impacted by the tuition plateau in the summer as most students take one or two classes in the summer. It is likely that the plateau model has little influence in the student's summer enrollment decisions. It is thought that using the OCAAT model would be very attractive to students in the summer. Students could complete a course in about 18 days which would be conducive to maximizing summer employment opportunities.

If the university set pricing at \$330 per credit hour, it would result in about \$750,000 less in tuition revenue for the same number of enrolled credit hours. The university would need to increase enrollment by 2,165 credit hours or approximately 180 FTE students to remain revenue neutral overall. If pricing was set at \$318 per credit hour, it would result in about \$1.5 million less in tuition revenue for the same number of enrolled credit hours. Would the university lose enrollment at the higher levels of the existing plateau and/or would enrollment increase in areas outside of the plateau due to lower tuition rates? These questions are not likely to be answered with any certainty until after a change has been made making a change risky without doing an in depth market study.

Some of the benefits of eliminating the plateau might be:

- Student loads are structured to what they can handle
- Pricing is fairer to a part-time student who cannot benefit from the plateau
- Seniors, who typically have lighter loads, should benefit
- More flexibility and ease in implementing the OCAAT model

Some of the cons of eliminating the plateau might be:

- More difficult for students to predict tuition bills
- More difficult for the university to budget tuition revenue
- Students are less likely to pursue a second major or minor
- Students are less likely to explore courses outside of their major

Using a broad population average can represent a disproportionate sample of average course loads. Freshmen and sophomore class loads tend to be heavier than junior and senior loads and loads vary depending on a student's curriculum. Higher level classes and certain academic disciplines also cost a university more to offer. Many universities have addressed such disparities by using differential tuition models.

Some universities differentiate between lower and upper classmen courses. Others combine tuition and program fees and sometimes course fees into differential tuition rates for specific programs. This can be accomplished under a traditional 15 week semester model or could be applied to the OCAAT model. In this analysis, there is not enough information to justify and properly evaluate differentiation between lower and upper classes. Combining program and/or course fees would not change the dollar amounts

charged to students and overall revenue but could enhance transparency of educational costs. A full analysis or projection of differential tuition is not warranted at this time for the purpose of exploring the OCAAT model.

In considering the OCAAT model, it is certain that changing to this model would greatly impact tuition payment deadlines and refund dates. This would be largely driven by financial aid guidelines and enrollment processes controlled by the Financial Aid and Registrar's offices. This would certainly change the add/drop periods. The OCAAT model would add complexity to an already complex business process but, certainly, the business end of this model has been handled at other institutions and can be handled at LSSU.

Another thing to consider is educating students to prepare and be ready for OCAAT courses. If a student comes unprepared without the required book for the first week of an OCAAT class, as is not uncommon now, they will have a difficult time being successful in that course. There will be little time at the beginning of a class to get financial aid issues resolved or to take other corrective action.

In summary, the OCAAT model would work best without a plateau. This model would require lots of flexibility using base tuition rates in combination of differential tuition at least for lower and upper level courses. It would be more difficult to determine who was a full-time student due to the apparent ease of entering/exiting courses within a semester. Pricing this model is a challenge and getting it wrong could be financial disaster for the university. Less important is differential tuition models that incorporate program and/or course fees. Differential tuition models can be instituted at any time and some believe it makes pricing more transparent. Changing to differential tuition for high-cost programs is a choice that should not impact tuition and fees; it is simply combining the already existing tuition and fees into a combined tuition for a particular program. Implementing OCAAT would not dictate whether or not the university moved to differential tuition. A change to OCAAT would be challenging to the Business Office and processes would likely be slowed down as systems and processes are adjusted to comply with a new way of doing business.

Presidential Directives Report

One Class At A Time

Vice President for Enrollment Services Report on One Class at a Time (OCAAT) Programming

For each of the schools reviewed their processes handled administrative duties a little differently, but all were ensuring that they followed all federally and state-mandated guidelines. One consistent factor that was discovered was that much of their administrative processes had, by necessity, been changed to a manual process vs. an on-line process. This includes financial aid monitoring and reimbursement and course add/drop procedures. For LSSU, this could ultimately lead to increased administrative cost or lowered efficiency.

