# 2010 Action Project

**Title:** Switch to Semesters (S2S)/ Phase Two  
**Version:** 1  
**Institution:** Columbus State Community College  
**Status:** Active  
**Submitted:** 2010-12-14  
**Category:** 1-Helping Students Learn

## Timeline

- Planned project kickoff date: 2010-10-12  
- Target completion date: 2011-10-12  
- Actual completion date: 

## Project Detail

### Project Goal

Describe this Action Project's goal in 100 words or fewer

*The Switch to Semesters Project/Phase Two* is a top tier/multi-year Cabinet/President level initiative aimed at moving Columbus State Community College toward using a semester calendar of programs/courses starting in Autumn semester 2012. This multi-year project focuses on preparing people, processes, and technology across the college to be ready for the switch to semesters. Phase Two aims to systematically and rigorously manage impacts across the many stakeholders to drive toward defined project success.

### Reasons For Project

Describe briefly your institution's reasons for taking on this Action Project now—why the project and its goals are high among your current priorities

A primary goal of the University System of Ohio (USO) is to increase the level of educational attainment throughout the state. To support this goal and to improve transferability options, increase opportunities for multi-campus partnerships, and increase efficiencies across Ohio institutions, Chancellor Fingerhut’s Strategic Plan for the University System of Ohio recommended the use of a common calendar. To support the goal of a common calendar, the Strategic Plan strongly encouraged institutions of higher education currently operating on a quarter system to convert to a semester system. Additionally, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) recognized the need to create a comprehensive community college network to facilitate the integration of courses and programs among the state’s community colleges. This network would help to identify spending efficiencies and productivity improvements and to implement them statewide.

Giving significant consideration to this academic model and responding to the USO Strategic Plan objectives, the Columbus State Community College Board of Trustees during the May 2009 meeting approved the transition from quarters to semesters by Autumn 2012. Currently ten of the twenty-three Ohio community colleges are on the semester calendar. Each semester is typically 16 weeks long. The remaining thirteen community colleges will be
converting to the semester calendar with a proposed launch date of Autumn 2012. Recognizing the enormity of this undertaking the OACC is supporting the effort by creating a statewide committee structure that will provide direction and coordination while preserving individual programs and institutional autonomy.

The switch to semesters decision is founded on compelling and proven benefits such as increased student transfer and mobility, system-wide efficiencies and cost savings, integration of all institutions into the University System of Ohio, more time for in-depth exploration of topics, improved access to summer jobs/internships, etc. Additionally, the S2S project also will promote some additional benefits such as the opportunity to re-examine and enhance curriculum, remove outdated curriculum, revisit longstanding policies, etc.

Organizational Areas Affected
List the organizational areas -- institutional departments, programs, divisions, or units -- most affected by or involved in this Action Project

The scope of this S2S project includes all business and student functions across the college impacted by the switch to semesters. Also included in scope are the update and improvement efforts around programs and curriculum. The college has also chosen to use this conversion as an opportunity to make qualitative and “value-added” academic and operational improvements in concert with critical quantitative conversion requirements to enhance a student’s educational experience. The following are a few examples:

- Comprehensive review and update of academic programs will include the most relevant courses moving forward into semesters
- All academic programs are adding a student success course by Autumn 2012.
- All programs and courses will be reviewed and, when appropriate, updated and improved using the established college guidelines and curricular change processes.
- All Transfer Assurance Guide (TAG) courses will be submitted to the Board of Regents for review and approval.
- The semester conversion will cause more students to document and discuss their plans of study with faculty or advisors.
- The College will revisit the late and re-registration policies to increase enrollment accuracy and reduce un-registered students attending classes.
- The College will modify the registration timeline to allow more planning time for students hence increasing student success.
- Improved user testing approaches and documentation will be developed for key enterprise/student systems which will also benefit future cross-campus projects.
- The Switch to Semesters process provides the opportunity to review key policies and procedures to enhance student success.

Key Organizational Process(es)
Name and describe briefly the key organizational process(es) that you expect this Action Project to change or improve

The governance structure established for this CSCC S2S project was generally modeled after the OACC Common Calendar subcommittees established. Many colleges across the state are
adopting similar structures. There is an overall governing Steering Committee with five interdependent subcommittees reporting up to the Steering Committee. All the co-chairs of the subcommittees also sit on the Steering Committee in addition to other leaders who are representative across the major stakeholder groups. The subcommittees include Curriculum, Enrollment and Student Services, College Operations, Information Technology and Communications.

The Steering Committee will also look to other CSCC governing bodies as needed for guidance, issue resolution and policy approval.

- **Steering Committee and Subcommittees** The established steering and subcommittee structures provide overall guidance and direction for the project. These groups are responsible for key decisions, full academic calendar, policy change recommendations, and project-wide issue resolution. The members of the Steering and Subcommittees serve on a part time basis and meet approximately every two weeks. Each subcommittee has a defined scope of responsibility.

- **Core Implementation Team** The core implementation team is a small group (people) of dedicated resources focused on detailed project/resource planning, implementation delivery, and identifying issues/risks. Members of the core implementation team generally look to their aligned subcommittees for guidance and direction as needed.

