

## Proposed Changes and Additions to the Academic Calendar Guidelines - Fall Semester

### ST OLAF PROPOSED academic calendar DRAFT 2A\_020124 – Fall Semester

2025 to 2026

Aug 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
<b>S2 ENDS AUGUST 20</b>					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Sep 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

Oct 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Nov 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

Dec 2025						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

#### KEY:

Holidays

No Class Days

Reading Days

Finals Days

First Day and Last Day of Terms (bolded)

- Move In/New Student Orientation – Friday, August 22 - Saturday, August 23, 2025
- First day of Class – Wednesday, August 27, 2025
- Labor Day Holiday/No Classes - Monday, September 1, 2025
- Fall Break/No Classes – Thursday, October 9 - Tuesday, October 14, 2025 (MEA is October 16-17, 2025)
- Quiet Day during Advising Week/No Classes - Wednesday, October 22, 2025
- Thanksgiving Break/No Classes – Wednesday, November 26 - Sunday, November 30, 2025
- Last Day of Class – Friday, December 5, 2025
- Christmas Festival - Friday, December 5 - Sunday, December 7, 2025\*
- Reading Day – Monday, December 8, 2025
- Final Exams – Tuesday, December 9 - Friday, December 12, 2025

*\*As is currently the case, Christmas Fest would always be the weekend after Thanksgiving*

**Proposed Changes to Fall Semester Academic Calendar Guidelines:**

Earlier Fall Start - Addition to the Academic Guidelines

- Proposed text: Fall semester begins the week prior to the Labor Day holiday.

Longer Fall Break - Change to the Academic Guidelines

- Original text: Breaks in fall semester (fall break + Thanksgiving break) to total at least five weekdays; occurs in mid-October; preferably not at the same time as MEA break; includes at least two consecutive weekdays; Thanksgiving break includes at least Thursday (Thanksgiving) and Friday
- Proposed text (changes in bold): Breaks in fall semester (fall break + Thanksgiving break) to total at least five weekdays. **Fall break should not occur during the same week as the MEA break and should encompass two days before and two days after the weekend.** Thanksgiving break includes at least Thursday (Thanksgiving) and Friday .

Quiet Day during Advising Week - Addition to the Academic Guidelines

- Proposed text: Advising Week includes one Quiet Day when classes are not in session but where all other activities, including advising appointments, may occur.
- *Note: We are recommending a name change from "Quiet Week for Advising" to "Advising Week" to avoid confusion with the addition of a "Quiet Day" within this week.*

4 Days of Finals - Addition to the Academic Guidelines

- Proposed text: Final exams are scheduled over four days. Hold all final exam times Tuesday through Friday in the fall semester so they do not extend across a weekend.
- *Note: With our ten standard day class times, we would arrange them into twelve 2-hour time slots over those 4 days with no evening times assigned. All exams would be scheduled between 8 am and 4 pm except for evening classes, which would still hold their final exam in the evenings.*

Ending earlier in December - Change to the Academic Guidelines

- Original text: Fall semester ends no later than December 21.
- *Note: We are not recommending any changes to the guidelines since ending Fall semester earlier would still meet the current guideline of ending before December 21.*

**Rationale:**

The Academic Calendar Review and Revision Committee identified the following rationales for the proposed calendar for Fall semester:

- Avoiding Labor Day travel for students/families and allowing more staff and faculty to take the holiday off. Avoiding the holiday weekend would also mean we launch the year when the campus is fully open.
- Allowing new student Fall athletes to attend New Student Orientation. Athletes would not need to arrive any earlier than they currently do.
- Lengthening Fall Break while maintaining MEA in session for Admissions visits.
- Adding an additional day with no classes during Quiet Week for Advising, which will be renamed to Advising Week (no classes, but all other activities, including advising, could still occur), with a parallel rest day in Spring.
- Holding finals Tuesday through Friday so they do not extend across a weekend. We are proposing a reduction to four days of finals in the Spring semester to preserve at least two days between the end of finals and Commencement activities. Fall semester finals parallel that structure. No additional finals would be held in the evenings.
- Ending the Fall semester earlier to allow for a longer Winter Break and reduce travel expenses.

In a survey to the community, we saw general support for these calendar changes, with the majority of student, staff, and faculty respondents in favor of the proposed guidelines above.

**Financial Implications:**

The Committee consulted impacted areas with financial implications that would result from these proposed changes.

Overall, there were no significant concerns from Athletics, Events/Camps & Conferences, PLT, or Student Life indicating no significant concerns. the beginning of Fall semester.

Payroll was not concerned about shifting a week off to another time of year to balance out the FTE for staff (such as AAAs) who do not work over the summer.

Budget and Auxiliary Operations, Smith Center, and Libraries did express the potential for staffing cost increases (both professional and student staff) by having one more week in the Academic Year. Those who typically do not work or work part-time during the summer would need to return earlier. However, it could be possible to work out alternative schedules such that these staff work reduced hours during college breaks, which would offset the additional week at

Budget and Auxiliary Operations also discussed implications for student meal plans with an additional week in Fall semester. However, since costs are lower during break periods, they concluded that these savings would offset most of that additional week.

### **Additional Information:**

In September 2023, the Academic Calendar Review and Revision Committee was [charged](#) with reviewing and recommending changes to St. Olaf's academic calendar. The Committee's charge did *not* include recommending changes to the daily class schedule or the number of credits required for graduation. As part of this process, members of the Committee met with [30 different groups](#) across campus to solicit ideas and feedback on potential changes. Because most changes to the academic calendar require a faculty vote, and because the structure of the academic calendar significantly impacts the work of faculty and many staff, the Committee felt this targeted outreach was necessary to understand the feasibility of potential calendar revisions before seeking broader community input.

Our Committee sought to address the following goals:

- Adding/lengthening breaks between and during terms to provide the campus community with more rest periods, support student mental health, and give faculty and staff more time for grading and preparation between terms.
- Reducing holiday travel days for students and families by shifting the start/end of terms accordingly.

After the first round of outreach, the Committee drafted a proposed calendar that addressed several of the suggestions collected from the 30 groups. This model was then circulated for further feedback, and the Committee made a few additional changes. We presented the proposed calendar for all students, staff, and faculty to share their input in early February 2024.

*Note: The Committee also considered additional, more substantial changes to the academic calendar. These included starting Fall term three weeks earlier and ending at Thanksgiving (similar to the schedule implemented for 2020-21 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic), shifting January term to an optional May term, or shortening January term to 3 weeks. Given the*

*significant challenges these changes posed for several departments and offices consulted, the Committee decided not to pursue these proposals.*