

**University of Washington**  
**Faculty Council on Teaching & Learning**

**Summary of discussion of Summer Quarter under ABB**  
**Faculty Council on Teaching & Learning (FCTL)**

The council discussed issues and other impacts relating to administering UW's summer quarter under Activity-based Budgeting (ABB) as part of its charge from the ABB Review Committee and the Senate Committee on Planning and Budgeting (SCPB).

A number of arguments were identified in favor of and against changing Summer Quarter from the present self-supporting model under PCE management to a "regular" quarter equivalent to all others under the ABB funding model.

Arguments in favor of change:

- ABB increases the efficiency of the UW's summer offerings. Currently, we offer a large number of low-enrollment courses.
- Regularizing summer quarter under ABB might help remedy the current learning spaces problem (not enough medium-size to large classrooms for undergraduate instruction) by spreading classroom requirements through the full calendar year.
- Summer quarter at UW is very popular with students from other universities in the US and around the world, and increased offerings might enhance this attraction (and the UW "brand"). However, recently UW is seeing fewer "special" students and more regularly-enrolled UW students taking advantage of the summer quarter.
- Having two different financial operating models (fee-based and ABB) for different quarters causes tension for some departments. For example, course cancellation and reassignment policies in some departments differ between summer and regular quarters.
- ABB funding returns might provide additional resources for departments, although not all schools and colleges at UW provide direct returns to the departments generating enrollment.

Arguments in favor of no change:

- Currently, the Provost's Office funds summer quarter and takes on the risk of low-enrollment courses. Summer thus allows departments to utilize successful outside lecturers and pilot new courses or subject material; they can experiment without being accountable to Deans for low enrollment, because ABB does not apply during summer quarter.
- Faculty research productivity may decline, and travel to summer conferences would be an issue for some.
- Often, advanced courses are not offered in summer because faculty comfortable teaching them are not available or not willing to teach. Support staff are typically free to take vacation time throughout summer and might resent being forced to take their vacations in the limited inter-quarter break, – which overlaps the start of the K12 school year.
- Under the current "special" status, there are usually no committee or administrative work requirements for faculty during the summer; this is liberating for faculty who teach in summer, allowing them to focus solely on their teaching duties.

- Currently, FTE fractions during summer quarter are lower than regular quarters for teaching faculty, and thus pay is lower for summer quarter. Unless rates would be normalized in summer, tenured faculty will need other incentives to do their teaching in the summer. In either case, costs will increase.
- Summer provides additional salary for faculty who are teaching. Regularizing the quarter might take away that additional income.
- Many students need summer job income (or summer intern/research experience opportunities).
- Summer quarter does not count in the number of consecutive quarters students are allowed for working toward their degree; altering the system to include summer quarter as a “regular” quarter could be detrimental to students’ ability to meet the requirement to graduate within a specified number of quarters.
- If summer term became a regular quarter, students could take other quarters off, but jobs and summer programs might not be available. U-district housing tends to be cheaper in summer also.
- Year-round university operation would be exhausting for faculty and students. Time off in summer provides opportunities for thinking and reflection – what we tell people is the essence of higher education! – and important for students and faculty alike. We will ask our student representatives to help us get student perspectives (perhaps by polls) on this issue.
- In summer, some intermediate classes are staffed with graduate TAs; if the summer were regularized and instructors replaced with regular faculty, grad students might no longer have the opportunity to earn summer salary and gain teaching experience in non-intro courses.
- Making summer a regular quarter may reduce available teaching and learning support services for budgetary reasons. For example, most library hours are shortened in the summer, and the Libraries may have difficulty fully supporting students who need library services. Similarly, offering advanced lab courses would create additional costs as the courses need specialist support staff.
- Labs and other special instructional facilities may need maintenance and upgrades that would be disruptive during the regular academic year, and is now typically done during summer.

In retrospect, the discussion seems to have yielded more negative than positive items for our list. In terms of teaching and learning impacts, a majority of the council feel no need for a change.

However, one important point was, what is the administration’s driving motivation to once again consider a change? FCTL members (and faculty in general) do not have a clear idea from previous reports on the topic. What specifically is thought to be broken? Then, if necessary, we can reconsider whether repairs might cause more pain than relief.