UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA AT CROSSROADS WITH ACADEMIC CALENDAR: AN EVALUATION OF THE CHANGE FROM QUARTER TO SEMESTER AT A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR COLLABORATION

Catherine Amimo and Elizabeth Role
University of Eastern Africa, Baraton
P. O. Box 2500, Eldoret, Kenya
E-mail: amimoc2002@yahoo.com; bethrole@gmail.com

Abstract

The issue of academic calendar is a topic of current debate and controversies in the universities in Kenya. While the quarter, semester and trimester calendars are used, there is evidence of sporadic migrations from the quarter to the semester and trimester calendars. This descriptive- comparative case study that built on Complexity Theory and Theory of Planned Change investigated change from quarter to semester calendar at a private university in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to establish factors driving the change, lecturers and students' involvement; concerns, challenges improvements realized from the change and implications on collaboration. Purposive and convenient sampling techniques were used to select forty lecturers and fifty students. The findings revealed that the change was externally driven by directive from the Inter-Universities Council for East Africa which had a collaborative agenda. Both lecturers and students were minimally involved in the change; t-Test indicated that there was no significant difference in the involvement of the two groups (p value of .226 > .05 alpha). A correlation coefficient of 0.444 (for lecturers) and 0.476 (for students) which are significant at 0.01 level revealed that the more the lecturers were involved in the change process the more they become comfortable with the semester sequence. Great concerns were on abrupt notice of change and lack of consultative meetings. Challenges included; lack of understanding of the implications of change in terms of credit hour equivalence, course requirements and tuition payment. The change brought improvements in the area of examination, assignments, preparation time, field work and labs, delivery of lectures and consultations. Interview reports indicated that the semester change did not interfere with the university collaborative activities, except a little interruption for industrial attachments and teaching practice. The study concludes that while considering change in academic calendar it is important to involve the stakeholders in deliberations on the factors driving the change and implications of the change. Once change is agreed upon, the implementation process has to be monitored and continuously evaluated with a focus on soliciting support, addressing concerns, and challenges; while taking note of emerging improvements.

Keywords: Collaboration, Academic calendar, Changes in universities, Managing change, Semester system, Quarter system, Trimester system, Complexity Theory, Theory of Planned Change, Curriculum change

Introduction

Universities in Kenya are at cross roads with the issue of academic calendar that seems to dominate important concerns such as collaboration, lecturers loading, professional development, research, planning and funding among others. While the quarter, semester and trimester calendars are used, there is even a new one baptized as the "Relay" whereby students -after first semester are given a longer brake to give room for their colleagues (who have been waiting) to catch up with their first semester so that they also give room later for the first group to enroll for their second semester. To solve the calendar puzzle there are indications of sporadic migrations from the traditional quarter calendar to the semester and trimester calendars. However, lack of understanding of the implications of changing an academic calendar is causing unnecessary disruption to universities, especially in cases where the change is externally motivated.

This descriptive- comparative case study, investigated change from quarter to semester calendar at a private university in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to establish the reasons for the semester change, lecturers and students' involvement; concerns, challenges, improvements and implications of the

change on collaboration. The study was informed and guided by Complexity theory and Theory of planned change. Data was obtained using questionnaires, interviews and information from documents. The following research questions and hypotheses guided the study;

1. What are the reasons given for the semester change?
2. To what extent are lecturers and students involved in the change process?
3. Is there a significant difference between lecturers and students involvement in the change process?
4. Is there a significant relationship between lecturers and students level of involvement in change and their comfort with the semester sequence?
5. What are the students and lecturers concerns and challenges of the semester change?
6. What is the impact of the semester change on collaboration activities at the university?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between lecturers and students involvement in the change process.
2. There a significant relationship between lecturers and students level of involvement in change and their comfort with the semester sequence.

Literature Review

Collaboration as a Key Factor in Change from Quarter to Semester

The call for collaboration among universities and between universities and the industries is in response to the growing state of globalization. Broadly, through the 1980s and 1990s the trend for collaboration has been promoted by international agencies such as United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank; which are operating under global and regional free trade agreements such as the European Union. In response to the activities of these agencies countries all over the world have made higher education institutions part of their national development policies (Maassen & Cloete , 2007). Referring to Coombe, Maassen and Cloete (2007, p.8) observe that "universities remain great national storehouses of trained, informed, inquiring and critical intellects, and the indispensible means of replenishing national talent".

Collaborative activities across universities and industrial sectors, is aimed at developing and sharing of such talents. According to Omar (2008) collaboration with industries can be achieved through internship programs, collaborative research, business incubation, mentoring programs, training programs and publications. He observes that collaborative apathy, lack of funds, brain drain, piracy and plagiarism and lack of institutional frame work are among factors that hinder collaboration. Lack of qualified personnel and regulation of time spent by academic staff on academic duties and research are added factors (Ssebuwufu, Ludwig, & Beland, 2011). By implication, universities which operate on other academic calendars other than the semester are also said to have tight and parallel schedules that hinder meaningful collaboration.