Financial Aid

- Aid is managed on a semester basis, but OCAAT creates a lot of additional enrollment monitoring, aid adjusting, and return for Title IV (R2T4) processes.
- Much of the new monitoring is manual and labor-intensive
- If scheduling and registration is allowed for each block, the university will assume an increase in their accounts receivable.

Advising, Retention and Orientation

Orientation

Cornell – New Student Orientation (NSO) is a 5 day program, starting with move-in, and is a mix of academics and student life programming. All new students that register take a first-year seminar (fys) during block one and a writing-intensive course at some point during blocks 2-6. The registration for fys occurs over the summer. During NSO, students meet with faculty advisor to schedule blocks 2-4 (they register for blocks 5-8 in October). In the spring, students register for the entire next academic year (blocks 1-8). There is faculty interaction beyond advising each day (Blockbuster-like one hour topical lectures; One Book discussion and the first meeting of FYS).

Colorado College – NSO is the week before classes start. This week also includes a 4 day outdoor experience with service component. Over the summer new students are required to read their Common Reading book (selected by faculty-this year “The Immortal life of Henrietta Lacks”). The program also includes an on-campus presentation in the fall and group discussions with faculty members. They are expecting approximately 560 new students this year. During NSO, students also attend a pre-FYS course. Parents attend NSO for the first 2 days only. They try to incorporate new transfers into orientation as much as possible.

First-year programming and academic advising

Cornell – Advising is primarily the responsibility of their faculty. The most difficult part is when a student’s faculty member is not teaching during a block and is away from campus. Faculty members are given the opportunity to learn campus culture for 2-3 years before assigned first year advisees. Student orientation staff members continue to work with their groups for approximately 3 blocks, continuing to provide programming and events for incoming students. They have discussed an additional course that would go for two blocks about the transitional components and led by student affairs staff, but have not implemented such program.

Colorado College – All new students take a consecutive FYS course during blocks 1 and 2. They offer between 30-40 classes with approximately 25 students enrolled in each. Academic advising is a faculty responsibility.

First-year retention efforts

Cornell – Their early alert program has them reaching out to students after block one. The early alert program works in conjunction with student affairs and academic advising staff. Their Dean of students sits on the Academic Appeals/Academic Standing Committee (made up of faculty and Registrar) to provide input on students they feel are having a difficult transition. They spend a lot of time talking with students about the importance of asking for help quickly. Several fys courses have a student mentor assigned to them.

Colorado College - Students get to choose whether to take a course as graded or pass/fail and have 3 days to change their mind from one to the other. Most take department courses as graded and electives as pass/fail. They have a few “safety nets” in place if a student has a family emergency, needs extra credit or time to make up missing work: ½ block course (offered the beginning of January, 1 ½ weeks long); Wild Card option-attend summer session for free (one time only); Incomplete-students have 3 subsequent blocks to finish a course with an incomplete (incompletes DO NOT change to F’s they remain as an “I” grade). Faculty members have approximately 5-15 advisees.

Faculty members generally reach out to Dean of Students office when they have student concerns. The Dean’s office then coordinates with appropriate staff to connect with the student. Student of Concern Committee (representatives from cross-section of campus) meets every block.

Additional notes...Colorado College found the socio-economic differences really stand out on the block plan. Very small populations of non-traditional and transfer students. They have a 3 year residency requirement, approx. 500 students live off campus their senior year. They also found a tremendous sense of ownership by the faculty over the classrooms because they are typically the only one in a room for 3 ½ weeks (classes are in the morning 9-noon every day and labs in the afternoon).

Registrar’s office

To conduct my initial research of OCAAT (One Course at a Time) I went out to the websites for Cornell College (Iowa); Colorado College (Colorado); and U of Montana West-Dillon (Montana).

In general I found the following:

- The schools had fewer programs and these programs were very straight forward – take this set of classes, earn degree.
- The OCAAT schools all boasted about their off campus opportunities as part of the blocks. All had some type of ‘big’ field-trip, or study abroad trip as part of the block.
- Developing OCAAT would require that we re-look at many of our programs and possibly redesign them to make them more straight forward.
- One school only had 3 or 4 credit courses. The 4 credit courses had lab (field trip) experiences.

