

1-26-1995

Academic Standards and Calendar Committee Report #94-95-1: Proposed University Calendar for Academic Year 1996-97

University of Rhode Island Faculty Senate

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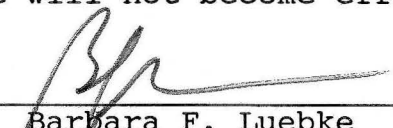
THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island
FACULTY SENATE
BILL
Adopted by the Faculty Senate

TO: President Robert L. Carothers

FROM: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

1. The attached BILL, titled Academic Standards and Calendar
Committee Report #94-95-1: Proposed University Calendar for
Academic Year 1996-97
is forwarded for your consideration.
2. The original and two copies for your use are included.
3. This BILL was adopted by vote of the Faculty Senate on January 26, 1995.
(date)
4. After considering this bill, will you please indicate your approval or disapproval. Return the original or forward it to the Board of Governors, completing the appropriate endorsement below.
5. In accordance with Section 10, paragraph 4 of the Senate's By-Laws, this bill will become effective February 16, 1995, three weeks after Senate approval, unless: (1) specific dates for implementation are written into the bill; (2) you return it disapproved; (3) you forward it to the Board of Governors for their approval; or (4) the University Faculty petitions for a referendum. If the bill is forwarded to the Board of Governors, it will not become effective until approved by the Board.

January 27, 1995
(date)



Barbara F. Luebke
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

Returned.

- a. Approved . *See Attached*
- b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors _____.
- c. Disapproved _____.

2.2.95
(date)



President

UNIVERSITY CALENDAR 1996-97

PROPOSED FALL SEMESTER, 1996

August 26, Monday	Classes begin, Kingston Campus and CCE
September 2, Monday	Holiday, Labor Day
October 14, Monday	Holiday, Columbus Day, classes do not
meet October 15, Tuesday	Monday classes meet
November 11, Monday	Holiday, Veteran's Day, classes do not
meet	
November 27, Wednesday	Thanksgiving recess begins, 8:00 AM
December 2, Monday	Classes resume, 8:00 AM
December 9, Monday	Classes end, Kingston campus
December 10-11, 14-15	Reading days
December 12-13, 16-19	Final Examinations, Kingston campus
December 19, Thursday	CCE classes, Examinations end
December 23, Monday	Final Grades due in Office of the
	Registrar, 4:00 PM
December 25, Wednesday	Holiday, Christmas
January 1, Wednesday	Holiday, New Year's Day

PROPOSED SPRING SEMESTER, 1997

January 13, Monday	Classes begin, Kingston Campus and CCE
January 20, Monday	Holiday, Martin Luther King Day
January 21, Tuesday	Monday classes meet
February 17, Monday	Classes will not meet
March 10, Monday	Spring recess begins, 8:00 AM
March 17, Monday	Classes resume, 8:00 AM
April 29, Tuesday	Classes end, Kingston Campus
April 30, May 1, 3-4	Reading days, Kingston Campus
May 2, 5-9	Final examinations, Kingston Campus
May 9, Friday	CCE classes, examinations end
May 12, Monday	Final grades due in Office of the
	Registrar, 4:00 PM
May 18, Sunday	Commencement
May 26, Monday	Holiday, Memorial Day

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UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE

ACADEMIC STANDARDS AND CALENDAR
COMMITTEE Report #1994-95-1

standards and calendar committee report #1994-95-1
The committee was formed in 1994 to review and
update the standards and calendar of the University of
Rhode Island. The committee has held several public
hearings and has received many suggestions from
faculty, staff, and students. The committee has
developed a new set of standards and a new
calendar for the University of Rhode Island. The
committee believes that these changes will improve
the quality of education at the University of Rhode
Island and will better serve the needs of our
students.

TO: John Long for Academic Standards and Calendar Committee

FROM: Fran Cohen, Director of Student Life

DATE: November 29, 1994

RE: Academic Calendar/Housing Dilemma

This is the information you requested to assist with deliberations about a pre-Labor Day start to classes for the 1996-97 calendar year. Please let me know if I can provide additional assistance.

Information about the Population Concerned

During the 1992-93 academic year, Institutional Research helped us describe our commuter population. I believe the information is still reasonably accurate for determining where our students live. The following are the coastal locations which would be affected by an early start. Some of these individuals live at home with parents and would not be affected. Most of those in Narragansett are in rental properties.

