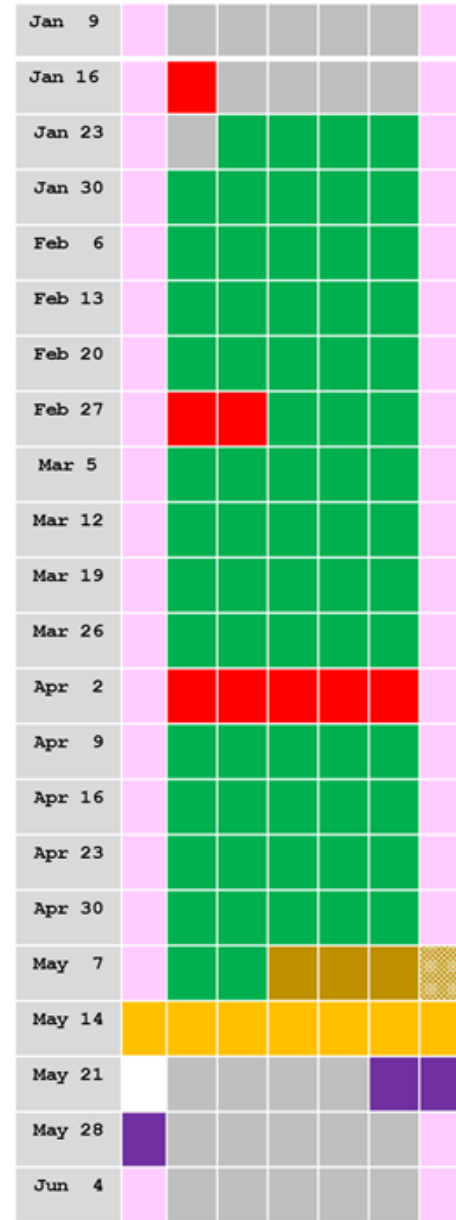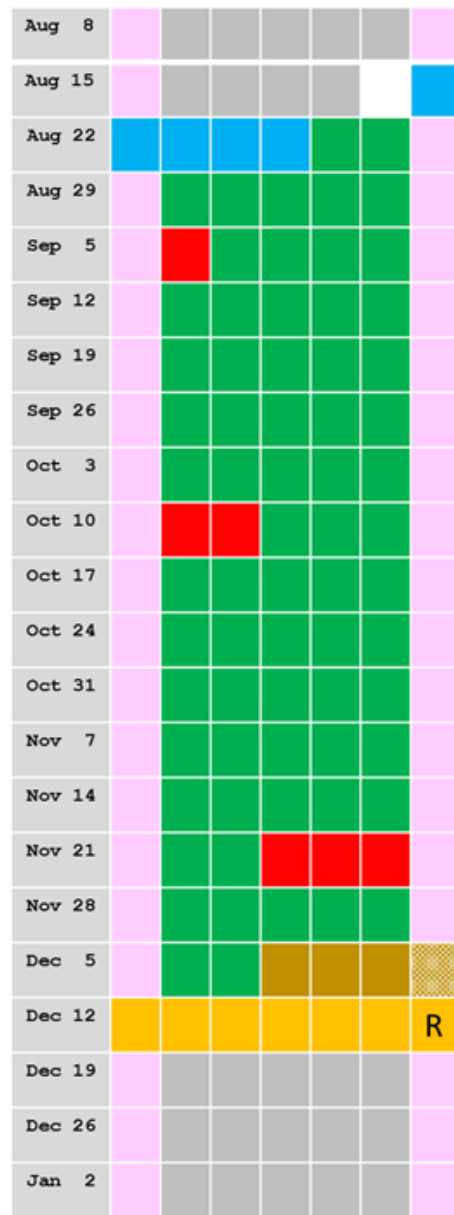# Getting Ready for the New Academic Calendar

How do we Do It?

Charlie Van Loan
Dean of Faculty

September 1, 2017

Starting in 2018-19 the New Academic Calendar Will Look Like This

Features:

1. Two additional orientation days

2. Two additional post-Thanksgiving class days

3. Repositioned February Break

4. Study/Exam Period Reduced by two days

5. Three Additional Senior Days

Legend:
- Instruction Day
- Study Day
- Orientation
- Commencement Weekend
- Break Day
- Exam Day
- Move-In/Out Day
- R Fall Recognition Day

Seven Things to Rethink During 2017-18

1. Orientation = Fri-Sat-Sun-Mon-Tues-Wed
2. Semester Wrap-Up
3. Final Exam Scheduling and Execution
4. Evening Prelim Scheduling
5. Religious Holiday Observance
6. Slope Day Placement
7. Senior Days

Details, questions, and processes follow.

