

Academic Calendar Proposal

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University of Colorado
Boulder

What Problems Does This Proposal Try to Solve?

➤ As a student, I . . .

- Feel stressed and tired because I have no break in the fall semester between Labor Day and late November, and no break in the spring semester between MLK, Jr. Day and after the 10th week of classes
- Need more time to prepare for final exams; one reading day isn't enough

What Problems Does This Proposal Try to Solve?

➤ As a faculty member, I . . .

- Have to adjust the amount of course content depending on my class meeting pattern
 - There are 15 Tuesdays, 15 Wednesdays, and 15 Thursdays in instructional days for each semester, but only 14 Mondays and 14 Fridays
 - As a result, TR courses have 15 weeks of instruction, whereas MWF courses (in any combination of those days) have less than 15
- Have less time for research if I teach TR
- Don't understand why spring "midterm" break is two-thirds of the way through the semester



What Problems Does This Proposal Try to Solve?

- **As a student/faculty member/staff member who is the parent of a school-age child in the Boulder Valley or St. Vrain School District, I . . .**
 - Might have a CU Boulder spring break that is not coordinated with my child's spring break, causing childcare and transportation problems

What Problems Does This Proposal Try to Solve?

- **As a residence hall student/parent/RA/staff member, I . . .**
 - Have to deal with a moveout procedure in the spring semester that is happening at the same time as spring commencement, which brings tens of thousands of people to campus

Proposal Summary

- **Equalize MTWRF instructional days, shortening the number of instructional days from 73 per semester to 70 per semester**
- **Create a midsemester reading day: Tuesday in Week 7**
- **Increase number of final exam reading days from 1 to 2 per semester**
- **Move spring break a week earlier**
- **Open a day for residence hall moveout between the last day of spring final exams and the day of spring**

Goals

1. Support student well-being and academic preparedness
2. Facilitate equity of course content across different iterations of the same course
3. Facilitate equitable teaching loads across faculty teaching TR and MWF schedules
4. Support faculty, staff, and students who have children/family members in BVSD and SVVSD
5. Support staff, students, and parents involved in residence hall moveout in spring semester

What about Accreditation and the Credit Hour?

- Federal Title 34 definition of the credit hour allows for institutional interpretation of instructional class time as approved by their accrediting agency:

... a credit hour is an amount of student work defined by an institution, as approved by the institution's accrediting agency or State approval agency, that is consistent with commonly accepted practice in postsecondary education and that— (1) Reasonably approximates not less than— (i) One hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or trimester hour of credit, or ten to twelve weeks for one quarter hour of credit, or the equivalent amount of work over a different period of time; or (ii) At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1)(i) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practica, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours; and (2) Permits an institution, in determining the amount of work associated with a credit hour, to take into account a variety of delivery methods, measurements of student work, academic calendars, disciplines, and degree levels. ([Title 34.Subtitle B.Chapter VI. § 600.2](#))

- That's why the number of instructional days per academic year in AAU Public institutions is not standardized



AAU Publics: Instructional and Reading Days

Analysis of 33 Institutions' AY 2022-23 Calendars

Instructional Days Per Year

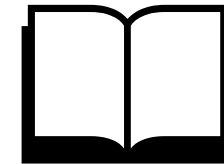
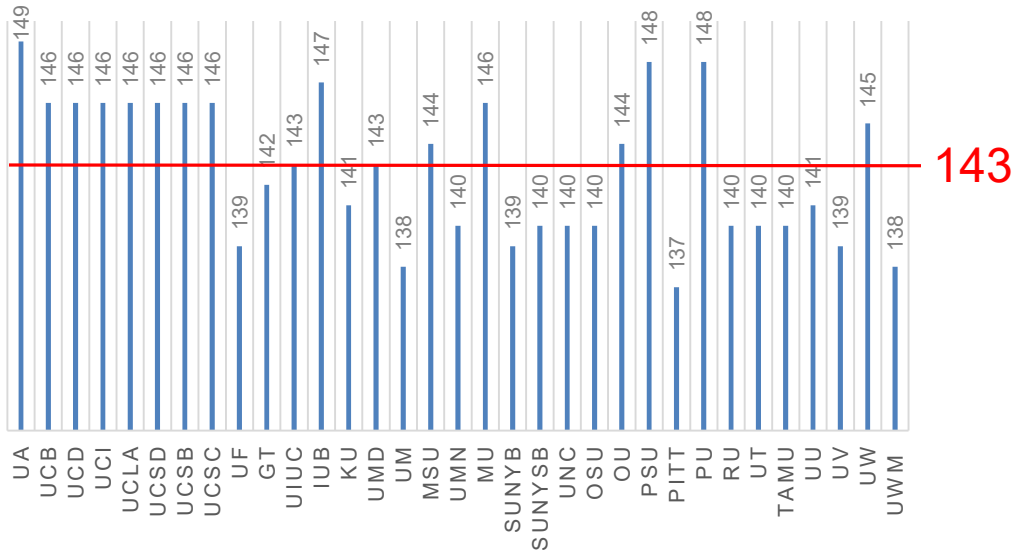
Average: 143 days (Min = 137; Max = 149)

Median: 143 days

Reading Days Per Year

Average: 3 days

Median: 2 days



What about Colorado Law?