The quarter system was popularized in the United States between 1960 and1975 to accommodate the college population that had increased by 65%. At the turn of the 1990s the demand for collaboration among higher education institutions led to a shift to the semester (Oregon State System of Higher Education, 1988; University of Cincinnati; 2012). Several years later, the semester conversion at the Delhi University in India was defended by the Vice Chancellors on grounds that it would facilitate international collaboration with foreign universities on the same calendar (Viyajan, 2010). At the center of this academic calendar shift is a panorama of two external forces driving changes in the universities. These are social and industry forces. While the social forces push universities to cultivate citizenship, preserve cultural heritage, and skills and characters, the industry forces are pushing the universities to train more workforce, foster economic development and sell goods and services (Siemens & Matheos, 2010; Maasen & Cloete , 2007).

Of the two forces, the universities seem to be swayed mostly by the industrial force, as seen in the re-stratification of academic subjects, the push for external control, evaluations, and sovereignty of the consumers-especially students (Maasen & Cloete , 2007). A report on forty years of Common wealth co-operation in higher education, further, reveals that the underlying reason for the semester campaign was a move to increase cooperation and student mobility across countries within the framework of common agreements, quality control exchanges of students and staffs for credit and fee waiver. By the year 2000 two hundred students

were already participating in such programs (Bown, 2003). In fact citing Marcus (2001) Fehnel (2007, pp. 236) writes " If you go into the Commonwealth, there is a very strong move which says it is no longer 'publish or perish', it is partnership or perish". The countries in the East African region, as part of common wealth, began to advocate for synchrony of the academic calendar to keep up with the exchange programs and transfer of credit hours. To achieve this, the University Council of East Africa encouraged all universities in the region to follow the semester calendar. In this regard some of the private universities in the region attempted to adopt the semester system, but with some resistance. Change theorists caution that when change is externally driven it fundamentally challenges institutional autonomy and in effect triggers resistance (Fullan, 2007).

Collaboration as a tool in Management of Change

The most commonly used theories in management of change underscore collaboration as a key factor. For instance, those who have used complexity theory in understanding educational change, depict educational institutions as complex structures existing in an ever changing environment. In order to survive they must continuously scan and adapt to the environment. Within the institutions are different stake holders (including the academic staff, students, parents, sponsors, support staff, educational officers, publishers, curriculum specialists and others) whose participation matter in successful change. Complexity theory stress that when change comes the organization must engage in self –organizing functions in order to survive. The key variables in these self-reorganizing functions are effective communication and collaboration (Morrison, 2008). Paradoxically complexity theorists' advice is that for survival, organizations need to balance collaboration with isolation in their relations with other organizations. This is seen in the careful balance of main constructs of complexity theory such as cooperation/ competition, similarity with difference, individuality with collectiveness, connectedness with separation, necessary deviance with necessary conformity, diversity with uniformity and partial predictability with partial unpredictability (see figure 1).

