

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE

ALTERNATIVE CALENDAR Faculty SURVEY

Spring 2002

Report on Survey Results

The Porterville College Alternative Calendar Committee is seeking input from various campus constituencies to make a decision regarding a possible change from an 18-week semester to a 16-week one. In February 2002, the Committee recommended that the college proceed with a 16-week calendar, contingent upon the availability of necessary facilities, staff and resources.

In order to determine if the staffing needs could be met for the calendar change, a faculty survey was conducted. The purpose of this survey is not to assess faculty opinion on the calendar change (this information will be gathered later), but rather to determine whether there will be sufficient faculty to teach classes under the proposed system.

The proposed calendar change would introduce a variety of adjustments in the days and times when classes are offered. It is important to determine whether faculty would be willing to teach classes under the new conditions. One of these changes will be a substantial increase in the number of courses offered in (mostly 3-hour) block schedules on Fridays during the fall and spring semesters. Another is the introduction of two five-week (and/or one ten-week) summer sessions, with the five-week sessions running consecutively. Additionally, the plan calls for a five-week winter intercession to be run between the fall and spring semester each year. For the summer and winter classes, it is believed that “core” classes, those that are required for graduation and/or transfer, are the most appropriate.

A one-page, seven-question survey instrument was designed for use in the spring of 2001. This instrument is duplicated in this report as an Appendix which begins on page #. The survey was placed in the office mailboxes of all full-time faculty. For adjunct (part-time) faculty, the survey was mailed to their homes with a metered return envelope. In all, 78 faculty were surveyed, 43 full-time and 35 adjuncts.

Faculty were asked to respond to five questions about their willingness to teach classes under various conditions. These included Friday block classes, each of the two 5-week summer sessions (early and late), a 10-week summer session, and the winter intercession. A 4-point likert scale was used, with responses ranging from very likely to very unlikely. Respondents were also asked whether they were full-time or adjunct and for the division in which they taught the most classes.

Results

Chart 1 shows the distribution of the faculty surveyed by instructional division. The two divisions with the most respondents were Language Arts and Natural Sciences and Mathematics. This is beneficial, as these divisions, along with Social Sciences, contain the most core courses.

The most important finding is shown in Chart 2. Here we see the percentage of faculty who are willing (combining the 'very likely' and 'likely' responses for each of the 5 questions) to teach classes at various times. It is clear from these results that there will be faculty members willing to classes in any of the five situations described. This willingness, however, was not uniform. More than half of the faculty are willing (combining the 'very likely' and 'likely' responses) to teach classes in an early (June 21-July 23) 5-week summer session or a 5-week winter intercession. Almost half are willing to teach classes in block schedules on Fridays. However less than 30 percent are willing to teach classes in a later (July 26-August 27) 5-week summer session or a 10-week summer session.

Full-time and adjunct faculty did not respond the same way to these questions. A comparison is provided in Chart 3. Full-time faculty are more likely than adjuncts to be willing to teach block schedule classes on Fridays. However, adjuncts are more likely to be willing to teach classes at all of the other times measured. It should be noted however, that none of these differences are statistically significant.

Two divisions, Language Arts and Natural Sciences and Mathematics, had enough survey respondents to make the results specific to those divisions relevant. These results are depicted in Charts 4 and 5. We can use these results to determine whether sufficient core courses can be offered at the various times listed. It does appear that there will be sufficient faculty to teach courses at each of these times. However, the later 5-week summer session and the 10-week summer session may have limited offerings.

We collected four pieces of demographic information: gender, age, ethnicity, and the class meeting time. The students surveyed were similar to the college population in terms of gender. However, the surveyed students tended to be somewhat younger and were more likely to be Hispanic than the college population. Detailed information on the college's class attendance distribution are not immediately available, but morning, afternoon, and evening classes were all well represented.

Students were asked about five possible factors which might prove to be obstacles to attending class. These included family responsibilities, work schedule, child care, course schedule, and transportation. The most common obstacles students face are work schedules and course schedules, both of which were problems for more than half of the students surveyed. Family responsibilities also was an obstacle for almost half of the

students. Child care and transportation are problems for just over one in five students surveyed.

