

# Faculty Senate

April 19, 2017

# Faculty Senate Resolution on Cornell Leadership in Honesty and Reliable Knowledge

The New York Times | <https://nyti.ms/2kMuAzH>

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The Opinion Pages

## American Universities Must Take a Stand

Leon Botstein

ON CAMPUS FEB. 8, 2017

*How can the university turn a blind eye to ... the capacity to dress falsehood up as truth and reject the fruits of reasoned argument, evidence and rigorous verification?*

*Standing up for the truth — which is, after all, higher education's business — might appear to be an act of political partisanship. But this is not about political parties. It is about **the proper role of the academy in a troubling time.***

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/08/opinion/american-universities-must-take-a-stand.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/08/opinion/american-universities-must-take-a-stand.html?_r=0)

## Cornell Leadership in Honesty and Reliable Knowledge

**Whereas** dishonesty, falsehoods, and the distortion or suppression of reliable knowledge have become critical public issues of particular urgency;

**Whereas** a central mission of colleges and universities is the discovery, validation, communication, and preservation of reliable knowledge;

**Whereas** social media, the internet, and other forms of digital communication are dramatically changing the patterns of our communication in a manner that “blurs the distinction between fact and fiction” and creates conditions where reliable knowledge is often drowned out by large volumes of false information;

**Whereas** Cornell University has a unique position as both a private and land-grant university with an official “...mission to discover, preserve, and disseminate knowledge; [to] produce creative work; and [to] promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the Cornell community,” and “...through public service, to enhance the lives and livelihoods of our students, the people of New York, and others around the world”;

**Therefore be it resolved** that Cornell university leadership and faculty should expand and initiate educational activities, both on- and off-campus, to explain established academic practices for discriminating between fact and opinion, validating facts, establishing what is reliable knowledge, and exposing the communication practices that distort, confuse, and seek to repress or censor reliable knowledge.

**Be it further resolved** that Cornell faculty and leadership should work with communication experts, journalists, and other relevant groups to develop innovative means, appropriate to the changing technology of communicating reliable knowledge with the public.

**Be it further resolved** that the Cornell leadership should collaborate with other colleges and universities to forward these objectives.

## Suggested Amendment (Jon McKenzie, English)

### Original:

**Whereas** social media, the internet, and other forms of digital communication are dramatically changing the patterns of our communication in a manner **that “blurs the distinction between fact and fiction”** and creates conditions where reliable knowledge is **often** drowned out by large volumes of false information;

### Amended:

**Whereas** social media, the internet, and other forms of digital communication are dramatically changing the patterns of our communication in a manner that, **like speech and writing themselves, can sometimes blur fact and fiction and create conditions** where reliable knowledge is drowned out by large volumes of false information;

# Academic Calendar Committee “Final” Report

## Senate Discussion

April 19, 2017

Becky Stoltzfus and Charlie Van Loan

# The Committee

Marianella Casasola  
Tom Fox  
Becky Stoltzfus  
Rob Thorne  
Charlie Van Loan

Akhi Issur  
Ben Oster  
Rina Winarto

Imani Allen  
Marin Clarkburg  
Cassie Dembosky  
Betsy East  
Greg Eells  
Gina Giambattista  
Mary Beth Grant  
Hazel Hall  
Connie Mabry

A good example of students, staff, and faculty working together.

# Finding the Overall Best Calendar

Given the emphasis on academics that is part of our charge, the Committee has focused on:

- how to position **breaks** so that they maximize learning and well being
- how to increase **summertime opportunities** for scholarship and employment
- how to enhance the value of **class days just before and just after Thanksgiving**
- how to structure an effective **orientation period** and **study/exam period**

As much as possible, we also address concerns that relate to religious practice, childcare, and a host of practical issues such as getting grades in on time, big course prep, getting the dorms ready for graduation families, etc., etc., etc.



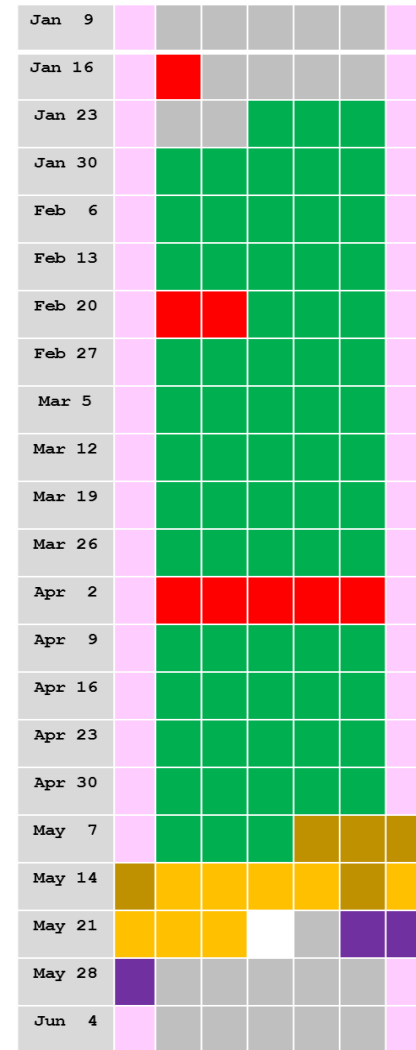
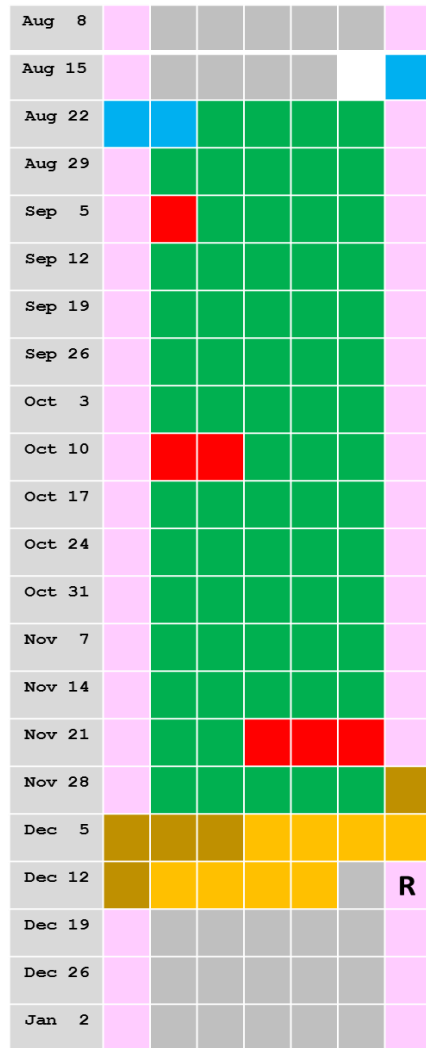
# The Current Calendar

Play with the tiles.

But NYS requires that

Class Days + Exam Days  
 $\geq 75$

each semester.