5,251 students commute		
Jamestown	60	1.1%
Charlestown	106	2%
Westerly	136	2.6%
Newport	181	3.4%
North Kingstown	307	5.8%
South Kingstown	655	12.5%
Narragansett	1453	27.7%

Information from Student Affairs Staff

- *Student Affairs staff are generally supportive of starting classes pre-Labor Day with a Saturday-Sunday move-in, Monday as an advising day and the first day of classes on the Tuesday before Labor Day.
- *The Counseling Center reports that students' mental health suffers in a Fall semester which is compressed and lacks holiday breaks.
- *A calendar which schedules classes on State holidays wreaks havoc with student services. We cannot afford to pay time-and-a-half to be fully staffed yet students expect full service on these days from Health Services, Counseling Center, Student Life, Student Activities, etc.
- *An exam period ending as late as December 23 is problematic for our out-of-state students who are traveling considerable distances as late as December 24.
- *We are required to keep residence halls open until noon the day following exams. The current calendar has us closing residence halls at noon on December 24. This poses problems for staff.
- *A pre-Labor Day start would save Athletics about \$15,000 because they wouldn't have to pay room and board for athletes who have to start training early.
- *Dining Services would need to make some adjustments to existing agreements with bargaining units regarding start dates for some employees but this would be easier than beginning the semester's meal service on a holiday weekend.

*This change will have a financial effect on students. Room and board expenses both on and off-campus may increase slightly and some students working summer jobs will lose substantial bonuses paid for working through the Labor Day weekend. Your plan to seek student input through focus groups should turn up any other potential problems.

*Some parents will complain about having to move their students on a non-holiday weekend, but we feel they will adjust.

Information from Housing and Residential Life (HRL) and Dining Services

- *HRL cannot provide temporary accommodations for students who live down-the-line but are not allowed access until after Labor Day.
- *As of September 6, 1994, we had less than 10 official vacancies and no triples. We also did not assign roommates to the 107 Resident Assistants hired at that time. Additional vacancies occur but rooms are not reassigned until they become "official" during the first few weeks of classes. Students on the waiting list are usually accommodated quickly.
- *A standard residence hall room costs about \$13 per night per person and three meals a day on the Dining Services meal plan costs about \$15. Any increase in room and board would be calculated based on the net number of additional days in the academic calendar for fall and spring and efforts would be made to keep additional costs associated with an extended academic calendar to a minimum.

Reactions from Renters and Realtors

Under the direction of Assistant Director of Student Life Deborah Barton and Graduate Assistant Donna Hayes, our Commuter Center staff conducted a phone survey of 79 landlords and 16 Realtors. This is about 31% of the landlords and 53% of the Realtors who list with our Off-Campus Housing Office. The following are the results of this survey.

1. As a landlord, would you be willing to start an academic year lease before Labor Day and beginning with the last week of August?

Landlords:	50 - yes	24 - no	5 - don't care or don't know
Realtors:	5 - yes	11 - no	
	61% - yes	39% - no	

2. If you are willing to begin the lease earlier, how would this affect the rent?

Landlords:	14 - rent would be adjusted (increased)	
	38 - no change to rent amount	
	27 - no response (many of this group were unwilling to adjust lease)	
Realtors:	Any adjustment would be up to the landlords. Some	

Realtors believe that landlords will simply have to adjust if they want to rent during the winter season. Others believe that landlords would have a big problem because they depend on the summer rental income, use the house themselves during that week, and/or need the week to prepare the house for winter renters.

cc: John H. McCray
Student Affairs Directors
Deborah Barton and Donna Hayes

TO: John Long for Academic Standards and Calendar Committee

FROM: Fran Cohen, Director of Student Life

DATE: December 15, 1994

RE: Academic Calendar

Since my November 29 memo, I received additional information about the costs of a Fall semester with classes during State holidays:

*Health Services incurs an additional expense of \$3,000 in salaries to maintain minimal coverage.

*Student Activities' costs is approximately \$1,500

*This year the Counseling Center received 62 phone calls from students on holidays when they had to close but classes were open.

*Regarding the stress of a compressed semester, this Fall, the Counseling Center logged the largest number of clients in any Fall semester. Staff from several departments have been involved in mediating an unusual number of conflicts among students which threatened to become physical. This typically happens more in the Spring semester.

Steffen Rogers sent me the enclosed minutes from the Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Advisory Committee. This is a diverse and representative group of students from each department in the college and as you can see in item 6, they had very strongly negative feelings about this year's calendar.

As I mentioned, the Student Affairs Division strongly supports the academic year start in August beginning in 1995.