About half of the survey questions dealt with the days and times when classes are offered. In particular, the committee was interested in learning the extent to which students are willing to take classes in early mornings, afternoons, evenings, and in block schedules on Fridays and Saturdays. Students were asked how likely they would be to attend a class offered at various times. Willingness to attend classes varied greatly depending on the day and time offered, but the most significant finding is that almost any time suggested finds a substantial number of students willing to attend classes. The least popular class time was 6:00 AM, yet even for this time, 18.2% of students indicated that they were “very likely” or “likely” to take a class offered at that time. Projected over the entire student population, at least 800 students would be willing to take 6:00 AM classes.

Students were asked if they would be more likely to take summer classes if more were offered and about their likelihood of taking classes during a winter intercession, which could possibly be added if a calendar change is made. The respondents were very much in favor of more summer classes. More than 70% said they would be more likely to take summer classes if more were offered, while only 20% said they would not. The remaining 10 percent were already taking summer classes. Sixty percent of students said they would be “very likely” or “likely” to take classes during a winter intercession.

Next, students were asked to give their preference between a class that meets three times per week for 62 minutes and a class that meets twice per week for 85 minutes.¹ Over 70 percent of students prefer that classes meet two days per week. Also, students were asked their preference between an 18 week semester in which 3-unit classes meet for 3 hours per week (the current situation) and a 16 week semester in which 3-unit classes meet for 3 hours and 23 minutes per week. Sixty-two percent of the students surveyed preferred a 16-week schedule.

Finally, students were asked about their preferences regarding semester starting and ending dates. Students were asked to choose between an early fall semester that begins in mid-August and ends in mid-December and a later starting fall semester in which classes begin in early September and end a few days before Christmas. Similarly, students were asked to choose between an early starting spring semester which begins in early January and ends in early May and a later starting spring semester which begins in early February and ends in early June. In both cases, more than 70 percent of students prefer the earlier starting semester. This percentage was slightly higher for spring than for fall.

These results, along with input from other campus and community groups, will be used to make decisions regarding the type of calendar Porterville College will offer in upcoming years. For more information on the calendar change, contact Dr. Ronald Glahn, co-chair of the Alternative Calendar Committee (rglahn@pc.cc.ca.us). For more information on

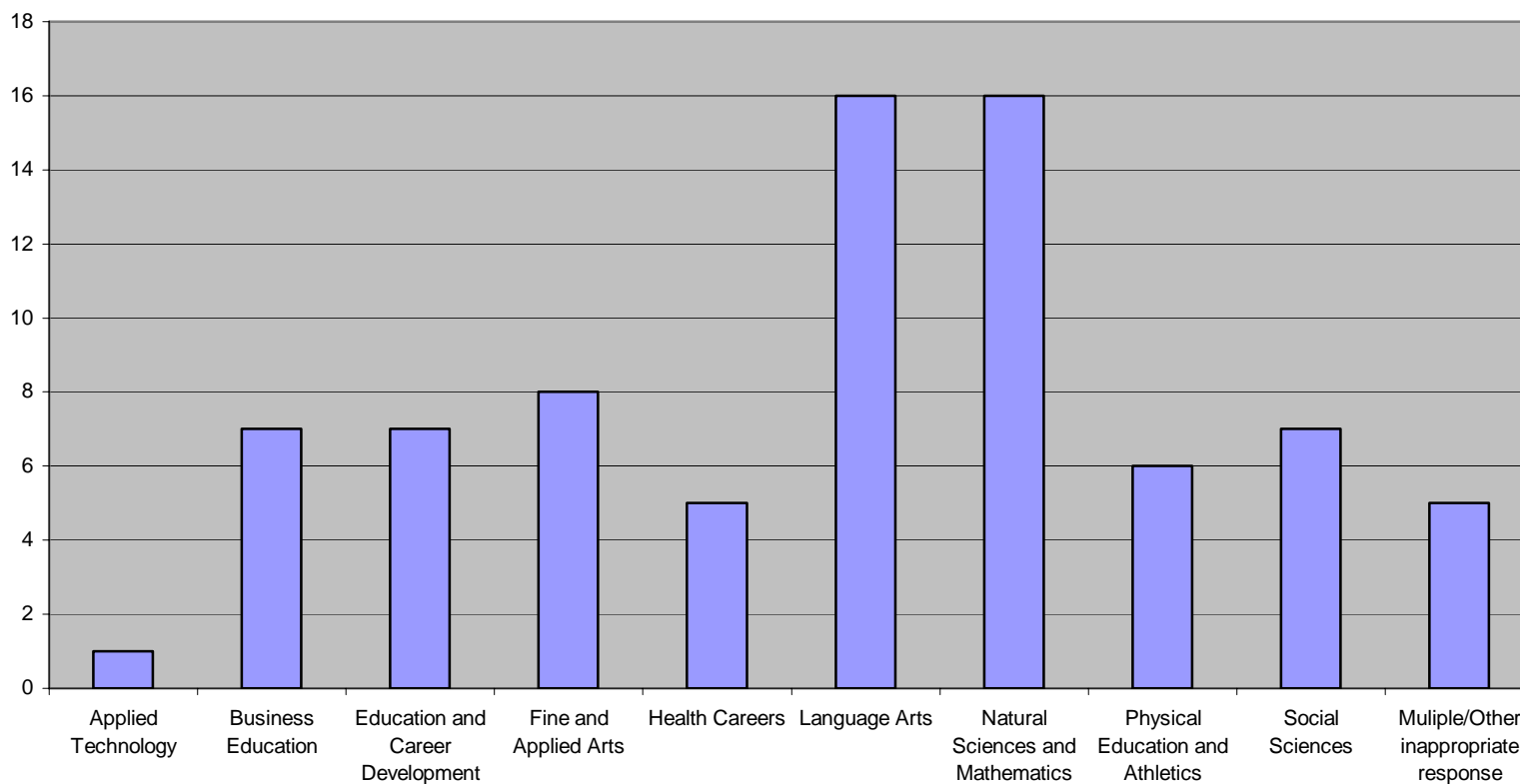
¹ The class times asked here assume a change to a 16-week calendar. Currently, most 3-unit classes meet for 50 minutes 3 times per week or for 80 minutes twice per week. These classes meet for 18 weeks each semester.

