Professors exhausted after not getting a spring break

Tana J. Haag

04/19/2021

Many Utah State University professors are drained as the semester pushes into its final weeks, without the spring break typically scheduled for this semester.

“The spring semester with no break is much more fast-paced,” said Rob Wilson, a professor of art and design. “It’s like drinking from a fire hose for both students and faculty, which can be very overwhelming.”

Eric Schulz, a professor of business, said he’s typically a big fan of spring break.

“I think it lets everyone recharge their spirits for the end-of-semester sprint,” Schulz said. He said he’s most disappointed by not being able to spend a week in Arizona enjoying the warm weather and watching baseball.

A professor of physics, David Smith, recognized the change was to protect the students and faculty from the exposure or spread of COVID-19. He is grateful for the administration's decision, despite the fatigue and stress he faces during an unending semester.

“Being a student is stressful, but so is teaching,” Smith said. “I have always looked forward to having a week or two off in the middle of the semester. It can be very therapeutic.”

Though history professor Ross Peterson is grateful for the safety concerns and his recent vaccination, he also misses spring break.

“I always thought the break was good, primarily so that I can get away from winter and take a breather before the charge to finals and graduation,” Peterson said.

Samantha Clem, a graduate student working in the English department, agreed the usual break is a nice time to grade and work on assignments.

“The real impact I feel is that I use spring break to catch up with the things I’m falling behind on,” Clem said.

Katie Brown, a nutrition science professor, said those two Fridays are getting her through this semester.

Even the students have started to notice the effect the long stretch has had on their professors.

“My Zoom meetings are seeming more scattered, and I’ve had three cancelled classes in the past two weeks,” said Kyra Johnson, a freshman at USU. “I enjoy the short breaks when class is cancelled, but I feel like we might as well have had a whole week off instead.”

Some believe change is coming.

“I am sure we will go back to a standard spring break in the future, as more people are vaccinated,” Wilson said, “likely by next spring.”

Utah State officials planned to give students two Fridays without classes to make up for the loss of a spring break.