- Orientation Day
- Class Day
- Break Day
- Study Day
- Exam Day
- Commencement
- R December Recognition

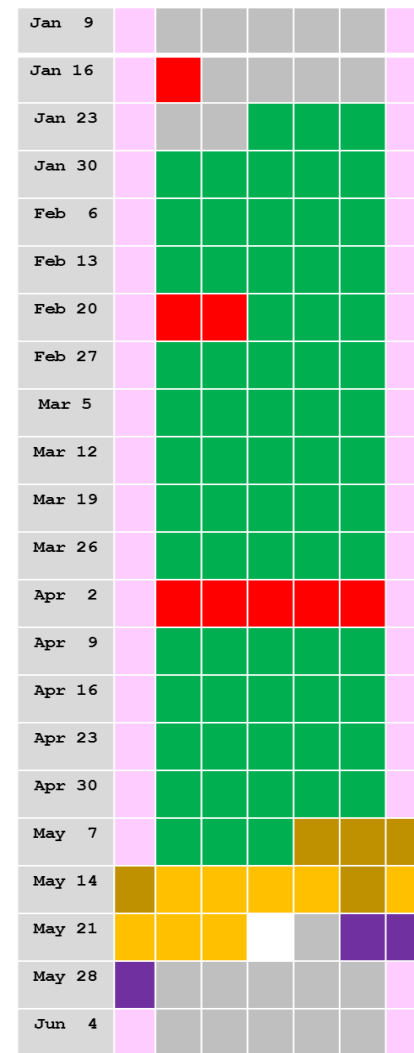
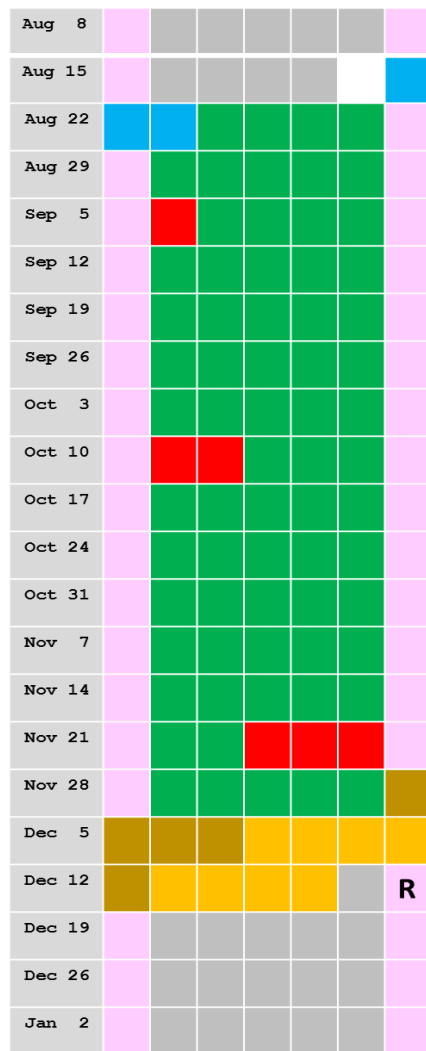
# Compared to Our Peers

We have the least number of Orientation days.

Cornell = 3

Median = 7

All peers have at least 5.



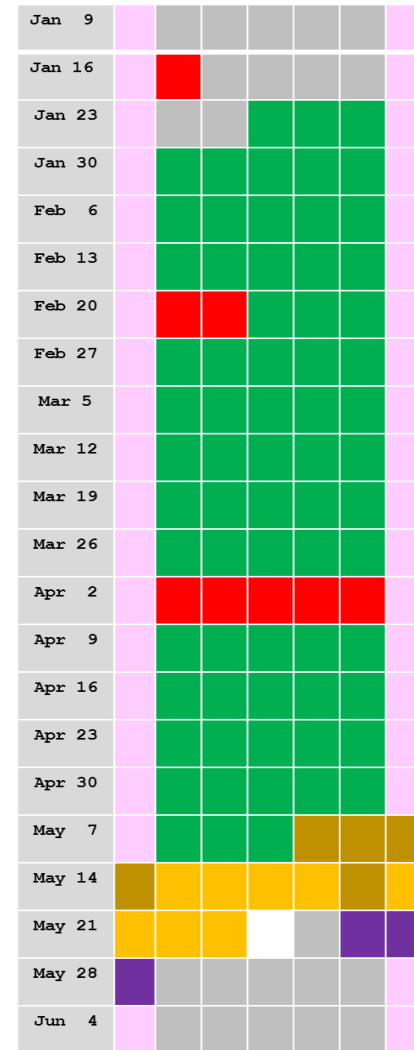
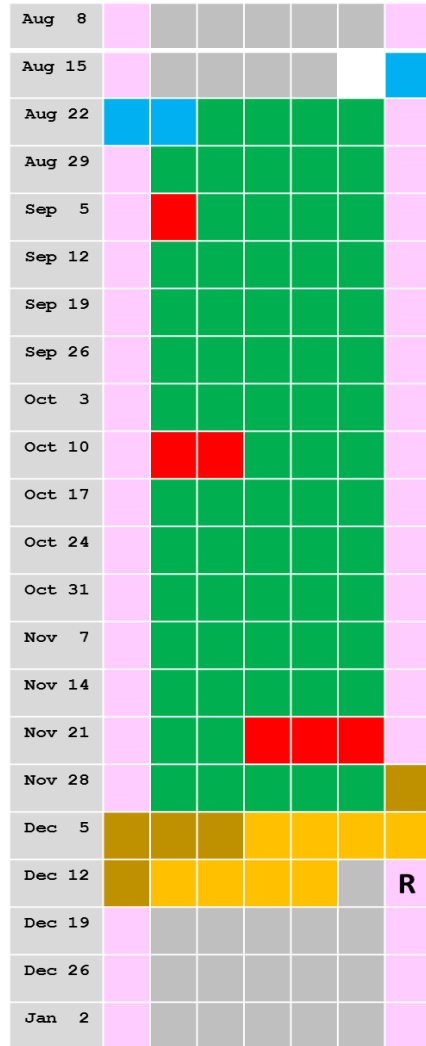
- Ivy League
- +
- Duke
- Johns Hopkins
- MIT
- Chicago
- Stanford
- Michigan
- Berkeley

# Compared to Our Peers

We have the least number of class days after Thanksgiving.

Cornell = 5  
Median = 10

Except for Harvard and Cornell, everybody has at least 8.

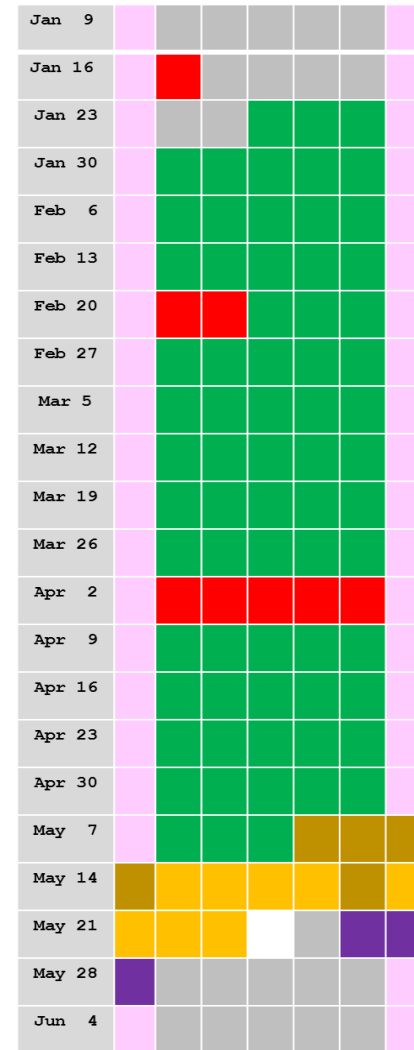
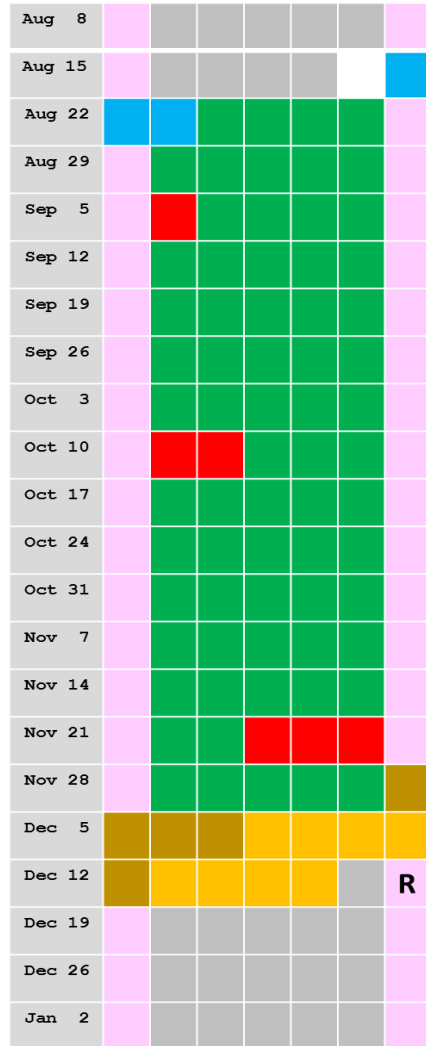


- Ivy League
- +
- Duke
- Johns Hopkins
- MIT
- Chicago
- Stanford
- Michigan
- Berkeley

# Compared to Our Peers

We have the only two-break Spring semester except Brown.