the student survey, contact Michael Carley, Director of Institutional Research (mcarley@pc.cc.ca.us).

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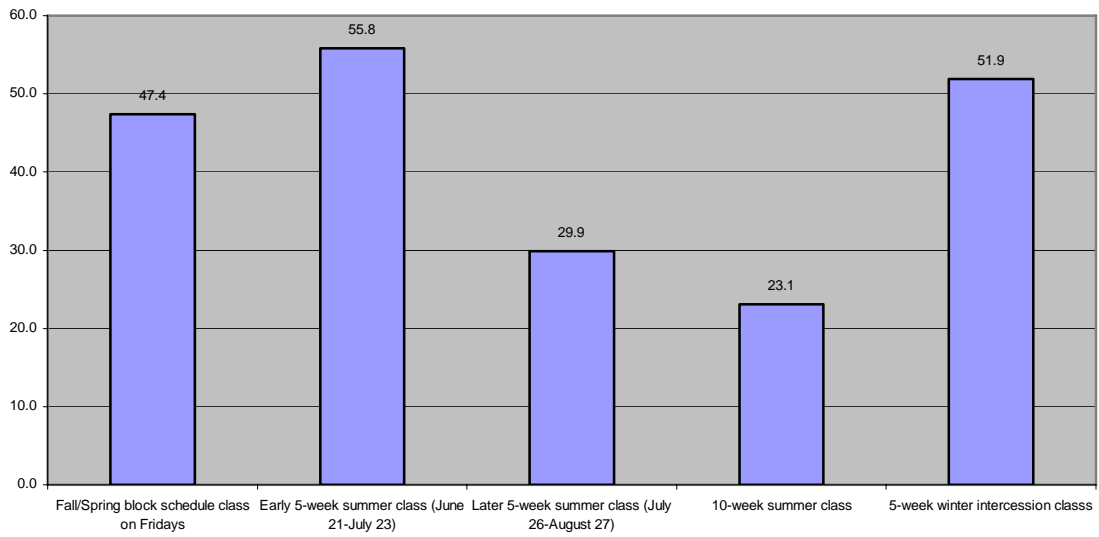
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Chart 1: Distribution of Faculty Survey Respondents by Academic Division



