1963

UA3/3/1 Class Scheduling: An Analysis of the Problem and a Possible Solution

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CLASS SCHEDULING
AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM AND A POSSIBLE SOLUTION

The Problem.-- This report has as its subject the general area of class scheduling, a topic of concern to most every college today. For example, the trimester system is one of the proffered solutions to the problem of utilization and class scheduling. Although the trimester plan may not be adaptable to Western's situation, it along with other scheduling schemes needs to be continuously studied.

Western faces a number of serious problems in regard to class scheduling which should be analyzed and solved, if possible, prior to the opening of the fall semester 1963. Some of these problems are as follows:

1. the decentralization of instructional facilities on the campus with the advent of the academic-athletic building foretells difficulties with the present ten minute break between classes;

2. the implementation of the eight-week student teaching bloc with its scheduling problems;

3. the desirability of grouping college students into ability groups for certain types of courses and the accompanying need for an honors program for superior students;

4. the sizable number of students who by mid-term each semester have dropped courses and then have a reduced course load of ten to twelve hours;

5. the significant percentage of freshmen and sophomores who by mid-term are merely spectators in two or more classes because they have already failed and have little chance of salvaging anything from the course; and

6. the lame-duck session of four weeks which follows the lengthy Christmas holidays during the first semester.

A Possible Solution.-- The plan of class scheduling outlined below could be considered to be rather radical but it does present a possible solution to all of the problems listed above. For lack of a better term it is being termed -- "The Half-Semester Schedule".

The features of this schedule are summarized as follows:

1. Each semester would be divided into two eight-week half-semesters.

2. Registration would be held as at present with the student registering for two half-semesters at one time.

3. A student would register for from two to three courses per half-
semester or for not more than ten hours per half-semester.

(4) A teacher would carry six hours for one half-semester and nine hours for the other, giving him a 15-hour load for the semester.

(5) Three-hour courses would run for eight weeks at the end of which a final test and grade would be given. The student would then proceed to take the classes for which he enrolled for the second half-semester.

(6) Four and five-hour courses would probably be divided into two, two-hour courses or one, two-hour and one, three-hour course; however, a final grade would be given for each course thereby preventing a student from losing credit if he passed the first half but failed the second.

(7) In continuation courses such as chemistry, physics, mathematics, accounting, etc., all of the failing students would drop the course at mid-term and either start over, or wait until the next semester to re-enroll. This would permit the instructor to accelerate the passing students during the second half-semester.

(8) A drop-and-add period would be designated at the end of the first half-semester to enable adjustments in schedule. Beginning students would also be permitted to enroll at these mid-points.

(9) Most classes (i.e. three-hour classes) would meet every day for one-hour periods. Fifteen minute breaks between classes would be scheduled.

Advantages of a Half-Semester Schedule:

(1) This type of schedule would benefit both the weak and the strong student in that the weak student could start over in classes failed and the strong student could be accelerated.

(2) The regular daily class meetings should help freshmen make the transition from high school to college and should aid in budgeting time.

(3) Student class schedules should be easier to arrange since only two or three classes would need to be fitted into the schedule as opposed to five or six on the full-semester plan. Fewer class conflicts should result from this scheduling plan.

(4) The plan is ideal from the standpoint of scheduling student teaching.

(5) Classrooms would be utilized better than at present. Unlike the summer session the half-semester schedule would run throughout the day.
(6) Since faculty would teach the equivalent of 18 hours for half of the semester teaching resources could be concentrated at the heaviest half of the semester. When heavy enrollment necessitated it instructors could teach nine hours both half-semesters the first semester and be given only six each half of the second semester.

(7) The schedule facilitates the lengthening of the break between classes.

(8) The possibilities for counseling under this plan are much greater than at present. Mistakes in counseling made at the beginning of the semester can be corrected at mid-term.

(9) The second half-semester during the first semester would be divided equally with four weeks before Christmas and four after thereby mitigating somewhat the problem of the lame-duck post-Christmas season.

(10) The College could, through enrollment analysis, grant faculty leaves for any half-semester permitting the teacher concerned to teach in the summer session to compensate for time missed. In some cases this could be economical if a professor were needed in the summer and if he could be released in the spring without being replaced.

(11) By adding a four-week quarter-semester in August, the College could achieve almost 100% utilization of facilities. With the probability that all of our faculty will not be used in the summer session, this possibility should be considered.

(12) The half-semester plan would encourage concentrated study on a few subjects rather than prolonged study of a number. The former is advocated by some leading educators.

