

# Research Reports

Institutional Assessment  
Boise State University

## **Summary of Results from the Faculty Calendar Survey Spring, 2004**

**Research Report 2004-01**

**Marcia J. Belcheir, Ph.D.**

**Coordinator, Office of Institutional Assessment**

---

### **Background**

State Board policy mandates that “each semester indicated in the Official Calendar of an institution will consist of seventeen (17) weeks with at least fifteen (15) full weeks or seventy-five (75) instructional days of class work or its equivalent effort.” At Boise State, we have been trying to meet both the 75-day rule and the 15-week rule. The result has been 76 teaching days (plus four exam days) for the fall of 2003 and 78 teaching days (plus four exam days) for the spring of 2004. Because of the number of Monday holidays in the spring, faculty taught for 14 Mondays and 16 Tuesdays-Fridays during the Spring of 2004.

This interpretation of policy is generally more stringent than that pursued by our sister institutions in Idaho, especially the University of Idaho. The table below displays the number of teaching and exam days for Boise State, the University of Idaho, and Idaho State University for this academic year.

Institution:	Fall 2003			Spring 2004		
	Teaching	Exams	Total Days	Teaching	Exams	Total Days
BSU	76	4	80	78	4	82
U of I	74	5	79	76	5	81
ISU	74	5	79	78	5	83

The Faculty Senate therefore developed a survey to assess faculty opinions on the current calendar and possible ways to restructure it. The survey was carried out by the Office of Institutional Assessment using web-based administration and e-mails to request faculty response to the survey.

### **Who Responded**

A series of two e-mails were sent to 550 full-time and 209 part-time faculty, requesting their participation in the survey. The survey site was visited by 427 people, while 357 respondents completed the entire survey. With only 53 respondents identifying themselves as adjunct faculty, we can estimate that about 55% of full-time and 25% of adjunct faculty completed the survey. The largest percentage of faculty (42.5%) were from the College of Arts and Sciences. Slightly more than half identified themselves as either full professors (27%) or associate professors (25.5%). Most respondents (86%) indicated that they were working on scholarly or creative development projects in addition to teaching their classes.

Slightly more than 75% of the respondents felt that the number of days for faculty development and/or for tenure and promotion preparation needed to be increased.

### **Reactions to the Current Calendar and Proposed Alternatives**

Bringing the calendar into compliance was important or very important to 60% of the faculty responding. Only 11% thought it was not important.

One proposal for bringing the calendar into compliance was to have one Monday class day held on a Tuesday or Thursday. About two-thirds of faculty indicated that they would be willing to do this. However, comments showed that many faculty who agreed that they would try it were still unsure about how it would actually work. As one faculty member wrote: *“It sounds like a good idea, but is it feasible? We have 3-4 hour labs on Tuesday and Thursday, often taught by the same people that teach lecture on Monday, so scheduling may not work out.”* The one-third who were opposed to this approach cited reasons such as chaos in scheduling, lack of available rooms, and student work schedules as reasons for their opposition.

Another proposal was that semesters could begin on another day of the week instead of Monday. With 91.5% of the respondents in favor, this was a very popular approach. As one faculty member noted, *“I think this is absolutely the best answer. Faculty meetings should be held on Monday and Tuesday, with classes starting on Wednesday or Thursday.”* Another noted: *“I’ve only attended or worked at universities that begin mid-week; BSU’s schedule was a surprise to me.”*

Faculty were also asked where they would like to add days to their break if the number of teaching days were reduced. Most (73.5%) preferred more days as part of the winter break.