

Rutgers University Senate
Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee
Response to Charge S-1003A
April 2012

Charge S-1003A Academic Calendar, Part 2, Continued: Continue consideration of future changes to the academic calendar to extend [beyond what was recommended for September and November 2011 by the Senate in October 2010](#). Respond to Senate Executive Committee by April 2012.

Background

This charge is a continuation of Charge S-1003, Fall Academic Calendar, which read as follows:

Consider the potential problems with the Fall 2010 academic calendar brought to the Senate's attention by Senator Ted Szatrowski; namely, the fact that the first class meeting for sections of courses meeting on Monday only will not take place until near the end of the second week of classes. Evaluate the difficulties this will cause for faculty and students. Consult with Arun Mukherjee, University Director of Scheduling and Space Management, with appropriate staff in the Office of Information Technology (OIT), and with representatives of various schools and colleges and recommend whether or not changes should be made to the Fall 2010 academic calendar to solve the problems identified. Also revisit the academic calendar for subsequent years to see if changes should be made in order to avoid similar problems with Monday classes in the future. Respond to the Senate Executive Committee by April 2010 with regard to recommendations for Fall 2010 and by October 2010 for recommendations for future years.

ASRAC responded to the first part of Charge S-1003 in April 2010 and recommended that

- the academic calendar for fall 2010 be changed so that Monday classes would meet on Wednesday, September 8, and Wednesday classes would meet on Monday, November 22, unless the Rutgers' administration could persuade the Senate Executive Committee that there were compelling reasons not to do so.
- the room assignment creation and load process for the 2011-2012 academic year not be run until the Senate finished considering possible changes to the academic calendars for 2011-2012 and beyond.

The Senate endorsed ASRAC's [report](#) and recommendations at its meeting of April 30, 2010 and the recommended changes to the fall 2010 academic calendar were implemented.

ASRAC gave a partial response to the second part of Charge S-1003 in October 2010 and recommended the following changes in the designations of class days for fall 2011:

1. Thursday, September 8, 2011 – Monday classes meet.
2. Monday, November 21, 2011 – Wednesday classes meet.
3. Tuesday, November 22, 2011 – Thursday classes meet.

These changes to the Fall 2011 academic calendar were approved by the Senate and were implemented.

ASRAC decided not to recommend right away that the changes to the Fall 2010 and Fall 2011 academic calendars be made in subsequent years in which the first of September falls on a Wednesday or Thursday, respectively, but instead to consider a variety of possible changes to the fall academic calendar that would fix the problem with Monday classes when the semester starts before Labor Day while minimizing the use of changes in the designations of class days. This led to the issuance of Charge S-1003A. Since there is no “Labor Day” problem with the current fall academic calendars for 2012, 2013, or 2014, consideration of this charge was put on hold until consideration of several other charges was completed.

Findings and Discussion

ASRAC’s goal in responding to charge S-1003A was to propose and consider a series of possible fall academic calendars that would satisfy as many of the following constraints as possible:

- Monday-only classes will not have their first meeting late in the second week of the semester.
- The number of changes of class day designations will be minimized.
- There will be the mandated 14 full weeks of classes.
- There will be one or two reading days between the end of classes and the beginning of final exams.
- There will be no final exams on Dec. 24th.

The Committee considered seven different cases; i.e., years in which Labor Day occurs on the 1st, 2nd, . . . , 7th of September, respectively; these correspond to the first of September falling on a Monday, Sunday, Saturday, . . . , Tuesday, respectively. We considered a variety of options in each case, including, in some cases, starting before September 1st and/or having no classes Thanksgiving week (a fall break in effect). We also considered always starting after Labor Day, no matter when Labor Day occurs. In the end, we rejected all options in which the first, third, or last of the above constraints would not be satisfied as well as options that would have classes begin before August 26th. The remaining options, all of which we considered carefully, are given below.

Case 1: Labor Day on September 1 (2014)

	Option I	Option II	Option III
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 2	Tues. September 2	Mon. Aug. 25
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 25 – Thur. Classes	None	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Wed. Nov. 26 – Fri Classes	Mon. Nov. 24–Sun. Nov. 30	Mon. Nov. 24–Sun. Nov. 30
Regular Classes End	Thur. Nov 27 – Sun. Nov. 30	Mon. Dec. 15	Mon. Dec. 8
Reading Days	Wed. Dec. 10 Thur. Dec. 11	Tues Dec. 16	Tues. Dec. 9 Wed. Dec. 10
Fall Exams Begin	Fri. Dec. 12	Wed. Dec. 17	Thur. Dec. 11
Fall Exams End	Mon. Dec. 15 Mon. Dec. 22	Tues. Dec. 23	Thur. Dec. 18

Case 2: Labor Day on September 2 (2013, 2019)

