

## Summary of Engineering Society's Student Survey on a Fall Study Break February 2020

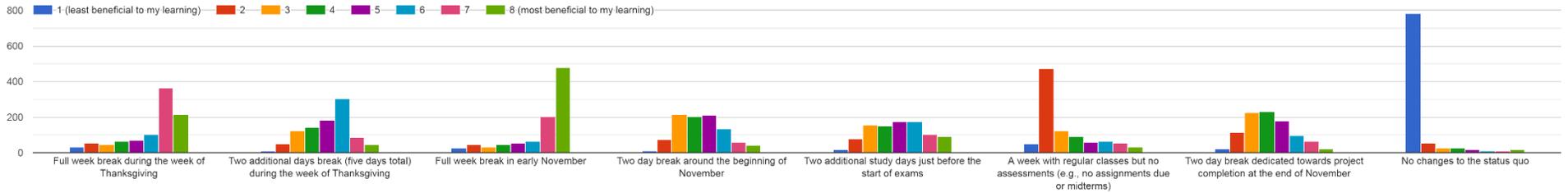
The survey was sent to all undergraduate students in FASE from February 5, 2020 to February 14, 2020. Over 950 responses were received (an approximately 20% response rate). The survey questions are included in **Appendix A** below, and the verbatim comments are included in **Appendix B**.

The chart summarizing these results is shown below:

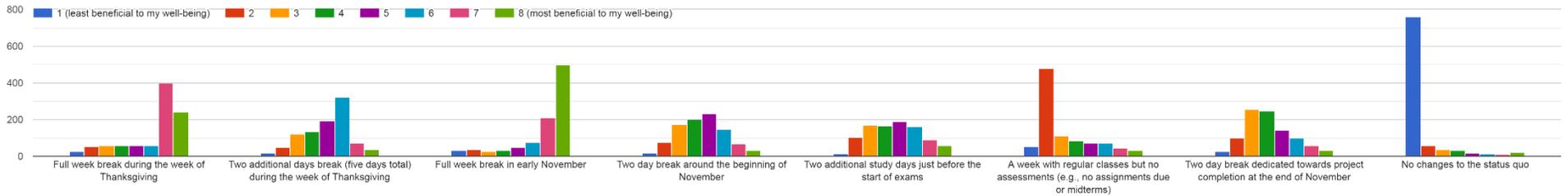
Category	Fall Break Option	Average (out of 8)	Standard Deviation	Percentage who Chose 7 or 8	Percentage who Chose 1 or 2
<b>Impact on Student Learning</b>	Full week break in early November	6.64	1.96	71.9%	7.7%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	6.09	1.96	61.4%	9.1%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	5.05	1.55	14.1%	6.2%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.87	1.83	20.3%	10.3%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.46	1.58	10.9%	8.7%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.13	1.58	9.1%	14.6%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.23	1.84	9.1%	55.1%
	No changes to the status quo	1.53	1.44	2.9%	88.2%
<b>Impact on Student Well-Being</b>	Full week break in early November	6.76	1.87	74.1%	6.7%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	6.21	1.95	67.3%	8.2%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	4.97	1.57	11.5%	7.4%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.63	1.75	15.6%	12.3%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.49	1.58	10.4%	10.2%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.11	1.60	9.3%	13.2%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.22	1.84	8.3%	55.9%
	No changes to the status quo	1.62	1.54	3.6%	86.0%

## Appendix 1

Please consider the following options regarding a Fall Break. From the perspective of your overall learning experience, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.



From the perspective of your overall well-being, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.



## Appendix A: Survey

### Fall Break Survey

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has had discussions on ways to improve student learning and well-being in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering.

Through these discussions, a number of suggestions have emerged on introducing a break during the Fall term and the committee would like the input of the student body on how beneficial they feel these measures may be at improving the student learning experience and well-being.

Each of the ideas have various advantages and disadvantages depending on the length and timing of when they take place. Longer breaks give students more time to rest, but also creates the challenge of having to cover more material in a lower number of classes for some courses. Feedback from students at other universities has also shown that relatively shorter breaks help students relax while not losing focus on course content. If the break is held too early in the semester, it may not provide much stress relief for students whereas if the break is held too late in the semester, it may reduce the flexibility associated with how students use the time.

