Angela, Lois - 239

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**Focus Group Questions – Post M.A.T. Graduation-Practice**

1. How did the actual MAT experience differ from your expectations? What was better? What was worse?

2. What should we do differently, if possible – given constraints of accreditation mandates and the PDS structure – in each graduate session to improve the program? Think content of courses, assignments, etc.)

GR01 – summer

GR02 – fall

GR03 – spring

GR04 – May

3. What should we NOT change, no matter what?

4. We constantly agonize over the movement into/out of the schools and into/out of the college classroom. See the chart of some options we’re debating (pasted at the end of this document) – again, we’re limited given the demand for the 100-day internship in a professional development school combined with the number of “contact” hours we have to ensure we meet to maintain accreditation for our courses.

5. Why did you choose – or not choose –to do a foreign placement.  What did you gain from your second, buoy, placement, no matter where it took place?

6. In what ways do you think you’re definitely prepared for your own classroom? How could we have prepared you better?

7. What are your concerns going forward and how can we help address them?

Timetabling MAT Courses at SMCM

Options for revising timing of placements

**Purpose:** This document will outline how the internship placement has been scheduled over the life of the MAT program, discuss the constraints at SMCM governing the timing of courses at the campus, and offer four options for how the internship/course timing schedule may or may not change. We are sensitive to the concerns of our PDS partners about the in-and-out nature of the internship, as well as those of our students about the timing of workload demands. We wish to find a scheduling system that works well for as many as possible.

**History of Internship Placements**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **MAT Year** | **Cohort Size** | **Timing of Internship/ Courses** | **Pros** | **Cons** |
| 2006-2007 | 7 | **FA:** Placement 1, in site M/W/F, classes T/R  **SP:** Placement 2, in site M/W/F, classes T/R, until beginning of March, then full-time teaching  🡪 NB: Some classes did meet on M/W/F, after school | Classes and placements occurring simultaneously, so very direct connections between class and practice | FA: With courses at end of the day, students were too tired to focus  FA/SP: Placement too choppy, students in and out constantly |
| 2007-2008 | 22 | FA: Placement 1, in site M/W/F, classes T/R  SP: Placement 2, in site M/W/F, classes T/R, until beginning of March, then full-time teaching  🡪 NB: Some classes did meet on M/W/F, after school | Classes and placements occurring simultaneously, so very direct connections between class and practice | FA: With courses at end of the day, students were too tired to focus  FA/SP: Placement too choppy, students in and out constantly |
| 2008-2009 | 29 | **FA:** Anchor-buoy placement (4 weeks at Site 1, 4 weeks at SMCM, 4 weeks at Site 2, 4 weeks at SMCM, 1.5 weeks at Site 1)  **SP:** 2 weeks at Site 1 (anchor), then for next 7 weeks, M-R @ site, F @ SMCM, then full-time at anchor site from mid-March to early May | 🡪 With 4 weeks at each site, it was easier for MAT candidates to be “interns” or “students”  🡪 Less “in-and-out” over the week  🡪 Made it easier to schedule classes, given size of cohort and room space issues at SMCM | 🡪 Harder to make connections between site and coursework  🡪 In SP, space/timing constraints for MAT classes were very difficult to negotiate  🡪 Buoy placement in middle was hard on SMCPS for finding placements  🡪 Students are often out of sites in the FA so that they miss a full assessment cycle |
| 2009-2010 | 42 | **FA:** Anchor-buoy placement (4 weeks at Site 1, 4 weeks at SMCM, 4 weeks at Site 2, 4 weeks at SMCM, no return to anchor)  **SP:** 2 weeks at Site 1 (anchor), then 2 intense weeks of courses @ SMCM, with some courses at night for special issues; full-time at anchor site from beginning of February to end of March, with option for some to go abroad at that point;  🡪 Students who went to Baltimore City would stay in the same site for the FA, and then in January, head to Baltimore City | 🡪 With 4 weeks at each site, it was easier for MAT candidates to be “interns” or “students”  🡪 No “in-and-out” over the week  🡪 Made scheduling classes easier, due to space constraints at SMCM  🡪 This year, interns did not go back to sites between end of FA courses and Winter Break for SMCPS, at request of many mentors, who felt that the time investment was not meaningful for that time of year. This continued for 10-11. | 🡪 Harder to make connections between site and coursework  🡪 In SP, space/timing constraints for MAT classes were very difficult to negotiate  🡪 Buoy placement in middle was hard on SMCPS for finding placements  🡪 Students are often out of sites in the FA so that they miss a full assessment cycle |
| 2010-2011 | 36 | **FA:** Anchor-anchor placement (4 weeks at anchor, 4 weeks at SMCM, 4 weeks at anchor, 4 weeks at SMCM, no return to anchor)  **SP:** 2 weeks at Site 1 (anchor), then 2 intense weeks of courses @ SMCM, with some courses at night for special issues; full-time at anchor site from beginning of February to end of March, Buoy begins at beginning of April (another school in SMCPS, in Baltimore City, or abroad) | 🡪 With 4 weeks at each site, it is easier for MAT candidates to be “interns” or “students”  🡪 No “in-and-out” over the week  🡪 Made scheduling classes easier, due to space constraints at SMCM  🡪 Resolved the challenges for SMCPS finding a second set of placements so quickly into year | 🡪 Harder to make connections between site and coursework  🡪 Space constraints (and timing constraints) did put more courses in the evening in the Spring  🡪 Students are often out of sites in the FA so that they miss a full assessment cycle |

