

Bowdoin Student Government

Proposal to Vote

Proposal 101106

Proposed by: Academic Affairs

Date: November 10, 2010

RESOLUTION REGARDING THANKSGIVING BREAK CALENDAR CHANGE

Opinion

Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break are two important periods of rest and family visitation for Bowdoin students during the fall semester. As the calendar currently stands, Fall Break is four days long and consists of a weekend and the subsequent Monday and Tuesday. Thanksgiving Break is currently five days long. The first day of Thanksgiving break is officially a class day, but the College mandates that courses on that Wednesday “will be rescheduled on a class-by-class basis by the course instructor.”

Many students, faculty, and staff feel that these breaks are “geographically discriminatory” and that neither break provides sufficient time for those who live or have relatives far away from Maine to travel for the holidays. The College should extend Thanksgiving Break by four more days to a total length of nine days, while keeping Fall Break at its current length of four days.

This goal would be accomplished through the following changes:

- Classes would begin one day earlier on a Wednesday (and thus all pre-semester activities, such as Pre-Orientation trips, the Bowdoin Science Experience, and Residential Life training will also be pushed back a day) in order to provide an actual vacation day on the Wednesday of Thanksgiving week.
- The “reschedule day” that is currently on Wednesday will be pushed forward to Monday of Thanksgiving week, and an additional “reschedule day” will be added for the Tuesday of that week.

These changes would result in an entire week class-free, with two “rescheduled days” and three actual vacation days. The weekends before and after that week would create a break nine days long, as opposed to the current five days, and would do so without eliminating a single class period.

This scheduling change should be enacted because:

- Students finding it impractical to travel home on a five day break will have more options if the break is extended to nine days.
- The day before Thanksgiving is the busiest travel day of the year, causing steep ticket prices and hectic driving. The proposed change would allow students to book flights for earlier days, which could result in dramatic savings in time and money and make the journey home more feasible to a wider array of students regardless of their socioeconomic status.
- No days are being dropped from Fall Break, only one day is being added to the beginning of the academic year, and an additional Tuesday “reschedule” day brings parity to the current Monday “reschedule day” and avoids any lost class time.
- Bowdoin’s academic calendar would more closely reflect those of many peer institutions.
- Students would have time to study for finals or relax before finals-studying ensues.
- Professors would benefit from all of the above and could also use the added flexibility in their schedules to catch up on grading and prepare final exams.
- Move-in day becomes Monday for the vast majority of incoming first-year students going on Pre-Orientation trips, making it easier for parents to take the time off to help their students move in. For those students not going on Pre-Orientation trips, move-in day would change from Saturday to Friday, a day still close enough to the weekend for parent schedules.

Action Requested

The Bowdoin Student Government requests that the College Calendar for future academic years be modified so that classes begin one day earlier (on the Wednesday prior to Labor Day), the Wednesday of Thanksgiving week becomes a vacation day, and classes on Monday and Tuesday of that week “will be rescheduled on a class-by-class basis by the course instructor.”