

IETC Survey Results: New Calendar, New Opportunity

Where do you see the biggest opportunity to enhance teaching at RIT as a result of the calendar conversion? (n=107)

- 45: Revamp/update current course offerings
- 16: Try a significant new activity in a class
- 14: Develop new multidisciplinary course content
- 13: TEACH a course during the 3-week intersession
- 8: Take advantage of community resources (field trips, plan visits, speakers, etc.)
- 4: TAKE a course or do other professional development during the 3-week intersession

Many of you opted to provide more information on specific ideas related to these opportunities – read on to see what your colleagues are planning!

Revamp/update current course offerings

- We have a lot of courses now - revising courses and changing some emphasis will happen with conversion.
- I am looking forward to a change that brings more flexibility to the curriculum both for students and professors. I look forward to considering how fewer courses that are longer can be used to improve the delivery (and retention) of course material.
- With the limited time available between quarters, it can be easy to rely on minor tweaks to a curriculum that leave the bulk of content the same. In so many of the disciplines we teach at RIT, things change so quickly that it is easy for a curriculum as a whole to become outdated. This will be a good opportunity to be forced to go in and reevaluate everything. Here's hoping people take advantage of it rather than just do the minimum necessary to be acceptable!
- I am a pessimist about whether semesters will actually change things for the better. The chance to rethink the course structure may be a once in a generation opportunity but semesters mean fewer courses and my department will probably be pressured to produce service courses which imitate semester courses at other semester schools, with conflicting requests to imitate this or that. As a student, I had two years with January interterms and one month is the wrong length of time. The interterm is neither a quarter nor a miniconference. Will student attendance be mandatory [and who is to take it]?
- Use additional 5 weeks to add more content, e.g. reading material or focus topic.
- The semester calendar will afford me greater opportunity to enhance active learning strategies by employing a few more DVDs I've wanted to include but didn't have the time. Overall, more activities will be employed to enhance learning.
- The conversion offers a great opportunity to update and refine the multiple disciplines in my School, to create more interdisciplinary courses and electives that can go between two to three disciplines.

- I emphasize integration of information in my courses, and it's been hard to do that in 10 weeks. A semester provides better opportunities for learning instead of memorizing.
- Today's students have a totally different attitude towards their own learning and how they retain information. I would like to make some changes to the way that I teach, primarily with the projects and assignments that meet the course objectives. In particular, I would like my students take what they have learned and use that knowledge towards problem solving, and hopefully becoming much more independent with leadership potential.
- The switch to semesters allows us all the opportunity to take a good hard look at our classes and refine and reshape them. Since everything will be changing, if there are changes that you've always wanted to make, but couldn't find the time or overcome the everyday momentum, now would be the time to do it as the momentum is being slowed down for you.
- More time to do examples.
- The new curriculum will cause (lossy) compression of the course content. Therefore, we must be very careful in trimming the courses and updating them to reflect current needs AND CONSTRAINTS
- Currently, I am teaching a writing course and other humanities courses where we have to rush through a writing process that always ends up being frustrating for students. With a 15 week semester, students will be able to see how revision really works. Right now, revision is a one week affair, but in real life, revision happens over many weeks and ideas get recycled and improved. I'm looking forward to building into my courses interesting and sustained revisions strategies that lead to publishable material for students. Enough of just writing for the teacher. Let's write for the real world. 15 weeks might just let that happen!
- The longer semester will allow me to provide greater oversight and assistance with student research and writing.
- I actually feel the conversion will hurt my program as we will have to eliminate some of our classes.
- With hiring myself and one other faculty in the last two years, my department has increased its expertise in an area that was not an area of strength. Our curriculum does not yet reflect these new capabilities. The calendar conversion will provide a good opportunity to rectify that.
- All offer good opportunities, but revamping the RIT curriculum base is the most significant.
- Some of our courses could use updating. This is an opportunity to add material to the courses and streamline some of the methods used in courses.
- This is an opportunity to take a good look at our programs, gather input from our IABs and offer significantly improved programs along with the semester format.
- Course projects are only meaningful after several weeks of content delivery, and then are time-compressed. A few more weeks in the schedule means we can have a more thorough project without necessarily adding class content.
- Incorporate new texts and teach them in new ways.
- The change in the calendar system will force me to re-evaluate course materials to determine what's most important and/or essential and what isn't so important.

Material now comprising a course sequence that spans two quarters must either be "cut down" to fit into a one-semester course or augmented with new material to make up a sequence that spans two semesters. Some tough choices will have to be made along the way!

- Having extra time will give us an opportunity to add more depth to our courses that many of them are lacking today. This will help students prepare better for the jobs and for tomorrow. We can also add more content that will make our courses more competitive in terms of other universities.

Try a significant new activity in class

- Always adding things to class
- For classes that contain labs, there are actually more time for students to do open-ended projects.
- There have often been activities that I've been tempted to do in class but fear they will consume too much of our time. Perhaps with a semester system I would be able to implement these activities.
- Build in more group interaction activities
- It has always been difficult to assign research papers with multiple opportunities for revision under the quarter system, and thus it will be nice to have the luxury of an extra five weeks to spend on this kind of work.
- Every quarter with every class there is subject matter that you omit or examples that you can't use because of the time constraints of the ten week quarter. The semester's length will leave time to include that missing subject matter as well as provide examples and exercises to reinforce learning objectives that were possibly skimmed over in the quarter system time frame.
- I would like for my students to do more projects in the community. Under the quarter system, by the time they know the material well enough, any community project seems compressed and hurried. Under semesters we will have more time to develop meaningful projects.
- The longer time period in a semester will allow for development of different in-class and out-of-class activities.
- Incorporate more active learning activities and assignments
- Thinking about how to deliver writing instruction over the course of 15 rather than 10 weeks affords me a wonderful opportunity to consider alternative assignment sequences for writing tasks, alternative and more involved revision activities, and increased attention to the peer/social dimensions of writing inquiry. The conversion also affords me the opportunity to strengthen the link between the writing classes I teach and other RIT community events/conversations, and it raised the possibility to consider different cross-disciplinary configurations for writing instruction.

