MEMORANDUM

TO: James Mower, Senate Chair
FROM: Havidán Rodríguez, President
DATE: November 16, 2018
SUBJECT: Senate Bill 1819-02
PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING CALENDARS

Thank you very much for providing consultation on the new guidelines proposed by the Academic Calendar Committee. The University Senate’s feedback and input during the consultation stage, and that of UPPC, along with those of numerous other groups consulted, have been instrumental in shaping the final recommendations by the Calendar Committee to me and my Executive Council.

The Calendar Committee’s new guidelines are now approved. I have asked Provost Stellar to disseminate that decision along with information about how the new guidelines will be communicated and rolled out to students, faculty, and staff.

I certainly do welcome the Senate’s support for the new guidelines and recognize, as stated above, the Senate’s appropriate role in helping to shape them. This has been a great example of how shared governance, through collaboration and consultation, clearly benefits the University. All the best for the remainder of the fall semester.

C: Provost Stellar
Registrar Karen Chico Hurst
UNIVERSITY SENATE

UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY
STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Introduced by: University Planning and Policy Council
Date: November 2018

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH GUIDELINES FOR PLANNING CALENDARS

IT IS HEREBY PROPOSED THAT THE FOLLOWING BE ADOPTED:

1. That the University Senate approves the attached proposal describing the guidelines for an academic Planning Calendar as approved by the University Planning & Policy Council (9/26/18);

2. That the proposed Guidelines for Academic Planning Calendars replaces the current Guidelines for Academic Calendars; and

3. That this bill and proposal be forwarded to the President for final campus approval.
University at Albany Planning Calendar Guidelines
DRAFT – with revisions of the Planning Calendar Committee

Definition: The Planning Calendar specifies start and end dates, tracks meeting patterns, sets final exam start and end dates, commencement dates, and specifies closures related to breaks. It forms the basis of the academic calendar, which then adds registration and add/drop related dates/deadlines. The Planning Calendar includes input from a wide representation across campus. The goal in creating the Planning Calendar is to meet Federal, State, and SUNY requirements regarding a traditional 15-week semester while also accommodating the values of the campus as a whole related to undergraduate and graduate instruction. The Planning Calendar is created by the Registrar according to Planning Calendar Guidelines and the variables in Appendix A, reviewed by the Planning Calendar Committee (which seeks representation from their respective divisions/areas), and then approved by the Provost and President. The following variables will be considered in the creation of the Planning Calendar with the realization that each year will have its unique issues and challenges.

1. The academic year is composed of two approximately equal semesters of 15 weeks (fall and spring) that allow enough time for Winter and Summer semesters/sessions to take place.
2. The U.S Department of Education clearly defines the requirements of how institutions administer financial aid. All classes must take place within the start and end dates of each semester/session as described in the Planning Calendar. This is to ensure the University remains compliant with Federal Financial Aid regulations.
3. The fall semester can begin before or after Labor Day, depending on the needs of the campus, but will end no later than the third week of December, thus accommodating campus facilities shutdown and a winter session.
   a. Winter Session must be 20 days and final grades must be recorded prior to the start of the Spring semester to align with the distribution of financial aid.
4. The spring semester will begin after MLK, Jr. Day but will end no later than the third week of May.
5. Commencement weekend will be no later than the third weekend of May, thus accommodating a summer session and turnover of residence halls.
   a. When at all possible final exams will not be scheduled on the Friday of Commencement Weekend.
   b. When at all possible, final exams will not be scheduled on the Thursday evening preceding Commencement Weekend.
6. Required minimum meeting patterns based on Federal, State, and SUNY requirements and UA time zone patterns:
   - The minimum number of class meeting days for TTH/MW courses is 27.
   - The minimum number of class meeting days for MWF courses is 39.
   - The minimum number of class meeting days for classes meeting once a week is 13.
   - The structure of the calendar shall reflect the following:
     o MWF format – classes meet for 55 minutes
     o TTH format – classes meet for 1 hour 20 minutes
     o MW format - classes meet for 1 hour 20 minutes
S/SU format - classes meet for 1 hour 20 minutes
Once a week format - 2 hours 50 minutes

Note: These patterns will vary from semester to semester but should not go below what is stated above.