Although online registration is utilized to an extent, dropping courses was done by completing a form and bringing it to the Registrar's Office to be processed. One form had a check box where the student had to indicate that by dropping the course, they were planning to take the rest of the blocks (so that their financial aid was not removed). Adding at the start of the semester (or each block) was also done manually in the Registrar's Offices.

I got the impression the financial aid process (adjustments, etc.) was also completed manually.

If LSSU were to pursue OCAAT, we would need additional staff in the Registrar's and Financial Aid Offices. We would need to re-design our programs and we would need to create off campus experiences for each block.

Idea (registrar's office):

We could look at using OCAAT at LSSU for the Summer Semester. Summer Semester is already very labor-intensive and manual. We already have courses running for 6 weeks or 3 weeks, etc. so running the blocks would not be a stretch. BUT, in order for this to work, we would have to look at which courses we would target, then, to fully embrace the concept of OCAAT; create cool off campus experiences for these courses. We would want to make taking the courses during the summer a really cool, expanded opportunity for our students and for those students from other schools looking to pick up course work. We would need to make the off campus experiences inexpensive. One of the problems we have experienced with off campus experiences (i.e. tall ships, study abroad, etc.) is that it is so expensive, students cannot afford it.

Presidential Directives Report

One Class At A Time

Vice President for Student Affairs Report on One Class at a Time (OCAAT) Programming

I contacted staff at the University of Montana Western, Cornell College, and Colorado College to ask about the operational challenges presented for Housing, Food Service and Student Involvement as a result of the OCAAT block program that all have in place. Colorado College first implemented the block plan in 1969, Cornell has been doing this since the 1970s and Montana has had it in place for about 8 years. I've summarized their responses for each item and will provide my thoughts about how LSSU might have to adjust if we embrace OCAAT.

- 1) Housing – operationally, all address the contractual nature and the assignments as they would a semester program. The need for housing to accommodate students through all 4 blocks in the traditional semester's time lends itself to maintaining our present operation and structure.
 - a. Montana
 - i. Noted that occasionally a student might start their studies during the second block of the year. In those cases, housing would not necessarily be guaranteed but, if assigned, cost would be prorated.
 - ii. Staff mentioned that this was a rare occurrence.
 - b. Cornell
 - i. Contracts are for the academic year. If a student does not have a class during one block they may remain on campus in their room provided they do not present a behavioral problem.
 - ii. Staff commented that it was not unusual for students to use a block in which they did not have class to pursue a research project or other appropriate academic initiative.
 - iii. The short, last week of each block often saw students engaging in service activities, taking short trips or simply relaxing on campus. One comment was that it was not unusual for a student to sleep for a good portion of Thursday and Friday after the end of a block.
 - c. Colorado
 - i. Contracts are for the academic year. They can prorate rooms but typically do not unless the student moves out of the unit. The college has a large number of students who will take advantage of studying abroad during a block and usually will do so at the end of a term (during the 4th or 8th block) and, in these cases, the students typically move out of the residence halls.
- 2) Food Service – operationally this area works in the same way as the housing area works. The only items which came forward as needing to be addressed are identified below.
 - a. Montana
 - i. Slight alteration to the meal plan at the end of each block to address the number or students leaving campus and/or attending meals. In the fourth week of each block the Thursday and Friday meal schedule replicate weekends – i.e. instead of a breakfast, lunch, dinner schedule, the meals served are brunch and dinner.
 - ii. Identified a need to address timing of lunch as all students will try to go at the same time so crowding could be a problem. Solved by opening for lunch earlier (students with afternoon blocks take advantage of this) and closing later (morning students

take advantage of this). Thirty minutes at each end of the typical lunch period seems to resolve this issue.