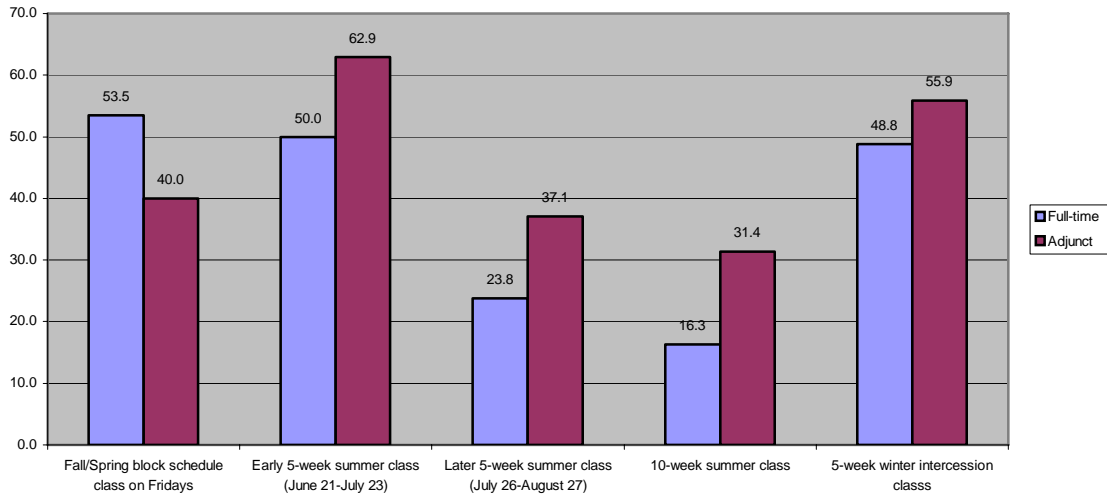
Note: N=78. Although the question asked, “In which academic division do you teach most of your classes?”, three respondents circled multiple responses. One respondent wrote in “none of the above” (there are no classes at Porterville College that are not in one of the nine divisions listed above) and one left the question blank.

Chart 2: Percent of faculty willing (very likely or likely) to teach classes at various times



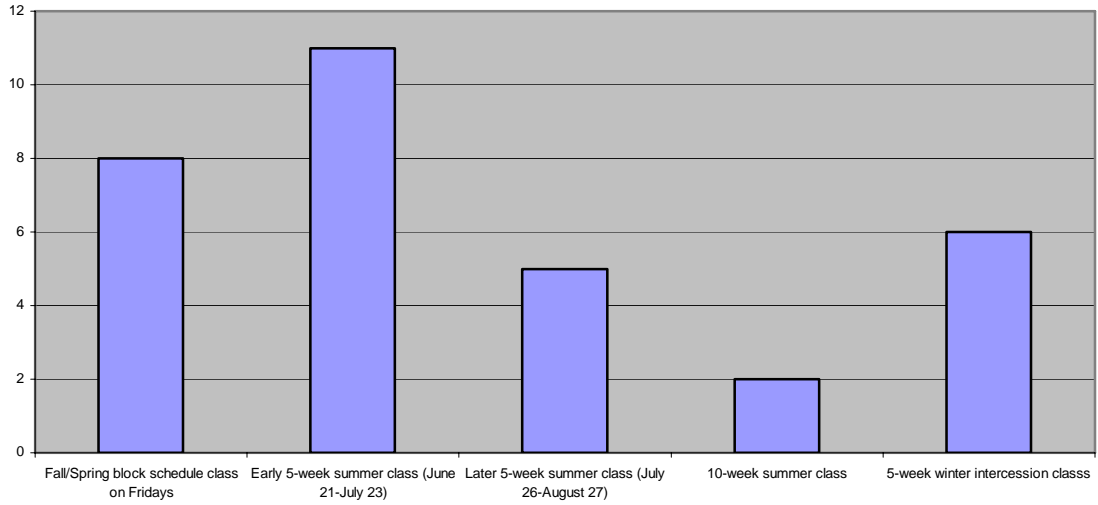
Note: N=77 for the early summer session, the late summer session and the winter intercession, 78 for the other two questions.

Chart 3: Percentage of full-time and adjunct faculty members willing (likely or very likely) to teach classes at various times