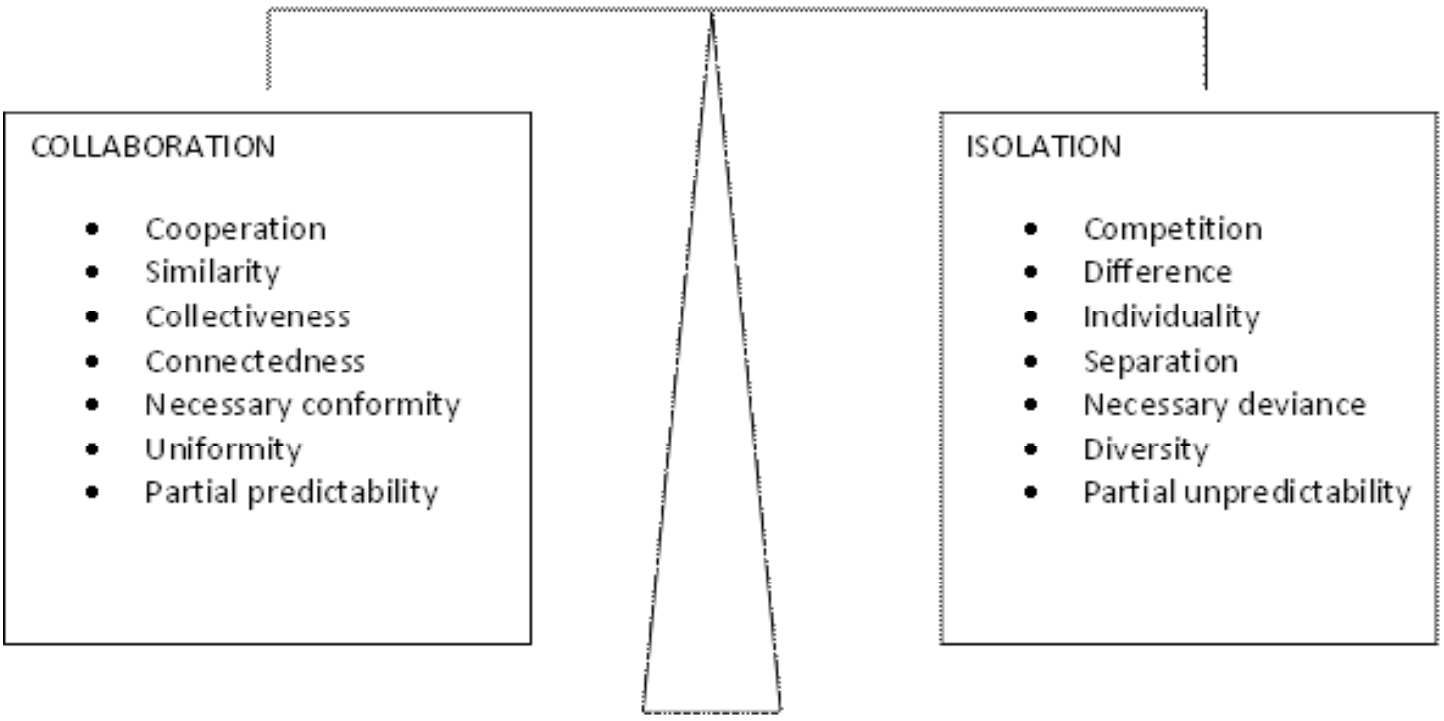

Figure 1. Balancing Collaboration with Isolation, Amimo, 2014.

The latter suggests that in every situation of change there are emerging outcomes, not envisioned at the beginning, that must be considered if an institution is to survive the edge of chaos (Reeler, 2007).

The theory of planned change (Lewin (1947) gets handy in dealing with the potential chaotic situations which accompany change. It points out two important forces that are usually present in change (1) forces driving change and (2) forces inhibiting change. Lewin recommends that proper management of change requires balancing of the two forces

(figure 2). In this act of balancing the field players need to communicate and collaborate. Previous research has shown that one of the impact concerns of teachers in curriculum change is how they will collaboration with colleagues to achieve change (Hall & Hord, 2006).

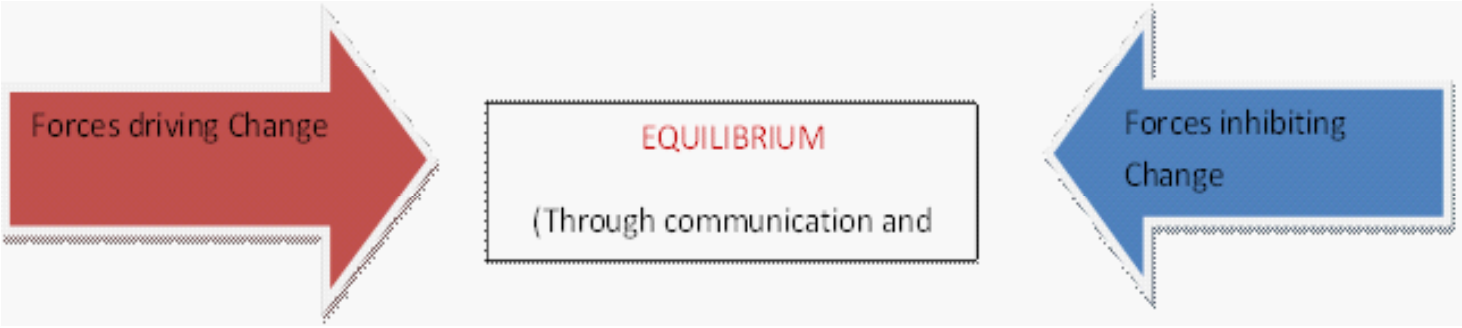

Figure 2. Balancing Forces experienced in Change, Amimo 2014

As demonstrated in the semester change at the Cincinnati University, information and communication are necessary tools for successful change management. In this particular case, Semester Change Committee that was formed browsed through the internet to study the semester system in other universities before they could formulate a proposal detailing the change and possible concerns. For dissemination purposes this final document was posted on the university web cite (Cincinnati University, 2012). Glickman, (2004) emphasizes that even though resistance seem to be part of typical organizational culture, transformational
leadership can foster organizational reforms through maintaining of collaborative norms such as collegiality, experimentation, high expectations, trust and confidence, tangible support, appreciation and recognition, caring, celebration and humor, protection and involvement in decision making, honest and open communication. However, change managers should know that aligning institutional structures with policy makers' interests for collaboration still remains an extremely complex and difficult aspect of change given the unique goals, characteristics and histories of individual universities (d'Ambrosio & Ehrenberg, 2007).

Research Methodology

The study sample comprised of 37 lecturers and 50 junior and senior students registered during the second semester of 2011/12. Purposive sampling method was used to select only students and lecturers who had experienced the semester change. Further, convenience sampling was used to get the faculty at the exam hall during the administration of Second Semester 2011/12 exams, while the third year and fourth year students were selected from a common core course taken during the semester. The sample comprised of School Deans, full time lecturers and third and fourth year students. A triangulated approach was used in data gathering which included use of questionnaires, interviews, documents, and focused group discussion. Students' and faculty's questionnaires were divided into seven parts that addressed demographic information, reasons for change, level of involvement in change, aspects of change, concerns, improvements from change, challenges and recommendations. A structured interview schedule was used to interview School Deans, while the researcher also scrutinized documents such as the university bulletins. Opportunities were seized at faculty gatherings to carry out impromptu focused group discussions.