- b. Cornell
 - i. Mentioned the time crunch at lunch and addressed it in the same way as Montana
 - c. Colorado
 - i. Mentioned the time crunch at lunch and addressed it in the same way as Montana
- 3) Involvement – All three schools indicated that the block program did not inhibit student involvement and, in fact, seemed to increase participation. Specific comments and observations follow below.
- a. Montana
 - i. Saw an increase in student participation as meetings of groups were easy to schedule given block schedules – after 3:30 PM open for all meetings and athletic practices.
 - b. Cornell
 - i. Programming for students is typically heavier during the first three weeks of each block. The last, shortened, week is treated as many schools treat finals week where activities focus on stress reduction (e.g. massages, late night breakfasts, very short films).
 - ii. Groups will often schedule trips (e.g. ski club) or service activities Thursday through Sunday of the end of a block. Occasionally staff will schedule a training module for student groups or staff at that time.
 - iii. Staff noticed that the block plan caused students to think in 4 week blocks rather than having a semester-long view which meant that advisers had to remind them of the needs surrounding plans for the implementation of programs later in the term (e.g. a speaker scheduled for the third block would need preparation work completed during both the 1st and 2nd blocks).
 - iv. While the block plan increased participation in organizations and offered groups less problems finding times to meet, the school discovered that meeting space might be at a premium as groups would all want to meet at the same time.
 - c. Colorado
 - i. Student participation is very strong
 - ii. Membership in organizations offers students a continuity they otherwise don't get in the block classes. Specifically, the cohort for a class stays together for 18 days and the students in that class may not have another class together for the rest of the year. Whereas, the members of the organization meet weekly for the entire year providing an anchor group for students.
 - iii. The block plan can impose some severe restrictions on availability for an extra-curricular activity if the course is extremely difficult. In these cases, the staff noticed that student leaders might have to step back from heavy involvement for the 18 days of that particular course. The culture at CC has embraced that and both members and advisers adapt and carry on. When the student leader, again, has a less difficult course, they typically will step in and resume a role with greater involvement.

- iv. End of block weeks typically see heavier scheduling (after Wednesday in that week) of outdoor education activities, day hikes and other relatively local travel and service programs.

4) Recommendations for LSSU if the OCAAT is adopted

a. Housing

- i. Maintain the current billing and assignment process.
- ii. If end of session blocks begin to be used extensively for students going abroad the housing office can address prorating providing students move out completely.
- iii. Other prorating can occur on a case by case basis but students will be allowed to live on campus if not enrolled for one block provided that they do not cause any social or behavioral issues.
- iv. Residence Life staff will need to work closely with the Retention Office and faculty to be sure that we can react quickly to any students who may be missing class as one class missed is the equivalent of a week of classes during a semester.
- v. RA duty scheduling may need greater flexibility as a student might be in a class that takes a week-long trip that will keep him/her away from campus on a normal duty night.

b. Food Service

- i. Will follow the billing process that housing uses.
- ii. Review the schedule for the daily meals to minimize lines during the week.
- iii. End of block meal schedules (4th week of a block) should retain regular scheduling until it is determined that need/usage on Thursday and Friday of the 4th week is truly reduced.
- iv. Each block week #4 must schedule dining opportunities for stress reduction (e.g. late night breakfast, coffee snack opportunities in the Galley, etc.)
- v. A potential problem may occur given the large number of student workers we employ in food service. At present, we occasionally will have a shortage of student workers at times during finals weeks, but with the anticipated increase in intensity that the block program can cause, this may prove to be more of a problem.

c. Involvement

- i. The intensity of the 4th week of a block will require that we are extremely intentional in our scheduling and that we work to ensure that we schedule stress reducing activities that don't impose heavily on study/work time in those weeks.
- ii. Find ways in which we can collaborate with groups to schedule programs that will take advantage of the long weekends between blocks. Thursday/Friday of the 4th weeks might be good times to have major programs as there are no competing activities (unless we find that students typically head home during these mini breaks).
- iii. Evaluate our current space availability as it applies to our organizations' needs. This may require that we reduce general public use of Cisler meeting rooms and work with student organizations to secure their meeting times earlier than at present.

5) Other issues/concerns

- a. As mentioned above, it will be imperative that we address absences in a proactive manner. At Colorado College the staff reported that the vast majority of faculty was very good about reporting any absences for which a student had not contacted the faculty member. In those instances the academic affairs and student affairs areas would reach out to ensure that the student was contacted and the absence addressed.

At Cornell College another observation emerged – because of the intensity of the block schedule students who really should stay in bed and be treated often go to class when they should not. To that end faculty there often will contact the health services office to get students in quickly. For LSSU, we'll need to make sure that our clinic has the ability to take students in quickly even if they do not have an appointment. Additionally we'll probably have to make sure that the residence life staff is more aware of students who are ill or are presenting symptoms that should be looked at.

