Establishment of the Academic Schedule of Dates

Principles and Goals for Establishing the academic Schedule of Dates (approved by Senate April 10, 2001)
Changes to the formula to allow the make-up of Thanksgiving Day Monday (approved by Senate October 2, 2007; effective Fall 2008)
Changes to the formula to allow an annual Fall Study Break Day following Thanksgiving Monday (approved by Senate February 10, 2014; effective Fall 2014)

1. Principles and Goals for Establishing the academic Schedule of Dates (approved by Senate April 10, 2001)

Principles and Goals
Basic principles of scheduling:
• We must provide sufficient time for faculty to mark exams
• We must continue to provide final grades to students before the beginning of the next semester
• We must allow for time to counsel students in academic difficulty
• We must maintain the number of teaching days at 59 for Fall, 59-60 for Winter, and 60 for Summer

Input from stakeholder groups (i.e. Program Committees, Program Counsellors, and VPAC, others) identified a number of basic changes that were broadly desired, and were used to inform the final principles:
• Begin Fall semester after Labour Day (not before)
• No classes on Saturday

2. Changes to the formula to allow the make-up of Thanksgiving Day Monday (approved by Senate October 2, 2007; effective Fall 2008)

The Issue
The University semester is 12 weeks long, with classes normally comprised of 36 hours of lectures. However, currently any instructor teaching on a Monday in the fall semester loses lecture time due to the Thanksgiving Monday holiday. For a faculty member teaching a three hour course on a Monday, this results in the loss of one full week of class time.

While some faculty may be able to design their course in a flexible manner to address this shortfall of class time, others may need this time to meet course requirements. Unfortunately, given the tightness of classroom space, some classes will always need to be assigned to a Monday time slot.

Schedule of Dates Change effective 2008
Accordingly the Schedule of Dates was changed to add one additional class day at the end of the Fall semester to ensure that all classes have the opportunity to meet for the full 36 hours per semester of class time. While the solution is obvious, the implementation proved more complicated. In some years, where Labour Day starts late, adding a Monday class at the end of the semester, and then providing for the usual time to study for examinations and complete marking, results in an inability to process the
final fall grades in time for the start of the winter semester. Given the semestered nature of our programs, students must have the results of their course outcomes prior to the start of the Winter semester, as they may then need to make changes to their course selection (e.g. re-take prerequisite courses, drop courses, etc.).

Consequently the proposed schedule (below) meets all the Schedule of Dates principles, and provides for a full 60 days of classes in the semester as well as an additional day for students to study for finals.

Since the majority of upper year students return to campus on the Labour Day weekend, the earlier start of classes will allow them to engage sooner in their studies and establish the academic focus and priorities of the year more quickly. The new schedule will provide first year students with the opportunity to settle into their studies sooner, and provide the opportunity to meet as necessary with course instructors (who are teaching and therefore more likely to be available in the first week). Orientation activities would continue, but scheduled around classes. Shortening the “return” period, along with shortening Orientation Week—by starting classes sooner—will signal the University’s intention that the engagement of students in academic activities is the primary purpose and focus of the university year.

These changes became effective for Fall 2008.
Fall classes to begin on the Thursday after the Labour Day Monday (rather than the following Monday).

1. Use these two additional days as follows:
   a. Add a make-up day for the missed Thanksgiving Monday at the end of the last week of Classes (on the Thursday).
   b. Add an additional day for students to study for examinations.

APPROVED CHANGE, effective Fall 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Year Students arrive the Saturday or Sunday before Labour Day¹</th>
<th>SEPTEMBER</th>
<th>OCTOBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes start on the Thursday the same week as Labour Day</td>
<td>S – Orientation</td>
<td>M – Thanksgiving, no classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular classes end on the Wednesday of the current final week of the semester</td>
<td>M – Labour Day (Orientation)</td>
<td>DECEMBER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Thursday of the final week of instruction is a make-up day for the Monday that had been</td>
<td>T – Orientation</td>
<td>W – Regular schedule of classes ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W – Orientation</td>
<td>R – Thanksgiving Day make-up classes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>R – Classes</td>
<td>F – Study/Reading Day</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F – Classes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M – Exams begin</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

¹ Move in date for new students would be decided after approval of the Schedule of Dates, and will involve broad consultation of the numerous stakeholders.
3. Changes to the formula to allow an annual Fall Study Break Day following Thanksgiving Monday (approved by Senate February 10, 2014; effective Fall 2014)

At its joint meeting on January 31st, the Boards of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies received and considered a proposal from the Central Students Association (CSA) to incorporate an annual one-day study break into the fall semester on the Tuesday immediately following the Thanksgiving Monday, effective Fall 2014.

