

-Senate Council office staff, April 24, 2018

October Fall Break Proposal

Introduction: Mental health and wellness continue to be important issues on our campus and on campuses nationwide. Especially for first year students, having the opportunity to visit home, decompress, catch up on work, or just rest, can have a huge impact on their academic success and personal well-being. A short fall break would provide that opportunity and break up the semester into chunks without disrupting classes and losing school days. Adopting this proposal is not unprecedented in higher education, 65% of our benchmark institutions have a fall break, lengths differ but most are two days.

What: A change to the University Calendar to implement an October Fall break on the Thursday and Friday of the 8th week of the Fall semester.

When: Begin Fall 2019 and continue thereafter.

Details:

- To make room for the two-day break, classes would begin on a Monday instead of Wednesday.
 - Coincides with a reshaping of the first-year experience on campus in regard to K Week activities and early move in.
 - Starting class on a Monday helps set an academic standard for first year students so that, right away, they know they are here first and foremost to learn and attend classes.
 - Reduces the chances of student conduct issues happening during the first week of school.
- Classes that will lose a day on the Thursday or Friday will be able to make it up on Monday and Tuesday – once the standardization of TR and MWF classes sets in this will not be an issue.
- This would not change or impact the current Thanksgiving break.
- Residence Halls would remain open.
- Endorsed by Associate Provost for Student and Academic Life Greg Heileman and Dean of Students Nick Kehrwald.
- Endorsed by the Student Government Association Senate.

FAQ

1. Why not make mon/tue of thanksgiving break off so that the whole week is off, similar to spring break?
 - a. SGA believes that the importance of this break is to break up the semester and give students an additional opportunity to catch up on work, visit home, and decompress. Many of our benchmark institutions have a fall break that is separate from the Thanksgiving break and we think that this method does more for student health and wellness than a whole week off for Thanksgiving.
2. Why not have fall break on a mon/tue instead of thu/fri. this way the added and dropped days are identical in terms of the day of the week.
 - a. We believe that a thu/fri break would be better for the flow of the semester by allowing classes to start back on a Monday instead of a Wednesday. We also believe mon/tue to be higher quality teaching days, so the impact felt on teaching would be less with the removal of thu/fri than with the removal of mon/tue.
3. Does this alter the current Thanksgiving break?
 - a. This has no impact on the current Thanksgiving break.
4. Does this change professional school calendars?
 - a. This proposed change is only for the general University Calendar. We encourage professional schools to consider the addition of a fall break onto their academic calendar but respect the fact that this effort should come from within their own programs.
5. How does this change class days in the semester?
 - a. This proposal would eliminate one Thursday and one Friday and add one Monday and one Tuesday. We realize that this could pose challenges for teachers with one day a week courses on Thursday but hope that because there is a whole academic year before this proposal kicks in that professors have enough time to plan accordingly for the change.

*Based on Fall 2018 Calendar which has been set, could be slight variation in Fall 2019

No Fall Break

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Teaching days
August	1	1	2	2	2	1	9
September	3	4	4	4	4	5	24
October	5	5	5	4	4	3	27
November	4	4	3	4	4	3	22
December	1	1	1	1	1	2	7
Totals	14	15	15	15	15	15	89

With Fall Break

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Teaching days
August	2	2	2	2	2	1	11
September	3	4	4	4	4	5	24
October	5	5	5	3	3	3	25
November	4	4	3	4	4	3	22
December	1	1	1	1	1	2	7
Totals	15	16	15	14	14	15	89