

Editor's Introduction

J. Terry Iversen

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

The interest in Summer Session extends beyond those who administer it. Faculty, especially those who teach summer courses regularly, can provide important insights into the efficacy of the summer term. Faculty authored two articles in this volume about their summer teaching experiences. One, authored by Alicia Crowe, Eunsook Hyun, and Mark Kretovics of Kent State University illustrates their efforts “to reconcile the differences between regular semester courses and compressed summer courses.” Specifically, they examine both academic rigor and learning outcomes by analyzing their summer teaching experiences.

The second article is by faculty member Lucas Nyenty Arrey of Capital University who presents a comparative study of summer learning by examining the experiences of students enrolled in organic chemistry during the summer and those enrolled in the same course in a semester/quarter term. In the study, Arrey focuses on student learning in three contexts: the effectiveness of the intensive course format; student motivation to learn; and, the mastery of course content.

A persistent challenge to summer session administrators over time has been to increase revenue and reduce costs while enhancing, or at least maintaining, the academic quality of the summer experience. Four articles address these issues. In her article, Diana Demetrulias of California State University, Stanislaus, provides a glimpse into the

•• *Editor's Introduction* ••

impact of new policies initiated by the State of California to increase significantly summer session enrollment while saving “billions of dollars.” Demetrulias presents an analysis of “the process and outcomes of the conversion of summer term from self-supported to state-supported year-round operations (YRO) as experienced by the California State University.”

Increasing summer session enrollment is a time-honored method of increasing revenue. To this end, Thomas Kowalik of Binghamton University, State University of New York, presents his study of the development of a universal survey instrument to determine what motivates students to attend a summer session at a particular institution of higher education. Kowalik suggests that the value of such an instrument is three-fold: (1) colleges and universities can use the information in the course selection process for summer to meet student demand; (2) institutions will have a better understanding of the programs and services required by summer students; and (3) summer session revenue will increase for institutions utilizing survey data in their marketing initiatives.

Although tuition for regular summer session credit courses is the principle revenue stream on most campuses, it is not the only one. Erin Bailey Dev of Lewis & Clark College sets forth in her article methods by which institutions can benefit financially from summer programs, such as camps, conferences, and special events that make good use of “underutilized resources and excess facilities capacity.” Dev proposes methods that institutions can use to determine the probable success of special summer programs that may be considered. Her objective is to demonstrate how summer programs, other than regular courses, can generate significant income at a time when traditional funding of higher education is on the decline.

While many colleges and universities are moving away from printed class schedules in favor of online versions, Barbara Gotshall, Colorado State University, explains in her article how and why her institution conducted an evaluation of the use of the printed class schedule before discontinuing hard copies for Summer Session. A survey of Colorado State undergraduates indicated that many still preferred to use the hardcopy, while a majority indicated a preference for the online schedule. Gotshall explains that her institution’s experience shows that a middle ground may be best, i.e. have the summer class schedule on line, but also have some printed copies available. A decision to move exclusively to an online version may jeopardize the user-friendly Summer Session environment prevalent at many institutions.

In his essay, David Schejbal of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign examines possible correlations between U.S. economic fluc-

••J. Terry Iversen ••

tuations and university summer session enrollments. Enrollment data from 28 institutions (20 public and 8 private) for the period of 1970 to 2002 are correlated with economic data for the same years. This study is important to Summer Session administrators because of the prospects of predicting the ebb and flow of summer enrollments, which affects all aspects of planning and ultimately the bottom line. While Schejbal notes that the results of his study are inconclusive, they represent an important step to further research on this subject.

Research for three articles in this volume (Demetrulias, Kowalik, and Schejbal) received grant support from the Research Consortium for the Theresa Neil Memorial Research Fund. The Fund was established by and is funded by the Association of University Summer Sessions, North American Association of Summer Sessions, North Central Conference on Summer Schools, and the Western Association of Summer Session Administrators. For more information about the Fund, faculty and administrators interested in researching summer session issues may contact the Research Consortium Chair, Jack K. Johnson, Director of Evening Classes and Summer Session, University of Minnesota, 170 Wesbrook Hall, 77 Pleasant Street SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455. (E-mail: jjohnso1@cce.umn.edu). Telephone: 612-624-8595. Prospective applicants should feel free to contact Johnson if they have questions or wish to discuss their ideas.