

To: Bloomington Faculty Council
From: Bloomington Academic Calendar Task Force
Date: September 17, 2010
Re: New Proposal to Revise the Bloomington Campus Calendar

On April 20, 2010, the BFC voted to approve a recommendation that classes no longer be held on Labor Day, effective 2011. In addition, the BFC approved "in principle" other proposed calendar changes, and recommended that the Task Force further explore possibilities for a different first day of classes, fall break, and revamped summer sessions. The Task Force met throughout the summer, and consulted with a wide variety of offices, programs and academic units that would be affected by any change in the academic calendar. We recommend:

(1) Fall semester classes will begin on Monday one week prior to the present first day of classes.

This change adds five instructional days to the fall semester; however, with no classes on Labor Day, fall break (one day) and a full week at Thanksgiving, the net increase is one instructional day. Fall semester instructional days would total 73; spring semester remains unchanged at 74 days. Starting classes one full week earlier avoids creation of a "broken" week at the beginning of the semester. Purdue, IUPUI, Ball State and four other CIC universities begin the fall semester on this earlier date.

(2) Fall semester recess will occur on Friday of the seventh or eighth week of classes (no regularly scheduled classes will meet).

This change provides a break from instructional activities midway through the fall semester, offering an opportunity for students and faculty to catch a breather during the long run from late August to Thanksgiving. Purdue, Ball State and two other CIC universities have a fall break. The one-day recess would also create opportunities to schedule special social, cultural and recreational activities (e.g., events linked to Themester, service and community engagement, programs in the arts, &c.). The fall break creates an additional "broken" week, but the recess occurs on Friday when there are fewer scheduled classes than on other weekdays.

(3) Thanksgiving Recess will be one full week.

This change eliminates one "broken" week, and acknowledges the reality that holding classes on Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving Week creates major travel problems for students wishing to go home for the holiday. The longer recess allows students more time to work on major class projects that are often due soon after their return to campus. Three CIC universities have a week-long recess at Thanksgiving.

(4) The summer session will consist of three four-week modules.

This change introduces greater flexibility for academic units to schedule summer classes, and increases the desirability of summer instruction for students and faculty. Classes in the first summer module will begin on the present first day of classes for the six-week session; there will be no breaks between summer session modules and existing holiday recesses will be preserved. Summer courses may range in duration from two to twelve weeks; to minimize overlaps, courses will ordinarily begin at the start of each module and in the middle of the session (allowing two sequential six-week terms). This change also reduces the summer session from fourteen to twelve weeks, and creates nearly three weeks between the end of summer session and the beginning of fall semester classes. This longer hiatus will allow greater opportunities to perform maintenance on instructional facilities, and is sufficient for the many activities scheduled for the weeks just prior to the fall semester (Welcome Week, international orientation, fall orientation for some first-year students, testing, advising, teaching workshops, &c.).

If approved by the Bloomington Faculty Council and by the campus administration during fall semester 2010, the new calendar could take effect in summer session 2012.

Members of the Bloomington Academic Calendar Task Force:

Michael Baker, CWA Representative
Cindy Curvin Boyd, BPC Representative
Mike Carroll, Registrar's Office
Nick D'Amico, Graduate and Professional Students Organization
Michael Coleman, IUSA President
Pat Connor, Residential Programs and Services
Roland Cote, Registrar
Thomas F. Gieryn, Vice Provost for Faculty & Academic Affairs [chair]
Jennifer Laherty, IU Libraries
Katie Lambert, RHA President
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