Important Communication Channels

The Associate Deans Group

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DGS's, DUS's, Advising + Orientation Offices ,
EPC, Student & Campus Life, Etc

⬍

Mostly this later

Individual Students, Staff, and Faculty

1. Orientation

Orientation

Current: (Fri)-Sat-Sun-Mon

New: (Fri)-Sat-Sun-Mon-Tue-Wed

Two Facts:

1. The "new" orientation period looks like Cornell's pre-2013 orientation period.

2. A 5-day orientation period is a little bit shorter than the typical orientation period offered by our peers.

Orientation: Who Figures it Out?

New Student Programs

The Orientation Steering Committee (Students)

The Colleges

The Departments

The Graduate School

The Graduate Fields

Coordination will Be Essential.

The program needs to be figured out this Fall.

To Start the Ball Rolling

The Colleges (including the Grad School) should communicate roughed out plans by (say) the end of September

What events/activities does your College need to hold, how long do they take, and when should they be staged?

Obviously, this has to be informed by what goes on in departments and graduate fields.

Things to Keep in Mind

1. Saturday and Sunday: Parents around. Fewer faculty and staff around. Better for University-Wide programming.

2. Topics that probably deserve expanded treatment: academic integrity, free speech issues, basic study skills.

3. We are mandated to provided heightened coverage of Title IX and anti-bias issues

4. Late-night University programming needs to be informed by "early morning" college programming.

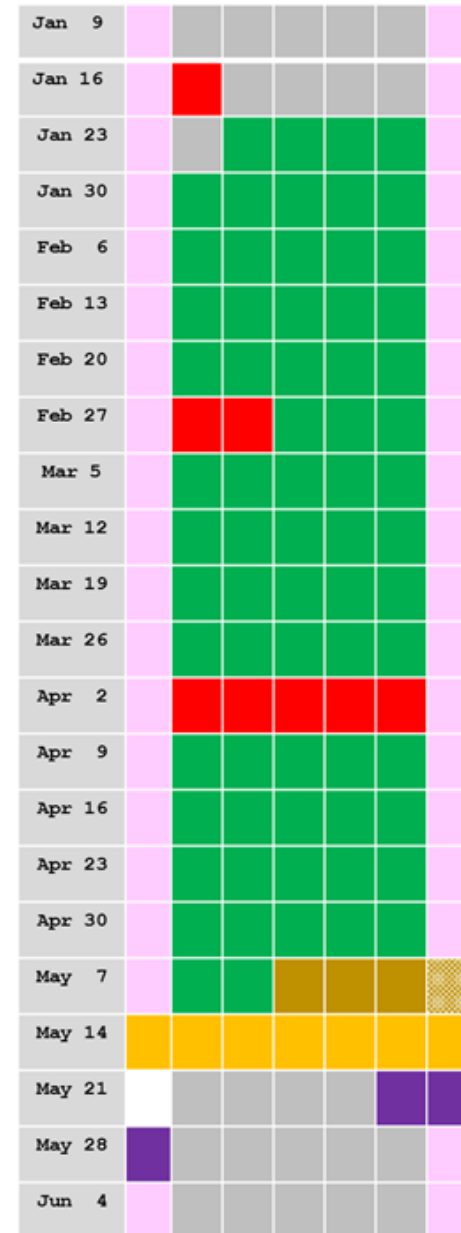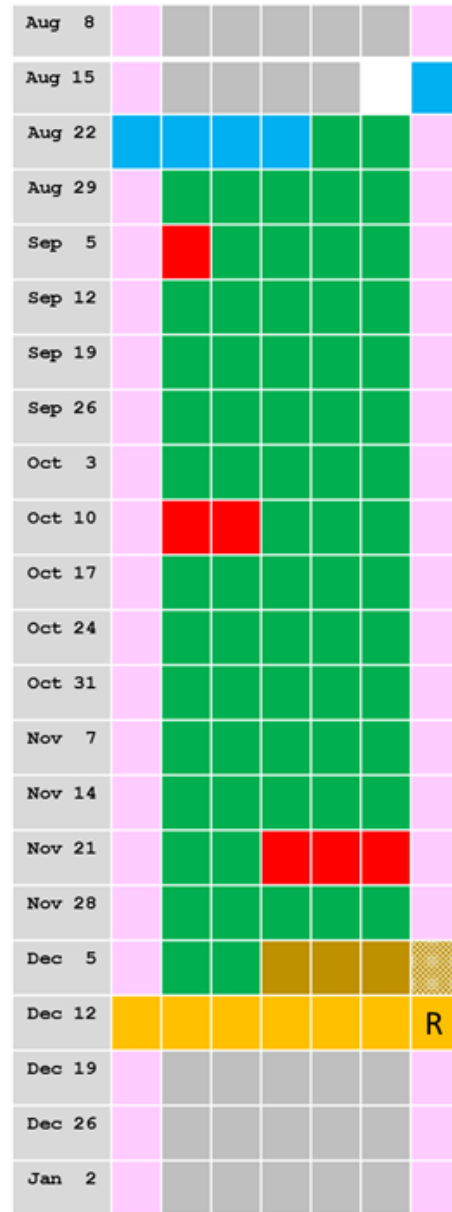5. Should the freshman book project be resurrected in some a new form?