Yale has a single 2-week spring break.

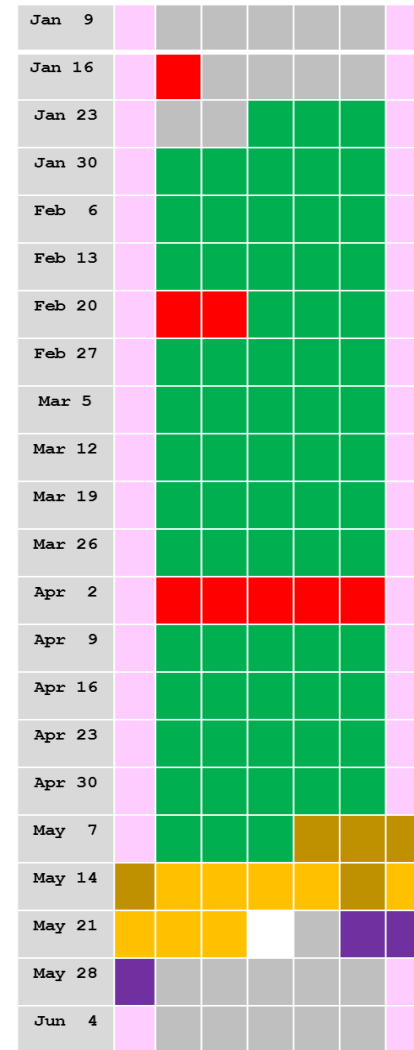
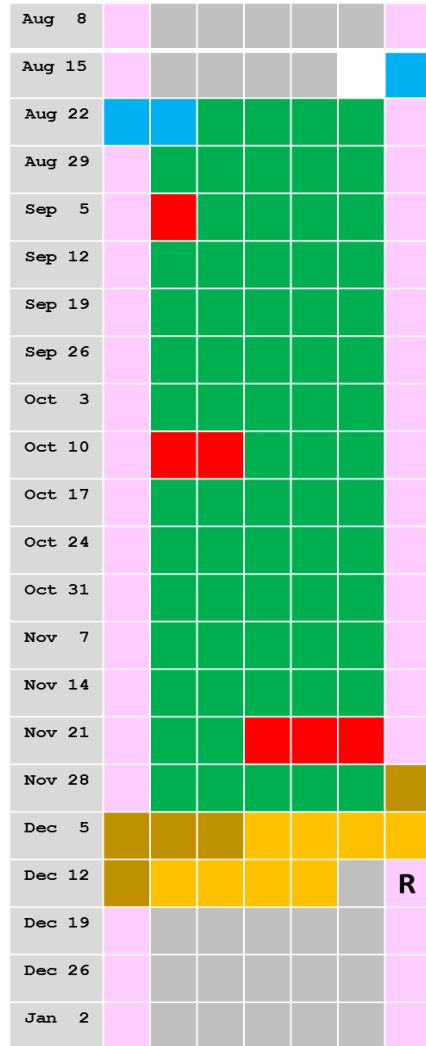


- Ivy League
- +
- Duke
- Johns Hopkins
- MIT
- Chicago
- Stanford
- Michigan
- Berkeley

# Compared to Our Peers

We have a somewhat long study/exam period.

Cornell	13
Penn	10
Columbia	10
Michigan	10
Duke	10
Berkeley	7



- Ivy League
- +
- Duke
- Johns Hopkins
- MIT
- Chicago
- Stanford
- Michigan
- Berkeley

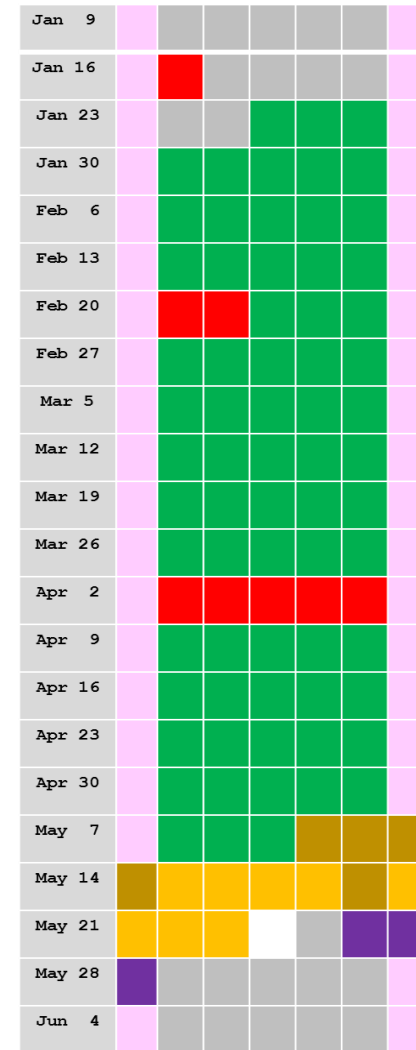
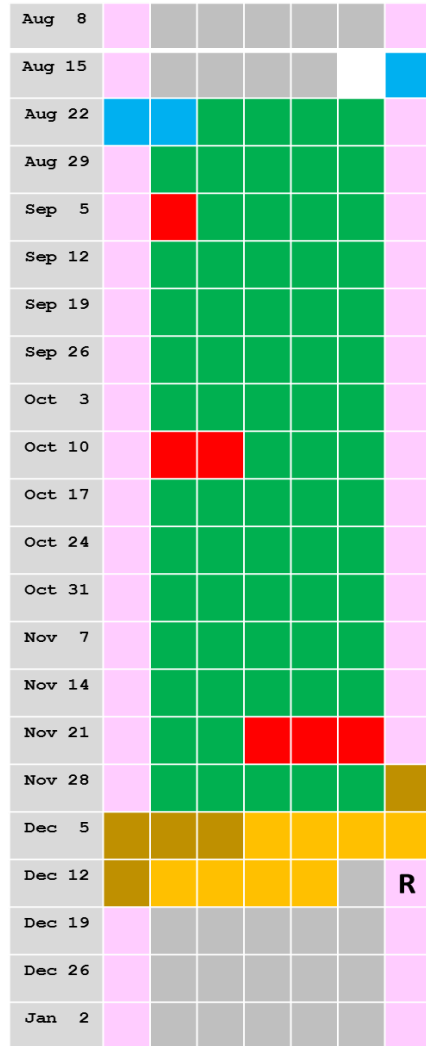
# Compared to Our Peers

We have a relatively long Dec/Jan break.

Cornell is about 1.5 weeks above the median.

We have a relatively short summer break.

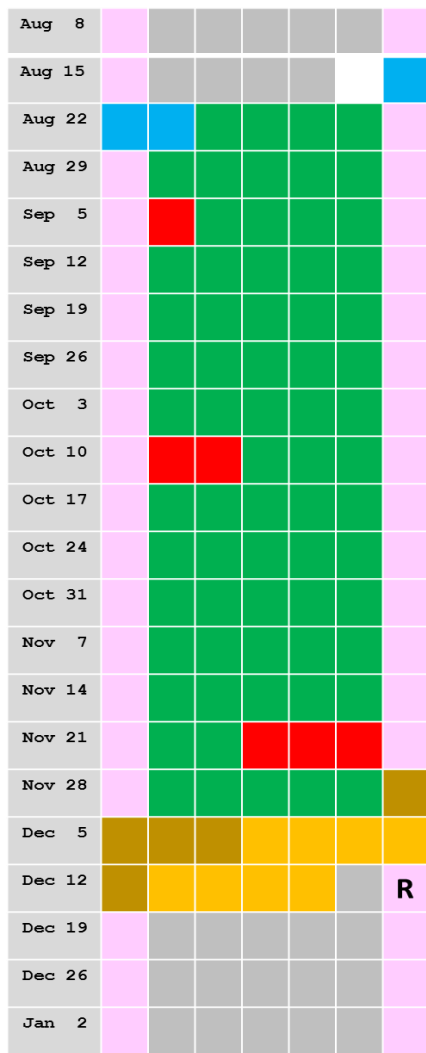
Cornell is about 2.5 weeks below the median.



