

Professor Beth Wilson
Proposed Calendar Change
Senate Discussion Item, 12/6/16

Proposal:

I propose a change to the calendar to include a short fall break in week 8 of the semester – either on a Mon/Tues or Thurs/Fri depending on how we make up for the days.

Rationale:

Because we state that student success is our top priority, it is essential that the calendar be conducive to reaching this goal. Holding classes for 13 weeks with no break is not consistent with effective student learning (classes on TR have zero days off this year). At this point in the semester, our students are overwhelmed, exhausted, falling ill and in no shape to learn. A short fall break during week 8 of the semester would help students rejuvenate and get caught up so that they are ready to tackle the second half of the semester.

To make up for the new fall break: I have several proposals for make up this time. They are not in any order of importance or preference.

- 1) Start the semester two days earlier on a Thursday. (There is no reason that we need to start the semester on a Monday). In this case the fall break would be on Thurs and Fri.
- 2) End the semester two days later – have regular classes on Monday and Tuesday of what is currently finals week. Start finals on Wednesday and go through Saturday (which is already a green day). This proposal would require us to reconfigure finals week to have all finals in four days rather than five days. If that is not possible, we might have to have finals extend through the following Monday. Note that many faculty hold review sessions on the last day of class anyway, thus a review session on a Mon or Tues before finals might lead to better outcomes. With this configuration, the fall break would be on Mon and Tues.
- 3) Take two days from the current Thanksgiving break. Classes would meet on Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week and we'd have Wed-Fri off for the holiday. It is my understanding that we once had this configuration, thus we should revisit it. With this configuration, the fall break would be on Mon and Tues.
- 4) Ask for an exception to be able to open campus on Labor day and Veteran's day and "move" those holidays to week 8 of the semester. Several private schools hold classes on labor day since it is right in the beginning of the semester and hence an unneeded break for their student-centered agenda. Of course, as a State school, that may be impossible to do.