

Excerpt from email communication sent June 15, 2020 to Notices-Faculty

When will the fall calendar start and end?

If you have read President Wippman's email, you know that the first day of classes will be a bit earlier than planned (Monday, 24 August) and the last day of classes will occur before Thanksgiving (Tuesday, 24 November), with final exams (or final presentations) to be held remotely after Thanksgiving. We will teach straight through, without a fall break (more about that below).

Who decided?

The Calendar Subcommittee of Academic Council was charged with devising solutions that would minimize risk and allow for a Thanksgiving dismissal. We hope that concluding by late November will help us avoid a resurgence of coronavirus, and we also seek to dismiss students before the ordinary influenza season creates a confusing overlap with possible COVID-19 cases. You will be aware that many other colleges have adopted this plan. Academic Council reviewed and approved this work, in consultation with the Academic Continuity Advisory Group. Academic Council is the elected committee that normally reviews and approves calendars. Senior Staff just approved this calendar; the New York State Department of Education and Middle States have been informed about it.

How will this calendar work?

Eleven of the thirteen available Saturdays in the fall have been designated curricular Wednesdays (four options), Thursdays (four options), and Fridays (three options). Faculty will have leeway as to whether they choose an early, mid-term, or late Saturday to make up a missing Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. You may also choose to replace a missing class with a recorded lecture (an asynchronous task), assigned attendance at a poetry reading or lecture, or an alternative activity during the week (if students' schedules permit). Groups of colleagues in a department or program may choose to plan a single "Wednesday-replacer," "Thursday-replacer," and/or "Friday-replacer" event for all students in a set of courses, so long as either physical distancing or remote access will work. Each faculty member teaching courses this fall will have a W,R, F to replace in each course, unless your courses meet only on Mondays and Tuesdays. The fact that there are four choices of "Wednesday Saturdays" for faculty with a class meeting on Wednesdays does not mean that four make-up Saturdays (or alternatives) are required. It simply affords you a choice as to whether to replace the Wednesday early in the term or later, as it suits you.

"Wednesday-replacer" Saturdays: (no class would need more than 1 of these)

5 Sept.

26 Sept.

24 Oct.

7 Nov.

"Thursday-replacer" Saturdays: (no class would need more than 1 of these)

12 Sept.

3 Oct.

31 Oct.

14 Nov.

"Friday-replacer" Saturdays: (no class would need more than 1 of these, though some would need a Wednesday Saturday, as well)

29 Aug.--end of very first week of classes

19 Sept.

21 Nov.--end of last FULL week of classes

As long as everybody sticks with these dates, there won't be conflicts for students. You will notice that two Saturdays in the middle of the term have no curricular day-of-the-week replacement. That's because the students on the Academic Continuity Advisory Group urged us to build in a bit of decompression to make up (a little) for the missing fall break in October. Faculty have already begun to discuss other plans for recognizing and alleviating the signs of stress in students, including making some creative plans to take a break from assigned work for a period in the middle of the term (though continuing class meetings). I leave that to you to brainstorm about on FAC-CURR.