On the Tuesday break day, the University would remain open, however no classes would be scheduled. The teaching day would be made up at the end of the semester, so as to align with the Monday/ Tuesday/ Friday or Tuesday/ Thursday class scheduling (i.e. Thanksgiving Monday is made up on the Friday, and the Tuesday study break day following Thanksgiving Monday would be made up on the Thursday).

As a result of this change - where there are now three days between the end of classes and the start of the exam period - with the incorporation of the one-day break there would now be only be two days. (It should be noted that according to the principles approved by Senate for establishing the academic Schedule of Dates, only two days are required, although in practice three days have typically been allotted). Under the proposal, and with the make-up day, 60 teaching days will remain in the Fall semester.

The break day can be accommodated in the Schedule of Dates for the regional campuses (Ridgetown, Alfred, and Kemptville), and the DVM program has indicated that it will be able to accommodate the break day, with the exception of Phase 4 of the curriculum The Guelph Humber campus has always operated on its own Schedule of Dates, and on the recommendation of the Vice Provost Guelph Humber following his consultation with students and staff at that campus, Guelph Humber will not implement the fall break day.

After considerable discussion, the Boards voted to support the recommendation to Senate to establish an annual fall semester study break day.

At the same meeting, the Boards also considered a motion from the CSA to establish a Working Group to examine the feasibility of establishing a week-long fall study break in future years.

Following considerable discussion by the members about the various factors that contribute to student stress during the academic semester and the various ways that these issues might be addressed in addition to a study break, and on the basis of information from the Associate Vice President Academic and the Associate Vice
President Student Affairs that work will begin shortly on a comprehensive University – wide strategy to address student mental health issues, the motion regarding the Working Group was withdrawn by the CSA representative. The Boards indicated that they will be interested in any suggestions emerging from the proposed mental health strategy that relate to academic policies and programming, and would be prepared to discuss any recommendations that might result.

Fall 2014 Schedule of Dates

- **Monday, September 1**
  - Holiday
- **Thursday, September 4**
  - Class commences
- **Friday, September 5**
  - Last day to submit Requests for Academic Consideration--1st meeting
  - Last day to submit co-op work performance evaluations for Summer Semester 2014
- **Wednesday, September 10**
  - Last day to submit co-op work semester reports for Summer Semester 2014
- **Friday, September 12**
  - Add period ends
  - Last day to drop two-semester courses (S14/F14)
- **Friday, September 19**
  - Last day for clearance to graduate for Fall 2014 Convocation
- **Wednesday, October 1**
  - Last day to submit Requests for Academic Consideration--2nd meeting
- **Monday, October 6**
  - Course selection period for Winter Semester 2015 begins--In-course students
  - Deferred examinations for Summer 2014 courses commence
- **Friday, October 10**
  - Deferred examinations for Summer 2014 courses conclude
- **Monday, October 13**
  - Holiday--NO CLASSES SCHEDULED -- classes rescheduled to Friday, November 28
- **Tuesday, October 14**
  - Fall Study Break Day - NO CLASSES SCHEDULED -- classes rescheduled to Thursday, November 27
- **Thursday, October 16**
  - Last day for applications to graduate at Winter 2015 Convocation without application late fee
- **Saturday, October 18**
  - Fall 2014 Convocation
- **Thursday, October 30**
  - Course selection period for Winter Semester 2015 ends--In-course students

- **Friday, October 31**
  - Fortieth class day--Last day to drop one semester courses
  - Last day to apply to graduate at Winter 2015 Convocation

- **Saturday, November 15**
  - Last day for external and internal applications for admission to Winter Semester 2015 for all programs with Winter entry

- **Thursday, November 27**
  - Classes rescheduled from Tuesday, October 14, Tuesday schedule in effect

- **Friday, November 28**
  - Classes rescheduled from Monday, October 13, Monday schedule in effect
  - Classes conclude
  - Last day for applications from in-course students for admission into the Co-op option of B.A. (Psychology), B.Sc.( Biochemistry, Biological & Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Chemistry, Toxicology), B.Sc.(Env.) for Winter Semester 2015

- **Monday, December 1**
  - Examinations commence

- **Saturday, December 6**
  - Examinations scheduled

- **Monday, December 8**
  - Add period for Winter Semester 2015 begins

- **Friday, December 12**
  - Examinations conclude

- **Monday, December 15**
  - Last day to submit Requests for Academic Consideration--3rd meeting