



University Council

Educational Affairs Committee – 2017-2018

Dr. Mark Farmer, Arts and Sciences (Sciences), Chair

Agricultural and Environmental Sciences - Dr. Jean Williams-Woodward
(also representing Forestry and Natural Resources)

Arts and Sciences - Dr. Barbara Biesecker (Arts)
Dr. Steven Lewis (Sciences)

Business – Dr. Santanu Chatterjee

Education – Dr. Diane Cooper

Environment and Design – Mr. Ronald Sawhill

Family and Consumer Sciences - Dr. Denise Lewis

Journalism and Mass Communication – Dr. Jeong-Yeob Han

Public and International Affairs – Dr. Teena Wilhelm

Veterinary Medicine – Dr. Susan Williams

(also representing Pharmacy, Law, and Engineering)

Provost's Representative – Dr. Rahul Shrivastav

Undergraduate Student Representative – Ms. Roya Naghepour

Graduate/Professional Student Representative – Mr. Michael Snell

The Educational Affairs Committee has met three times during the fall semester to discuss proposed changes in the Academic Calendar for 2019-2020. Our deliberations were informed by many conversations with a diverse number of stakeholders including the Deans of most UGA schools and colleges, representatives of the Student Government Association, undergraduate advisors, The Graduate student association, faculty representing all colleges, the offices of student housing, admissions and orientation, and student financial aid as well as the President, Provost, Registrar and Vice President of Instruction.

The EAC approached the creation of the 2019-2020 academic calendar with the goal of starting the fall semester a bit later in August than has traditionally been the case. The question of shortening the overall length of a semester by the inclusion of final exams as instructional time was clarified by the USG Board of Regents when they specified that a semester shall be defined as fifteen weeks of instruction plus an optional finals periods. This is consistent with the way in which UGA has defined the length of a semester and keeps us in compliance with federal, SACS, and USG definitions.

In order to accommodate a later start date without extending the semester too far into December, the EAC recommends that several changes be considered regarding the fall semester of 2019-2020.

First, classes should be taught on the Monday and Tuesday of Thanksgiving week. This will accomplish two goals. This week will now count towards the federally mandated and BOR defined fifteen week semester. In the past the lack of any classes taught during this week put UGA at a disadvantage in meeting the fifteen week requirement. It will also allow UGA to make up for two missed days during the semester (Labor Day and Fall break Friday) and thus insure that classes taught on Mondays and Fridays will have the required fifteen meeting times during the semester. The proposed change would bring UGA closer to the Thanksgiving break policies of our peer, aspirant, and fellow USG institutions.

Second, the current five day finals period could be shortened to four days. This could be accomplished by having a mixture of three-hour finals periods and two-hour finals periods. Many final exams do not require the entire three hours currently allotted but this limits the number of sessions per day to four. If five finals sessions per day could be accommodated the same number of finals periods (twenty) could be accommodated in one less day. The Office of Instruction is currently exploring the logistics of this recommendation as it poses new challenges in terms of aligning the final exams schedule with the semester class offerings schedule while still accommodating the needs of those courses that still require the full three hours for finals.

Third, by beginning classes on a Monday, and having classes for two days during Thanksgiving week, the semester would always end on a Friday. Finals would begin the following Monday. Most faculty and students agree that the need for an additional Reading day would be eliminated due to the full weekend break between the end of classes and the beginning of final exams.

Finally, in the fall semester, there is little justification for "Gap Day" the day of unscheduled activities that traditionally separates the last day of finals from Commencement. In the spring semester Gap day is critical to those colleges who hold special convocation events that should not interfere with either final exams or commencement. Gap day would be retained for the spring semester but because few colleges hold convocation in the fall, or their numbers are significantly reduced compared to spring, it was felt that Gap day in the fall semester could be eliminated.

The net result is that the fall semester of 2019 would begin approximately one week later than it has in the past and the fall semester's activities would conclude in December at approximately the same date as they always have.

As mentioned by President Morehead in his opening remarks, we have passed on these recommendations to the Vice President for Instruction for his consideration in

proposing an academic calendar to the President for approval by the Board of Regents.

This concludes the report of the Educational Affairs Committee.