

Spring 2021 Academic Calendar Finalized

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Thu 10/15/2020 10:00 AM

Dear Saint Louis University community,

Thank you to the nearly 3,000 of you who shared your preferences for the spring 2021 academic calendar. The survey data and subsequent discussions with stakeholder groups was instrumental in coming to a decision.

The following are the key dates for the main spring semester. Please note: Some professional programs operate on slightly different calendars, so please check with your college, school or program for specifics.

- First day of class: Thursday, Jan. 28
- Days off:
 - Wednesday, Feb. 17
 - Thursday, Mar. 11
 - Friday, Apr. 2 (Good Friday)
- Last day of classes: Monday, May 10
- Study Day: Tuesday, May 11
- Final exams: May 12-18 (hopefully in person, but that will be determined at a later date)

You also can view and download the [full calendar here](#).

This selection was overwhelmingly the most popular option among our students, and for very good reasons. It is steeped in our shared desire for some needed mental health days sprinkled throughout the spring semester, while promoting COVID-19-prevention compliance. Dr. Pestello supports this decision, too.

I particularly want to thank our faculty and staff for their input and guidance as well. The tremendous lift to make this fall and next spring possible would not happen without your diligence and support.

I remind you now — as we did earlier this semester and as I am sure we will again — that days without classes are not a free pass to act like the pandemic is over. Similar to the fall, the spring calendar was designed to limit travel throughout the semester, based on guidance from our public health experts. None of us knows what February, March or April will look like. But I seriously doubt we will have returned to the “normal” we all want. The fact is we still can’t let our guard down against COVID-19 — not during the spring semester. And not now.

Our students are the reason we remain on campus today, more than seven weeks into our fall semester. And I can’t thank them enough.

As difficult and abnormal as this semester has been for them, our students have stepped up and abided by the public health protocols we have put in place. By doing so, our students are protecting those essential staff on campus who are at risk of COVID-19 complications, were they to be infected.

Our students also do not want to replay what they experienced in mid-March when our campus basically shut down. They want to study and socialize here on campus. They know they have to be COVID-19 safe: Always wear a face mask. Stay 6 feet apart from one another. Put your face mask on right after eating or drinking, even if you will continue to sit with friends for a while.

My colleagues and I have heard from families with concerns about a few key topics, which I will address in turn:

- **Commencement:** Commencement considerations are still in progress. We tentatively plan to host the commencement celebrations on the weekend of May 22. Again, this is tentative. We continue to monitor the COVID-19 impact and will inform you when commencement details are further solidified.
- **Return-to-Campus:** Our dedicated Housing and Residence Life team has been waiting for this announcement on the academic calendar in order to begin preparing for students returning to campus after a longer-than-usual winter break. (On-campus students who may need to remain in campus housing over the break, or return early, should complete the Winter Break form HRL sent last week.) More COVID-19 testing is likely to be conducted when students come back during the third and fourth week of January. But we haven't firmed up those details. Please stay tuned for more information.
- **Study abroad:** Our International Services team continues to monitor the global impact of COVID-19 — including, of course, in Madrid. We plan to share more information for those who still hope to attend spring semester abroad in the coming days.

I want to again thank everyone who offered their viewpoints. I hope this information gives everyone enough clarity to plan for the months ahead.

Thank you,

Mike Lewis, Ph.D.
Interim Provost