(13) The plan would facilitate an honors program by permitting great acceleration within a particular subject for the gifted. For example, a gifted math student could be placed in a special math 111 and 112 honors program and thereby become prepared to take calculus as a second semester freshman. Two years of any subject could be given in one year for the gifted; however, this may or may not be desirable.

(14) The final exam period would be divided into two, two-day periods. The shorter exam period and fewer exams might enable the student to do better.
Disadvantages of a Half-Semester Schedule:

(1) The major disadvantage would probably be the concentration of subject matter into the eight weeks. Some teachers will contend that they cannot teach their subject adequately nor require the necessary reading in such a short time. This, however, could be said of the summer session also.

(2) Another disadvantage would probably be the administration of the system. All of the problems in this regard cannot be foreseen here. The processing of final grades and the drop and add period at mid-term would present problems.

(3) It can be argued that this schedule would encourage students to give up at mid-term rather than continue in a subject and finally pull it through. This is valid in some subjects, but in others it is impossible to catch up since the subject is built up from the beginning and everything new learned is dependent on what has been learned, i.e., accounting, mathematics, physics, chemistry, etc.

(4) Students who miss school because of illness would get behind twice as fast as under the present plan.
Feature of Half-Semester Schedule.

I. Calendar -

Next year's calendar would be as follows:

1963 College Calendar 1964

First Semester

Half-Semester I

1. ( September 23, Monday . . . . . . . Classes Begin
2. 8 Weeks ( November 14, 15, Thursday & Friday . . Final Exams
3. ( November 15, Friday . . . . . . Half-Semester I Ends

Half-Semester II

1. ( November 18, Monday . . . . . . Classes Begin
2. ( November 27, Wednesday - 12:00 noon . . Thanksgiving
3. 4 Weeks ( Holidays begin
4. ( December 2, Monday . . . . . . Classes Resume
5. ( December 18, Wednesday - 12:00 noon . . Christmas
6. ( Holidays begin

4 Weeks ( January 2, 1964 - Thursday - 8:00 . . Classes Resume
2. ( January 23, 24, Thursday & Friday . . Final Exams
3. ( January 24, Friday . . . . . . . Semester Ends

Second Semester

Half-Semester III

1. ( February 5-6, Wednesday & Thursday . . Registration
2. 8 Weeks ( February 7, Friday . . . . . . Classes Begin
3. ( April 2-3 - Thursday and Friday . . Final Exams
4. ( April 3, Friday . . . . . . . Half-Semester III Ends

April 5-13 . . . . . . . Spring Vacation and K. E. A.

Half-Semester IV

1. ( April 13, Monday . . . . . . . Classes Begin
2. 8 Weeks ( June 4, 5 - Thursday and Friday . . Final Exams
3. ( June 5, Friday . . . . . . . Commencement
II. Class Schedule - 15 minute class breaks - 60 minute classes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan I</th>
<th>Plan II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes 1 - 7:45 - 8:45</td>
<td>Classes 1 - 8:00 - 9:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 9:00 - 10:00</td>
<td>2 - 9:15 - 10:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch (3 - 10:15 - 11:15</td>
<td>Lunch (3 - 10:30 - 11:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period (4 - 11:30 - 12:30</td>
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<td>5 - 12:45 - 1:45</td>
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<td>6 - 2:00 - 3:00</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 - 3:15 - 4:15</td>
<td>7 - 3:30 - 4:30</td>
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NOTICE that in both scheduling plans three periods overlap what could be considered the lunch period. A student should have no difficulty getting lunch unless he has classes all three periods.

III. Typical Student Schedules. (Actual cases taken from this year's student schedule files.)

These schedules illustrate the ease with which a schedule could be made on the half-semester plan.
### Hoskins, Carolyn Lee Brumback
#### Sophomore

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Call No.</th>
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<th>Course Title</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
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<th>Th</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>S</th>
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<th>Instructor</th>
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<td>9:00</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>103</td>
<td>Childrens Lit.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10:30</td>
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<td>Psy.</td>
<td>903</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>Intro. to Psy.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>11:45</td>
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#### Half-Semester

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<td>811</td>
<td>Safety &amp; First Aid</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Elem. Arith.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12:45</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Art Survey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>x</td>
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### Williams, Jonathan Bricker
#### Freshman

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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lab IV</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Freshman Eng.</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Beg. Spanish</td>
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#### Half-Semester

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<td>3</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Prin. of Soc.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7:45</td>
<td>x</td>
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### Scott, Sylvia Mae
#### Freshman

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<th>F</th>
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<td>101</td>
<td>U. S. Hist. to 1865</td>
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<td>Phy. Hygiene</td>
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#### Half-Semester

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<tr>
<td>360</td>
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<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
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