



March 11, 2004

MEMORANDUM

TO: Bill Voxman, Faculty Secretary

FROM: Reta Pikowsky, Registrar

RE: Start Date of Spring Semester

The recent change to a Wednesday start date for the spring semester appears to have created some problems. Following are the problems, concerns, and questions that have been directed to me by various faculty and staff on and off-campus.

- The College of Law may wish to regain the two days we lost by starting on Wednesday instead of Monday. It might be possible to have a different start date for the College of Law, but we would need to be sure that we have examined all the possible issues related to one start date for the College of Law and for the rest of the University (financial aid, reporting enrollment to the Clearinghouse, availability of other university services, university housing, etc.). *The College of Law representative will speak to this issue at the meeting.*
- Our students registered in cross-listed courses that were taught at WSU, missed the first two days of class because we did not begin until Wednesday, when WSU started on Monday, as usual. WSU and UI try to coordinate calendars for these and other reasons.
- Could better information for the students enrolled in WSU/UI cross-listed courses solve the problem with WSU's and UI's start date being different in Spring?
- Whatever we do in regard to coordinating with WSU, we must remember that the commencement dates in May must be on different weekends.
- For classes that meet only on Monday, the MLK holiday in the second week means that these classes don't actually meet until the third week. Classes that meet on Tuesday, don't meet until the second week of the semester.

- Our courses in Idaho Falls are closely linked with ISU's schedule. Having a different start date for the UI creates confusion. Courses that are delivered compressed video from Idaho Falls are a problem for our students who would have to come back to campus two days early.
- BSU starts a week later in the spring than we do – we might inquire as to why that is the case. We might also inquire as to whether all state institutions live by the 160-day policy.
- Depending upon those answers, why don't we look at being on the same calendar as BSU and ISU?

The Idaho State Board of Education Governing Policies and Procedures manual states that "each semester indicated in the Official Calendar of an institution will consist of seventeen (17) weeks with at least fifteen (15) full weeks or seventy-five (75) instructional days of class work or its equivalent". Our Faculty-Staff Handbook states "Each academic year includes two 16-week semesters..... The Fall semester ends shortly before Christmas; the Fall and Spring semesters together must include at least 160 instructional days, including the final-examination period".

In reviewing the number of instructional days in the Fall 2003 (79 days) and the Spring 2004 (81 days) semesters, we note that there are exactly 160. So, according to our own parameters, there is no more leeway in the calendar; we are teaching the minimum number of instructional days allowed.

If the start date of Wednesday is deemed problematic, and we consider changing it back to Monday, one possible way "to give back" a day to the teaching faculty would be to institute a Friday holiday perhaps some time in April that would be a University holiday, no classes and no offices open. This would lead us to 79 days in the Fall and 82 days in the Spring. This might be a compromise that would not create any other problems.

Please let me know if I can provide any additional information or assistance as the Faculty Council takes up this issue. Thanks.