- Ivy League
- +
- Duke
- Johns Hopkins
- MIT
- Chicago
- Stanford
- Michigan
- Berkeley

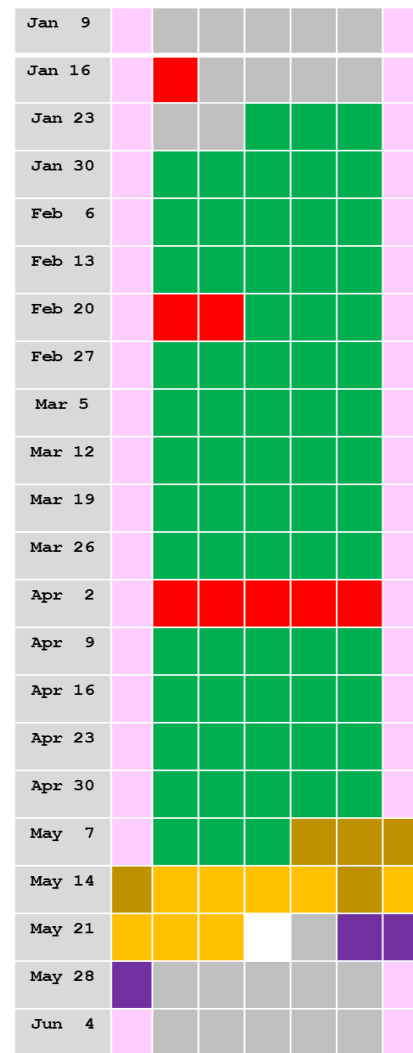
# Starting, Stopping, Breaks

Don't start too early →



Gimme 5! →

Don't end too late →



← Don't start so late

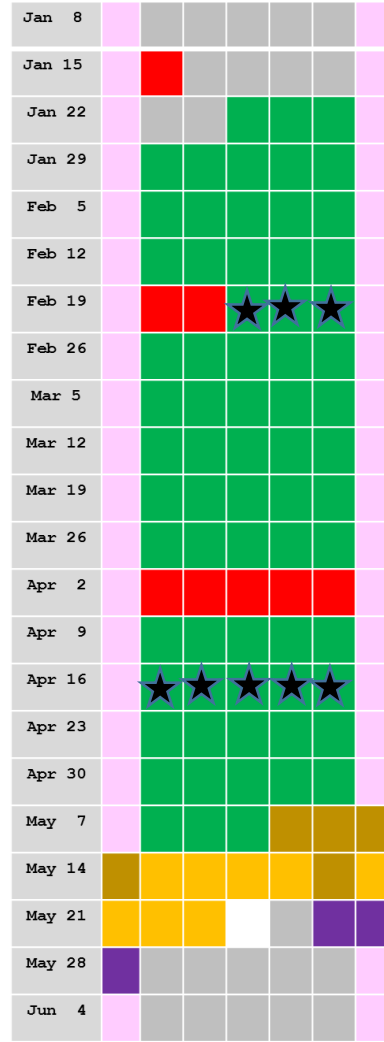
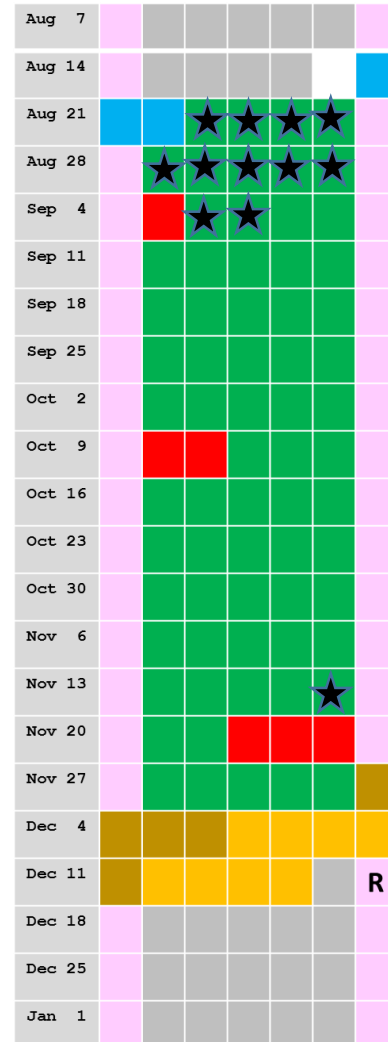
← Reposition

← Don't end so late

# Childcare Days: 2016-17

A childcare day is a Cornell class day that is not a public school class day.

The number of childcare days doesn't capture everything, but it is a start.



Very difficult to synch breaks with the public schools if we position our breaks according to what's academically best for our students.

Similar comment about religious holidays.



# The Proposed Alternatives

## The Modified Current Calendar

What we think is the best possible calendar given that graduation stays on Memorial Day Weekend.

## The Early Commencement Calendar

What we think is the best possible calendar given that graduation is held two weeks earlier.

The Fall Semester is the same for both of these calendars.

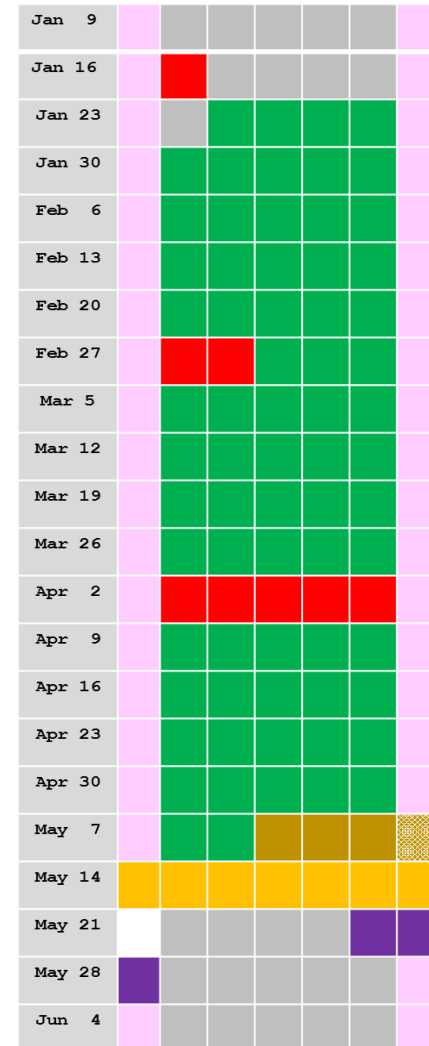
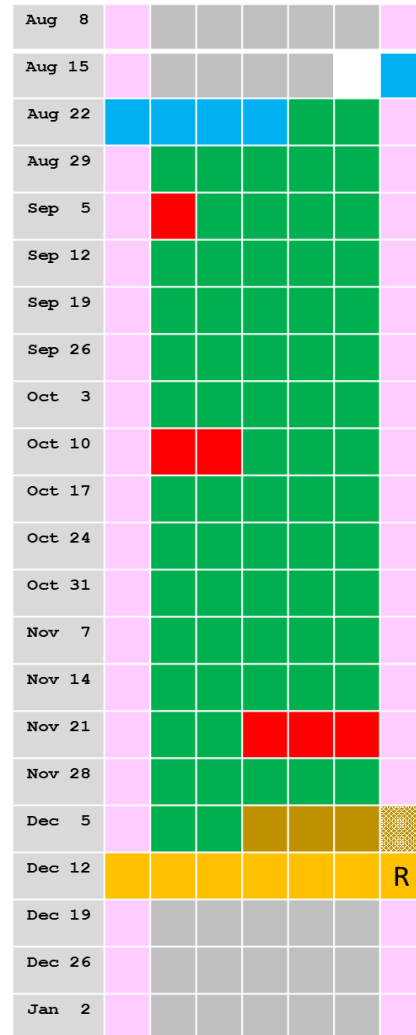
# The Modified Current Calendar Framework

Five-day orientation.

