

Publications Committee

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UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS,

AUSTIN, TEXAS.



TO THE STUDENTS.

In response to petition from students, dated December 2, 1887, the Faculty beg leave to say that at the annual meeting of the Board of Regents held June, 1886, it was enacted, at the instance of the Faculty, that, beginning with the session of 1887-8, the sessions of the University should commence on the fourth Wednesday of September instead of on the third; and that there should be no vacation at Christmas, except Christmas Day. These orders were published in the Catalogue of 1886-7; and in obedience to their requirements the current session began on Wednesday, September 28, it being the fourth Wednesday, and there will be no vacation at Christmas, except Christmas Day. As "Christmas Day," however, falls this year on Sunday, the day given will be the following Monday, in accordance with the usual construction in such cases.

The order of the Regents in regard to the Christmas vacation is final; and, therefore, the exercises of the University will continue during Christmas week, except on Monday, as during any other week of the session.

In view of the fact, however, that in many of the schools in the South an entire week is given for the Christmas holidays, and in view of the fact that heretofore this custom has been observed in the University of Texas, the Faculty think it proper to set before the students in detail the reasons that have led to a change in this respect. The Faculty are influenced further by the fact that heretofore in all questions concerning the welfare of the University, they have had the cordial co-operation of the students. In order to secure this co-operation, it has been necessary only to show that the University would be benefitted. In the belief that their co-operation can be secured now in the same way as on other occasions, the Faculty avail themselves of this opportunity to state in full why a vacation of only one day will be given at Christmas.

In the first place, while it is the custom of the large majority of the schools in the South to give an entire week for the Christmas holidays, such has never been, or has ceased to be, the case with those

that are considered of the first class. Notably among these are the Vanderbilt University, at Nashville, the University of Virginia, at Charlottesville, Johns Hopkins University, at Baltimore.

It is desirable that the University of Texas should align itself on all important questions with these the leading institutions of the South, as well as with Harvard, Yale, Cornell and other leading Universities of the North.

In the second place, when an entire week is given at Christmas, six days are lost when time is exceedingly precious. Classes have by that time become fairly settled down to work, and every hour spent in the lecture room is fully utilized. The temperature at the last of December is always cool and bracing, and the mind works with a buoyancy that makes acquisition easy and delightful.

Again, in the majority of cases, six days is not the entire loss. In anticipation of the holidays many students get impatient and leave their classes three or four days before the recess begins, and just as frequently they are tempted to stay away three or four days after the recess ends. In this way it not unfrequently happens that as much as three weeks of valuable time is taken bodily out of the session when the student is least able to lose it.

Moreover, and this, perhaps, is the strongest reason for not giving a long recess at Christmas, the festivities and recreations characteristic of the season tend to call off the mind from study, distract the attention from books, and divert the student from the more serious duties of the lecture room and of the laboratory. This would be unfortunate at any time during the session, but it is especially so at the time of the Christmas holidays; for within three weeks after the close of this period come the intermediate examinations, with their unavoidable pressure of additional work. The consequence is that the student who has lost three weeks, or even one week, returns to his work when it is most exacting at a time when he is least inclined to yield to its exactions. As a result, there are failures at the examinations, discouragement, and frequently an abandonment of all serious effort to secure a liberal education.

Such are the principal reasons why it has been thought best to give no vacation at Christmas except Christmas Day, and they have been fully stated because it is believed there are many students now in attendance mature enough to appreciate their weight and importance, and who will be ready and willing to coöperate with the faculty in carrying out the directions of the Board of Regents. In case, however, there are those who cannot resist the temptation to spend the entire week away from their classes, or who fail to see and appreciate the importance of a continuous attendance upon the exercises of the Uni-

versity, the Faculty are willing to grant leaves of absence under the same conditions as are recognized at any other time during the session, viz: in the case of minors, a written request from the parent or guardian, stating the length of time for which the leave is desired; in the case of others, a written request, signed by the applicant with a similar statement. In either case the request must be handed to the Chairman of the Faculty, who will give the applicant a "Leave of Absence" blank to be signed by the professors concerned.

It must be distinctly understood that with the exception of one day—Monday, December 26—the usual exercises will continue, and the students who are absent during the entire week will be held responsible at the examinations, equally with those who remained in constant attendance upon the work of the lecture rooms.

FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY.

December 6, 1887.