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VICE CHANCELLOR FOR
ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
AND DEAN OF THE
FACULTIES

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Memorandum

To: Academic Deans

From: R. Gerald Pugh, Interim Chair, Calendar and Schedule Committee
Kim Walker, Chair, Calendar and Schedule Committee
Associate Deans of the Faculties, Office of Academic Affairs
and Dean of the Faculties *KW*

Date: January 22, 2002

Subj: Proposal for changes to the First Semester Academic Calendar

This memorandum is to apprise you of proposed changes to the first semester academic calendar, which have been made by members of the Campus Calendar and Schedule Committee. Before the Committee takes action on whether to forward these proposals to the Bloomington Faculty Council, the Committee would like to ascertain reaction, particularly from school faculties.

Attached to this memorandum are four documents:

1. The current BFC Campus Calendar Principles (approved 11/19/91) with notations identifying the proposed changes.
2. An application of those principles for the 2001-2 academic calendar identifying the allocation of time in each of the year's fifty-two weeks.
3. Minutes of the November 12 meeting.
4. Members of the Calendar and Schedule Committee for 2001-2.

It was September 1996 and 1997 when the campus last began first semester classes on Labor Day (which is not currently a class holiday but it is so designated for staff). Subsequent to those years, the Calendar and Schedule Committee has received and rather carefully researched and studied complaints about the first semester calendar. The issues brought to us can be summarized as follows:

1. The first day of the semester should not be a holiday.
2. Labor Day should be celebrated as a holiday with no classes scheduled.
3. The span of time between the start of the semester and Thanksgiving is too long; a fall break is needed.

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4. Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week are scheduled class days but are not effectively used thus reducing the semester in length.
5. The first semester is not symmetrical with the second semester as it has two fewer scheduled class days.

The Committee has obtained comments from every school and department on these issues in the last four years. We now find ourselves approaching September 2002 (and 2003) when, again, the start of the semester will begin on Labor Day with the attendant problems of staff off and the need for public explanations. The evidence collected seems clear:

1. Complete weeks of Monday through Fridays are basic to a successful first and second semester calendar structure. Broken weeks are to be avoided in so far as possible. This is particularly important in science departments with laboratory scheduling. This means a long weekend fall break is not viable.
2. Time shifting received virtually no support. That is, grant Labor Day as a holiday but substitute another day for Monday (such as the preceding Friday) or shift the entire week by one day (utilizing Tuesday through Saturday).

With a fall break eliminated from the list of five concerns, the Committee sees only one possibility to address the remaining four issues. This proposal must then be judged in the context of advantages and disadvantages with the present construct.

We suggest adding the unallocated week after second summer to the first semester calendar. The start of the first semester would be identical to that of Purdue. The addition of five instructional days in that week would then permit the establishment of identical (symmetrical) semester calendars by granting Labor Day as a class holiday and creating a one-week holiday at Thanksgiving. (The semester would never start on Labor Day (third Monday or second Monday of the term, similar to the King day in second semester). Each term would have 74 class days, all class days would be better utilized, and there would be one less broken week.

Note: We are fully aware that if we could reschedule Thanksgiving to the fourth Thursday in OCTOBER, a real mid-term fall break could be achieved!

The Committee is aware that international student orientation, freshman advising, associate instructor training, and possible pressure to shorten the second semester session (thus affecting income and course scheduling choices for students) might be affected by this proposal. Clearly, faculty who teach in the second summer session may wish to continue to use this week as a break period. We write to you seeking illumination of these concerns and the identification of others.

No one knows better than your Calendar and Schedule Committee members that there is no perfect calendar and that more wishes could be accommodated if we had more than fifty-two weeks a year to utilize. So, it is really a question of which calendar features and calendar benefits do you prefer?

The Committee will meet again in early February. For due consideration, may we ask that you forward your observations to the Office of Academic Affairs and Dean of the Faculties (Bryan Hall 111) by Monday, February 4, 2002.

RGP/KW:jr

CC: Committee Members