- b. It is crucial that a process/time table for completing incompletes is established to afford a reasonable opportunity for students to successfully manage them. Colorado College indicated that they offered a half block term (occurred between Fall and Spring sessions) in which credits could be earned or Incompletes finished. This would require housing to look at the issues that would occur given a small population that might be spread out among many buildings (involves safety, cleaning, and energy issues).
- c. The staff at Cornell College shared an interesting observation about how the intensity of the block program prepared their students for the world of work. Specifically, the courses have a greater percentage of experiential activities than semester based courses and the need to learn quickly, resolve issues and concerns quickly, and produce work quickly all afford their students a leg up on other college students, as those skills are necessary in the work place. Employers have commented that Cornell College students are already adapted to the needs of the workplace when they start their jobs.

Presidential Directives Report

One Class At A Time

Academic Affairs Report on One Class at a Time (OCAAT) Programming

Schools in North America utilizing or considering this type of schedule:

Algoma University College, Sault Ste. Marie, ON (not implemented as of July 2013)

Colorado College, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa

Maharishi University of Management, Fairfield, Iowa

University of Montana- Western (UMW), Dillon, Montana

Tusculum College, Greeneville, Tennessee

Roseman University (formerly University of Southern Nevada), Henderson, Nevada

Keiser University, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky

Quest University, Squamish, British Columbia, Canada

Of the above mentioned schools, only the University of Montana-Western is a public university.

Models for course offerings:

Most of the above colleges utilize the model of one class (block) meeting for 18 days (3.5 weeks) with a four day break between blocks. Typically 4 blocks are taken by the student each semester. For the student to earn enough credits for graduation within the traditional timeframe of 4 academic years, it is necessary to complete 15-16 credits per semester, thus the typical block course would be 4 semester credits. Students taking developmental or additional electives would have the option to complete one of three summer blocks.

The course schedule in use at UMW is structured to utilize two 3-hr blocks (AM 8:15-11:15 and PM 12:15-3:15) for the academic courses. Electives, athletics, clubs, performance courses, and independent study courses are scheduled after 3:30 PM in the late afternoon or evening slots. Courses after 3:30 are referred to by UMW as 'stringer' courses, including all independent study, directed study, internship, practicum, and courses scheduled TBA.

Cornell College allocates a classroom to each instructor for the full instructional day to grant the maximum flexibility to mix direct instruction, group interactions, and activities in any format the instructor may desire. UMW has chosen to maximize the room utilization on campus by limiting instructional access to classrooms to either the AM or PM slots so that two instructors could utilize the same room.

There are challenges implicit in the OCAAT design. Fields like nursing require large number of hours in clinical experiences, while at the same time there are limited hospital sites which often must be shared with other institutions. Large courses, especially in the sciences, pose a particular challenge where there are multiple if not many lab sections. Preliminary modeling of courses in chemistry shows that it is possible to shift from large lecture sections to smaller lecture/lab pairings compatible with the OCAAT model. This shift would maintain current faculty loads and be consistent with the federal definition of the credit hour, but move greater responsibility for student learning away from direct faculty oversight in the lab. The goal of promoting experiential learning and student-faculty engagement may be better achieved

through greater flexibility and innovation rather than timing the hours that faculty sit in laboratories overseeing students as they write lab reports.

Areas of Concern and Opportunity

Impetus for Change and Anticipated Impact:

Schools using the OCAAT model occupy a unique and distinctive market niche, which appears to have been successful for the two institutions using this approach for the longest time. UMW's change to the OCAAT model has been paralleled by rapid institutional growth which may in part be linked as well to regional population growth. The OCAAT model is conducive to pedagogical innovation, experiential learning, a focus on student learning, flexibility and change. Not all these aspects of the OCAAT model are universally championed on the traditional university campus, but therein lies the opportunity for institutional distinction and focus.