Classes start 2 days later.

Seven class days after Thanksgiving.

Modified study/exam period.



Feb break is always after 24 class days.

Modified study/exam period.

Increases the gap from the last exam day to graduation.

# Other Differences

1. The summer break increases by 5 days.
2. The summer break increases by one “work week”.
3. The Dec/Jan break decreases by 3 days.

## 4. Weekday Balance

Current Fall: 12-15-14-14-14

Modified Fall: 13-14-13-14-14

Current Spring: 13-13-15-14-14

Modified Spring: 13-14-14-14-14

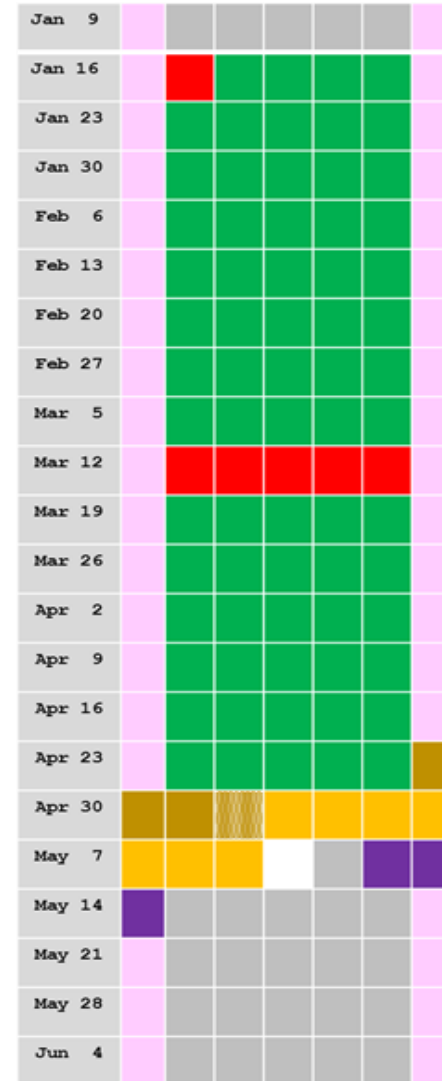
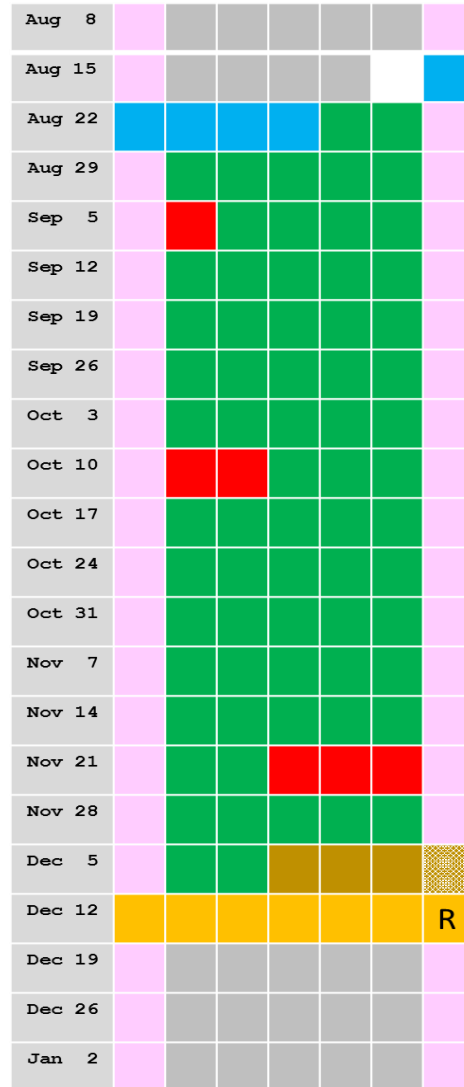
# The Early Commencement Calendar Framework

Five-day orientation.

Classes start 2 days later.

Seven class days after Thanksgiving.

Modified study/exam period.



Classes start 8 days earlier.

Only one break.

Modified study/exam period.

Graduation is two Weeks earlier

# Other Differences

1. The summer break increases by 15 days.
2. The summer break increases by two “work weeks”
3. The Dec/Jan break decreases by 10 days.

## 4. Weekday Balance

Current Fall: 12-15-14-14-14

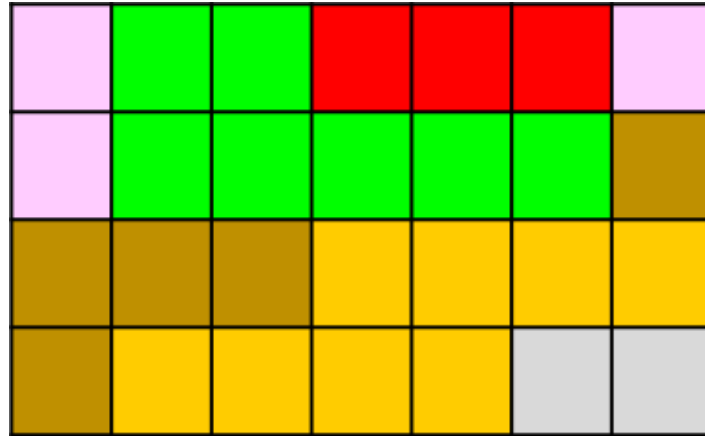
Early Fall: 13-14-13-14-14

Current Spring: 13-13-15-14-14

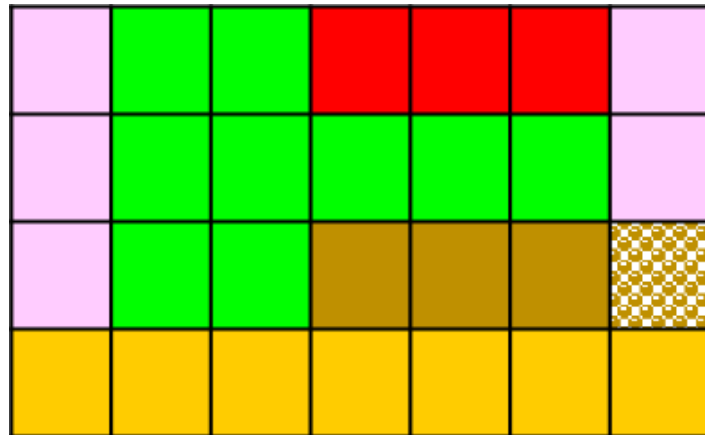
Early Spring: 13-14-14-14-14






# The Modified Exam Period (Fall Illustration)

Current  
Calendar



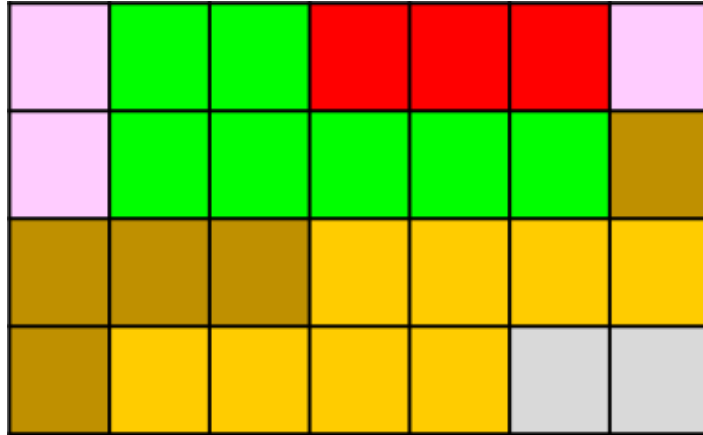
Modified  
or  
Early  
Calendar



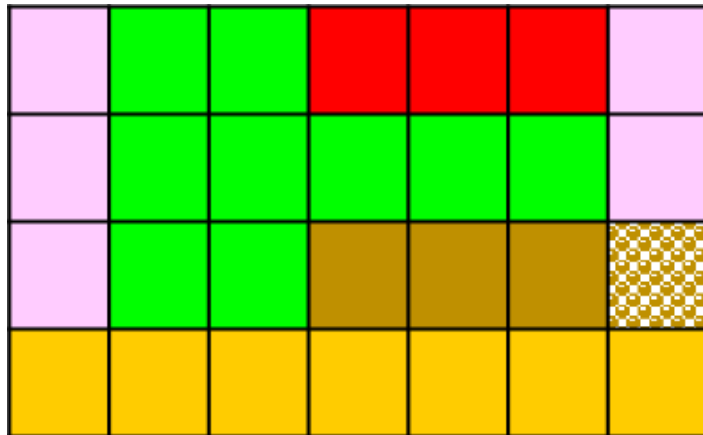
-  Class Day
-  Break Day (Thanksgiving)
-  Study Day
-  1-Exam Day
-  Exam Day