Q1: Please consider the following options regarding a Fall Break. From the perspective of your overall learning experience, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.

	1 (least beneficial to my learning)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my learning)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								
Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q2: From the perspective of your overall well-being, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.

	1 (least beneficial to my well-being)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my well-being)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								
Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q3: Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?

Q4: Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?

Q5: What is your year of study?

- First Year
- Second Year
- Third Year
- PEY
- Fourth Year
- Other

Q6: What is your discipline?

- |                       |                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| • TrackOne            | • Chemical          |
| • Engineering Science | • Materials Science |
| • Mechanical          | • Civil             |
| • Industrial          | • Mineral           |
| • ECE                 |                     |

## Appendix B: Student Comments

*Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?*

<p>A break in early November is more valuable than a break during Thanksgiving. In early November, we've been in school long enough that we need a break, but there is still plenty of work to do should we want to get ahead in our studies. In October (Thanksgiving), we may not need a break yet.</p> <p>Having class with no assessments for a week will just give us hectic weeks before and after, without a proper break during that week. Instead, time outside class will be spent preparing for all the midterms/assignments that have been pushed to the next week - effectively it will just be another week at school. You might as well not change the status quo. Having a proper break will allow us to disconnect from school if we choose, or have some time to study and some time to disconnect.</p> <p>There is often a good break before exams start to study as the testing period is over. Even if two study days were given, there's a good chance they'd be taken up finishing end of term assignments. Two free days would be better spent in the middle of the semester.</p>
<p>A break toward the end of November would be more beneficial than a break at the beginning, since its near the end more work gets piled up and there is not enough time to study for exams</p>
<p>An official week without assignments seems more like a farce than anything. Engineering students not getting a fall break, but getting a winter break just hasn't made sense to us, ever. We are human just like the Artscis and we need breaks too. We are tired of getting shafted all the time when it comes to not only tuition, learning experience, GPA, and breaks from study.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assessment free weeks usually lead to the previous or following week to be incredibly packed</li> <li>- random two days off do not give us the full break we deserve</li> <li>- Thanksgiving weekend break can make it easier for people to visit family</li> <li>- end of term projects and exams are tied very close together so a break between those isn't too bad</li> <li>- we deserve a full week off</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- I would not find two more days to study for exams helpful: the crunch is during the term and more time is more excuse to procrastinate away 2 extra days</li> <li>- I would like an extended Thanksgiving holiday, but if you're going to give a full week off please sync it up with other universities so siblings can spend time together over the same week. This has been great for my well-being throughout busy school semesters in the past</li> <li>- Two days off seems odd to me but might be a valid way to relieve some pressure in the middle of the term</li> <li>- No assignments but still having class would not make me feel like I was getting a break</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are typically the heaviest midterm schedules at the end of October, and thus a full reading week mid-October would provide time for students to catch up on homework/assignments to start preparing for the midterms</li> <li>- also, having some sort of break during Thanksgiving gives students who have family further away a chance to be with family during the Holiday</li> </ul>
<p>"Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November" Would just mean that professors will pile on projects and we'll have multiple projects to attempt to finish then. Anti-helpful.</p>
<p>:(</p>
<p>A break (full week or a couple of days, or regular class with no submissions) at the peak of midterm season would be the most beneficial to my learning and well being.</p>
<p>A break at the end of November / right before exam period is the best because that's when most end-of-term projects are due, plus we need to prepare for the final exam which takes up the most portion of marks for every courses.</p>
<p>A break before exams wouldnt help de stress.</p>
<p>A break during Thanksgiving is too early. The semester is perhaps most stressful towards late October and November.</p>

