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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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.

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
(6 signatures)
Barbara F. Luebke
Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

ENDORSEMENT

TO: Chairperson of the Faculty Senate

FROM: President of the University

Returned.

a. Approved
b. Approved subject to final approval by Board of Governors
c. Disapproved

2.2.95
(date)

Form revised 9/91
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
UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
Kingston, Rhode Island

FACULTY SENATE

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

The Academic Standards and Calendar Committee, Fall 1995, recommended to the 1996-97 Academic Senate that the following principles be followed:

- That both the fall and spring semesters should contain 14 weeks of classes, and
- That the fall semester should begin 14 weeks after the spring semester ends.
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 Narraganset 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 believe that landlords would 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, the 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.

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.
The Good 5 Cent Cig
December 7, 1994
Editorial

SCHOOLENCALANDAR LACKS HOLIDAYS

The year seems near the end of seven decades of war, the age-old problem of
the last calendar
Christmas Eve, the day before New Year's Most themselves. Marilyn
insanospotartelson, suolens tota
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
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.