After permission to carry out the research was sought from the offices of Director of Research Studies and Deputy Vice Chancellor of the university, data collection proceeded between the month of June and July, 2012. The response rate on the questionnaires was 100%, since every participant filled and promptly handed back the copy given to them. After analysis of the questionnaires, certain areas were identified for further probing through focused group discussions and interviews with faculty and Deans of Schools. Special appointments were made with School Deans for interviews in their respective offices. The latest academic bulletin was scrutinized for relevant information. Data was cleaned, categorized and coded into the computer using the SSP program version 17. Percentages, means, frequencies, standard deviation, t-test, and and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient were used to analyze the data. Information from interviews and focused group discussion was coded, analyzed and interpreted according to

themes.

Results

Reasons Given for the Semester Change

Table 1
Reason Given for the Change from Quarter to Semester System

Items	Teachers		Students		Overall Response	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
A recommendation by the Inter- University council	54.8%	45.2%	64.4%	35.6%	60.5%	39.5%
The change was for the university to be like other universities in the region	48.4%	51.6%	37.8%	62.2%	42.1%	57.9%
The change was to give time for syllabus coverage	29.0%	71.0%	20.0%	80.0%	23.7%	76.3%
The change was a recommendation from faculty through the general assembly	22.6%	77.4%	13.3%	86.7%	17.1%	82.9%

As shown in table 1, also implied during the interviews, a high percentage of the respondents (60.5%) were of the opinion that the change from quarter to semester was pushed by the Inter-University Council of East Africa whose goal was to achieve collaboration among universities in the region through credit accumulation and transfer system. The respondents were more or less divided on the reason that the change was to make the university be like other universities in the region, with 42.3% agreeing and 57.9% saying no, especially the students (62.2%). Reading further, a majority of the respondents (76.3%) were convinced that the change was not meant to give more time for syllabus coverage. Students (80.0%) came out strongly on this opinion than the faculty (71.0%). An overwhelming percentage of students (82.9%) indicated that the change was not a recommendation from faculty. On the overall, respondents seemed to say that the reason for change was not clear. One student said "I really have no idea", another added for "some flimsy reasons" and one lecturer responded that "I don't know, something was just announced to us".

Lectures' and Students' Involvement in the Semester Change

Table 2 shows that students were minimally involved in explanation of the reasons for change; standard deviation showing normal distribution in responses ($\bar{X}$=1.56; SD=1.83), while teachers showed that they were not involved in the process ($\bar{X}$= 1.1; SD= 0.8); meaning that a fraction of the respondents were involved though there is a big margin between those who were involved and those who were not. Both students ($\bar{X}$=1.8276, SD=1.00246) and lecturers ($\bar{X}$=1.00246, SD=1.06749) reported that they were minimally involved in meetings about the change; in both cases standard deviations values indicate normal distribution in responses.

Table 2

Respondents' Involvement in the Planning and Implementation of the Change

Items	Students		Lecturers	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean	Std. Deviation
Respondents involved in the explanation of the reasons for change	1.5581	1.8333	1.14721	.82527
Respondents involved in meetings	1.8372	1.8276	1.00246	1.06749
Respondents involved in planning semester courses with support of supervisor	2.0000	2.9667	1.09807	1.02353
Meetings where the change from quarter to semester discussed	1.9091	2.2963	1.20304	1.00737
Respondents involved in discussions of change with colleagues	2.5909	2.6897	1.25651	1.16775
Respondents explained the change to parents and guardians	2.4048	1.7333	1.11211	1.26991
In making the decision to change from quarter to semester system	1.4884	1.4667	.77608	.85557

Further minimal involvement of students ($\bar{X}$=2.0000, SD= 2.9667) and lecturers ($\bar{X}$=09807, SD= 1.02353) was in planning semester courses. When asked about involvement in meetings where the semester change was discussed, students reported minimal involvement ($\bar{X}$=1.9091, SD=2.2963) and lecturers indicated that they were not involved ($\bar{X}$ = 1.20304, SD=1.00737). However, most students agreed that they were moderately involved in discussion of the change with their colleagues ($\bar{X}$=2.5909, SD=.2.6897). On the contrary lecturers were not involved in discussion with fellow lecturers on the change ($\bar{X}$=1.25651, SD= 1.16775). Students agreed ($\bar{X}$=2.4048, SD=1.7333) that they were minimally involved in explaining the change to parents and guardians, while lecturers were not involved at this level ($\bar{X}$ = 1.11211, SD=1.26991). Lastly, the results show that while students were minimally involved in the decision to change from quarter to semester system ($\bar{X}$ = 1.48841, SD= 1.4667,) lectures were not involved ($\bar{X}$ = 0.77608, SD= .85557). In all the cases standard deviation values (SD) show normality in distribution of responses.

Difference in the Level of Involvement of Students and Lecturers in the Change from Quarter to Semester System

From the table 3, it is realized that there is homogeneity of variances based on the Levene's test for equality of variances. The test on equality of means revealed that there is no significant difference in the level of involvement of students and lecturers in the process of semester change. This confirms the findings in table 2 which indicate that both the lectures and students were not fully involved in the change.

