

**FALL 2012 END OF TERM SUMMARY
2012- 2013 Academic Calendar Impact**

SYNOPSIS:

- In 2005 changes were made to the policies governing the Academic Calendar (passed by the Senate). Unfortunately the holiday schedule in the fall term following these new policies resulted in compressed time between the Fall and Spring semesters. Fall 2012 was the first year where adjustments were needed as there were only 3 weeks between the end of final exams and the start of the spring term. Typically there are 4 weeks between the terms. This similar set of circumstances will occur infrequently with the next occurrence being in the 2017–2018 Academic Year.
- Modifications to the 2012–2013 Academic Calendar were needed to ensure that there was sufficient processing time for end of term activities:
 - The Final Exam schedule was modified to use Saturday Dec 15th so finals could end on Thursday, Dec 20th (one day prior to the originally approved calendar).
 - The grade submission deadline chosen was Wed, Dec 26 which was a paid holiday
 - Grading period was compressed one day but still had 5.5 days for grading exams and determining grades after final exams end (including holidays)
- Even with the above adjustments to the Academic Calendar, there was an overall shorter timeline to complete End of Term processing. The main two components impacted:
 - Dean’s review of Academic Standing
 - Student Appeal for drop status
- The difference in timeline between the grade submission deadline and the Federal Financial Aid disbursement deadline was:

Fall 2012

3 full service days
2 reduced service days plus one weekend
2 holidays

Fall 2011

6 full service days
3 reduced service days and 2 weekends
3 holidays

The solutions implemented for Fall 2012 shared the burden among students, faculty, and campus administrators. This solution was considered and passed by the Senate. See EP.12.11 which was passed by the Senate on November 7, 2011:

<http://www.senate.illinois.edu/ep/Props/1112/ep.12.11.pdf>

OVERVIEW OF FINAL EXAM (SATURDAY FINAL) IMPACT:

There were a total of **358** exams scheduled on Saturday, Dec 15:

- **317** - Non Combined (the University appointed exam time)
- **41** - Specifically requested Saturday by way of Combined, Arranged or Conflict exams.
- **0** - Requests submitted to the Office of the Provost to move an exam away from Saturday.

Facility Mgmt & Scheduling (FMS) provided phone coverage on Saturday for exam scheduling issues. As of Jan 9, 2013, Facility Mgmt & Scheduling had not received any complaints from students, staff or faculty in regards to Saturday exams. Of note, one student did contact the Office of the Registrar to express a problem with a Friday evening final exam (religious observation of Sabbath from dusk on Friday to Saturday). This conflict was not related to the Saturday exam schedule.

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OVERVIEW OF FINAL GRADE ENTRY IMPACT:

The main impact to the adjusted calendar related to the grade submission deadline being on Wed, Dec 26th (holiday). When this submission date was originally approved by the Senate in November 2011, the official Campus Holidays for Fiscal Year 2013 were not available from Human Resources. Many communication efforts were made to various groups to ensure the grade entry deadline was known but some individuals were still unclear of the date mainly due to the deadline being on a paid holiday and assumed the deadline was on the first Reduced Service Day (Dec 27th). Also, other than Friday, Dec 21st, the weekdays leading up to the deadline were either gift days or paid holidays. This slowed communications with departments that normally assist with the coordination of grade collection. Office of the Registrar staff monitored email and voicemail regularly throughout the holidays to provide faculty/instructors any necessary assistance.

Despite these efforts, just over 7,000 Not Reported (NR) grades were rolled to student academic records. In normal spring and fall terms, there are typically 3,500 NR grades. Though many grade change requests were able to be processed relatively quickly in the days following Dec 26, there were still several departments without staff to approve the grade changes in time to have better grade audits for academic standing reviews. The additional NR grades had an overall impact on the Dean's review of Academic Standing as some student GPA data was incomplete when determining true academic standing for drop status considerations.

While there were possibly a variety of reasons for the increase in NR grades, one of the main reasons communicated to the Office of the Registrar was the deadline being on a paid holiday. Some units communicated lack of staff employment over the paid holidays that would normally provide additional faculty/instructor support. It is also worth noting that one instructor was ill which resulted in NR grades for one very large enrollment class (~900 students).

FUTURE PLANS FOR SHORTENED TIMELINES BETWEEN TERMS:

In discussions with Council of Undergraduate Deans, Associate & Assistant Deans, and administrative resources at the Undergraduate College level, it was agreed that there appeared to be no impact to students by having Saturday finals. It was also determined that we should provide a reasonable amount of time for final grade submission and make every effort to prevent the deadline from being on a paid holiday. While a longer grade entry period may result in a slightly shorter timeframe for administrative units to provide necessary reporting for Dean's review of Academic Standing, those units providing the support for grade audits felt they could work with a slightly shorter window of time if this allowed for more accurate GPA information for the reviews.

Recommendations include:

- Allow Saturday finals in years with condensed time between terms to accommodate final grades submission and end of term processing (grade roll, GPA calculation, Academic Standing calculation, Dean's Review of Academic Standing, student appeal for academic drop status).

- Choose the final grade submission deadline after the Campus Holiday Schedule has been published for the Fiscal Year. The schedule is typically communicated in the June/July timeframe. Included in this option would be to identify a better mode of communicating the important date information to faculty/instructors. Early communications this year did not seem to make it to all faculty/instructors or was forgotten by the actual deadline.