- **Supporting Resources** There are many supporting resources and personnel which need to be involved in the project. These are part time roles and serve to support the core implementation team at their direction. These people represent key subject matter knowledge across the many aspects of the College that are impacted by the switch to semesters.

- **Repeatable organizational model** This organizational and governance structure should not be viewed as a one-time, special circumstance. Rather, this project serves as the catalyst for this repeatable organizational model for future top tier College wide projects.

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**Project Time Frame Rationale**

*Explain the rationale for the length of time planned for this Action Project (from kickoff to target completion)*

The total time frame of the project is a little under three years dating from the original meeting of the Steering Committee (November 2009) until the beginning of our first Autumn Semester in August 2012. This time frame was based on research into the project plans of similar schools that have undergone semester conversion and an analysis of the tasks needed across the college to accomplish a successful conversion. During Autumn 2009, the Steering Committee engaged in milestone driven work planning to develop a timeline for the various stages of conversion, and we created a project plan which roughly corresponds to the subcommittee structure and contains detailed work plans for each area. The project plan is a living document and we have continued to update it and add detail over the past year.
Curriculum revision was a major portion of the conversion work and the project plan for curriculum was created to allow conversion to happen in stages. The development of curriculum supports the beginning of detailed advising, which we scheduled to begin slightly more than one year before the actual conversion. This was a best practice which other colleges who have undergone conversion shared with us.

The table below shows the overall work for curriculum, which includes the work of the faculty in converting courses and programs as well as the work of Curriculum Management in building the new curriculum into our student information systems:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Phase 1 (April - December 2010)</th>
<th>Phase 2 (January - September 2011)</th>
<th>Phase 3 (September 2011 - June 2012)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts and Sciences Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Develop crosswalk tables</td>
<td>Full course conversion for state transfer programs (OTM, TAG’s)</td>
<td>Full course conversion for all remaining courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Convert degree structure (plans of study)</td>
<td>Approval of OTM and TAG courses through division curriculum committees (April 2011)</td>
<td>Development/revision of instructional materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approval of crosswalks and degree plans through division curriculum committees</td>
<td>Submission to OBOR for state transfer programs</td>
<td>Training of faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Career and Technical Faculty</strong></td>
<td>Convert degree structure (plans of study)</td>
<td>Full course conversion for state transfer programs (TAG’s, CTAG’s)</td>
<td>Conversion of distance learning courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop crosswalk tables</td>
<td>Approval of OTM and TAG courses through division curriculum committees (April 2011)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conversion of distance learning courses</td>
<td>Training of faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum Management</strong></td>
<td>Testing – degree audit and Colleague systems</td>
<td>DARS encoding</td>
<td>Revisions to DARS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Initial DARS</td>
<td>Enter semester courses in Colleague (from)</td>
<td>Revisions to Colleague</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
We engaged in planning processes across all college areas, and we have similar plans in place for areas such as Records and Registration, Financial Aid, and Information Technology.

**Project Success Monitoring**
Describe how you plan to monitor how successfully your efforts on this Action Project are progressing

S2S will require robust participation of staff across the campus. The following is an outline of the groups who will be involved in monitoring the effort.

- **Bi-weekly Steering Committee meetings** will focus on proactive milestone reviews, Key Business Decision (KBD) approvals, reviews of time sensitive key issues and Risks and Cross subcommittee communication.
- **Bi-weekly subcommittee meetings** will focus on subcommittee specific milestone progress, KBD analysis, task groups as needed, support Core Implementation Team in completing activities, and regular Core Implementation Team Meetings.
- **Progress Reports** are generated by the project manager on a regular basis and will include information from team members. Reports are distributed via Blackboard S2S Community which is accessible to all Steering and Subcommittee members, Core Implementation Team, and key supporting resources. The project manager also provides regular progress reports to key groups such as Cabinet, deans and other administrators, Shared Governance committees, and departments.
- **Blackboard S2S Community.** This file stores key S2S documents and information such as contacts, directories, subcommittee documents, project management documents, links to relevant reference material.

**Project Outcome Measures**
Describe the overall "outcome" measures or indicators that will tell you whether this Action Project has been a success or failure in achieving its goals

Planning for the S2S effort began at CSCC in September 2009. A master plan of ‘milestones’ was subsequently developed through to the first semester in August 2012. Milestones, or measures, are major accomplishments over the course of the project schedule which impact most subcommittees’ work efforts and are well understood by all subcommittee members. They are significant points in time, tangible achievements, key meetings, key decisions made, key communications, etc. Milestones serve as the foundation for project level progress reporting and help ensure focus on most important events. Milestones will also be included on
individual Subcommittee detailed work plans together with all the activities and tasks. This is “milestone driven work planning”.

- **Project Documentation and Sharing.** Network folders have been established based on the organization and work plan of the project for ease of finding project documentation.

- **Risk/Issue Management.** A risk register will detail risk, mitigating actions and ownership issues. A log file will compile issue descriptions, resolutions and issue resolution ownership.

- **Questions Log and Process.** This is a mechanism for capturing all S2S related questions from the many stakeholder groups and funnelling to the right subcommittee for answer ownership.