


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To: Statewide Academic Council  
From: Tara Smith, Chair, Faculty Alliance   
Date: February 10, 2017  
Re: Improvements to Common Academic Calendar

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The Faculty Alliance respects the difficult work of the UA Common Calendar Committee in aligning academic course calendars at UAA, UAF, and UAS. This type of coordination affects many stakeholders, including faculty, students, and staff, and is a difficult transition, but as the regents pointed out in April 2014, a common academic calendar may make it easier for our students to take courses from different universities.

There remain significant concerns of faculty on both the process and substance of the common calendar. In terms of process concerns, the task force that was created by Faculty Alliance and chaired by Saichi Oba did not report back to the body that created it before making recommendations to the president and the regents. The draft common calendar circulated for feedback in September 2015 and then approved by the president and chancellors in October 2015 did not address changes to long-standing, non-teaching days which have been implemented at UAA and UAF. Those changes were not communicated to faculty and students in a timely or proactive fashion.

In moving forward, we hope that the Statewide Academic Council will consider and endorse our recommendations and support them to the Summit Team and President Johnsen. We look forward to assisting with communications to faculty on the common calendar in the future.

**RECOMMENDATION 1: The Wednesday before Thanksgiving should be designated a non-teaching day at all three universities.**

In the future, we recommend that throughout UA, classes not be scheduled on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, to allow adequate time for those who travel within or outside the state to be with family or friends on this significant and most-travelled holiday of the year. We have received strong feedback from faculty and students that this day should not be scheduled as a teaching day.

**RECOMMENDATION 2: Each University should have the discretion to designate non-teaching days.**

We strongly recommend universities retain the authority to declare non-teaching days that are relevant to the standing traditions and/or allow for the development of new ones within their institutional culture. The UAS student-driven Power & Privilege conference, the UAF Springfest, and the UAA Tuesday after Labor Day are all examples of the types of established and emerging non-teaching whose observance should be decided collaboratively within the respective university.

Cc: President Johnsen