

Kernel Editorial: Add another day (but not three) to fall holiday break

By:

Posted: 3/21/07

The UK Calendar Committee and the University Senate debated yesterday about changes to the current durations of Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break.

They tossed around two ideas: combining Fall Break and Thanksgiving Break to give students a full week off, thus eliminating two days from the semester; or moving the one-day Fall Break to the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

We think the second proposal is the most logical.

Eliminating two days from the fall semester would not be the proper compromise to adjusting the too-short Fall Break and the too-short Thanksgiving Break. Cutting out two days of a semester would force faculty to make a drastic change to their class curriculums, which would put students in a bind. Also, with Winter Break only a few weeks away, students don't need an entire week off when they are going to get nearly a month off for the holiday season.

While students would be excited about having a weeklong Thanksgiving Break and about having two fewer days in the semester, this doesn't seem to benefit anyone in the long run.

If the one-day Fall Break - which is insufficient at best, especially because many students don't have class on Fridays - is moved to the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Break, all involved will see advantages from the change.

Many UK students live out of state and have long distances to travel to get home. It is unfair to them to have to stay in Lexington until Wednesday afternoon (or whenever their last class is) instead of getting home Tuesday night.

With this problem, many students not from Kentucky go home on Tuesday anyway, choosing to miss class in favor of staying and getting a late start on their trip home.

This also affects instructors. Some hold classes on Wednesday, and some cancel, understanding that many students have travel issues. They would no longer be forced to choose between accommodating students' desire to get home and giving them their benefit for their tuition money.

If the university is going to make a change, this option seems like the most plausible move.

If students were given the Wednesday before Thanksgiving Break off, it would allow them to get home to their families sooner, and it would help fix lagging attendance on that day. This would be a better solution than removing two days from the semester to extend Thanksgiving Break to a week.