

Values Commitment Steering Team Minutes
April 9, 2015

Team members in attendance were Bob Sitler, Michael Branton, Leila Roach, Colleen Price, Joshua Rust, and Felisha McCaster by teleconference from the College of Law at Gulfport.

Committee discussions continued regarding the holiday recommendations to be presented to President Libby and the Cabinet, with Felisha requesting that the distinct needs of the Law School calendar be taken into consideration. Heeding the suggestions and thoughts of the committee members, Bob Sitler formulated the following recommendations:

Dear President Libby and Cabinet,

Since the members of the Values Commitment Steering Team participated in the creation of the original recommendations regarding university holidays, we continue to support them, but with the following additional considerations that arose from community comments and further internal discussion:

1. The College of Law requests the flexibility to set its own holiday calendar according to its particular academic needs.
2. We reiterate the importance of better publicity for the current Religious Observance Policy for students.
3. Rather than switching the Good Friday holiday on the DeLand campus to the following Monday, the VCST suggests instead to expand upon the intent of the Religious Observance Policy for students to include parallel policies for staff and faculty. Rather than a collective holiday on Good Friday, staff and faculty would have the flexibility of honoring a holiday on a date of their own choosing.

For staff, this would mean that those who wish to have their paid holiday on Good Friday could continue to do so. Other staff members could choose a day more in line with their own faith tradition and/or personal preferences. For administrative purposes, this could simply be handled as an additional vacation or sick day, the only difference being that this flexible holiday could be known far in advance and the day would be deliberately identified as one for religious observances and personal reflection in support of the university's values.

For faculty members, the situation may appear to be more complex. However, faculty members frequently must cancel classes for professional activities, and so the option of cancelling class for one additional day per year will be largely imperceptible. Also, since faculty would lose the Good Friday holiday, the addition of a flexible day without teaching classes means there would be no net change in the overall number of teacher days in the classroom.

Sincerely,

Robert K. Sitler

The last committee meeting of the school year will take place on April 23, 2015 at 10 a.m. in room 126 of the Lynn Business Center.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Hamil, Recording Secretary