# The Modified Exam Period (Fall Illustration)

Current  
Calendar



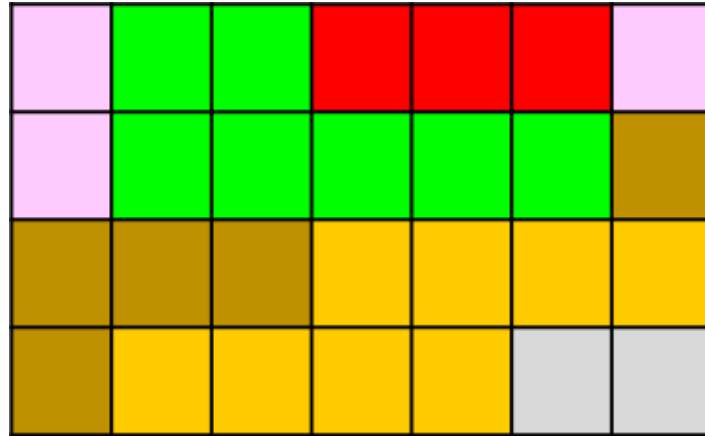
Modified  
or  
Early  
Calendar



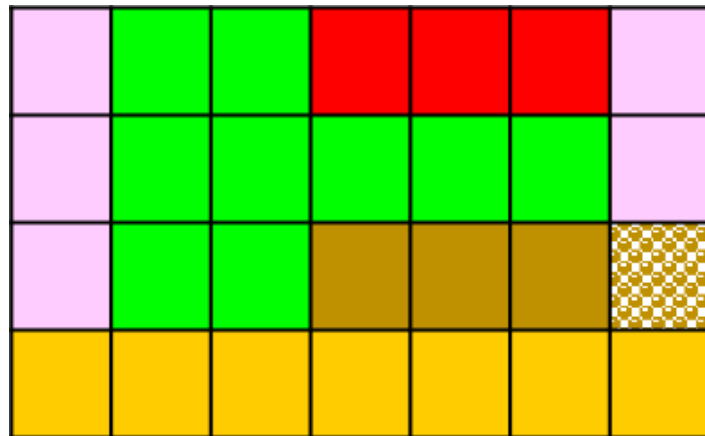
New material taught just after the Thanksgiving break can be properly reviewed and integrated with earlier course content.

# The Modified Exam Period (Fall Illustration)

Current  
Calendar



Modified  
or  
Early  
Calendar

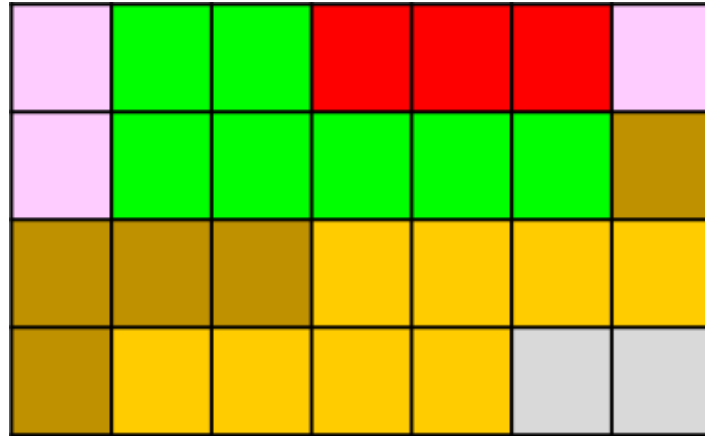


Instead of ending classes with a 5-day frenzy, instructors can plan a course wrap-up that works well for students as they begin preparing for finals.

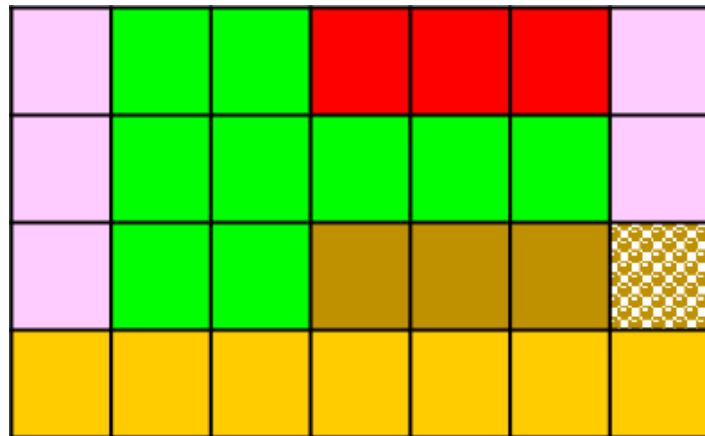


# The Modified Exam Period (Fall Illustration)

Current  
Calendar



Modified  
or  
Early  
Calendar



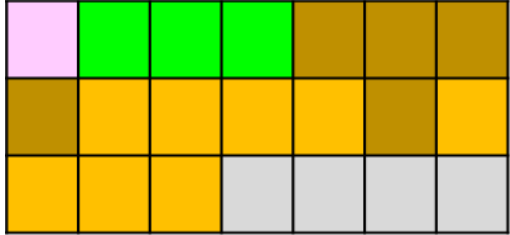
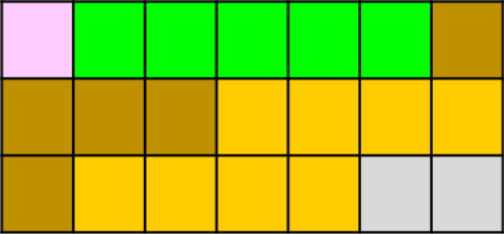
Moreover, the weekend after Thanksgiving weekend gives students more time to complete end-of-term projects and papers.

# End-of-Term Design

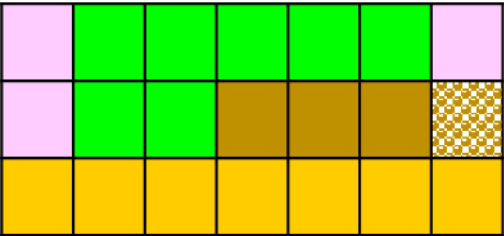
Fall

Spring

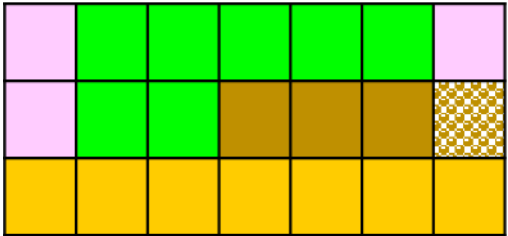
Current  
Calendar



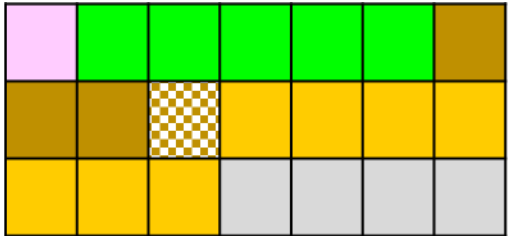
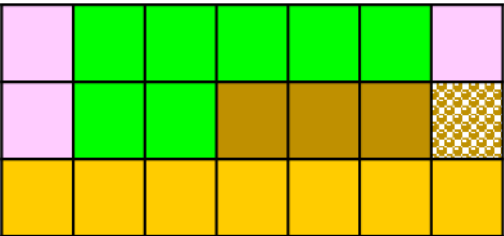
Modified  
Current  
Calendar



