

Senate Ad Hoc Calendar Committee members:

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This is a recommendation that the University Senate incorporate the following changes to the Academic Calendar, effective for the 2021/2022 academic year:

1. Begin the Spring semester on a Monday.<sup>1</sup>
2. Move the Fall Break from Monday and Tuesday of the NINTH to the Monday and Tuesday of the TENTH week of the Fall semester.<sup>2</sup>
3. Add two 'Reading Days' to both the fall and spring semesters to occur on Thursday and Friday of "Dead Week" ([SR 5.2.5.6](#)).<sup>3</sup>
4. Adjust the final examination schedule from a 5 day schedule to a "4+1" final examination schedule. The Registrar will schedule all Final Examinations during the first four days (Monday through Thursday) of Final Exam week. The fifth day (Friday) would be reserved for scheduling of exams for students with conflicts.<sup>4</sup>

**Notes**

- <sup>1</sup> This change equalizes the instructional minutes between the Fall and Spring semesters. The actual start dates are included in the 5-year structural calendar. This change, in combination with #2, would align the fall and spring semester calendars. Both semesters would start on the same day of the week (i.e., Monday). Both semesters would have the same number of class meeting days. The distribution of those class meeting days across the days of the week would be more even ([Figure 1](#)).
- <sup>2</sup> This change moves Fall Break one week later in the semester from the current rules. The change aligns the start of Fall Break with the start of Spring Break.
- <sup>3</sup> The fall and spring semesters would each have two Reading Days. The Reading Days would be on the Thursday and Friday of "Dead Week" ([SR 5.2.5.6](#)) just prior to the week of final exams. The current Dead Week restrictions on certain instructional activities would continue to apply to Reading Days. An additional restriction would apply to Reading Days, namely no required class meetings or, more generally, no "required interactions" ([SR 5.2.5.2.3.1](#)). Reading Days are not academic holidays. The summer session would not have any reading days.
- <sup>4</sup> While no final exams will be officially scheduled on the +1 day (Friday) of Finals week, that day would be available as an extra day to schedule final exams for students with scheduling conflicts, including exams for students with accommodations. This proposal does not address the final exam schedule for online courses.

## **Background**

At its April 23, 2018 meeting, the University Senate approved a two-day Fall Break for the Monday and Tuesday of the week following midterms ([agenda](#), [original proposal](#), [approved proposal](#), [minutes](#), [transcript](#)). As part of this proposal, the Senate agreed to start the fall semester on a Monday rather than a Wednesday.

## **Problem**

No changes were made to the spring semester calendar. The spring semester continues to start on a Wednesday, amplifying asymmetries that already existed between the fall and spring semester calendars (click to view [Figure 1](#)). In addition to the different start days, the spring semester has two fewer class meeting days overall than the fall semester. Also, both semesters continue to have a relatively uneven distribution of class meeting days across the five days of the week. These asymmetries create design problems for many instructors, particularly those who need to teach the same course in both semesters and for those teaching classes that meet once a week.

## **Solution**

At the October 17, 2019 Senate Council meeting, a motion was approved to “create an ad hoc committee to review starting the Spring Semester on a Monday”. The Senate Academic Priorities and Planning Committee (SAPC) Chair (Osterhage) solicited volunteers from the SAPC, Registrar’s Office, faculty, advisors, and previous Senate calendar committee members.

The committee met multiple times between November 2019 and April 2020 and solicited feedback from units across campus. In addition to its original charge, the committee incorporated three additional elements into their discussions based on recommendations from relevant groups:

1. a recommendation from the Student Government Association to add two non-instructional “Reading Days” to the end of the semester,
2. a recommendation from the Registrar’s Office to change the Final Exam schedule from a 5 day schedule to a 4+1 day schedule (described in more detail in the attached document), and
3. A recommendation from the Math department to move Fall Break one week later in the semester to align the timing of the Fall Break with the first two days of Spring Break.

The committee unanimously approved the motion presented here on April 23, 2020.

## **Impact on Winter Break Calendar**

[SR 2.1.2.1](#) (Fall Semester) and [SR 2.1.2.2](#) (Spring Semester) suggest that, if we started the spring semester two days earlier (i.e., on a Monday rather than a Wednesday), that would mean that we always have exactly 23 calendar days between the end of the Fall Semester (that always ends on a Friday) and the proposed start of the Spring Semester (that we propose to start on a Monday).

The above referenced 23-day period includes four weekends (i.e., 4 Saturdays and 4 Sundays) and two University holidays (i.e., Christmas Day and New Year’s Day), leaving 13 work days between the end of the Fall Semester and the proposed start of the Spring Semester. If we assume that no work occurs between the two official University holidays (i.e., Christmas and New Year’s Day), that reduces the number of work days by three (3), leaving 10 work days (i.e., 2 weeks) under the proposed change.

Under the current proposal, the MLK holiday (that is always on a Monday) would usually occur exactly one week after the proposed start of Spring Semester classes (also a Monday). Occasionally, the MLK holiday

would occur exactly two weeks after the proposed start of the Spring Semester classes. The first such time this latter instance would occur would be spring 2030 and then again in spring 2036.

