



Office of the Provost

MSC 3445
New Mexico State University
P. O. Box 30001
Las Cruces, NM 88003-8001
575-646-2594, fax: 575-646-6334
provost@nmsu.edu

Date: November 2, 2020
To: NMSU System Faculty, Staff and Students
From: Carol Parker, Provost
Subject: Spring Academic Calendar

As we plan for the spring 2021 semester, it's clear that we must continue to be flexible and to make operational adjustments in response to the ongoing pandemic. Many universities have already announced plans to cancel spring break as part of their strategy to reduce the opportunity for the virus to spread on their campuses.

We realize that spring break provides a valuable opportunity to rest, recharge, and catch up on both energy and schoolwork. We need a break – but we must balance that with the need to do everything we can to mitigate risk. Spring break is prime time for vacation travel, parties and relaxing with friends and family, so it's also prime time for spreading COVID-19. Allowing the traditional week off from classes poses too much of risk further spread of the virus – both here in New Mexico and nationwide. Therefore, as the president has already announced, the Spring Semester 2021 academic calendar will not include a traditional spring break.

With all of that in mind, our spring semester tiger team, which includes volunteer faculty members, students, administrators and staff from a wide range of departments, together with input from the Faculty Senate, has developed a plan to split up the days off a spring break would traditionally provide. The plan will extend the winter break by a few days, allowing faculty more time to prepare for the start of the semester, and offer a couple of small breaks mid-semester to catch our breath.

The 2021 spring academic calendar will be set up as follows, with the changes marked in red:

	New Date(s)	Previous Schedule
Faculty report back to work	Thursday, Jan. 14	Thursday, Jan. 14
Instruction begins	Monday, Jan. 25	Wednesday, Jan. 20
Presidents Day (No classes)	Monday, Feb. 15	N/A
Spring Break (No classes)	Tuesday, March 23, only	March 22-26
Spring Holiday (No classes, faculty and staff holiday)	Friday, April 2	Friday, April 2
Last Day of Classes	Friday, May 14	Friday, May 14

The administrative calendar, including holiday closures and employee days off, will remain unchanged.

We understand that it's disappointing to change important traditions like spring break but taking the proactive approach of setting this schedule now gives our faculty and our students the information they need to plan for a successful semester.

I want to thank all the volunteers on our tiger team and the COVID-19 Rapid Response Team for their efforts to develop a solution that balances many different needs and concerns. And I want to thank each of you for your personal efforts to keep the NMSU community safe while also continuing to support the academic mission.

We continue to welcome your feedback and questions at covid19@nmsu.edu. And, as always, please check with your department and college administrators if you have any questions about how this might directly impact your circumstances.