Table 3
Difference in the Level of Students' and Lecturers' Involvement in the Change Agenda

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Mean of Involvement	Equal variances assumed	2.509	.118	1.223	62	.226	.25128	.20552
	Equal variances not assumed			1.162	42.838	.252	.25128	.21624

Lecturers' and Students' Comfort with the Semester Sequence

The question on whether respondents were comfortable with the semester sequence received mixed responses as evident in figure 1.

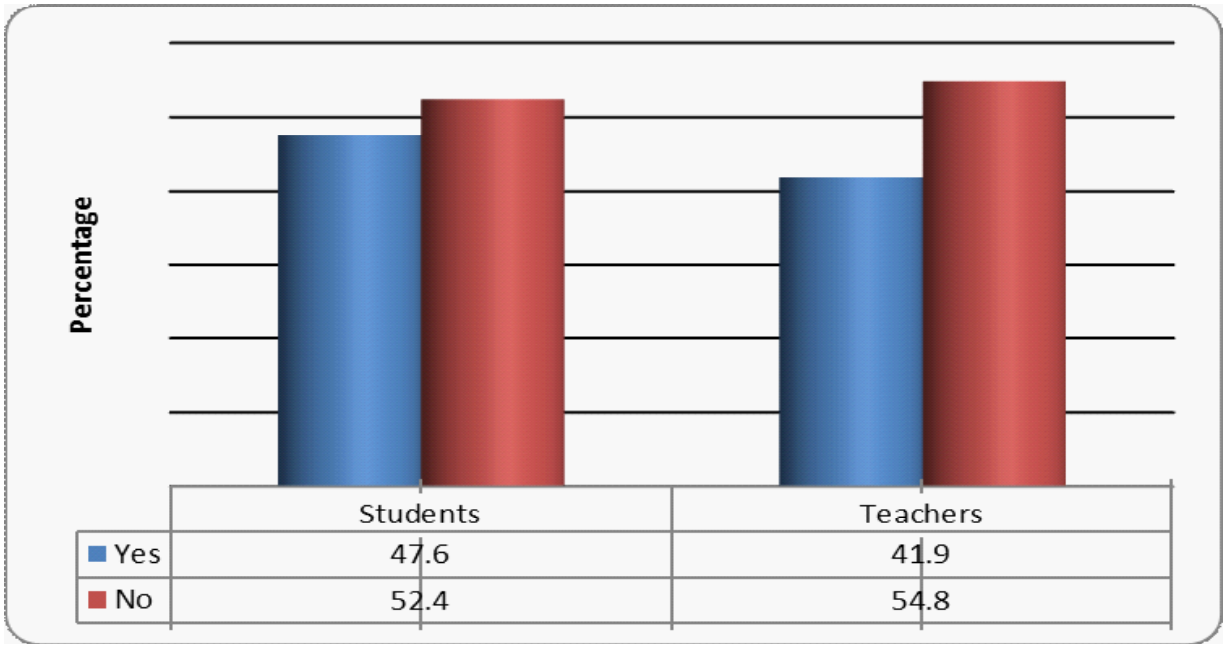

Figure 1. Respondents, Comfort with the sequence of the semester Calendar

Slightly more than half the lecturers (54.8%) and students (52.4%) were not comfortable with the sequence; while 41.9% of lecturers and students 47.6% were comfortable with the arrangement (1st Semester August- November, Inter- Semester January- March and 2nd Semester March- June). Lecturers who were uncomfortable with the sequence said that the breaks were short and did not give time for rest, research and preparation; the inter-semester was unnecessary break between the semesters and was too short for any serious learning- besides it creates an interruption in series courses.

Students supporting the sequence observed that it coincides with the government financial year thus favors search for tuition money and the optional nature of the inter-semester offers a longer break from studies. Some who disliked the sequence reasoned that it does not give them a chance to interact with colleagues from other universities, the holidays are too short, the inter-semester interferes with course

offerings and is too short for learning; it is not conducive for students who go for literature evangelism, teaching practice and industrial attachment. In addition the students felt that missing a semester is equivalent to missing one academic year because some courses are offered only once a year.

Relationship Between Lecturers' and Students' Level of Involvement in Change and Comfort with the Semester Sequence

A correlation analysis was done and a correlation coefficient of 0.444 (for lecturers) and 0.476 (for students) were obtained, which are significant at 0.01 level. There is a positive moderate relationship level of involvement in change and comfort with semester sequence showing that the more the lecturers and students were involved in the process of change the more they become comfortable with the semester sequence.

Table 4

Relationship Between Level of Involvement in the Change Agenda and Comfort with the Semester Sequence

	Comfort with semester sequence	
	Lecturers	Students
Level of involvement	.444	.476

Students' and Faculty Concerns about the Semester Change

Students' Concerns

Table 6 shows students concerns in this order; the majority of students were concerned, the change was abrupt (64.4%) , they were not fully prepared for the change (64.4%), some lecturers were rushing over the content (46.7%), content was not well covered (44.4%), students forgot to do assignments (42.2%), and only a few reported concerns over contact hours with lecturers (33.3%). In the open ended question on concerns on the semester change, additional concerns reported by students were; too much work load, low enrollment, and semesters being too long with no breaks, unclear tuition charges, lack of communication about the change and lack of lecturers. One student said "they did not consult us to see whether we wanted the change to the semester system" and "guardians, and parents were not advised on restructuring of fee schedule".

