

To: The University Senate
From: University Senate Educational Policy Committee
University Senate Student Affairs Committee
Purdue Student Government
Subject: Voluntary Reading Day in Fall 2020 Semester
Reference: <https://www.purdue.edu/registrar/calendars/2020-21-Academic-Calendar.html>
Disposition: University Senate for Discussion and Adoption

Rationale: Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in May 2020, Purdue University implemented an alternative academic calendar for the fall 2020 semester. To minimize health risks involved in mass travel, the new calendar required that University holidays and fall breaks, including Labor Day and October break, be removed.

As a result, students, faculty, and staff are now fatigued, having worked without the customary fall breaks for an extended period starting August 24, 2020.

Recommending a mandatory Reading Day this fall semester seems sensible. However, this may be problematic because we are late in the semester, instructor plans may have little flexibility, and various university programs require a fixed number of attendance hours due to certification and accreditation guidelines, among other reasons.

Nonetheless, the Purdue community needs a break. Members of our community need to refresh their minds, maintain mental well-being, and relieve body fatigue. At the same time, we should continue to keep in mind health and safety concerns, including social distancing, mask-wearing, mass travel, and all other precautions indicated by the Protect Purdue Pledge.

Proposal: To support the academic progress of our students and the mental and physical health of faculty, staff, and students engaged in the academic mission of Purdue, the Purdue University Senate strongly recommends that the University institute a “Reading Day” break on Wednesday, November 4, 2020. To accommodate courses with a fixed or otherwise required number of attendance hours due to certification or accreditation guidelines, the Reading Day must be voluntary. Purdue University leaves the decision to opt-in to Reading Day to the discretion of course instructors.

Committee Votes:

For:

Against:

Abstained:

Absent:

Erik Otárola-Castillo (EPC)
David Sanders (SAC)
Thomas Atkinson* (SAC)
Thomas Brush (EPC)
Vic Cherupally** (EPC)
Todor Cooklev (EPC)
Chitta Das (SAC)
Donna Ferullo (EPC)
Jennifer Freeman (EPC)
Keith Gehres* (EPC)
Mili Jha** (EPC)
Nan Kong (EPC)
Eric Kvam (EPC)
Benjamin Lawton (SAC)
Greg M. Michalski (EPC)
Li Qiao (EPC)
Alex Reed** (SAC)
Veronica Reynolds** (SAC)
Libby Richards (EPC)
Jenna Rickus* (EPC)
Ralph Rivera** (SAC)
Dennis Savaiano (SAC)
John Sheffield (EPC)
Amanda Shie** (SAC)
Thomas Siegmund (EPC)
Jeffery Stefancic* (EPC)
Hannah Walter-Darr** (EPC)
Jane Yacilla (SAC)

* Indicates advisers with voting rights.

** Indicates student members.