A break during the time of fall reading week would be the most helpful as it generally falls before the majority of midterms and projects. A week is also a lot more beneficial than two days, and more importantly doing either nothing or just leaving a regular week with no assignments is useless considering we still have classes 9-6, aka no time given for us to catch up.
A break in thanksgiving is too early in the year and disrupts flow of class, and for well being work load is generally low at that time of year anyways so it wouldn't provide too much. The week with no assignments due or midterms simply means the next week everything will be due. So that week is just as busy anyways.
A break is highly recommended for my well being and health.
A break is when I catch up on material so it would be more beneficial for a break to be in the middle of the semester or else I would cram too late (plus some profs already rush the end of the sem so cutting it short at the end would make them worse while adding in the middle would remind them that we should be halfway thru the syllabus)
A break was highly necessary and can help me to realise and check my priorities and goals for the term ahead.
A break would be beneficial to both mental health and time to catch up. A break around thanksgiving would be nicer given me a chance to fly home for thanksgiving.
A chance to catch up in the middle of the term would allow students to stay up to date and not fall more behind. Thanksgiving is generally around the beginning of midterm season and when students fall behind while studying, it is hard for them to catch up for the remainder of the term.
A change would be great, having a week break could make a huge impact in overall performance by students, and have a positive impact on mental health as well.
A fall break would be extremely beneficial to both academics and mental health and would really improve the experience of first semester
A fall reading break would allow students to have extra time for studying and taking a break from school. It also spaces assessments better. This will put it more in line with the spring reading week.
A fall reading week break will be very beneficial for catching up, finishing projects
A fall reading week for engineering students would be amazing, the burnout is real yo
A few days break dedicated to finishing projects without studying for midterms or exams would be great, also sometimes finals start 3 days after classes end and that's bull crap
A full fall reading week should be provided.
A full week break is always better as it allows for proper study time and recuperation. Also, November breaks are more beneficial than October.
A full week break is better than 2 days but that does not mean that 2 days would not be beneficial. I would appreciate any change that is put in place.
A full week break is by far the most beneficial. Ideally at the same time as other faculties.
A full week break just like for second semester would be ideal. Helps students reset our mindsets and regain focus on school.
A full week break later in the semester would have helped to reduce stress and helped me to refocus in the time leading up to exams.
A full week break might be too much, which causes the professors to speed up the lectures.
A full week break will allow myself and fellow students to refresh ourselves after a busy half a semester therefore will make me feel more mentally prepared for any upcoming assignments and midterms for the latter half of the semester.
A full week break would be ideal just for students to reset our mindsets and refocus
A full week of actual break would be the most ideal. Not a fan of options around Thanksgiving because there will likely be family commitments. Two days before start of exams might just delay the entire exam schedule; this sucks for out of province students.
A full week off during the fall would be very beneficial to my learning as it would allow me to destress during the semester
A full week would be beneficial both academically to study, and for my wellbeing so that I can catch up on appointments, and other personal matters.

A longer break gives more time to recharge and do better in academic coursework
A longer break in the fall allows students to de-stress from a busy semester, and allows them to spend time to get a deeper understanding of course material.
A longer break is better, so long as it is balanced against curriculum size or term length. Generally better for mental health as well.
A longer break makes it harder to cover the same amount of content but really the amount of content covered in a semester with no breaks was already overwhelming to begin with. Dedication to the idea of an introduction of a break would include a discussion on reducing the staggering amount of course content as a component of the idea instead of a tradeoff.
A mid-semester break is most helpful!
A no assessment week doesn't really help as most of our time in engineering is spent in classes/labs/tutorials. It won't be much different.
A no assignments week had been "attempted" in the Fall of 2015 where no class followed such rule.
A reading week in the fall at the same time as other schools would be nice. A normal week with no assessments doesn't mean anything and professor's will mostly ignore it, like they do the normal no-assessment time. Although it would be nice for scheduling club meetings!
A reading week might not be necessary because that would mean lost lecture time, less time to learn, and potentially an early start to the school year, which is not desirable. Two day breaks would be better than nothing (maintaining the status quo). I don't think a week of "no assessments" would be that useful.
A Reading Week really helps students catch up with course work in the winter semester. Currently in the fall semester, of students fall behind, they're left playing catch up for the rest of the semester. By introducing a break, attendance can be increased, assessment performance can be improved and quality of projects could be higher.
A reading week would greatly reduce student distress around the middle of first semester.
In the middle of the semester is where I feel like there is no hope left. Without a reading week, I know I will be unable to catch up with the course material. I just have had to accept that I will never have the chance to learn a big chunk of course material after this, because I am scrambling to keep up with the most basic things.
This causes me to be behind in lectures and course topics because I didn't have the chance to learn the prior material due to no time. I end up being at such a disadvantage near the end of the semester solely because I did not have that week's worth of time to catch up on work.
Further, catching up on work over reading week helps me to come back with questions for my professors that I wouldn't have had otherwise.
As a result, having no reading week greatly impacts my learning. I truly see reading week as having a huge positive impact to the quality of students' learning.
A reading week would help with my mental health.
A reading week would really help me manage my workload before midterms and will tremendously help my mental health.
A two-day break gives a good compromise between providing days to relax, and not packing too much content into classes. A break in November is much more useful than a break around Thanksgiving.
A week as synchronised as possible with other Canadian universities increases the value of going home. I wouldn't use two days before exams to study but I would use two days after exams to spend time with family. A week with no assignments would only be asking professors to load up the following week if the same material still needs to be covered.
A week away from classes, regardless of timing, seems like the best option to me since it provides an opportunity to get away from school, wind down, and not constantly be bogged down by having to adhere to the weekly schedule, while also allowing me to reset prior to returning to classes.
A week break may screw things up, 2 days feels reasonable