Table 6

Students' Concern of the Change

Items	Yes	No
Change was abrupt	29(64.4%)	16 (35.6%)
I was not fully prepared for the change	29(64.4%)	16(35.6%)
Content not well covered as stated in course outline	20(44.4%)	25(55.6%)
Some lecturers were rushing to finish thee syllabus	21(46.7%)	24(53.3%)
I missed the frequent contact hours with the lecturer	15(33.3%)	30(66.7%)
I forgot to do assignment since it takes long before the class meets again	19(42.2%)	26(57.8%)

Lecturers' Concerns

As shown in table 7 to a major concern to lecturers (64.5%) was that there were no meetings to share and consult about the semester change experiences. While a majority of lecturers (71.0%) seemed prepared for the change, some were concerned that they were not fully prepared (29.0%). Some lecturers (27.6%) were also concerned that they had less contact hours with students. Only a few (25.8%) expressed concern that the change was abrupt and that students forgot to work covered in the earlier part of the semester (22.6%). Very few lecturers (9.7%) registered concern that lessons were not covered as planned. The open ended responses showed that lecturers' were concerned that the students seemed ignorant about many aspects of the change, lecturers teaching practical courses with labs had heavy loadings, the translation of quarter to semester credit hours was arbitrary and inconsistently applied; the one hour credit courses were not economical and there was lack of time for research and professional development. Lecturers were also concerned that other stake holders like parents and sponsors were not clearly informed about the change.

Table 7
Lecturers' Concern on the Change

Items	Yes	No
Change was abrupt	8(25.8%)	23(74.2%)
Not fully prepared for the change	9(29.0%)	22(71.0%)
Lessons not well covered as planned	3(9.7%)	28(90.3%)
Lectures missed the frequent contact hours with students	8(27.6%)	21(72.4%)
Student forget work covered in early parts of the semester	7(22.6%)	24(77.4%)
No consultation meetings to share the experience of the change	20(64.5%)	11(35.5%)

Challenges Experienced by the Faculty and Students

As shown in Table 8, more students experienced challenge with the semester change than lecturers. A majority of students (71.4%) had challenges understanding details about the change (specifically the difference between quarter and semester), the semester being too busy (66.7%), and tuition payments (59.5%); having to recall work covered (42.9%), doing assignments promptly (38.1%), and preparing adequately for classes (31%).

Table 8
Challenges Faced by Students

Items	Yes	No
Too many courses	28(66.7%)	14(33.3%)
Having to remember what was covered in the last lesson	18(42.9%)	24(57.1%)
Getting the assignment done promptly	16(38.1%)	26(61.9%)
Preparing for classes	13(31.0%)	29(69.0%)
Semester being busy	29(69.0%)	13(31.0%)
Getting enough fees for the semester	25(59.5%)	17(40.5%)
Understanding some details about change	30(71.4%)	12(28.6%)

From table 9 some lecturers (37.9%) had challenges explaining details of the change to students, getting students to do assignments promptly (37.9%), the semester being too long (24%), having students recall work covered in previous lectures (20.0%), covering the course content (17.2%) and preparing for lessons (3.4%).

Table 9
Challenges Faced by Lecturers

Items	Yes	No
Covering the syllabus	5(17.2%)	24(82.8%)
Having to remind student about work covered in the last lesson	6(20.0%)	24(80.0%)
Getting the students do their assignments promptly	11(37.9%)	18(62.1%)
Forgetting to prepare for lessons	1(3.4%)	28(96.6%)
Semester being too long	7(24.1%)	22(75.9%)
Explaining to some details about change	11(37.9%)	18(62.1%)

Improvements Realized by Students and Faculty from the Semester Change

Table 10 on improvements realized by students from the semester change disclosed the following; Students realized little improvement in the following areas with respective means – quality of classroom delivery ($\bar{X}$=2.2250, SD=1.09749), consultation with lecturers ($\bar{X}$=2.2381, SD=1.20587) and time for outside reading, discussions and trips ($\bar{X}$=2.1905, SD= 1.08736) and timely feedback on assignment ($\bar{X}$=2.3171, SD= 1.12781). Greater improvement was noted in quality of assignments (2.5854, SD= 1.09489), meeting deadlines for assignments (2$\bar{X}$=.5952, SD= 1.16994), time to prepare for classes ($\bar{X}$=2.6047, SD=1.15757), in depth classroom discussions ($\bar{X}$=2.7073, SD= 1.07805), and number of tests and assignments given ($\bar{X}$=2.7561, SD=1.13535). The standard deviations indicate that the responses were normally distributed.

Table 10
Improvements realized by students due to the change

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Quality of classroom delivery	2.2250	1.09749
Hours to consult outside class	2.2381	1.20587
Time to prepare for your classes	2.6047	1.15757
Number of tests and assignments given to respondent	2.7561	1.13535
Did the respondents meet the deadlines for assignment	2.5952	1.16994
Timely feedbacks for assignment submitted	2.3171	1.12781
Quality of assignments	2.5854	1.09489
In-depth classrooms discussions	2.7073	1.07805
Outside reading, discussions and field trips	2.1905	1.08736

Lecturers realized more improvements than students. Table 11 show that the responses were normally distributed, as indicated by the standard deviation values.