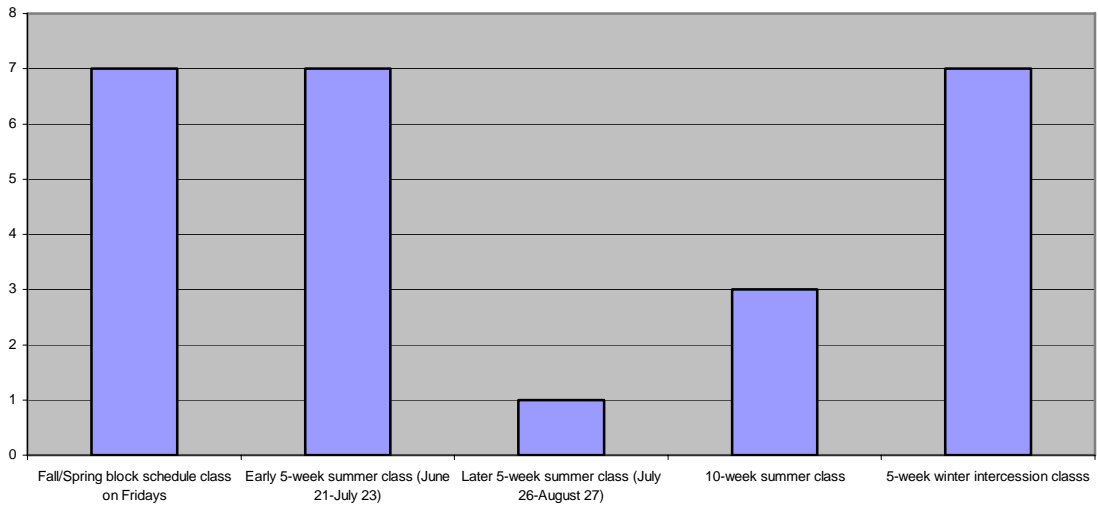
Note: N=77 for the early summer session, the late summer session and the winter intercession, 78 for the other two questions. None of the differences shown here were statistically significant.

Chart 4: Number of faculty willing (very likely or likely) to teach at various times, Language Arts Division



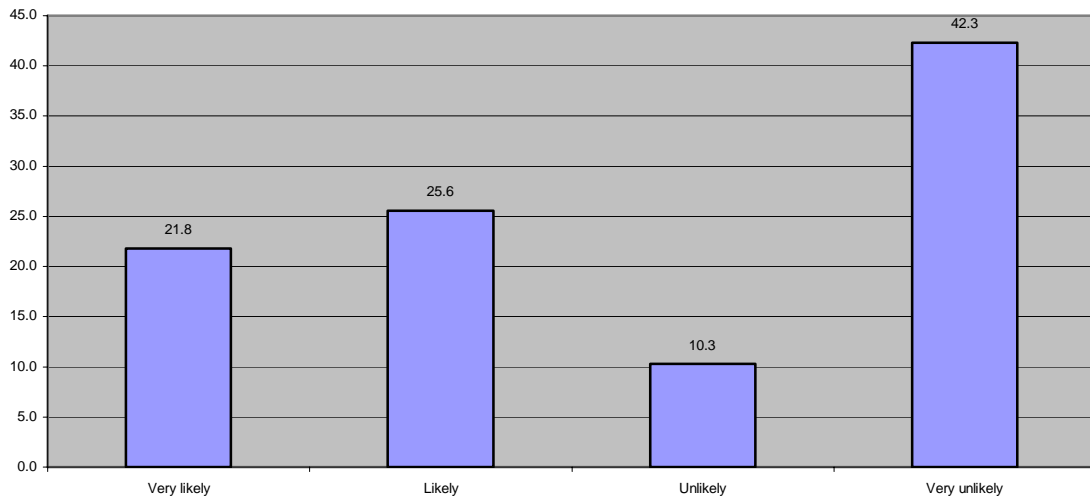
Note: N=16.

Chart 5: Number of faculty willing (very likely or likely) to teach at various times, Natural Sciences and Mathematics Division



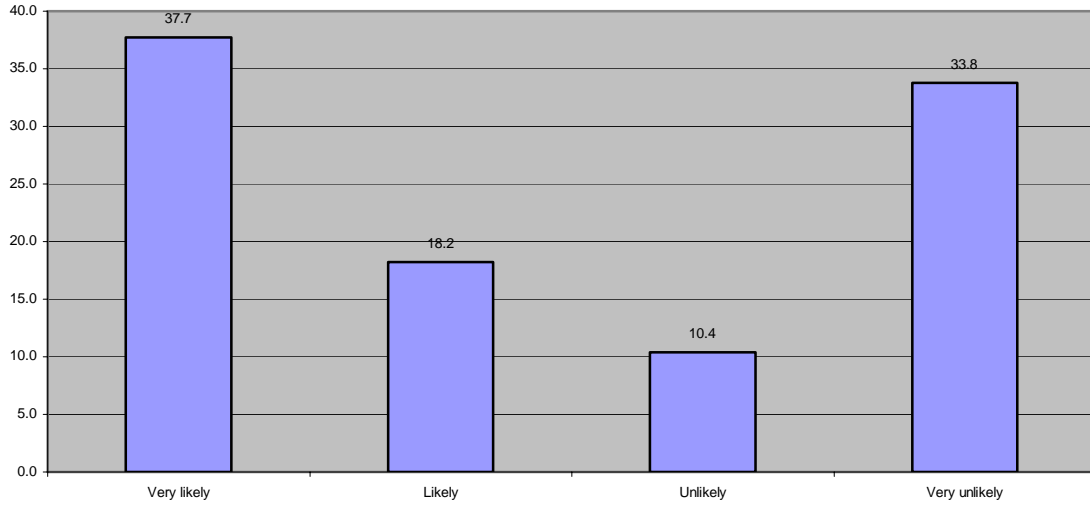
Note: N=16.

