

UNH FACULTY SENATE

MOTION # XX-M8

on cancelling classes on Wednesday before Thanksgiving break

1. Motion presenter: Scott Smith, chair of Senate Academic Affairs Committee

2. Dates of Faculty Senate discussion: 12/7/15, 2/1/16

3. Rationale: Last year the Faculty Senate voted (XIX–M8) to cancel classes on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving (hereafter WBT) for one year, but mandated a review by the Academic Affairs Committee to determine whether this change should be continued beyond the one-year trial period. The AAC solicited feedback from Faculty Senators concerning the week before Thanksgiving. The committee received over twenty responses, and the prevailing opinion (over 90%) was in favor of cancelling classes on WBT for a number of reasons, including the safety of students.

When the motion was presented last year, there was some concern about students taking advantage of the cancellation of Wednesday classes to take the whole week off. Some students indeed left early, but there was no clarity—nor any way to find out—whether more did so than in previous years when WBT was a *de facto* day off because of numerous cancellations by faculty. Responses from Faculty Senators were mixed: some reported abnormal absences; others expressed surprise at high attendance; still others found no appreciable difference in attendance.

A particularly worrisome phenomenon arose, however, to wit, the fact that a substantial number of faculty cancelled classes on the *Tuesday* before Thanksgiving. It stands to reason if a student has less to lose, that student will see less need to stay on campus. Therefore, if the Faculty Senate votes in favor of the motion, we strenuously urge department chairs and senators to remind their faculty that classes are expected to run as scheduled on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Faculty must take a united stand.

The Academic Affairs Committee has worked with the University Registrar on a provisional calendar should this motion be passed, and is ready to act quickly to establish the calendar for the next academic year.

4. Motion: The Senate Academic Affairs Committee moves that the Faculty Senate adjust the calendar such that classes are cancelled on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and Fall Break is eliminated for a period of one year (through AY 16–17). It also recommends that the Academic Affairs Committee review the effects of this change during the next academic year.

5. Senate action: The motion passed with 40 votes in favor, 3 against, and 0 abstentions.

6. Senate chair's signature: Deborah A. Kenyon

Forwarded to: President Mark Huddleston, on February 26, 2016

Interim Provost P.T. Vasudevan, on February 26, 2016

Mary Rhiel, Interim Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, on Feb 26, 2016

Andy Colby, Registrar, on February 26, 2016

All college deans, on February 26, 2016

All department chairs, on February 26, 2016