## **Proposed Senate Rule Changes**

### **2.1.2 TIMING OF TERMS**

#### **2.1.2.1 Fall Semester**

The fall semester shall begin in time to permit completion prior to the official late-December holiday break.

When Labor Day falls on September 1 or 2, classes will start on the Monday before Labor Day. When Labor Day falls on September 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7, classes will start on the Monday 14 days before Labor Day. The last day of classes will be on a ~~Friday~~, Wednesday, followed by two reading days (SR 5.2.4.6). Final examinations will run for four days, Monday through Thursday, with the fifth day (Friday) to be available for scheduling of final exams for students with conflicts (SR 5.2.4.7.4.2). Final examinations for weekend classes will be administered the weekend before this five-day period. [US: 12/10/84; 3/20/95; 4/9/2001; 2/11/2019]

#### **SR 2.1.2.2 Spring Semester**

The Spring Semester classes will start on a ~~Wednesday~~ Monday approximately ~~26~~ 24 days after the last day of final examinations for the Fall Semester. ~~When the Fall Semester starts on the Monday before Labor Day, The subsequent Spring Semester will~~ begin on the second Monday of January. ~~begin on January 14, 12 or 15 13.~~ ~~When the Fall Semester starts a week earlier, the Spring Semester will begin on January 9, 10, 11, 12, or 13.~~ The final day of classes will be a ~~Friday~~, Wednesday, followed by two reading days (SR 5.2.4.6). Final examinations will run for four days, Monday through Thursday, with the fifth day (Friday) to be available for scheduling of final exams for students with conflicts (SR 5.2.5.7.4.2) ~~run for five days, Monday through Friday.~~ Final examinations for weekend classes will be administered the weekend before this ~~five-day~~ period [US: 3/20/95; 4/9/2001; 2/11/2019]

#### **SR 5.2.5.6 Dead Week**

[US: 4/10/06; 4/13/2009]

1. The ~~last~~ week ~~of instruction~~ preceding the final examination period (SR 5.2.5.7.1) of ~~a regular~~ the fall and spring semesters is termed "Dead Week." In the rest of these Rules, this phrase also refers to the last three days of instruction of the summer session and winter intersession. [US: 4/10/2006]
2. In cases of "Take Home" final examinations, students shall not be required to return the completed examination before the regularly scheduled examination period for that course.
3. No written examinations, including final examinations, may be scheduled during the Dead Week.
4. No quizzes may be given during Dead Week.
5. No project/lab practicals/paper/presentation deadlines or oral/listening examinations may be scheduled to fall during the Dead Week unless it was scheduled in the syllabus AND the course has no final examination (or assignment that acts as a final examination) scheduled during finals week. A

course with a lab component may schedule the lab practical of the course during Dead Week if the lab portion does not also require a Final Examination during finals week.

6. Make-up exams and quizzes are allowed during Dead Week; these are exempt from the restrictions stated in 1, 2, and 3.
7. Class participation and attendance grades are permitted during Dead Week.
  - \* The current wording of this rule does not prohibit continuing into Dead Week regularly assigned graded homework that was announced in the class syllabus. [SREC: 9/2009]
  - \* The Dead Week rule applies to ALL courses taught in the fall semester, spring semester, and summer session, including those taught in a format that has been compressed into less than one semester or session. The rule does not apply to courses in professional programs in colleges that have University Senate approval to follow a nonstandard calendar, as authorized in SR 2.1.1(I). [SREC: 3/15/2012]
8. For fall and spring semester, the Thursday and Friday of Dead Week are study days (i.e., “Reading Days”) during which no required interactions (SR 9.1) shall be scheduled.

### SR 2.1.3 Academic Holidays

The Monday and Tuesday that begin the ~~ninth~~ tenth week from the start of the University Calendar fall semester are designated the Fall Break, which is an academic holiday. [US: 4/23/2018; 2/11/2019]

The tenth week of the Spring Semester shall be utilized each year as the Spring Break, which is an academic holiday. [US: 4/25/88]

### SR 5.2.5.7 Final Examinations

#### SR 5.2.5.7.1 Scheduling of Exams by the Registrar

The Registrar shall schedule two-hour periods for final examinations for courses offered during the fall and spring semesters. The faculties of colleges that have Senate approval for their own special calendars may instruct the Registrar to schedule final examination periods of a different length. The Registrar shall schedule spring and fall semester final examination periods during the last ~~five (5) days~~ Monday through Thursday of the semester; The last Friday of the semester will be set aside for final examinations rescheduled in accordance with SR 5.2.5.7.4.2.

For the fall and spring semesters only, that the five-day examination period shall be immediately preceded by a two study days (i.e., “Reading Days”) ~~or and a~~ weekend ~~on~~ during which no ~~classes or examinations for weekday classes~~ required interactions will be scheduled. ~~other than~~ Ffinal examinations for weekend classes ~~will which shall~~ be administered the during this weekend ~~before this five-day period and need not be preceded by a study day.~~ [US: 4/9/2001; 10/10/11]

The Registrar shall schedule final examinations for courses offered during the summer session and winter intersession for the time of the last scheduled class period. [US: 10/11/11]