- Colorado Department of Higher Education [guidelines](#):

Base Contact Hour: The faculty Base Contact Hour represents a standard measurement of consumption of faculty resources by students. It consists of the number of scheduled minutes of instructional activity involving direct contact of faculty with students in a given term utilizing a particular method of instruction. . . . [For the] Semester System Term: One Base Contact Hour = a minimum of 750 minutes. This translates to a minimum of fifteen 50-minute or 10 75-minute class meetings per semester (or the equivalent).

- This doesn't mean that we must have 75 instructional days per semester, though; direct contact of faculty with students during exams can also be included
- Instructional days per semester vary across Colorado institutions

Colorado Comparisons: Instructional Days

Analysis of AY 2022-23 Calendars

Institution	Instructional Days Per Academic Year	Final Exam Days Per Academic Year
CU Boulder	146	10
UCCS	149	8
CU Denver	148	12
Colorado State	148	10
School of Mines	146	10
Colorado College	144	0



FAQs

- **What would happen with add/drop deadlines?**
 - They would not be changed: add deadline the 2nd Wednesday of classes; drop deadline the 3rd Wednesday; late drop deadline the 10th Friday. (Set proportionally for shorter-term classes.)

- **What would happen with the B81 and B82 “seven-week” sessions, which are currently 37 days?**
 - They would be shortened to 35 days, or a true seven weeks.

- **What about lab classes that are set up to run the same lab experiment M-Th or M-F? Won’t the midsemester reading day mess up a week?**
 - The Office of the Registrar would work with departments to optimize schedules. Other AAU peers with 70 instructional days per semester could serve as models.



More FAQs

- **Why is the midsemester reading day a Tuesday?**
 - It's necessary to equalize the number of MTWRF instructional days.
- **Would the midsemester reading day govern when midterms are scheduled?**
 - No. Faculty may schedule exams and other due dates at any time.
- **Would faculty be able to have exams or other due dates on the midsemester reading day?**
 - No; the midsemester reading day would be like the final exam period reading days in this regard. However, unlike the final exam period reading days, the midsemester reading day would not be a “blackout date” for concerts, sports events, or other campus events.
 - Departments and the Office of the Registrar will need to review scheduling of common midterm exams.



More FAQ's

- **What would the fall semester degree conferral date be?**
 - TBD. We could move it a day earlier, but would likely leave it the same.

- **Would we have to make up snow days or other days when campus is closed due to emergency?**
 - There's no rule on this. The Chancellor would make a decision if excessive instructional days were lost to weather or other emergency circumstances.

- **Have BVSD and SVVSD agreed to this?**
 - If these changes are approved, CU Boulder administration would need to work with both school districts to align spring breaks. CU Boulder and BVSD traditionally align their spring breaks, and BVSD hopes to align with SVVSD, but to date there has not been complete alignment.



Approval Process

- We are seeking input from Deans Council, BFA, and SRS to inform the recommendations of the Provost and the Chief Operating Officer
- The decision is made by the Chancellor (upon positive recommendation by the Provost and the Chief Operating Officer)
- The University of Colorado System office and the Board of Regents do not need to approve campus academic calendars, but they would be informed of any changes

What are we asking for?

Please send any feedback, questions, and/or concerns **no later than Friday, October 20**. Scan the QR code or click on the link to add your input. Questions? Email vcaa@colorado.edu.



https://cuboulder.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6u4U3HCEzWgVd9Y



Next Steps, If Approved

- Campus-wide open forum for awareness and feedback
- Communication campaign
- Web site dedicated to Academic Calendar reform
- Implementation plans begin in spring 2024 with the new calendar in effect for the 2025-26 academic year



Academic Calendar Ad Hoc Working Group Members

- Katherine Eggert, Senior Vice Provost for Academic Planning and Assessment
- Kristi Wold-McCormick, Assistant Vice Provost and University Registrar
- Devin Cramer, Acting Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students
- Andre Grothe, Assistant Vice Provost for Academic Planning
- Sarah Layton, Associate Registrar
- Barbara Marshall, Director of Financial Aid
- Erika Swain, Assistant Director for Compliance and Authorization, ODA

Consulted in the Process of Creating This Proposal

- BFA Executive Committee
- GPSG officers (who consulted with the GPSG assembly)
- CUSG Tri-Execs
- Provost's Cabinet
- Student Affairs leadership (including Veterans Affairs)
- Enrollment Management leadership
- Undergraduate Student Success group (College/School Assistant and Associate Deans for Undergraduate Education + other administrative leadership in support of undergraduate education)
- Buff Undergraduate Success Leadership Implementation Team (BUS-LIT)
- Continuing Education
- Athletics
- Michael Lightner, CU System Vice President for Academic Affairs



Questions and Discussion



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