

MICHIGAN STATE
U N I V E R S I T Y

February 8, 2006

MEMORANDUM

TO: Ralph Putnam, UCAP Chairperson
Karin Wurst, UGC Chairperson
Jeremy Hernandez, UCSA Chairperson

FROM: Jon Sticklen, Chairperson
Executive Committee of Academic Council



SUBJECT: Academic Assembly Bill #14-32 re: Creation of a Fall Break

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**OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY
FOR ACADEMIC
GOVERNANCE**

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As you know, the Executive Committee of Academic Council met on Tuesday, February 7, 2006 and reviewed attached Bill #14-32 from Academic Assembly. It was agreed your committees would review the proposal and we would appreciate receiving a response no later than Monday, March 13, 2006. Please send your committee findings to Julie Harrison in the Academic Governance office at harris24@msu.edu.

Thank you!

ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY

FOURTEENTH SESSION

BILL NO. 14 - 32

INTRODUCED BY: Prasad

SECONDED BY: Hinojosa

A BILL TO: Support the Creation of a Fall Break

THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACT:

WHEREAS, The Academic Assembly has in past sessions supported the idea of a Fall Break for multiple reasons; and

WHEREAS, A Fall Break would provide a brief period of time for students to rest and recuperate from midterms, give students time to finish backlogged work and studying, allow students who do not live locally a chance to return home to see family, and help ease stress and mental strain of the student body; and

WHEREAS, There exists currently a proposal approved by the University Committee on Academic Policy on January 27, 2000 calling for the creation of a one day Fall Break; and

WHEREAS, The UCAP proposal mysteriously disappeared from the Academic Governance system and has been lying dormant since then;

WHEREAS, The Academic Assembly feels that a two day break to be observed on a Thursday and Friday, a Friday and Monday, or a Monday and Tuesday is of more use to students than the one day break supported by UCAP, not least because of the increase in fuel costs associated with traveling since 2000; therefore be it

RESOLVED, The Academic Assembly requests that the Fall Break proposal be returned to UCAP with the request that the proposal now call for a two day break attached to a weekend; and be it further

RESOLVED, While the Academic Assembly prefers a break of two days, it supports a Fall Break of either length.

INTRODUCED ON January 17, 2006

SPECIAL ACTION TAKEN _____ DATE _____

FINAL ACTION TAKEN X 19-0-0 January 17, 2006
PASSED FAILED VOTE DATE



CHAIRPERSON

SECRETARY

University Committee on Academic Policy
Minutes
January 27, 2000
10:25-12:00

Present: Kathryn Baker, Stephen Bentley, J. Roy Black, Eric Bonten, Howard Bossen, Joe Chartkoff, Rachel Fisher, Cindy Gibbons, David Imig, Fred Jacobs, Kurt Lausman, Folke Lindahl, Gerald Osborn, Laura Roehler, Jon Sticklen, Jeanne Wald, Winston Wilkinson

Others: Barbara Steidle (Assistant Provost)

1. The meeting was called to order at 10:25 a.m.
2. The agenda was approved.
3. The minutes of January 13, 2000 were approved.
4. Chairperson's comments:
 - a) Encourage someone from UCAP to attend the March 31 Lilly Seminar on student evaluation.
 - b) The awards report passed in Academic Council.
5. SIRS Report (Jacobs)
 - a) There was a general discussion of the issues involved as pertaining to the SIRS Subcommittee
Report of October 28, 1999 (objective of releasing SIRS data): are two different forms needed?
Is there a need for "expert" assistance?
 - b) The UCAP task is to recommend (or not) a policy statement that would in effect formalize a policy on public SIRS for students that would assist the students in their selection of courses and instructors. Subsequent discussion should address the issue of the University-based SIRS forms and their uses and the issue of other modes of evaluating teaching.
 - c) Discussion addressed the issue of one versus two course evaluation forms. UCAP members agreed that a two form approach was most appropriate.
 - d) It was agreed that a course evaluation expert (s) representing different viewpoints would meet with UCAP at the next meeting
6. Other Subcommittee Reports
 - a) Mid-Semester Break - A report was distributed. The subcommittee recommended: 1) a one-day break in mid-October, and a break date on Good Friday. Discussion followed. A motion was made to reject the sub-committees recommendation. A second motion was made to split the original motion into two parts reflecting the sub-committee recommendation. The original motion was restated as a positive motion. The first part of the sub-committee recommendation passed (7 yes, 6 no), and the second part of the recommendation was rejected (11 no, 2 yes). An alternative to the second motion, setting a fixed Friday in spring semester as a break, was rejected (10 no, 3 yes).
 - b) Grade Marker Proposal - A report was distributed. The sub-committee

recommended that a grade marker be used to distinguish those students receiving a 0.0 as a consequence of failing to attend class and complete the required course assignments from those students attending class and completing the required course assignments and receiving a 0.0 final course grade. Comments addressed the issue of a student officially withdrawing from the University. It was discussed that a 0.0 is a 0.0, and what is to be gained by using a grade marker? It was asked if the option of a student retaking a course with this marker was affected? The answer was no. The breadth of the range of questions indicated the need for more systematic discussion at the next meeting.

7. Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

David R. Imig

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Report and Recommendations of the UCAP Subcommittee on Mid-semester Breaks. January 20, 2000

The Subcommittee discussing a proposal to include in the academic calendar a one-week mid-fall-semester break agreed some sort of break would be of academic value as is spring break, but immediately faced major obstacles: there is not enough time left in the calendar to take another week off without shortening a semester (or both semesters) by a week; and to insure comparability of courses run in various semesters the semesters should be the same length or close to it.

Between semesters there is just one week except for the winter holiday between Spring and Fall semesters. That week is necessary for grades to be processed and preparations for the new semester to be completed. In addition the winter break is a time when certain other administrative matters, notably union negotiations, must be tended to. So any time off would have to be cut from the semesters themselves. We could take a week off if either we were willing to make the Spring semester a week longer than the Fall semester or if we were willing to shorten the Spring semester also by a week. Both alternatives would seriously disrupt course planning and execution.

The Subcommittee thought nonetheless a break would be useful. So, by way of compromise, the Subcommittee proposes

1) There be a one-day break, namely a Friday in mid-October. The subcommittee members thought the loss of a Friday would be less disruptive than the loss of a Monday; in either case, we would gain a long weekend. The Subcommittee members believed there would be no significant pedagogical loss in just one day and to take the day off would be justified by the fact that both students and faculty would benefit from being able to refresh and reorganize themselves.

2). If it is desirable to maintain an equal number of class days, then in the Spring semester Good Friday should be a school holiday. Good Friday has the advantage of being close to the end of the semester, as does Thanksgiving in the Fall, and, as the Thanksgiving break in the Fall, a long weekend at that time would be useful to some by way of getting ready for the end of the semester. It is to be noted, though, that the Subcommittee was not convinced a one-day difference in semester lengths would be a major problem rather than a minor inconvenience.