A week break right in the heat of the term will allow everyone to regroup and maintain their focus and motivation for the duration of the term. With the demanding nature of the engineering program, a week off would allow people to rest and will improve overall mental health.
A week is good for planning, relaxing and also getting high quality work done.
A week is too long. Adding an additional 2 days after Thanksgiving is enough
A week is very helpful for projects and such
A week long break in early November is extremely beneficial to rest and also catch up in other work. Shorter breaks or breaks at other times will only be used for studying and will not be much of a relief.
A week long break placed near midterm season (similar to the Arts and Science reading week) leaves room for both exam preparation and relaxing, contributing both the learning experience and overall well-being.
A week of no assignments is never followed by my instructors. It is not helpful at all.
a week of no deadlines will only concentrate deadlines even more.
A week off can be a very big deal by letting students study and have time off for mental health.
A week off is greatly valued (would also be nice to time it with american thanksgiving)
A week or even a couple of days to not worry about having things due would allow a lot of people to catch up and feel secure
A week with no midterms would most likely result in them getting moved to another week, possibly resulting in a very stressful week or two. My rankings for both were very similar because in order to learn I need to feel well (physically and mentally)
A week with regular classes but no assessments would not be optimal, as students would still have to attend class, but they would lose out on time that could have been spent working on projects. For some disciplines/years with ~30h of core course content, that would hardly be beneficial, unless you really want students to skip class.
Although it is beneficial to my well-being to have a long break, but I believe the professors still need the time to complete the course materials. Therefore, I strongly recommend a 2 day break.
An assessment free week does not give you more time to study and work on projects and relax especially when there is a midterm every week
Any breaks during early November (two day or full week) would be the most beneficial because that is around the time when students start to get behind classes and the material gets harder.
Any changes to class schedule will likely result in loads of assessments being clustered before or after the break, invalidating any relief the break may give
Any sort of break would honestly be really nice
any sort of mental break in the middle of an often-gruelling fall semester would be appreciated
anything but no change
As a student completing my 4th year of ENG I think students could use a proper reading week, I've seen a lot of friends incredibly stressed as well as experienced it myself. You need some time to decompress and not worry about school.
This is why I didn't rank any of the still in school just with no assignments highly, you never really de-stress like that.
As an engineering student, i really need a week breakperiod to relax and adjust myself due to the heavy work load
As somebody who lives on the other side of the country (Vancouver BC), spending my thanksgiving week with my family and being able to rest/catch up in my courses would be beneficial for my overall well-being and allow me to do much better academically.
As someone who commutes for about 3 hours a day, some of the options I feel will not be beneficial to my well-being. For instances, the assessment free week was a good break from tests. However it truly did not allow me to take a break because I was still having to go to school. We need days where classes are not running in order to re-charge or catch up. This way, we can work on our assignments at our own pace, and not rushing to complete them.
At least there should be some break

