

Dear Provost Whitmore,

This letter is a follow-up of the brief conversation we had about recessing class on November 26th and 27th. During these two days of class, many students do not attend class and many teachers do not teach a regular lesson. These days are dead-days that should be canceled.

Teachers make tough decision when planning their lessons for these two days. They need to decide between two options: 1) do not teach in order to keep the class at the same place 2) hold an exam to force every student to attend.

The first option has been the option I have experienced. In my classes, I have watched films, received extra credit or been sent home early from class. The same class is often taught by the same teacher both first and second semester during the school year. Because there are currently two more days of class in the first semester, the teacher would then be able to use the same lesson plan as second semester.

The second option does not help teachers out any more than the not teaching or students. In addition to planning make up times for students who need to leave town for valid reasons, they often hold a test three weeks before finals week. Regardless of which option is picked, these two days of class are not productive and in many cases counter productive.

In order to cancel these two days of class, we would not need to make them up at another time. As mentioned above, the first semester has two more days than the second semester. Both semesters run seventeen weeks from start to finish. The fall semester recesses one Monday for Labor Day and the spring semester subtracts one Monday for Martin Luther King Jr. Day. The fall semester ends with a week of semester tests before winter break and the spring semester ends with a week of semester tests before summer break. The fall semester recesses three days of school for Thanksgiving recess, while the spring semester subtracts five days (two more days than Thanksgiving recess) for spring vacation.

These two additional days during the fall semester are an inefficient use of money. When MGT evaluated the efficiency of the UI, they explained that efficiency measured the ratio of money spent to credit hours earned. These two extra days do not increase the number of hours a student is educated, but do increase the amount of money spent for each hour earned. Last year it was proposed that we let out class a whole week for budget cuts; knowing this idea was entertained makes me believe these days could be recessed this year.

There are many other schools that give their students an entire week off. For example, Iowa State University, University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign) and University of Nebraska recess class on the Monday and Tuesday before Thanksgiving break.

In closing, I am asking you to initiate discussion with the relevant parties dealing with this issue. I am confident that you will find an overwhelming majority of support for recessing classes on the two day preceding Thanksgiving break.

Sincerely,

Nick Herbold
President
Student Government

Matt Blizek
Vice President
Student Government

Cc: President Boyd
Associate Provost Lopes
Professor Cox
Dean Phillip Jones