

University Senate Statement on the Stony Brook Academic Calendar

23 March 2012

Much attention has been paid recently to the Stony Brook University Academic calendar.

The calendar was presented to the University Council in November 2011 by Associate Provost Robbins. The presence of the President of the University Senate at the Council meeting should not be construed as acceptance of the calendar by the University Senate.

The President of the University Senate invited Associate Provost Robbins to meet with the Senate Executive Committee on 28 November 2011, and to present the calendar to the University Senate as a whole at the 5 December 2011 meeting. The Senate was not asked to take a position on the calendar, and what little discussion ensued focused on the fact that the calendar was not generated according to established practice.

In the past a university-wide calendar committee, with representation from the Senate, the students, the Inter-faith Council, as well as the registrar and other administrators, has been convened about every 5 years to generate a calendar acceptable to all parties. Such prior community consensus was not sought here.

At the next University Senate meeting, on 6 February 2012, the Senate passed without dissent a resolution entitled "*Role of Shared Governance in the Establishment of an Academic Calendar*". This resolution was delivered to President Stanley and Provost Assanis. The full text of the resolution is appended to this statement.

Contrary to the assertion in the "*University Message to the Campus Community: Redesigning the Academic Calendar at Stony Brook University, effective 2012-13 Academic Year*", the University Senate took no position on the revised calendar. Rather, the University Senate condemned the lack of involvement of the campus community in the process by which the calendar was generated. We made our disapproval known to the Associate Provost at Executive Committee meeting, to all at the December 2011 Senate meeting, and again with the formal resolution dated February 2012.

Frederick M. Walter
President, Stony Brook University Senate

Resolution on the Role of Shared Governance in the Establishment of an Academic Calendar

WHEREAS the American Association of University Professors, in Section V of its *Statement on Governance* includes “those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process” as one of the areas in which “the faculty has primary responsibility;” and

WHEREAS it has been the practice over many years to have an academic calendar committee comprised of members of the Provost’s Office, representatives from relevant committees of the University Senate, and a representative of the Interfaith Center; and

WHEREAS these academic calendars were based upon a set of principles that took account of the needs of administration, faculty and students; and

WHEREAS during the fall 2011 semester the administration, unilaterally and without consultation with any of the existing governance organizations, established an academic calendar committee consisting solely of administrators; and

WHEREAS this administrative committee then promulgated a new academic calendar to take effect for the 2012-2013 academic year that, consequently, superseded the previously adopted academic calendar; and

WHEREAS the University Senate’s concern about this clear violation of the principle of shared governance, especially in an area that the AAUP deems a primary responsibility of the faculty, is independent of any agreement on the acceptability of the newly proposed academic calendar:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the University Senate urges the administration to establish a shared governance committee, similar to those used in the past, to consider the issues raised in this resolution, to review the proposed academic calendar in light of the set of principles used in establishing the previous academic calendar, and if necessary to recommend a more appropriate multi-year academic calendar for the University community.