Based on my feelings and experiences, a full week break (7) days will make students feel they have a long week, so they usually choose to have a short break (first 1 or 2 days) at the beginning of week, and then they usually start to feel nerves at the second day because they don't get used to have such a long break. So most of students will use the rest of the week (5-3 days) to study. A 2 day break is completely different, it makes me feel I should use the days to have a rest because it's only 2 days, so I will use the full 2 day to have a rest and won't study at all.
Based on what I've experienced so far and spreading out our breaks.
because it is better for studying to have a full period of study
Because UofT Engineering has been abusing its students for years. #TimesUp
Because you try to condense too much material in 12 weeks
Break before midterms is most beneficial to give students time to complete labs and other assignments, so that during midterms they can focus fully on their tests.
Breaks are a very good to provide students repose from the heavy amount of school-work, as long as they are not taken advantage of with assignments being assigned during them.
Breaks are needed. Too many assignments for too long means burnout.
Breaks before exams and dues will greatly helpful to improve my marks. I don't want to rush over the review and the assignments.
Breaks help us catch up with work and allow us to get proper sleep during the school term because we are always catching up with work.
Breaks provide a time to relax and catch up which is beneficial to have. This is why other departments have a reading week in the fall term.
Breaks when people can visit family (because they also have a break) are most beneficial. Usually professors dont follow through on a no-assignment week
By that time during the semester I am kind of burned out. Having extra days before exams first not feel too beneficial, and two days without worrying about going to lectures can help but it's still stressful.
cant tell if a break is best in october or november, but extra days to complete projects arent helpful - just more stress and an inability to study the material study on exams
catering extra days towards "projects" is going to make every course put projects at the same time which only increases stress, and those extra days will just be filled with every course's deadlines.
adding a week with classes but no assignments just makes it such that the week before and after are even more filled with evaluations, AND students don't get a week off to catch-up/prepare.
these decisions have to be made to preserve student learning and well being, so consider how professors are going to react to these extra days (ie. scheduling all project due dates at the same time, or cramming more into certain weeks).
Current fall timeline is definitely stressful, as there are no "transition" period in between the different phases of the semester. The November break can be crucial and act as a transition to the "final stretch" period of the semester. The Thanksgiving break can be a little premature, as not much is actually happening yet in the semester at that point in time. Otherwise, some time off without being presented new material at the very end of the semester can greatly decrease the stress before heading into exams.
decent overall
Due to high workload as an Engineering student, I don't think having a reading week is advisable. If we had reading week, we will put the week's workload on other weeks, which makes me feel more stressful. However, having a week without any assignment and term test is great, I still review the courses I take with no pressure.
During the fall term, I felt extremely overwhelmed with the continuous workload, especially coming back from summer vacation and the fact it was my first year. I felt that every day I had no time to breath and really even taking in the information. Every day felt like a race which is why I believe a week of a break is so beneficial to help ease the mind and also take time to truly absorb what's been taught.
Early November has always been a very stressful time, and it would be great to get a lot of time to catch up near the end of the midterms

Early reading break means easier time fixing bad habits after getting into the flow of school.
Engineering can get very stressful because of the heavy workload especially when compared to other faculties. The winter semester break is very helpful and beneficial to students and therefore I think the same would be beneficial during the fall semester.
Engineering courses can be pretty demanding and draining. Getting a week of break would help a lot in stress relief.
Engineering education at UofT is very bad. Most of the profs are terrible in teaching. Even though I question how this faculty still presents itself as the number one engineering school in Canada, I still need to survive in this school's low level teaching quality. For this reason, my friends and I need some break to learn the content, which our profs should have taught, in a limited amount of time like a reading week.
Engineering has literally no holidays. Students need a break (like how other students have completely free days) every now and then. Engineering students need time to catch up on their work, and implementing more breaks can benefit our wellbeing.
Several weeks ago I got sick and had to miss school. We barely have time to visit the doctor, let alone catch up on our work. Engineering students definitely feel the lack of holidays.
Engineering is so stressful specially engineering science, and we need some long breaks during our study.
Engineering students definitely need a proper break during the fall term
Engineering students take at least five courses per semester. At least three of them would have midterms immediately after the break. With a two-day revision period adequate for each course, the total break should last at least six days with weekends included.
Engineers need a full week break just as much as, if not more than, other faculties for both academic improvement and mental health.
Engineers really need some break not some assessment free week/days.
EngSci is VERY stressful and as a commuter who barely has enough time to study already, any sort of break or even being lax on providing assessments would be immense to my mental well being and will provide better studying opportunities.
Especially seeing my friends in other Faculties have an impact on my need for a break.
Every other school has a fall break for better mental health. The winter semester has always been my best semester because of looking forward to the break. I get very depressed by the end of Fall because of constant work and stress
Everyone else in the world gets a reading week, would be nice if we did too. School is hectic and difficult, I don't see why we don't have a reading week in fall semester.
Extra 2 days for studying would be helpful for exams (assuming all projects are due before then)
Extra time is always beneficial to the student's study. With the engineering workload, classes already take up most of the day, therefore extra time off to study is perfect. I had a GPA around 2.0 first year, in the summer, I only took two courses and my GPA in that session was 3.7. It makes a huge difference.
Fall break is a good chance to catch up.
Fall reading week is a thing for artsci and it is a great reboot to get back into studying with renewed vigour. I feel it'll have a similar effect for engineering students.
Fall semester is always the worst because I'm overworked and have no time for a break, and then exams hit and I'm already too burnt out to do well.
Fall semester is too hard to overcome without a week of break
Fall Semester was too stressful with back-to-back things going on. A break mid way is very essential
Few days off are better than a full week off to ensure that courses don't decide to pile everything on students once coming back from the break - usually what happens during the winter term
First semester is hectic so breaks would help, but not too often in case you start to slack off
First semester should have a break. It is very discouraging to see the rest of u of t students taking a week off while we have to still go to classes.