Process:

New Student Programs coordinates everything as usual.

New programming that deals with climate and ethics must be developed very carefully with full involvement of the Faculty.

The entire community (students+staff+faculty) must be given the chance to publically comment on the new orientation plan before it becomes "official". This doesn't have to be complicated or labor-intensive. A single-question survey floated in November should suffice: "Here is a rough draft of the new orientation schedule—what do you think?" Responses could be posted on a designated webpage as was done during the calendar project last year.

2. Semester Wrap-Up

Semester Wrap-Up

Revisit all the rules associated with:

end-of-term assignments

due dates

study days

exam days.

Proposed Process:

With student and faculty input all along the way, the EPC reviews the rules associated with prelims, study days, and finals and proposes improvements.

The Senate considers and votes on the EPC recommendations.

3. Final Exam Scheduling

Final Exam Scheduling & Execution

Optimization Issues

    1. Number of back-to-backs, 3-in-24s, direct conflicts

    2. Big course exam slots: Freshman Friendly vs. Grader Friendly

The Student Assembly has passed a [resolution](#) that asks for a review of the prelim and final exam scheduling procedures and the rules associated with "too many exams in a short period of time."

Proposed Process:

Alternative optimization systems are applied to Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 data.

Their performance is evaluated and compared using metrics that are identified by students and faculty

The EPC assesses the results and advises the Registrar.

Length-of-Final Exams

Should our final exams be 2 hours long? Not radical, e.g., U Penn and Michigan have 2-hour exams

The role of final exams is evolving—time for a rethink?

The number of extra-time exams that are given each semester has approximately doubled in the last five years.

Proposed Process:
The EPC should look into this with obvious input from the Learning Strategies Center, the Registrar, and Student Disability Services.

4. Evening Prelim Scheduling

Evening Prelim Scheduling

Researchers in ORIE have studied ways to optimize the scheduling of evening prelims and there has been a preliminary dialog with the Registrar's office.

[Somewhat related topics include the 4:30-7:30 off-limits policy and the policy that states the evening exams must be on Tuesdays and Thursdays only.]

Proposed Process:
> **The dialog should reach some kind of conclusion in advance of the annual February meeting that will decide the 2018-19 evening prelim schedule.**

5. Religious Holiday Observance

Problems

Uneven respect for the Formal policy and what the Faculty Handbook says.

Students feel awkward in approaching faculty about accomodations.

Proposed Process:
Work on this issue should proceed under the auspices of Cornell United Religious Work and the Dean of Faculty Office. New procedures and guidelines will require review by the SA, the GPSA, the Senate, and the Associate Deans Group.

6. Slope Day Placement

Slope Day: Last Day of Class or the Day After?

Current Calendar

      Spring-semester classes end on a Wednesday.

      Slope day is held on Thursday.

New Calendar

      Spring-semester classes end on a Tuesday.

      Slope Day is held on Tuesday or Wednesday

Tuesday or Wednesday?

Input from Cornell Health and the Slope Day Programming Board is required.

Faculty and student thinking needs to be assessed by the Senate and the Student Assembly.

There is an Alternative Slope Day initiative.

Proposed Process:
> **Work on this issue should proceed under the auspices of the Office of Student and Campus Life and the Dean of Faculty Office once the 2018 Slope Day Programming Board is formed.**

7. Senior Days

Senior Days

The number of days between the last exam date and Commencement is increasing by 3.

Extra programming is required:

Engaged Cornell has "community project" ideas.

The 2017 Senior Days Committee had ideas.

Proposed Process:
Work on this issue should proceed under the auspices of the Office of Student and Campus Life once the 2018 Senior Days group is formed.

Comments on this Document should be sent to

- cfv3@cornell.edu

Once we get it right it will show up in some form on the DoF Website.