Develop new multidisciplinary course content

- I confess I will be very tempted to crash and relax, but if others are available, having an extended time to develop multidisciplinary projects would be cool. I once did this while on a learning community, and I heard of a very successful effort over in CIAS between photography and design.
- I would like to offer more course contents geared towards industry needs. Those week could allow for some update on different topics and find how to integrate them in course offerings.
- Makes it more likely that I can work with colleagues in other colleges to come up with some "innovative" courses. It's not the semester aspect of the conversion, just the conversion aspect of the conversion!
- The change to semesters will allow me to bring in content that is deeper and richer than what I have been able to deliver in the quarter system. I can show how a technology developed throughout history, what drove the changes, why we do what we do--none of that could be shoehorned into the courses before.
- I have been discussing creating new courses or even programs between SCOB and CIAS, and this is a time when we might be able to get something off the ground. The intersession is also a good time to add a short course, but at the moment, I'd be more interested in the new program.
- It is possible that the Physics Department will be able to offer some new elective courses, and I'd like to develop one in particular: "The Age of the World", which would explain to students how our knowledge of the age of the world (Earth, solar system, universe) has evolved over time. However, it seems likely that we will not have the resources to offer such courses. It looks like we'll barely be able to offer the required service courses
- I think the semester conversion is an opportunity to really revamp all our programs and make them fresh and inviting all over again.
- A course that combines crowdsourcing with the elements of market research.

TEACH a course during the 3-week intersession

- I like the idea of inter session courses for the many students who are unable to leave the school during that time.
- Can give students a chance to adjust their sprint schedule, if necessary. For example, fit in a prerequisite.
- I'm thinking of teaching a grammar class for deaf students or an intensive reading workshop centered around a book and a movie, for remedial language development.
- Having taught at St Olaf in Minnesota previously, I have always admired their January term in which students can take a very intensive, focused course which often meets daily for several hours or, alternatively, a course involving international travel and a similar focused study.
- This schedule will allow me to offer week-long seminars for deaf-adult learners wishing to improve their computer skills. Also I could offer special topics courses to evaluate new content for potential inclusion in the curriculum.
- I would like to look into a three week trip to the Mojave Desert, teaching students about desert ecology, geology, resources management, and desert solitude. Cal

State Fullerton maintains a field station out on ZZZYZ Road out near Baker CA (worth the trip just to see the signs).

- I really look forward to teaching those intersession courses for some extra pay.
- I have several 1 credit free electives that would fit well into a 3 week course. Special topics as it were.
- This will give people the opportunity to offer new content they can "test" in a classroom situation. It may also offer a way to introduce material that has not been fully developed yet to fill an entire semester.
- There are short seminar topics that I'd like to work on during the intersession as a way of trying out new ideas for semester long courses.
- The winter intersession is just one of the short course opportunities. The talk is for a much shorter summer session, 7-8 weeks or so including finals. I have had very good experience teaching 5 week summer courses. I think the students respond well to the immersion format. So a short semester would work as well.

Take advantage of community resources (field trips, plan visits, speakers, etc.)

- of course I will have to update the course, stretch it out, include more things. Though I'm afraid if I have to teach MORE courses per semester then there won't be as much time to do the same pace with scholarly papers.
- I am really thinking as a provider of these Community resources/visits. As the librarian for the CLA, I am hoping that faculty will take this opportunity to include information literacy/library class instruction into their revamped classes. Giving students an opportunity to learn about specific resources for their papers/projects/research.
- I believe that the conversion will help open up student schedules in order to include more hands on learning opportunities.
- This will give me the opportunity to show more movies, clips, take students into Rochester on tours, etc.
- Semester calendar is more compatible with my research collaborators, allowing for research visits both during the winter and the summer breaks.

TAKE a course or do other professional development during the 3-week intersession

- The space between semesters will provide for catch up on prof development.
- Offer refresher courses or mini class on topics for RIT faculty/staff that pertains to an event like graduation, Imagine RIT, Frozen 4

Other responses

- The switch to semesters will allow faculty to take the opportunity to integrate study skills techniques, strategies, and best practices into their curriculums and syllabi. By adding and enhancing to their courses/syllabi, students will have a stronger chance to be organized around their academics, have a better chance of

participating in class, and anticipate busy times throughout the semester. This will also allow for the recognition and use of support services. A poster session at FITL will address the integration of study skills into curriculum and syllabi.

- The biggest advantage for my teaching will be in the ability to slow down the course content material and cover the topics at a more leisurely pace. This will hopefully give students more opportunity for reflection and deepen their thinking about the topics.
- I have been trying to incorporate more writing assignments into my science courses, including having drafts of lab reports so that students have the chance to rewrite and edit. With 15 weeks, I should be able to do this more effectively!!
- I see this as a mid academic year opportunity to have students doing full-time research for 4 weeks. It will additionally give us extra time to write papers and grants uninterrupted by coursework.
- The change to semesters, if done right, will allow a more thoughtful treatment of material. The quarter system is much too rushed. As a result, the proper frame of mind necessary for contemplation, or for going deeper into one thing, rather than more shallowly into several things, is lacking.