Flexibility in how students use the time is key; some students may benefit from extra study time, while some may need a complete recharge.
For balance between study and break
For many, a rest is needed to get affairs in order and catch up
For mental health
For my mental well being I would want the break somewhere where the workload isn't too high and dependent on assessments. This is because it will be the right time to catch up to unfinished work without the stress of constantly feeling like I'm doing too little work and not studying enough for midterms, projects and the like.
for well being i prefer quit school, for learning more time study for exam and more time without assignment is very helpful
From my experience in semester one, a week break would be greatly beneficial.
Full week break > 2 day break > no break
Full week break may result in unpredictable changes to midterm schedules, and ultimately may even be more stressful for students (ie. multiple midterms a week). Having a couple more days of break scattered throughout the months is more beneficial.
full week break would be most beneficial for everyone
Full week breaks are never a bad thing.
<p>Full week breaks are the most effective method to lessen both student stress and allow students to catch up on learning or work, which is often needed when you have a seemingly endless stream of deliverables. It lessens the chance of student burnout by giving a proper break to students who are often continually exhausted and have limited time to do things they find pleasure in. November, right before finals is often the busiest time of the semester.</p> <p>Two day breaks, while appreciated, don't really have the same effect. For example, if you have a break on Monday and Tuesday, but five deliverables due later in the week, it's not really a break at all.</p> <p>If breaks are not feasible due to the curriculum, students should at least have a full weekend to study before exams, instead of being bombarded with finals on a Friday when classes end on Wednesday.</p>
Give us a break!
Give us a reading week in fall semester like literally every other school! About time UofT caught this train!!
Given the current academic climate at UofT, any break where students may have the opportunity to rest and recharge may not achieve it's intended purpose, as many students would opt to use this time to study, leaving students who need the time for self care, doctors appointments, or vacation to rest and relax feeling further left behind. That said, giving students a break is better than not doing so. However, I must sincerely stress the importance of giving students time with a focus on the time to be used for "room to breathe and live" rather than as more time for dedicated studying.
Going to lectures, tutorials, and labs takes up a ton of time - especially for those who commute. It can't be a true break while classes are still going on. Combining days off with Thanksgiving is a nice idea since many of us go home to visit family that weekend anyway.
Having a break between midterms and finals would help me de-stress in between and catch-up on a lot of accumulating work. While a two-day break is better than nothing, a full week would help return some morale for the rest of the term.

having a break close to exam time (ie. end of november or december) won't be a good use of break time because people will be stressed studying for exams and are already in peak stress at that point, where as a break earlier in the semester where students are maybe mid level stress is better because they will be able to make better use of it to their needs (ie. lower stress level earlier in the semester could encourage better decision making w.r.t the break) ALSO having the break around thanksgiving would be great because it will allow people to actually celebrate thanksgiving either with friends or family!!! We grow up being used to celebrating such social gatherings, and it's really a shame that in university people are too stressed to enjoy this time of coming together and freindship and family (increases stress significantly, at least from personal experience) --> sorry for poor grammar and spelling, hopefully my message came across O.K.