Impact of OCAAT on student learning:

There is not a large body of empirical evidence in support of the OCAAT model, in spite of its innovative use beginning with Colorado College in the 1970s. What research does exist is convoluted in its examination of the OCAAT model by variations in the delivery system and the small sample sizes. A search of the academic literature finds only a few studies and these are 20 years old. The anecdotal and qualitative evidence however is quite strong in identifying the key advantages of the OCAAT system, and these fall into two categories.

First, from a pragmatic standpoint, there is a strong marketing advantage to institutions which can clearly define their 'brand' and institutional distinctive. This is ever more important as student enrollments decline regionally, state-wide and even nationally. Cornell College faculty have reiterated in numerous interviews the key advantage the OCAAT model brings to distinguishing their institution from the many other private liberal arts institutions in their peer group. UMW has seen a marked increase in enrollment following their adoption of the OCAAT model and their unique claim to be the ONLY public university using this model.

Secondly, the testimonials of faculty and staff who have successfully incorporated this educational model are uniformly supportive, are quick to highlight the benefits it brought to them; praising the personal intellectual and professional growth resulting from the experience. Cornell has extensive student and faculty interviews posted to their institutional web site and case studies from across the university demonstrating its success.

Perceived benefits of and obstacles impacting implementation:

Key Benefits:

- Creates immediate institutional identity and point of distinction
- Allows institutional focus on experiential learning to move forward
- Students will focus only on one class at a time instead of 4 or 5 classes.

- Faculty can utilize the block schedule to be innovative in how the course material is presented (e.g., perhaps they may take a long field trip or work on an applied project that normally could not be completed in the current model of students taking 4 or 5 classes).
- Students will not have tests or projects from multiple classes due on the same day, which will allow them to fully focus on the one course they are enrolled in.
- Facilitates study abroad by allowing students to participate in a study abroad course during a block in the semester without precluding them from taking other courses during the semester.

Challenges:

- Typically require smaller class sizes and extended faculty access to rooms
- Requires adjustment to 4-credit courses to maintain OCAAT model and reach graduation in 8 semesters of 4-blocks each.
- Requires re-examination of the definition of credit hour and our faculty load
- Requires a renewed focus on student learning outcomes and effective instructional practices
- Capstone and extended-time projects may require time outside the 18-day block and need a different scheduling pattern

Recommendations:

Further dialog is recommended, including consideration of the impact on the collective bargaining agreement. Substantial curriculum review will be necessary for programs which are not developed using the four-credit per course format. The OCAAT model offers the university the opportunity to create a unique and distinctive approach to undergraduate education.

A complete Shared-Governance based review of the OCAAT plan and its implications should be undertaken in the fall of 2013 with a target decision date for implementation at the end of fall 2013. Should the institution continue discussion, the planning for policy, financial aid, and the necessary curriculum reforms could be expected to take until December 2014, with the implementation to begin no earlier than the fall of 2015. In order for the changes to impact student recruitment it will be necessary to begin promotion as soon as the decision to make the conversion has been announced.

The change to an OCAAT model would represent a radical redefining of the university, its focus on student learning outcomes, and pedagogical innovation. The University Culture is typically unaccustomed to sweeping change and it can be expected that it will require considerable time for deliberation, review and debate to build consensus for any action other than to maintain the status-quo. However, and most importantly, higher education in the country is changing and institutions which remain static and unresponsive to political, financial and enrollment changes will face serious threats to their viability, autonomy and continued existence.

OCAAT is not the only, or necessarily the best, response to these threats but it is essential that the university community have open and frank discussions regarding our vision for the future and the steps necessary to reach that future. There is a perception that higher education as we have known it is a broken system in need of substantial reform. In a speech on July 24, 2013, President Obama, to a higher education group, vowed to unveil a plan to promote significant reform in higher education declaring that “in the coming months, I will lay out an aggressive strategy to shake up the system, tackle rising costs,

and improve value for middle-class students and their families.” (1) Nationally there is pressure to reinstate the Gainful Employment provisions, to link institutional funding to graduation rates, student retention and performance. Institutions which are to survive and thrive must be proactive and innovative.

1. <http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/07/25/obama-vows-shake-higher-education-and-find-new-ways-limit-costs#ixzz2a4bNOOre> Inside Higher Ed

Perceptions of advantages and disadvantages of OCAAT as garnered from review of institutional web sites, interviews, promotional literature, editorials, commentaries and blogs.

