

Academic Programs and Planning (APP) Committee Feedback and Response to Winter (January) or J-Term Pilot Proposal

The AP&P committee reviewed the **Winter (January) or J-Term Pilot** proposal on **September 19, 2024**, and provided the following suggestions and comments:

General Comment: Overall, committee members were generally supportive of a pilot project to explore offering a Winter session, noting that many students express interest in such a program. Members noted that many students express their interest in taking courses in a winter session for various reasons, including speeding up completion of the degree, to lessen the courseload burden in the regular semesters and to repeat courses they have attempted unsuccessfully. It was also observed that since many of our peer institutions offer winter session(s), we would be at a competitive disadvantage if we do not.

However, the committee raised several concerns and questions, as outlined below:

Committee Suggestion/Clarification	Author Response
FAFSA/Financial Aid eligibility	<p>Provided the student is enrolled full-time for the Spring, the student will be eligible for financial aid. Winter sessions draw on the student eligibility for Spring aid, it is not considered a separate aid term.</p> <p>A Winter Session is considered part of the spring term. Anticipated Spring aid can be used to assist with securing Winter Session classes. Students with enough anticipated aid posted for Spring 2024 to cover their entire balance for the Spring semester and the Winter Session will not be required to make payment.</p> <p>Students will need to plan accordingly for purchasing textbooks for the Winter Session.</p>
Consider Open Educational Resources (OER)	Students may not have aid disbursed and paying for textbooks and resources may be a challenge.
<p>If a faculty member already has overload in fall and spring, can they still take on more credits in winter?</p> <p>Along same lines, will students be capped at 20 credits between winter and spring?</p>	

<p>The potential funds gained from non-Stockton students (2.b.i) could be beneficial. We currently send our students to community colleges over break to “catch up” on credits and/or pre-requisite courses needed before Spring term. Makes sense to keep the money and support here plus attract outside students.</p>	
<p>Agree with Senate concern for a student taking two winter courses. Given the “seat” hours needed for a 4 credit course, is it logistically possible to take more than one within a four (five) week period?</p>	
<p>It would be helpful to hear from each school which courses they believe would be feasible to offer in this winter session. In addition, polling faculty to get a sense of whether faculty are willing to teach during these winter sessions would be helpful to know before moving forward with a pilot (because if faculty are not interested in teaching during these sessions, then all of these discussions could be futile).</p> <p>Furthermore, it would be helpful to know the rationale for why a course should be offered in the winter session because there could be several reasons that need to be considered prior to attaching policies to these courses (policies such as who can take these courses, how many courses will students be limited to during these sessions, etc...).</p> <p>For example, are students taking an algebra course in the winter session to “catch up” in their math sequence? Are students that failed Quantitative Reasoning trying to retake the course to “catch up” in their math sequence? Or perhaps students want to try to take a G course during the winter session to lighten their load in the spring for when they have to take a science class (such as chemistry, biology, or physics). Or perhaps students are attempting to graduate in less than 4 years? All of these possible reasons may change our perspective of what the policies regarding these winter sessions should be, as well as change our perception of what kinds of students (e.g., high-achievers, repeaters, etc...) would be trying to complete these courses.</p>	

<p>The time demand seems unrealistic for students, at least in a math course. For example Rowan offers a 3-credit calculus in the winter session and they meet for 4.5 hours per day 5 days per week:</p> <p>Calculus: Techniques and Applications</p> <p>Associated Term: Winter 2024 Levels: Undergraduate Attributes: Physical Presence Required, Cat 0-499</p> <p>Main Campus Lecture Schedule Type Traditional Instructional Method 3.000 Credits View Catalog Entry</p> <p><i>Scheduled Meeting Times</i></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Type</th> <th>Time</th> <th>Days</th> <th>Where</th> <th>Date Range</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Class</td> <td>10:00 am - 2:30 pm</td> <td>MTWRF</td> <td>Robinson Hall 310</td> <td>01/02/2024 - 01/12/2024</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>If the goal is to help students catch up in algebra for their math sequence, would we be offering courses 5 days per week for more than 4.5 hours per day? (Since we have 4 credit courses at Stockton). This is a huge time demand for students.</p>	Type	Time	Days	Where	Date Range	Class	10:00 am - 2:30 pm	MTWRF	Robinson Hall 310	01/02/2024 - 01/12/2024	
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<p>A four-week session (with intervening winter holiday) may be too short a timeframe for adequate instruction and student learning.</p> <p><i>Notes below from Senate Executive Committee</i> <i>The 5 week term is really a 4 week term because the campus is closed Dec 25-Jan1. So, no classrooms, and no support, because everyone is off.</i></p> <p><i>The remaining 4 weeks, if we just look at weekdays contain 17 days. So, to schedule classroom minutes in 17 days, each class would need to meet for 177 minutes per day, 5 days a week....and that is just in-class hours. I know that hybrid and online courses could be taught, but almost 3 hours of instruction would need to be provided every single day on top of additional out of classroom time.</i></p>											

<p>The offering could be based on the discipline and the type of the course as the time and modality might not be a good match for every course to be taught in a short Winter session.</p>	
<p>A two-week session perceived as inadequate for proper instruction, especially for a 4-credit course and likely disapproved by accreditation bodies like the AACSB for the School of Business.</p>	
<p>Only one session from the end of the Fall semester to the beginning of the Spring Semester can be offered.</p> <p>Possibly, an extended session of 8 or so weeks, overlapping with either the Fall or the Spring semester, could be considered, including beginning with Saturday only classes for a few weeks in November.</p>	
<p>Concern was expressed that students less prepared for the rigors of short sessions would enroll in courses in the session, perhaps to repeat courses they were unsuccessful in during the regular session, and flounder. In effect, then, the Winter session may set them up for failure.</p>	
<p>A limit should be placed on the number of credits a student can register for in the winter session-confined to 4-8 credits, perhaps linked to GPA achieved, the decision taken at the program-level.</p>	
<p>It may be required that students work closely with their preceptors and take courses in the Winter session with their approval.</p>	
<p>Only two-credit courses could be offered, perhaps three-credit courses during the winter session. Possibility of internship courses or study-tours, etc.</p>	
<p>More research needs to be done to explore best practice in Winter session offerings by peer institutions including the duration of the session(s), the type of courses offered (introductory, advanced, graduate, classroom-based, lab-based, etc.) and modality (face-to-face, online, hybrid etc.).</p>	

<p>The week the university is closed between Christmas and Thanksgiving, students would not be able to get institutional support, including IT tech support, access to library resources, advising, etc.</p>	
<p>There should be systematic student surveys to gauge their interest in taking courses and of faculty to gauge their interest in offering courses in the Winter session.</p>	
<p>Each school should be encouraged to develop a list of potential course offerings with clear justifications for how these courses could be effectively delivered during the session.</p>	