exactly  
the  
same



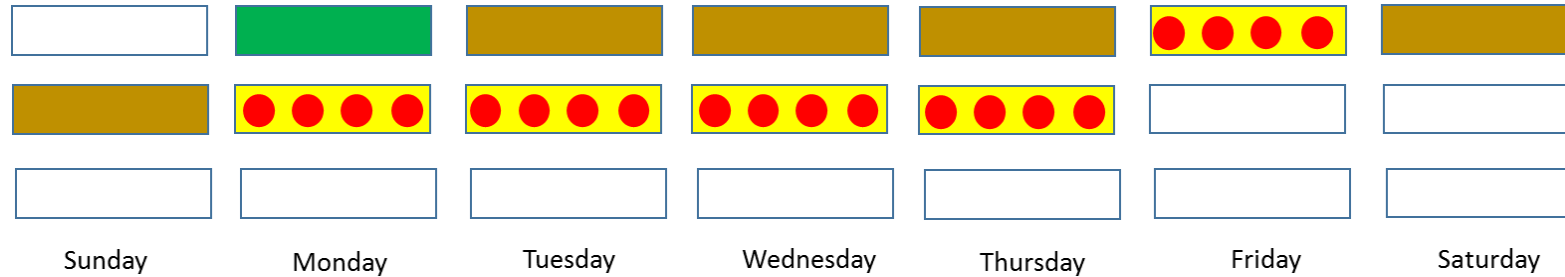
Early  
Commencement  
Calendar



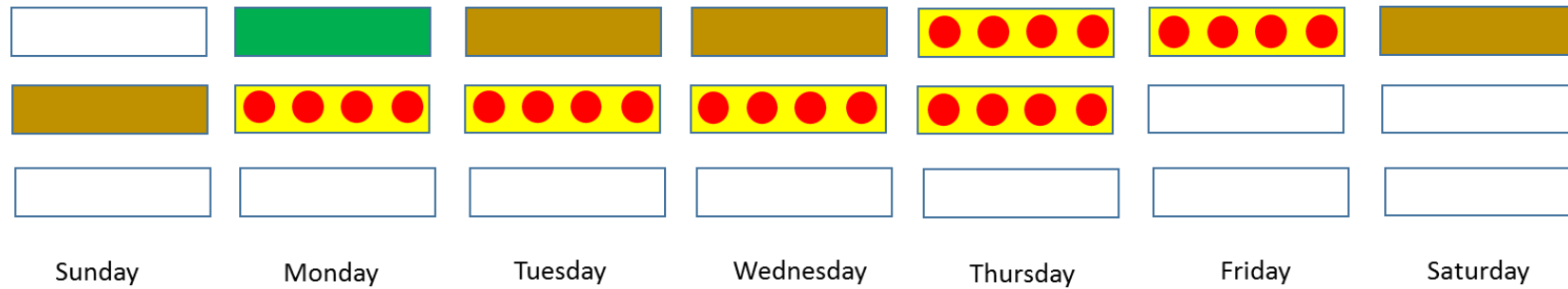
An opportunity  
for us all to  
rethink how  
the semester  
can and should  
wrap up.

# Some Peer School Study/Exam Periods

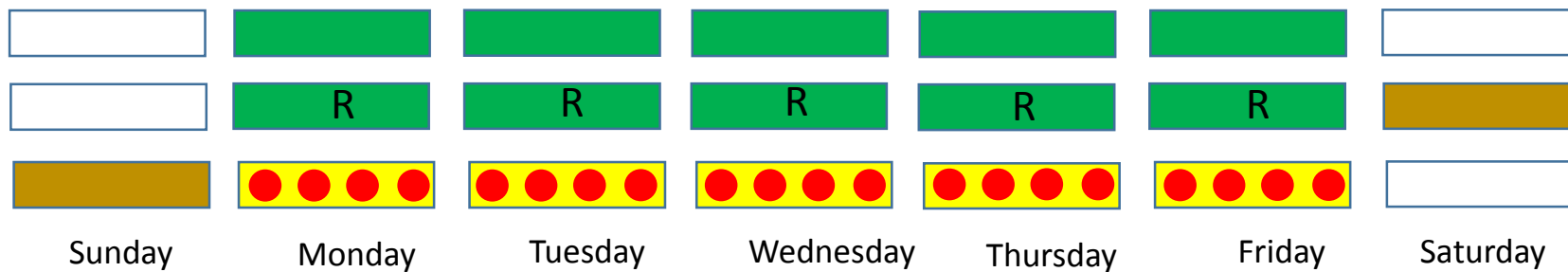
**Columbia**



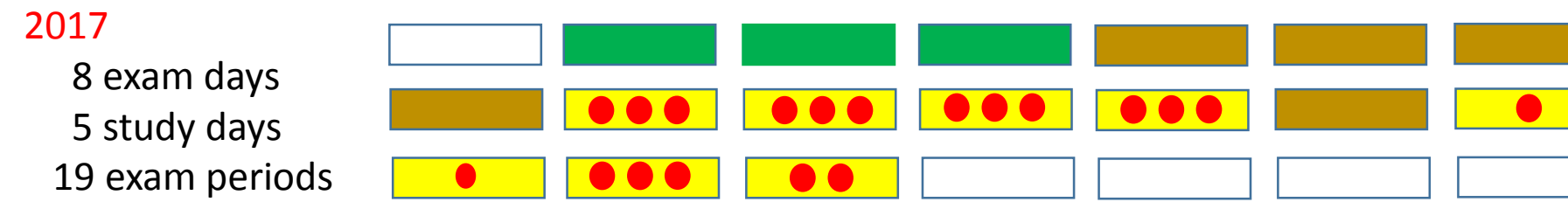
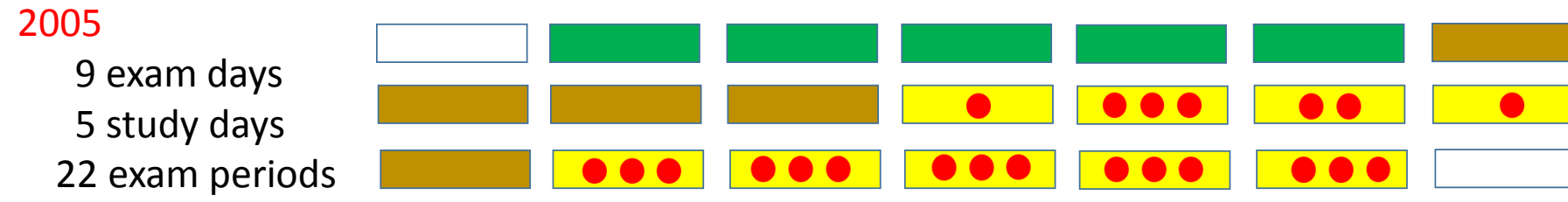
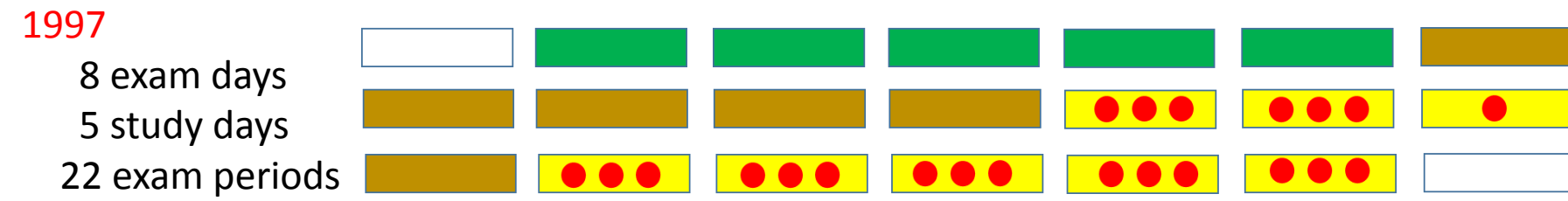
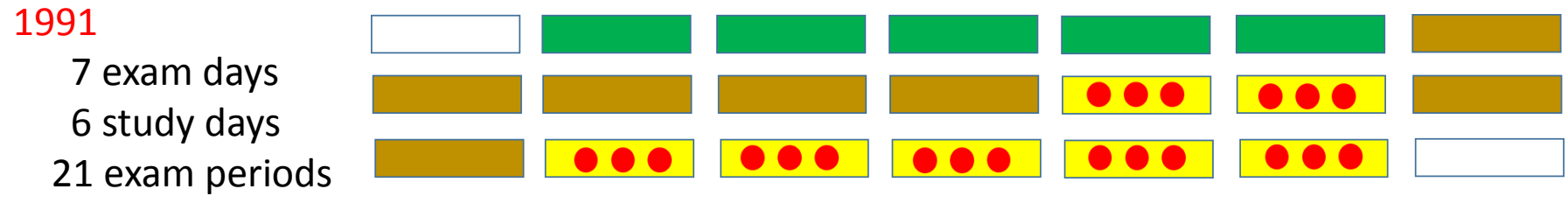
**Penn**