Chart6: Percentage of faculty likely to teach classes meeting on Fridays in block schedules (fall and spring)



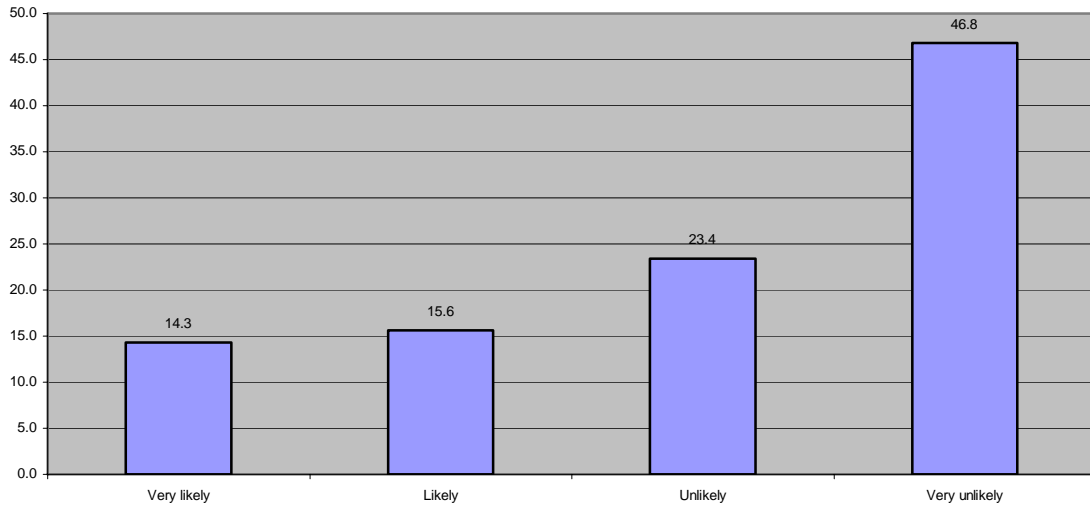
Note: N=78.

Chart 7: Percentage of faculty likely to teach classes in an early 5-week summer session (June 21-July 23)



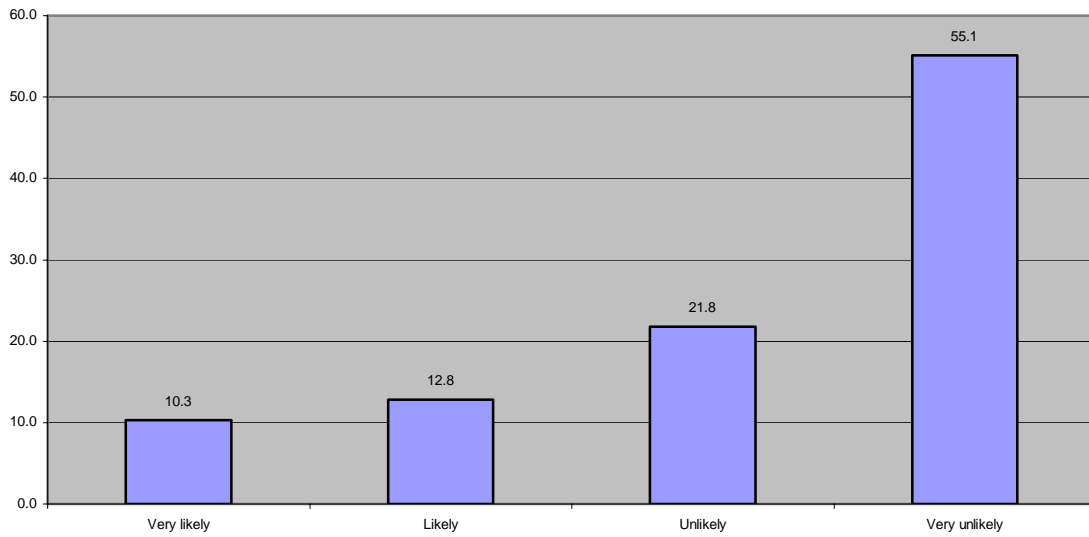
Note: N=77.

