


THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA



September 29, 1998

Memo To: Robert Wiley, Faculty Senate

From: Scott Shuman and Sarah Pettinger, UISG 

Re: Review Days

For several years, Student Government executives have worked on a variety of proposals to provide anywhere from one week to a few days, prior to finals week, for preparation and review. This year's executive cabinet has become aware of a Review Days proposal created by an ad hoc committee. The proposal has received support from many of the representative bodies on campus, and we would like to have faculty input. Please call Scott at 335-3576 to arrange a time to discuss the attached proposal. Thank you.

cc: John Folkins

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA



TO: Jon Whitmore

FROM: Ad hoc committee on reading days
John Folkins
Jerry Dallam
Meghan Henry
Jake Jakobsen
Juliet Kaufmann
Lola Lopes
Lloyd Matheson
Allison Miller
Don Yarbrough

DATE: February 27, 1998

RE: Review Days

As you know, concerns have been raised that students are often pressed for time at the end of the semester and it is common for students to wish they had more time to prepare for final examinations. A number of universities have responded to this need by designating reading days or reading weeks just prior to finals. Typically, classes do not meet on reading days, but instructors are encouraged to hold review sessions, office hours, etc.

We have considered changing the University of Iowa calendar in various ways to insert a couple of reading days. We have not been able to find a manipulation that is generally satisfactory. For example, our proposal to move the spring semester forward four days, has met opposition from both graduate students and faculty members. We propose another approach. We call this approach review days.

Review days are the last days of instruction for the semester. During review days, students should be expected to spend more and more of their time preparing for finals. They might be given the time to do this using a variety of principles. It is expected that the principles employed would vary greatly across the University, due to the different pedagogical demands of different units and courses. For example, courses with laboratory sections at the end of the week may need to use the laboratory periods to finish laboratory work rather than reviewing lecture material. Although each college or unit will implement review days in its own way, the following principles might be useful guides:

- Review days will be defined as the last few days of regularly scheduled instruction at the end of the semester. This might be one, two, or three days, as determined by different colleges or units.
- During review days, instructors are encouraged to use class time to review and synthesize material covered throughout the semester.

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- Presentation of new material is discouraged during the review days unless there are compelling reasons to provide it.
- Projects, papers, and other assignments requiring out-of-class time should be due prior to the review days whenever possible.
- Regular examinations should not be scheduled during the review days unless there are no good alternative dates. Of course, there are already rules against holding final examinations during the last days of classes without specific approval from the collegiate dean.
- Nonacademic student activities are typically not scheduled during finals week. This principle should be extended to review days. The exception to this would be activities designed to be study breaks or to otherwise complement final examinations. It is recognized that there may be limits to the extent that this principle can be implemented; for example, it may be necessary for the Theater Department to schedule plays during review days.

The Council on Teaching has now approved this proposal. We will also have it discussed at a Deans Meeting and an Associate Deans and Directors Meeting. Then we would ask the Faculty Council if they would like to discuss it.

c: Rich MacNeil, Chair, Council on Teaching