Table 1
Improvements Realized by Lecturers Due to the Change

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Syllabus coverage	3.2581	.99892
Hours to consult outside class	2.9355	.85383
Time to prepare for your classes	3.0323	1.13970
Number of tests and assignments given to students	3.9516	1.39747
Meet deadlines for marking and giving feedbacks to assignment	3.0323	1.01600
General classroom teaching/delivery	3.1290	.84624
Quality of assignments	2.5333	.86037
Carrying out field and lab components of the curriculum	2.9655	1.01710
Carrying out research	2.2258	1.11683
Attending seminars and conferences	2.2069	1.04810
Consultations with colleagues in the department	2.5161	1.02862
Attending refresher courses/training	1.9000	.92289
Writing papers and book publications	2.0323	1.04830

The greatest improvement was in testing and assignments ($\bar{X}$=3.9516, SD= 1.4). This finding concurs with students opinions on the same. Some improvements were realized in; syllabus coverage ($\bar{X}$= 3.2 581, SD= .99892), classroom delivery ($\bar{X}$=3.1290, SD= .84624), time to prepare for classes ($\bar{X}$=3.0323, SD=1.13970), giving feedback promptly to students ($\bar{X}$=3.0323 SD= 1.01600), field work and labs ($\bar{X}$=2.9655, SD=1.01710), consultation with students outside class ($\bar{X}$=2.9355, SD= .85383) quality of assignments given to students ($\bar{X}$=2.5333, SD= .86037), consultation with colleagues in the department ($\bar{X}$=2.5161, SD= 1.02862). Conversely, there was little improvement in areas of collaboration such as publications ($\bar{X}$=2.0323, SD= 1.04830), research ($\bar{X}$=2.2258, SD= 1.11683) , attending seminars and conferences ($\bar{X}$=2.2069, SD= 1.04810) and writing papers and publishing ($\bar{X}$=2.0323, SD= 1.04830) .

When asked about any other improvement the lecturers made the following observations in open ended questions and focused group discussions; examination period of two weeks is commendable, faculty forum is a good idea, semester is a bit more relaxed than quarter, students have done well in lab work and assignments, and there is more time for students. A lecturer in the department on management said "actually semester gave us more time to cover content; we could have case study analysis which we did not have in the quarter system". On the overall these findings imply that whereas change from quarter to semester brought improvements in general curriculum delivery and interaction with students, it did not contribute much to lecturers' professional development, especially in the area of research and training.

Implications of Semester Change on Collaboration

Even though the main goal of the semester change was to achieve regional collaboration in terms of credit transfer and exchange programs, the change was short lived to measure this specific out come adequately; though there were interesting findings. A question on improvements realized from the semester indicated that though the semester sequence interfered with some collaborative activities such as teaching practice and industrial attachments, collaborative efforts such as research, publications, seminars, training were picking up. The university was already in collaboration with universities in Finland, United States of America and Germany. Since 2010 the university collaborates with Youngstown State University in the United States and the terms are to carry out research and develop staff for Chemistry

Department. In an interview the Chair of the Department said that the semester change did not affect the collaboration. In fact, staff development is succeeding with three staff already on training, and currently two with new admissions. For those on board, two are already doing their doctoral degrees and one a masters. Two of the students have since came back shortly to volunteer as teaching staff at the department.

On the other hand, the research agenda has not picked up due to poor internet access, technicalities in sending samples out of the country- ethical issues notwithstanding, lack of equipment, funding and general expertise. Otherwise, the scholarship has motivated the undergraduate students in the department to maintain high performance. An interview with the Dean School of Health Sciences confirmed that the change did not affect collaboration with Finland. The collaboration activities which include exchange programs, workshops, E-learning, development of common courses, research and scholarship are active under three programs; Public Health Sciences, Global Health Care Program and North- South to South. Both students and lectures participate actively in online and study abroad modular programs. The "North to South to South" which is an initiative to extend the collaboration between Finland and the university to other African universities has now extended to Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Mozambique and Egypt.

The coordinator of Inclusive education program based on collaboration of the university, with Support Africa (German based organization) and Kapsabet Vocational School for the deaf observed that with the semester change there were more visitations to the site and the program is progressing well under different departments (some shown in the pictures taken at the site). So far three cohorts have graduated from the program and attitudes towards deafness is changing in Nandi County. Since the collaboration begun records show that factors that hinder progress includes funding, equipment, bureaucracy, attitudes towards deafness and lack of clear understanding of the roles of each of the collaborating partners.

Discussion and Conclusion

The semester change was driven by a directive from Inter-Universities Council for East African (IUCEA). The university followed this directive without understanding the main goal which was to enhance collaboration among universities in the region through a system of credit accumulation and transfer (CATS) and exchange programs. Cheng (1994) argues that a simplistic understanding of change does not only cripple the much needed support for change but limits internalization of the process and reflective decision. In this particular case, there was little reflection on the reason and process of change as revealed in lack of involvement of lectures and students and the arbitrary adjustments on course offerings and credit hours; forcing some faculty to teach outside schedule to cover content and some students to take extra courses to fill up for graduation requirements. Literature on curriculum change stress that it is import to involve the stakeholders in forums that create awareness, give information and clarify involvement as this helps in planning, decisions, accountability, and commitment (Cheng, 1994; Glickman, 2004, Schlechty & Bob, 1991).