Chart 8: Percentage of faculty likely to teach classes in a later 5-week summer session (July 26-August 27)



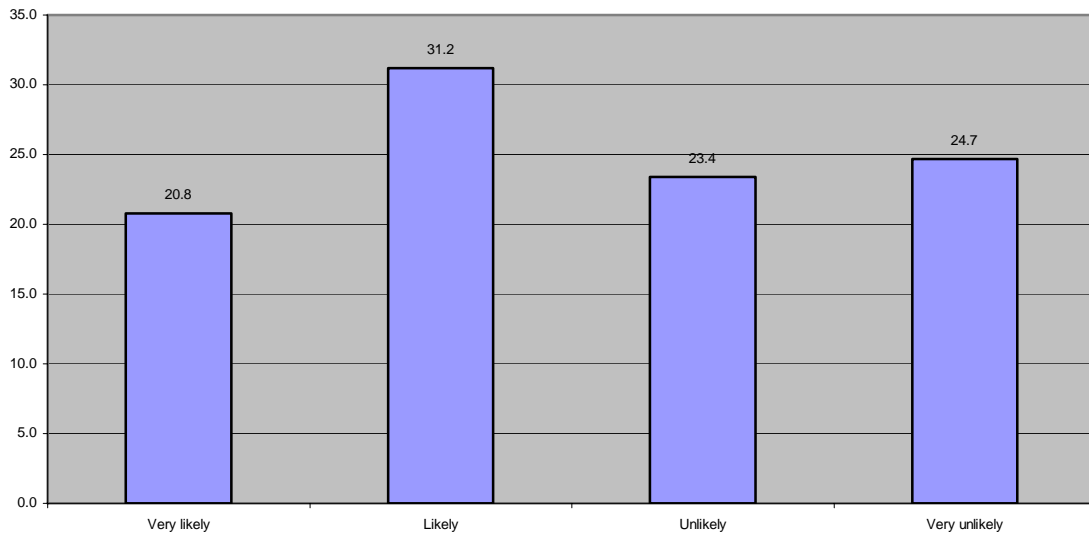
Note: N=77.

Chart 9: Percentage of faculty likely to teach in a 10-week summer session



Note: N=78.

Chart 10: Percentage of faculty likely to teach in a 5-week winter intercession



Note: N=77.

PORTERVILLE COLLEGE FACULTY INTEREST SURVEY

Spring 2002

Hello Porterville College faculty.

This brief survey is being conducted to help in planning for the future of Porterville College. It is confidential and anonymous. Please do not write your name on this page. Just circle the letter that corresponds with your answer for each question and return this page to Mike Carley's faculty box in the mailroom within 5 days.

Class Scheduling

Porterville college is considering a variety of changes to its academic calendar. Please circle how likely you would be to teach classes under the following circumstances. (The dates used in the examples below are hypothetical and are based on the 2003-04 academic year.)

	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely
1. A class in a 5-week summer session beginning about June 21 st and ending about July 23 rd .	a	b	c	d
2. A class in a 5-week summer session beginning about July 26 th and ending about August 27 th .	a	b	c	d
3. A class in a 10-week summer session beginning about June 21 st and ending about August 27 th .	a	b	c	d
4. A class in a 5-week winter session between the fall and spring semesters, which would begin about January 5 th and end about February 6 th .	a	b	c	d
5. A class in the normal fall and/or spring semester which meets on Fridays for 3 hours and 10 minutes (assuming a 3-unit class).	a	b	c	d

6. Are you full-time or adjunct faculty?

- a full-time b adjunct

7. In which academic division do you teach most of your classes?

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a Applied Technology | f Language Arts |
| b Business Education | g Natural Sciences and Mathematics |
| c Education and Career Development | h Physical Education and Athletics |
| d Fine and Applied Arts | i Social Sciences |
| e Health Careers | |