

12-12-2014

SR-14-15-25 FS

Marshall University

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## FACULTY SENATE RECOMMENDATION

### SR-14-15-25 FS

Recommends that we continue with the current 14/15 week-calendar model for one more year (2015-2016). Then, due to the many valid considerations/concerns raised by students and faculty alike with many aspects of our current calendar model (beyond just the uneven number of weeks between semesters), we will take the next year to more deliberately discuss a new structure to the academic calendar, with these changes taking effect in the 2016-17 school year.

### RATIONALE

Several faculty have raised a number of objections to the proposed academic calendar for 2015-16 (with similar objections to the calendar proposed for 2016-17). No faculty argued in support of the proposed calendar change, although some voiced support for making the lengths of the semesters equal (either by lengthening the fall or shortening the spring); several wondered why the 14-week fall semester we have been working with is now posing a problem. Adding a week on the end of the fall semester merely to make it even with the spring semester does not solve the problems that the fall calendar currently has (notably, that there is no substantive break for students or faculty until the week of Thanksgiving).

- 1) The end of the fall term is so late that means that the grades won't "roll" for at least 2 more days, allowing very little time to run the report for students on probation, suspension and those who have a status change to good standing. That usually means the following morning after grades roll. College offices will not know who is to be suspended, put on probation, or moved to good standing until, perhaps, Christmas Eve, or later. College offices must send out 5 different types of letters to these different types of students (probation, 1 semester suspensions, 2 semester suspensions, 2 year suspensions and good standing), but must first individually double check all students on the lists, which can be as many as 150-200 students in the COLA. If College staff do not work full days on Christmas Eve and perhaps Christmas Day, then students will have to wait until after New Year's Eve to find out their probation, suspension, or good standing status.
- 2) The proposed changes leave faculty little time to make substantive changes to syllabi, to plan courses, or engage scholarly activities during break. Faculty are increasingly expected to use the first week on contract (prior to instructional time) for administrative and service activities; together, these make untenable demands on a single planning week, especially for faculty with heavy teaching loads. This is graphically illustrated on the following calendar, which shows that there are 6 non-holiday days off between semesters in the proposed academic calendar for AY 2015-2016 (this number is 5 if one considers that the State includes half-day holidays for Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve for that calendar year).
- 3) Moving the end of the semester closer to the Christmas holidays will force some students to travel on days that are necessarily more expensive than earlier closings are. This is also true for any faculty and staff who use this time to travel and see family. There must certainly be an associated cost to the university to keep the buildings and facilities open for these extra days.

- 4) If the fall semester would start a week earlier, this would more closely match the Cabell County public school schedule – certainly would help College of Ed students who are doing their student teaching – to actually start their semester of student teaching when the school starts.

**FACULTY SENATE CHAIR:**

APPROVED BY THE  
FACULTY SENATE: Larry Stiebler DATE: December 12, 2014

DISAPPROVED BY THE  
FACULTY SENATE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT:**

APPROVED: Ray S. White DATE: 6/11/15

DISAPPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

**COMMENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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