In addition, the magnitude of the change was much greater than originally expected and planned for; and this caused greater concerns and challenges, especially, to students who were expected to be the beneficiaries of the change. Whereas there were mixed responses about comfort with the semester sequence, both lecturers and students were greatly concerned about lack of consultative meetings to discuss their experiences with the change. Students especially, felt ambushed by the change. Even the lecturers were not helping much, one lecturer commented that "I tried to explain to students issues concerning the change which even me I did not fully understand, it was like a blind man leading another blind man". Researchers on curriculum change caution that for change to be effective it must be understood in its complexity, especially with regards to the reason for change, what is changing (its extent) and who it is affecting and how (Cheng, 1994; Fullan, M. 2007; Otunga, Odero, & Barasa, 2011; Pasi, 2012).

This study concludes that for effective management of academic calendar change there has to be a proper understanding of what each academic calendar entails and implies in terms of coursework requirements, specific timescales, students and lecturers loadings in terms of a specified number of "credits", "hours" or "units"; implementation process should be inclusive with proper diffusion and dissemination of information concerning the change. Universities in Kenya should re align their academic calendars so that students are not disadvantaged.

Private universities in Kenya need more sensitization about the benefits of collaborating with other universities.

References

Balfour, L. & Mackenzie, A. (2009). Involving teachers in curriculum change. *Principal*, March/ April.

Bown, L. (2003). *Education in the commonwealth: The first 40 years: From Oxford to Halifax and beyond*. London, UK: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Cheng, Y. (1994). Effectiveness of curriculum change in schools. An organizational perspective. *International Journal of Educational Management. 8*(3), 26-34.

CUE. (2013). *New dawn for university education.* A Commission for University Education Publication, March-June, 2013.

Crystal, (2011). Why the Quarter System? Retrieved fromhttp://tusb.stanford.edu/2011/05/why-the-quarter-system.html

Eastern Washington University (2009). Quarters to semester conversion. Retrieved from https://www20.csueastbay.edu/oaa/files/conversion_files/EasternwashingtonU.pdf

Glickman, C., Gordon, S., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2004). *Supervision and instructional leadership: A developmental approach*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Gruba, P., Alister, M., Harald, S., & Justin, Z. (2004). *What drives curriculum change.* Conferences in Research and Practice in information Technology, Vol. 30.

Maasen, P. & Cloete, N. (2007). Global Reform Trends in higher education. In. & Cloete, N., Maasen, P., Fehnel, R., Moja, T., Gibbon, T., & Perold, H. (2007). Transformation in higher education: Global pressures and local realities. Neitherlands: Springer.

New Delhi, Tuesday July 27 (IANS) "Don't play with the lives of our students"; Semester system tussle: Court strives for students' good. Retrieved on 22nd November 2010 from http://www.thaindian.com/newsportal/uncategorized/semester-system-tussle-court-strives-for-students-good_100402867.html

Omar, F. (2008). How to foster collaboration between universities and the private sector in Kenya from http://www.orsea.net/pastpapers/2008/ORSEA%20Conference%20Paper_Athman%20Fa dhili%20Omar.pdf

Oregon University (1988). Merits of semester versus quarter system.www.ous.edu/sites/default/files/stateboard/jointblsemlfiles/Semesterconversionpros-cons10-31-092.pdf

Otunga, R, Odero, I, Baraza, P. (2011). A Handbook for Curriculum and Instruction. Moi University Press.

Ramzanali. (2010). Quarter system better for students and faculty- http://www.dailybruin.com/index.php/article/2010/09/quarter_system_better_for_ students_and_faculty

Rotberg, I.C. (2004) Balancing Change and Tradition in Global Education Reform; Rawman and Little Field Education.

Siemens, G., & Matheos, K. (2010). Systemic change in higher education. Retrieved from http://ineducation.ca/article/systemic-changes-higher- education

Schaffer, R. & Harvey, A. (1992). Successful change programs begin with results. Harvard Business Review, Vol. 70 No 1, Jan- Feb pp. 80-89.

Schlechty, P. & Bob, C. (1991) Creating a system that supports change. *Educational Horizons, 69* (2), 78-82.

Shiundu, J. & Omulando, J. (1992). *Curriculum Theory and Practice in Kenya.* Nairobi: Oxford University Press.

Ssebuwufu,J., Ludwig, T., & Beland, M. (2011). Strengthening university-industry linkages in Africa: A study on Institutional capacities and gaps. From http://www.aucc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/aaucase-study-university-industry-linkages-africa.pdf

Turner, L. (2010). In Focus: The quarter system at Northwestern. Retrieved from http://www.dailynorthwestern.com/mobile/in-focus-the-quarter-system-at- northwestern-1.2398754

University of Cincinnati.(2012). Semester conversion guide. www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/conversion/docs/faqs/guide.pdf

Vivayan, P. (2010). The semester system is a free market utopia. Retrieved from http://www.tehelka.com/the-semester-system-is-a-free-market-utopia/