**Contextual Constraints**

*Internship*

🡪 Per the state of Maryland, interns must spend 100 days in the PDS internship site. Currently, we are just slightly above that number.

*Classes at SMCM*

🡪 With the credit hours assigned to courses, there are requirements about how much we need to see the students face-to-face. The current structure gives us the minimum acceptable time for our courses. During the time the MAT students are on campus, it can lead to a very skewed schedule for some faculty members because of the amount of time the courses need to meet.

🡪 With the exception of one faculty member, ALL members of the MAT faculty also teach undergraduate courses. As a primarily undergraduate institution, we have to build our undergrad schedule first each semester to accommodate the 160 or so students who take our classes. The MAT schedule MUST be built around the undergrad schedule, which not only affects the timetable but classroom space. Though there are classrooms we “control” within our department, the growth of the MAT program has sometimes sent us looking for other spaces, and space is at a premium on our campus.

🡪 The SMCM faculty are on 10-month contracts. Though there is a one-month break between semesters, that time is to be allocated for personal research/scholarship activities, course planning, and some small amounts of personal time. To ask the Department faculty to teach earlier in January would make it difficult for them to fulfill their other responsibilities.

At the moment, there is discussion of putting the Department on 11-month contracts, but this is in response to accreditation demands that

infringe on the month between the MAT cohorts—another time when the faculty are to be writing and pursuing their own professional

development. With that looming reality, there really is no way for the faculty to teach on any other calendar than the one currently in place

on campus.

**The proposed options**

In light of the concerns about the current schedule, we are open to reorienting the calendar, but we must be cognizant of the constraints we face.

***Option 1: “***The Status quo”🡪 Continue the current structure

***Option 2:*** “Extended Spring Course Timetable” 🡪 Continue with Anchor-Class-Anchor-Class in the Fall, and then at the end of the second class cycle in the Fall, send the interns back to the sites until Winter Break (currently, the interns start their break Dec. 15). In January, the interns will spend the first two weeks full-time at the site, then beginning of the week of MLK and going for the next 4 weeks, the interns will spend 3 days at SMCM and two days in the Anchor Site. Full-time resumes the week of Valentine’s Day, continuing through the last week of March (ending 31st). Students will go to buoy placements the first of April, until the end of the first week of May.

***Option 3:*** “Make the buoy come first” 🡪 Reverse the current schedule, which would likely challenge the students’ ability to complete international internships and/or placements in other contexts (which are both recruiting tools, since that is somewhat unique to our program).

***Option 4:*** Other—to be proposed by you!

To vote for your preferred option (or rather, the option you find least objectionable), please click this link:

You will be asked some demographic information to help us determine who is represented in the turnout. These options will also be discussed at a PDS meeting.