**Berkeley**



# The Evolution of the Cornell Study/Exam Period



# Another Trend

The last twenty years has seen a near doubling of breaks days:

- 1 Labor Day
- 2 Fall Break
- 1 Wednesday before Thanksgiving
- 2 Thanksgiving and day after
- 2 February Break
- 5 Spring Break

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$$6+7 = 13$$

# Wrap-Up Timeline

April Faculty Senate and Assemblies Discussion

May Faculty Senate and Assemblies Vote

Report & Recommendations to Provost who decides.

New calendar (probably) takes effect 2018-19.

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View report and leave comments:

<http://theuniversityfaculty.cornell.edu/news/academic-calendar-committee/recommendations/>

# For Voting We Recommend a Ranking Ballot

Circle the Rank	Calendar Framework
<p>1      2      3</p>	<p><b>Current Calendar Framework</b></p> <p>It features a 3-day orientation, a 2-day October break, a 3-day Thanksgiving break, 5 class days after Thanksgiving, a 2-day February break, a 5-day spring break, a 13-day finals period with 8 exam days, a 4-day gap between the last exam day and graduation. Commencement is held on Memorial Day weekend.</p>
<p>1      2      3</p>	<p><b>Modified Current Calendar Framework</b></p> <p>Same as the Current Calendar except that it has a 5-day orientation, 7 class days after Thanksgiving, an 11-day finals period with 7 exam days, and a 7-day gap between the last exam day and graduation. Commencement is held on Memorial Day weekend. The summer break is five days longer and the between-semester break is five days shorter.</p>
<p>1      2      3</p>	<p><b>Early Commencement Calendar Framework</b></p> <p>Same as the Current Calendar except that it has a 5-day orientation, 7 class days after Thanksgiving, a single 5-day break in the spring semester, an 11-day finals period with 7 exam days, and a 2-week earlier Commencement. The summer break is <u>approximately</u> two weeks longer and the between-semester break is <u>approximately</u> two weeks shorter.</p>

Extra Slides



# FYI: Output from a Sample Exam Scheduling Simulation

Day	Period	Group	Num Students Sitting by Day	Num Students Sitting by Period	Name	Count	Weight
Mon	0	6	4107	4107	3 in one day	13	50
Tues	1	4	5294	333	3 in 24 hours	48	18
	2	5		3623	Pair overnight	333	6
	3	16		1338	Pair over lunch	627	4
Wed	4	15	6773	2172	Pair over dinner	940	3
	5	21		1449	Pair in 24 hours	898	0
	6	12		3152			
Thurs	7	10	5338	640			
	8	8		3428			
	9	18		1270			
Fri	10	19	4663	821			
	11	7		3842			
Mon	12	13	5921	3038			
	13	20		1308			
	14	9		1575			
Tues	15	22	6350	1417			
	16	14		2735			
	17	3		2198			
Wed	18	1	4784	1101			
	19	17		1277			
	20	11		2406			
Dummy	21	2					

# Possible Fall Calendar Framework

## Fall Calendar Framework F1

- 2-day Fall break
- 3-day Thanksgiving break
- A modified study/exam period
- Four August class days moved to December

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	31.7	55.4	12.9
Grad	43.1	42.4	14.5
Staff	57.2	18.7	24.1
Faculty	70.1	17.0	12.9
Alumni	27.2	57.2	15.6

# Possible Fall Calendar Framework

## Fall Calendar Framework F2

- 2-day Fall break
- 5-day Thanksgiving break
- A modified study/exam period
- Two August class days moved to December
- An effectively longer orientation period

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	51.4	34.3	14.3
Grad	51.5	31.8	16.7
Staff	49.1	26.7	24.2
Faculty	39.5	41.3	19.2
Alumni	38.2	45.6	16.2

# Possible Spring Calendar Framework

## Spring Calendar Framework S1

- February break is one week later
- Spring break stays the same
- A modified study/exam period

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	37.5	38.5	24.0
Grad	41.2	30.6	28.2
Staff	30.7	36.7	32.6
Faculty	29.4	41.3	29.3
Alumni	49.7	26.5	23.8

# Possible Spring Calendar Framework

## Spring Calendar Framework S2

- The 5-day break is positioned in March
- The 2-day break is positioned in April
- A modified study/exam period

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	30.1	53.7	15.2
Grad	40.1	46.3	13.6
Staff	38.7	31.6	29.7
Faculty	35.6	31.6	29.8
Alumni	28.5	56.7	14.4

# Possible Spring Calendar Framework

## Spring Calendar Framework S3

- Commencement is 2 weeks earlier
- February break and spring break remain
- A modified study/exam period
- Classes start about 13 days earlier

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	52.8	34.9	12.3
Grad	40.1	46.3	13.6
Staff	47.2	33.0	19.8
Faculty	27.0	59.5	13.5
Alumni	28.8	56.7	14.4

# Possible Spring Calendar Framework

## Spring Calendar Framework S4

- Commencement is 2 weeks earlier
- No February break
- A modified study/exam period
- Classes start about 8 days earlier

Improvement  
over the current  
calendar?

	Agree	Disagree	Unsure
Undergrad	29.3	58.9	11.8
Grad	29.1	59.0	11.9
Staff	44.1	37.1	18.8
Faculty	36.8	49.0	14.2
Alumni	15.6	71.8	13.6

## Perspective: Emergency Room Visits During Senior Week

This means that 32 Cornell students checked into the Cayuga Medical Center ER on a Sunday during 2006

Same stats only confined to "senior week". These are the seven days that precede Commencement Sunday.

Sunday	32	96	162	137	75	90	270	348	339	294	204
Monday	16	56	108	80	28	65	173	238	204	226	117
Tuesday	10	44	89	67	40	56	164	180	188	170	134
Wednesday	14	47	99	100	40	24	139	212	164	174	103
Thursday	18	47	82	84	39	43	144	161	199	171	110
Friday	20	64	115	72	35	65	164	204	193	221	136
Saturday	26	71	146	118	52	77	243	314	292	310	185
TOTAL	136	425	801	658	412	420	1297	1657	1579	1567	989
	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Sunday	1	4	2	1	1	2	7	3	5	4	5
Monday		1	1			1	1	1	3	6	2
Tuesday			3			1	5	3	2	3	2
Wednesday	1		1	1	1	1	3	3	7	4	4
Thursday		1	1	1		2		6	7	5	1
Friday			3	1	2	3	8	10	7	8	4
Saturday		1	6	3	3	6	8	3	8	7	8
SW TOTAL	2	7	16	6	7	16	32	29	39	37	26
% of TOTAL	1.5	1.6	2.0	2.9	1.6	3.8	2.4	1.7	2.5	2.4	2.6

New Calendar Reduce Senior Week Years:

