

No Work After Break Motion

Purpose: This motion comes from student reactions to the recent Fall Break. Following Fall Break 2020, many students shared stories of being overwhelmed with work. Although work is a part of being a college student, the purpose of Fall Break was meant to allow students to relax and take a short break from the work routine. Moving forward, to ensure that students are given the opportunity to enjoy their break to the fullest, we are presenting this motion which aims at creating a fair balance between work and break.

The What: Our proposal is to create a college-wide agreement that the 2 days following any break (including long weekend) no large assignment will be due. These large assignments include but are not limited to: long readings, exams/quizzes, papers or anything that is worth more than 5% of one's final grade. The first thing that we would need to make this proposal successful is to get the approval of the faculty academic affair committee to send out this proposal to each department. The second thing that would need to happen is to get each department's head to sign off/agree to this proposal, commitment to communicate this initiative throughout their department, and set expectations for their fellow professors. To make this proposal truly successful we need this to be adopted widely across academic departments.

The How: In order to make this idea into policy, it is imperative that we receive the support of the Student Government Association, and therefore, this will be first passed as a motion. After the policy is supported by students, the next step would require faculty support, including Margaret McFadden, the College's Provost and Dean of Faculty. Once we meet with Provost McFadden and receive her support, we will work with her in order to make it into policy for all of the faculty to adhere to. Since each department has a different definition for what a major assignment is, we will then finally work with each department in defining what that means for them.

Strengths and Importance: Due to the changes in the spring semester schedule, long weekend breaks from classes have become more relevant with the absence of a week long spring break. These small breaks which also occur annually in the fall semester, are often surrounded by academic deadlines for students. By preventing large deadlines from occurring in the two days following small breaks, these reprieves from academics become useful for student life and mental health. When major deadlines directly follow these short breaks, the breaks become an effective reading period, as opposed to a time to rest and recuperate. This change will not only make short school breaks more effective, but also enhance the academic performance of students throughout the semester, given the time to catch up on work and rest.

Possible Risk Areas: One possible risk area is that some departments would agree to adopt this agreement while other departments would refuse. This would create inconsistency within the study body and possibly fail to help reduce students anxiety due to their majors, minors, and/or

general classes. Another risk would be that professors would vary in their idea of what defines a “significant/large” assignment.

Intuition and Questions Already Addressed:

Is this something that the greater student body would actually want and benefit from? Yes, we believe that the study body would appreciate this motion. We have heard from a variety of other students, including athletes, members of SGA, and members of other clubs. The general consensus that we have heard is that, this year especially, students needed an academic break because of the added stress of this semester. However, most students felt as though they were not able to adequately de-stress and rest because of the amount of work that was assigned.

What constitutes a break or long weekend? Any weekend that has additional days off from class or any of the traditional spring and fall break periods.

Are you planning on implementing more programming on campus to ensure that students still have things to do and a motivation to stay on campus during these breaks? Yes, as a class year and as a SGA we have already begun to think about additional event planning and programming that we will put on for these two breaks in the spring semester. This will be an essential part of keeping students on campus during these breaks especially if they have more free time.

Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students Consulted: Lukas and Laura had a meeting with Jess Manno, in which they discussed the idea for the motion. Jess liked the idea and offered us advice about who to speak with next, assuming the motion is passed. If the motion is passed, we intend on reaching out to Provost Margaret McFadden to discuss our motion and our next steps in approaching faculty about our idea.

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