7. The following list represents days/times that classes will not be in session. These dates will be accommodated as often as possible:
   a. Labor Day
   b. Columbus Day
   c. Thanksgiving Break
      i. Day before - Wednesday
      ii. Day of - Thursday
      iii. Day After - Friday
   d. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
   e. Spring Break: Albany’s St. Patrick’s Day parade is always the weekend before March 17th. To maintain town gown relations, the campus has agreed to accommodate a week off surrounding this date to strategically plan for the closure of residence halls.

8. Faculty members who are unable to attend class or final exams due to religious beliefs may utilize all the normally available alternatives for planned absences, approved in advance by the appropriate department chair or dean (e.g., arrange for a substitute instructor, construct an alternate plan, etc.).

9. Campuses are required, under existing State law (Education Law §224-a), to excuse, without penalty, individual students absent because of religious beliefs, and to provide equivalent opportunities for make-up examinations, study, or work requirements missed because of such absences. Faculty should work directly with students to accommodate absences for the conflicts above.

10. At least one day will be set aside for Reading Day. A reading day is a day reserved for preparation for final exams. Reading Day will be scheduled after all regular class lectures and before final exams. As a rule, Reading Day should not be used as a make-up day and activities should not be scheduled that conflict with students’ ability to study for final exams.

11. Six days will be scheduled for final exams. Saturday and Sunday will be used as an exam day when necessary.

12. In the event of cancellations or delays during an exam day, alternate exam times may be scheduled and will be communicated to the campus. Options the campus will consider will include, but are not limited to:
   a. Delay: On the day of a delayed opening, final exams scheduled to begin prior to the opening time will be rescheduled to Saturday (if not scheduled as an exam day), Sunday, or the day immediately following the last scheduled exam day, whichever comes first.
   b. Closings: Final exams scheduled when the university closes for inclement weather will be rescheduled to the following Saturday (if not scheduled as an exam day), Sunday, or the day immediately following the last scheduled exam day, whichever comes first.

13. These guidelines shall take effect for the 2019-2020 Planning Calendar and will be reviewed regularly to accommodate the changing needs of the University.

14. Five-Year Planning Calendars will be constructed for consideration.
Appendix A

Summary of variables included in the creation of the University Planning Calendar:

1. Federal, State, and SUNY requirements regarding a traditional 15-week semester.
2. Accreditation standards.
3. Consideration for the “University at Albany Calendar Guidelines”.
4. Start and end dates.
5. Time between Fall and Spring to allow for Wintersession – minimum 20 days
6. Time between Spring and Fall to allow for Summer Session – 12 weeks.
7. Required minimum meeting patterns based on Federal, State, and SUNY requirements:
   - The suggested minimum number of class meeting times for TTH/MW courses is 27.
   - The suggested minimum number of class meeting times for MWF courses is 39.
   - The suggested minimum number of class meeting times for classes meeting once a week is 13.
8. Academics.
10. Desire to maintain positive town gown relations.
11. Inclement Weather – Class cancellations.
12. Emergencies.
13. Faculty and/or faculty family illness – need to cancel classes.
15. Advisement Efforts.
17. Athletics.
18. Performances and Events.
20. Vacating residence halls in enough time to allow for preparation for the upcoming semester and for assessing damage charges prior to the next semester.
21. Time between semesters to allow for renovations, classroom repairs, installation of new technologies, etc.
22. Food Service Contracts.
23. Financial Aid - The U.S Department of Education clearly defines the requirements of how institutions administer financial aid. Construction of the planning calendar must align with guidance.

24. Efforts of the Plant — Ability to have facilities ready, perform construction, exercise winter shutdown and energy savings initiatives.

25. IT Support for administrative and student systems. Installation of service packs and bundles.
   Upgrades to Blackboard.

26. Final Exams.

27. Grading.


29. Commencement weekend and related activities/ceremonies

30. Awarding of Degrees.

31. Ability of students to secure winter and summer employment.

32. Travel costs for students (students must vacate the campus when residence halls close).
## Calendar Committee

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