Perceived Advantages	Perceived Disadvantages	Notes
Gives flexibility for practice schedule for athletes, classes end by 3:30		
	Missing instructional days for travel scheduled for athletes	
	Course projects may require time greater than the 18-day structure will allow (e.g. Programming)	
	Capstone projects typically span entire semester or year	Some activities can be scheduled as stringer
	Faculty illness/absence - may miss large portion of course	Policies needed
	Student illness/absence - may miss large portion of course	Policies needed
Faculty flexibility for research and conference attendance		
	OCAAT may be harder for continuing education adults	Scheduled as stringer courses
	Skills which require practice (music, art) may need long-term practice	Scheduled as stringer courses
Great for immersion into language studies		
	Fast turn-around on faculty grading can be challenging	
Flexibility for field based and laboratory intensive		
Offers alternative to trad. Schedule		
Creates distinctive character for university		
Requires greater focus on student learning outcomes	Requires greater focus on student learning outcomes	
Students don't have to prioritize multiple course assignments/projects		
Faculty are available all day every day		
Classmate bonding enhanced by protracted period of engagement		
Retention cycle shortened, accountability and grading every 18 days		
	Every hour counts, can't skip classes	
	No time to "figure it out later" - must keep on their studies	

	Homework & reading schedules can be demanding	
Students needing to retake a course can do so within same semester	Delay in delivery of sequential content	Course repeat cycle is reduced
	Potential barrier to part-time students	Some courses offered as stringers
	Barrier to faculty with other commitments	Not all bad
	People are suspicious of change	
	Can trigger generational split in faculty	
Concentrates attention, no long term deadlines		
Flexibility to change up instructional practice within allotted time	Scheduling dedicated classrooms not possible unless 1:1 faculty:room	Reduces flexibility with AM PM only
Fewer topics in greater depth	Fewer topics in greater depth	
Efficient use of class time	Inefficient use of rooms (based on Cornell College experience)	Look at AM or PM class pattern
Facilitates excursions, off-site field, trips	Scheduling clinical experiences at limited sites may be difficult but also may offer new opportunities	
Time for in-depth study, conversation		
	Instructors are "on" for more extended time, may be more tiring	
	Space utilization challenges - every instructor needs a space	
Allows part-time students to step-out of sequence		
New instructional paradigms don't rely on instructors lecturing 42 hrs	Stand-up lectures for 42 hours are not effective in 18 days	
	Faculty very busy on weekend between courses for grading	
Instructional time is flexible		
Not every class needs to meet the same schedule		
Extended discussions, films, debates fit flexible schedule		
Every course is the most important course for that 18-day period		
	Not a lot of good research on this instructional model	
	Every class gets intensive attention for every student	
Programs can be intentionally interdisciplinary in creative scheduling		
	Requires teachers to be creative and think outside the box	

Faculty need to engage students in their own learning		
Every student becomes a dedicated student of your discipline (for 18 days)		
Students discover that there are no uninteresting subjects		
Students have high level of commitment coming to class every day	"If you miss a day you miss a week"	
	"Ineffective" utilization of classroom space, Montana fixed two class session blocks	
	Every instructor may need a dedicated room available all day	
Provides a greater mixing of students as they share outside of class times	Everyone is at meals at the same time - schedule issues	
Gives students greater flexibility for extracurricular subject		
Cornell College looking for a competitive difference set themselves apart		
	Adjuncts for single blocks (day or afternoon) may be difficult to secure	May need new model for non-tenure track
Real-world deadlines in the 18-day format, helps procrastinators adapt to real-life		
Serious illness may let you get a fresh start the next month	Injury and illness are tricky under any circumstances, personal attention solves much of it	
Flexibility to allow one course to meet 5 hrs a day for 5 days and another to meet 2 then have studio work		
Cornell College OCAAT since 1978, Colorado College since 1970		
	Concern over retention of information falls to instructor's creating powerful effective learning environments	
Classroom community built within the networking of the block schedule		
High-level of focus encourages connections between classes in all subjects		
Cornell coach: afternoon dedicated to extracurricular activities 3 pm onward		
Coaches can schedule travel events over block breaks between courses		
Being "present" in class enhanced by having only one class to think about		