

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR DECISION

PRESENTED BY: Gordon Hill, Chair, Academic Programs Committee

DATE OF MEETING: Nov. 20, 2008

SUBJECT: **Policy on scheduling of Spring Convocation**

DECISION REQUESTED:

It is recommended:

That Council approve the policy of scheduling of Spring Convocation on the recommendation of the Registrar, effective with Spring Convocation 2010.

PURPOSE:

Under the University Act, Council approves policies for developing the annual Academic Schedule. Council has delegated approval of the annual schedule to the Academic Programs Committee.

SUMMARY:

The attached Briefing Note describes the rationale presented by the Assistant and Associate Deans for changing the existing policy on the scheduling of Spring Convocation. The Academic Programs Committee discussed this at its November 4 meeting and recommends that Council approve the motion to schedule Spring Convocation as recommended by the Registrar, noting that the Registrar's recommendation will be based on the following considerations:

1. allowing four full weeks between the last day of final examinations and the first Convocation ceremony
2. ensuring that Convocation is scheduled as early as is practical each spring, once the four full weeks have elapsed
3. continuing the practice of holding all Spring Convocation ceremonies on consecutive days

ATTACHMENTS:

Briefing Note from Kelly McInnes regarding change in policy for scheduling of Spring Convocation.

***Briefing Note – Timing of Spring Convocation
Academic Programs Committee
November 4, 2008***

Background

University Council approved the following motion on June 16, 1998:

REMUS/BROWN: That Council approve the notice of motion that beginning in the spring of 1999, the timing of Spring Convocation no longer be tied to the May long weekend, but that Spring Convocation be held each year on the last consecutive Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of May.

In 2006, the Assistant and Associate Deans of the Colleges and School engaged in a discussion related to the timing of Spring Convocation. While the original impetus for the discussion was the timing of Spring Convocation 2007 in relation to Congress, the group expressed general support for moving Spring Convocation one week later to allow more time for processing applications to graduate. The recommendation in 2006 was that there should be a minimum of four weeks between the last day of exams and the first Spring Convocation ceremony. Our experience since 1999 has been that, in some years, even the last consecutive Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of May is too early and does not allow sufficient time to attend to all the details that surround the Convocation ceremony including, but not limited to, processing applications to graduate, holding faculty meetings, laying out and proofing Convocation programs for print publication, and producing parchments.

Recommendation to APC from the Assistant and Associate Deans

That Academic Programs Committee recommend to Council that beginning in the spring of 2010, the Spring Convocation be scheduled by APC on the recommendation of the Registrar. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to,

1. allowing four full weeks between the last day of final examinations and the first Convocation ceremony
2. ensuring that Convocation is scheduled as early as is practical each spring, once the four full weeks have elapsed
3. continuing the practice of holding all Spring Convocation ceremonies on consecutive days

Intent of the Recommendation

The intent of the new motion is to ensure that colleges have sufficient time to process applications to graduate and hold faculty meetings and that the Registrar has sufficient time to produce the print program and the parchments. It should be noted that the University of Saskatchewan had a successful June Convocation in 2007 and feedback received from the colleges was overwhelmingly positive.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Assistant and Associates Deans by:
Kelly McInnes, Registrar and Director of Academic Services and Financial Assistance