

MEMO

Date: Feb. 20, 2006

To: President Tribble
Provost Summerville

From: Dr. Tracey Schwarze,
Faculty Senate President

Subject: 2006-07 Academic Calendar and Exam Week Schedule

The Senate has reviewed the subject document, and in response to your request for suggestions, we offer the following proposals and rationales.

1. The Senate believes that preserving the 2.5-hour examination period should be a paramount concern of the university in order to provide the opportunity for faculty to administer comprehensive course examinations.
2. To create a university reading day in addition to the Saturday and Sunday preceding final examinations, we recommend that a Saturday examination day be added to the end of the final examination schedule.

Creating such a period will provide the requisite number of slots needed to free up a week day during finals week for an additional university reading day; it also has the advantage, unlike the proposed plan, of not increasing the likelihood that students will be scheduled for multiple examinations on a single day. Conditions of the Saturday examination should be as follows:

- a. The Saturday examination day will fall at the end of examination week.
 - b. It will be used only for the three “conflict” periods (identified on the current document as occurring on Friday, 8 Dec., 4th, 5th, and 6th periods).
 - c. Final grades will be due to the Registrar at noon on Tuesday, Dec. 12, versus Monday, Dec. 11, in order to give faculty sufficient time to complete their grading. Since there is no more winter commencement, and since we saw in Fall 2006 (admittedly under duress) that a Tuesday deadline for final grade submission is workable, we believe that the deadline shift should not present a problem for the Registrar’s office.
3. With regard to a Sunday graduation in Spring 2007, we respectfully request that such a change be postponed this year to give the faculty time to consider altering the timetable of the academic year as a whole. The Senate was split on this issue, but several members

were concerned that under the new proposal, that graduation would occur (in perpetuity) on Mother's Day. A proposal was made to shift the entire academic year forward chronologically, starting a week later in August and ending a week later in May, in order to avoid the Mother's Day conflict. There may other advantages to this plan as well (shifting spring break back a week; pushing more of the winter break into January, thus allowing faculty more time for scholarship and research on the break), but there are also disadvantages that we would like to discuss more broadly before making such a recommendation to you. In the meantime, it is our hope that you will allow graduation to remain on Saturday. If the issue is the ability to hold additional graduation-related events prior to the graduation itself, perhaps graduation could be held later in the day on Saturday to allow time for morning activities.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer counsel on this issue. Please contact me if I can clarify any of these suggestions or be of any further assistance.