	Option I	Option II	Option III
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 3	Tues. Sept. 3	Mon. Aug. 26
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 26, Thur. Classes	None	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Wed. Nov. 27, Fri Classes		
Regular Classes End	Thur. Nov 28 – Sun. Dec. 1	Mon. Nov. 25 – Sun. Dec. 1	Mon. Nov. 25 – Sun. Dec. 1
Reading Days	Wed. Dec. 11	Mon. Dec. 16	Mon. Dec. 9
	Thur. Dec. 12	None	Tues. Dec. 10
	Fri. Dec. 13		Wed. Dec. 11
Fall Exams Begin	Mon. Dec. 16	Tues. Dec. 17	Thur. Dec. 12
Fall Exams End	Mon. Dec. 23	Mon. Dec. 23	Thur. Dec. 19

Case 3: Labor Day on September 3 (2012, 2018)

	Option I	Option II
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 4	Mon. Aug. 27
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 20 – Thur. Classes	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Wed. Nov. 21 – Fri Classes	
Regular Classes End	Thur. Nov 22 – Sun. Nov. 25	Mon. Nov. 19 – Sun. Nov. 25
Reading Days	Wed. Dec. 12	Mon. Dec. 10
	Thur. Dec. 13	Tues. Dec. 11
		Wed. Dec. 12
Fall Exams Begin	Fri. Dec. 14	Thur. Dec. 13
Fall Exams End	Fri. Dec. 21	Thur. Dec. 20

Case 4: Labor Day on September 4 (2017)

	Option I	Option II
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 5	Mon. Aug. 28
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 21 – Thur. Classes	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Wed. Nov. 22 – Fri Classes	
Regular Classes End	Thur. Nov 23 – Sun. Nov. 26	Mon. Nov. 20 – Sun. Nov. 26
Reading Days	Wed. Dec. 13	Mon. Dec. 11
	Thur. Dec. 14	Tues. Dec. 12
		Wed. Dec. 13
Fall Exams Begin	Fri. Dec. 15	Thur. Dec. 14
Fall Exams End	Fri. Dec. 22	Thur. Dec. 21

Case 5: Labor Day on September 5 (2016, 2022)

	Option I	Option II	Option III
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 6	Thur. Sept. 1	Mon. Aug. 29
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 22, Thur. Classes Wed. Nov. 23, Fri Classes	Thur. Sept. 8, Mon. Classes Mon. Nov. 21, Wed. Classes Tues. Nov. 22, Thur. Classes	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Thur. Nov 24 – Sun. Nov. 27	Wed. Nov. 23 – Sun. Nov. 27	Mon. Nov.21–Sun.Nov.27
Regular Classes End	Wed. Dec. 14	Tues. Dec. 13	Mon. Dec. 12
Reading Days	Thur. Dec. 15	Wed. Dec. 14	Tues. Dec. 13
Fall Exams Begin	Fri. Dec. 16	Thur. Dec. 15	Wed. Dec. 14
Fall Exams End	Fri. Dec. 23	Fri. Dec. 16	Thur. Dec. 15
		Fri. Dec. 23	Thur. Dec. 22

Case 6: Labor Day on September 6 (2021)

	Option I	Option II	Option III
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 7	Wed. Sept. 1	Mon. Aug. 30
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 23, Thur. Classes Wed. Nov. 24, Fri Classes	Wed. Sept. 8, Mon. Classes Mon. Nov. 22, Wed. Classes	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Thur. Nov 25 – Sun. Nov. 28	Wed. Nov. 24 – Sun. Nov. 28	Mon. Nov.22–Sun.Nov.28
Regular Classes End	Wed. Dec. 15	Mon. Dec. 13	Mon. Dec. 13
Reading Days	None	Tues. Dec. 14	Tues. Dec. 14
Fall Exams Begin	Thur. Dec. 16	Wed. Dec. 15	Wed. Dec. 15
Fall Exams End	Thur. Dec. 23	Thur. Dec. 16	Thur. Dec. 16
		Thur. Dec. 23	Thur. Dec. 23

Case 7: Labor Day on September 7 (2015, 2020)

	Option I	Option II	Option III
Fall Semester Begins	Tues. Sept. 8	Tues. Sept. 1	Mon. Aug. 31
Changes in Designation of Class Days	Tues. Nov. 24, Thur. Classes Wed. Nov. 25, Fri Classes	Tues. Sept. 8, Mon. Classes	None
Thanksgiving Recess	Thur. Nov 26 – Sun. Nov. 29	Wed. Nov. 25 – Sun. Nov. 29	Mon. Nov.23–Sun.Nov.29
Regular Classes End	Wed. Dec. 16	Fri. Dec. 11	Mon. Dec. 14
Reading Days	None	Mon. Dec. 14	Tues. Dec. 15
Fall Exams Begin	Thur. Dec. 17	Tues. Dec. 15	Wed. Dec. 16
Fall Exams End	Wed. Dec. 23	Wed. Dec. 16	Wed. Dec. 23
		Wed. Dec. 23	

For cases 1 through 4, option I is the academic calendar currently in use. These calendars all feature two changes in the designation of class days during Thanksgiving week; i.e., Thursday classes meet on Tuesday and Friday classes meet on Wednesday that week. The alternative options for cases 1 through 4 all have the advantage of eliminating all changes of class day designations and having no classes during Thanksgiving week, but they have other disadvantages.