College of Arts and Sciences
Undergraduate Advisory Committee
Minutes from November 3, 1994 and December 1, 1994
Page 2

6. The students were extremely disturbed by the schedule of courses for the fall semester of 1994. For instance, they stated very strongly that URI should not schedule classes on Veterans Day, that it does not show proper respect for family members who have served in the armed forces. The students' reaction on this issue was surprisingly strong. The students were equally upset by having classes conducted on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving. They pointed out that the University is recruiting 60 percent of its students from out-of-state and then expecting those students to stay through Wednesday afternoon to meet their classes. In some cases, if they needed to fly home, that schedule translates into arriving at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday for Thanksgiving dinner. The students said it was extremely frustrating because they were torn between attending their Wednesday class or leaving early so they could get home in time for Thanksgiving. The out-of-state students were equally agitated about the fact that the final exam schedule runs until December 23rd. In-state, but particularly out-of-state students, were very upset about the fact that many of the students would be required to stay through the afternoon of December 23rd; therefore making it extremely difficult for them to get home in a timely-fashion to celebrate the holidays. The students were so emotionally involved in this discussion that they did not realize that they were coming up out of their seats and raising their voices. Several of the students said that the University may look upon these issues as trivial matters if they are viewed one instance at a time, but the cumulative effect on student morale could influence the attrition rate. They said students are asking, why should I stay at a University that does not recognize the importance of Veterans' Day; that won't let me get home in time for Thanksgiving dinner; and as the last straw, makes me stay at the University until the 23rd of December rather than letting me go home for Christmas. The students had the following positive suggestions to assist with changing the schedule:

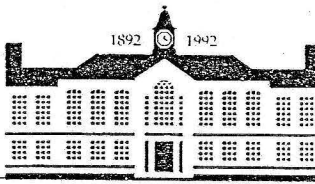
1. Thoroughly investigate the possibility of starting before Labor Day, as they are not convinced that housing is as large an issue as the University seems to think.
2. Reduce or eliminate reading days and use those days for final exams.
3. Give final exams on Saturday.
4. Reduce the hours allotted to final exams from three hours to two hours, and give four exams per day rather than three. They stated that students could be protected from having four exams on a single day by retaining the existing regulations.

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December 7, 1994
Editorial

CHOICE CALENDAR LACKS HOLIDAYS

the year is near the end of
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CENTENNIAL

University of Rhode Island
Office of the President

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 1, 1995

TO: Dr. Barbara Luebke, Chair
Faculty Senate

FROM: Robert L. Carothers
President 

SUBJECT: 1995-96 and 1996-97 Calendars

I have reviewed Senate Bills #94-95--11 and #94-95--12, relating to the establishment of the academic calendars for 1995-96 and 1996-97, with members of the senior staff at the University and with the leadership of the Student Senate. I support the intent of the Senate in establishing an academic calendar which provides for fourteen full weeks of classes. I understand as well the complexity of the many interests and issues which must be balanced in establishing such a calendar. I have particular concern with the proper acclimation and advising of students at the beginning of each semester. Providing quality care for the 20% or so of the student body which is "troubled" in one way or another pays very significant dividends not only to them as individuals but for the University as a whole, in terms of retention.

Therefore, I am approving Senate Bill #94-95--12, establishing the calendar for the 1996-97 academic year as passed by the Senate, with the understanding that the staff of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs will work with the Academic Standards and Calendar Committee and with the faculty at large to assure that there are proper provision for advising and other necessary administrative activities for all students. I would ask that the faculty also use the intervening year to consider again a number of traditional practices at the University, including reading days (and the number thereof), three hour final exam periods and the universal requirement for final examinations itself. Each of these makes time demands on the calendar which should be weighed against other possible and competing uses of that same time.

I am disapproving Senate Bill 94-95--11, establishing the 1995-96 academic calendar. The calendar as approved by the Senate does not provide, in my view, a sufficient adjustment and advising period for students. Moreover, it does not provide sufficient lead

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Dr. Barbara Luebke, Page 2.

time for both students and landlords to make housing arrangements for the coming fall. However, I want to make certain that all such students and landlords understand that by approving the 1996-97 calendar, I am giving them full notice that the University will commence classes in 1996 during the week before Labor Day.

I am very grateful for the excellent work of Chairman Long and the members of the Committee. I recognize the difficulty of the assignment. It is my hope that the Academic Standards and Calendar Committee will return to the 1995-96 calendar and make several "one-time" adjustments to avoid some of the problems encountered this past fall, especially with regard to holidays.

Thank you.