Option III for cases 1 and 2 and option II for cases 3 and 4 eliminate changes in class day designations by starting classes the Monday before Labor Day. We do not recommend these options, however, for several reasons

- Starting classes the last week in August would cause problems for students with summer jobs or internships that run through the end of August.
- Many graduate students and some undergraduate student leaders are required to be on campus the week before classes begin; if classes started early in the last week of August, these students would have to be on campus the third week of August, which would be a hardship for many.
- Many professional societies hold national meetings the last week in August and having classes that week would interfere with faculty and student participation in such meetings.
- Faculty members with young children report that child care is particularly difficult to arrange the last weeks in August.
- Starting classes before September 1st would require negotiated changes in a number of union contracts, which might prove difficult.

Option II for cases 1 and 2 eliminates all changes in class day designation without starting before September 1, but would require that the fall final exam period be shortened from eight to seven days (if that is possible) and would completely eliminate reading days in case 2.

In the end, we decided that the disadvantages of the alternative options outweigh continuing the changes in the designations of class days during Thanksgiving week. These changes have been in place for many years and do not seem to cause major problems. We therefore do not recommend any changes in the fall academic calendars for cases 1 through 4.

For case 5, option II is the academic calendar that was used in 2011 upon ASRAC's recommendation. Upon further consideration, however, we now strongly prefer option I, which has only the normal change of class day designations during Thanksgiving week, rather than the more complicated change of three class day designations in option II.

Cases 6 and 7 are more difficult since starting classes after Labor Day and finishing final exams before Dec. 24th would require the complete elimination of reading days in both cases. For case 6, we were initially prepared to recommend a modification of option I in which Dec. 16 would be a reading day and the final exam period would run from Friday, December 17 through Thursday, December 23. We have since been informed, however, by the University Director of Scheduling and Space Management, Chris Morett, that it is not possible to shorten the fall exam period from eight to seven days when exams start on a Friday, although a seven-day fall final exam period may be possible when exams start on Monday through Thursday. Given this information, there is no consensus on the Committee regarding either case 6 or case 7. For both cases, opinion is split between option I and option II, the latter being what was done in fall 2010 for case 6 and in fall 2009 for case 7. While everyone agrees that always starting after Labor Day would be desirable for a number of reasons, some ASRAC members think that the advantages of doing so are outweighed by the disadvantages of completely eliminating reading days.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the discussion above, ASRAC is ready to recommend to the Senate that the fall academic calendars for cases 1 through 4 remain as they have been (i.e., option I) and that the option I academic calendar also be adopted for case 5, which will next occur in 2016. We are not ready, however, to make a recommendation regarding case 6 or case 7 without further consultation with faculty, students, staff, and administrators on all three Rutgers Campuses. We wish to ask the Administration to assist us in this consultative process by getting input on the proposed calendar options from members of the Council of Deans and appropriate members of the Administrative Council.

Our formal recommendations with respect to the fall academic calendars for 2013 through 2022 are therefore as follows:

1. No changes should be made to the fall academic calendars for 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
2. The Case 5, Option I fall academic calendar should be adopted for 2016 and 2022.
3. The Administration should be asked to assist the Senate in determining which of the available options for cases 6 (2021) and 7 (2015, 2020) would be best by getting input on this matter from members of the Council of Deans and the Administrative Council.

Resolution

Whereas, the University Senate's Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee has considered a number of possible changes to the fall academic calendars for 2013 through 2022, and has made a number of recommendations regarding these calendars; and

Whereas, the University Senate has reviewed the Academic Standards, Regulations, and Admissions Committee's recommendations and found them to be sound and in the best interests of Rutgers University;

Therefore, be it resolved, that the revised academic calendar recommended by ASRAC be adopted for fall 2016 and fall 2022.

Be it further resolved, that no changes be made in the currently projected fall academic calendars for 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, or 2019.

Finally, be it resolved, that the University Senate asks the Rutgers Administration to help determine the best fall academic calendars for 2015, 2020, and 2021 by getting input on the proposed options for those years from the Council of Deans and the Administrative Council.

Academic Standards, Regulations and Admissions Committee

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