Having a break during Thanksgiving is too close to the start of the school year in my opinion; having a break in early November is much better suited to class schedules.

Having a break in early November is important because the concentration of midterms can become overwhelming.

Having a break incorporated into the semester is very good. But I would like it to be "worthwhile" and that is why I chose the most precious time as being the one that we need a break during: 2 extra days for exam preparation.

Having a full week is the only way that the students can actually take time to recover from being behind in schoolwork AND take a moment to ourselves for our own sanity. It gets really stressful into late October and November, and the only way to actually make this break useful from a mental health standpoint is to give us a full week. At any point in the semester an engineering student could use a few days just to catch up on their homework, so us having just a couple of days just means we will end up at home, studying, and still depressed. Also, the days being attached to Thanksgiving does not matter, an extra couple of days off could be put on any weekend. Its is often the week(s) after Thanksgiving that work piles up, so having a reading week there is useless/ineffective.

Having a fully break is more beneficial. Professors often don't care about assessment free weeks, so we end up being busy anyway.

Having a less intense work schedule would help with dealing with mental health and overall learning ability.

Having a reading week-like break in the fall semester would be awesome. I think the more breaks the merrier, but it's good to space them out. I think 2 extra days break before exams wouldn't be too helpful, because we could still have stuff due on those days

Having a week of classes with no assessments made the next week more stressful. I also didn't have time to catch up on the work because I was still going to classes even if there were no assessments.

Having a week without assignments will mean profs are more likely to bunch their major assessments close together, which is one of the main stressors in engineering

Having an actual break/reading week would be the best option for both academics and wellbeing since that would give us actual time to both rest and do work

Having at least some sort or break additional to only having Thanksgiving Day would benefit the mental wealth and well-being students a lot. Definitely something that should be considered and will be beneficial, as all other faculties and universities do so and continue to provide good learning experiences.

Having midterms every week until the end of november and then december exams coming along don't help. It's extremely difficult for students to go through this.

Having no assignments or projects due is not reasonable. There will be the same number of assignment and projects per course and they due dates will be shifted such that more of these due dates will overlap with one another. This would essentially cram the same number of deliverables into a shorter period of time with a week break in the middle. During this week we would still have a full course load and would still have to work as if the assignments were due as now twice as many will be due the next week.

Days to solely focus on projects is marginally helpful but would not decrease stress throughout the entire year. This would only provide a very small amount of time to focus on a project but in reality projects for different courses are due at varying times throughout the course.

I think a full week is needed as it allows students to take a day to focus on their mental and physical wellbeing without worrying about school work and catching up on assignments and deliverables. Then you can use the rest of the week once you're in a healthier state to focus on school work.

Having no breaks in the fall semester can be mentally draining and stressful.

Having only a two day break will not affect my personal well being. Last semester I had a final exam the day after my last lecture which caused me to fall fall behind in my classes. I think there should be at least a weekend between the end of classes and the start of exams

Having some break in the middle of the semester will be very helpful for students to catch up. But at the same time, it is also important to adjust number of midterms per course so that we won't have multiple midterms/assignment dues within one week before or after the reading week.

<https://blog.studentlifeforum.com/2019/10/16/fall-reading-week-benefits/>

I always feel very stressed around halfway through the semester, as things are hectic. Multiple projects are going on, midterms are happening, and sometimes I'm falling behind in a class because I was focusing on another project at that time. Having a break really helps with my mental health and overall I'm more productive.

I always had a fall week off in high school, and I found that it made the term easier to manage and made learning easier.

I am afraid that if there are extra breaks during fall and total course content stay the same, then some lecture content/tutorial/lab that would have been done during the break would be crammed at some other time, and result in more stress. Also I am concerned that the assignment/midterm/exam content is going to be more difficult with the fall break, since it may seem like we have extra time to study for some people, instead of considering it as a time that we can gather ourselves together and rest. Usually winter is more stressful for me even with the reading break, fall semester I still have the energy remaining from summer to , but winter break is too short to recover from the fall semester.

I believe a full week "fall reading week" will be most beneficial to my learning experience and well being. Having two-days extra is nice too but would not be enough time for me to go home, in Ottawa, as I do live quite far from Toronto. Thus given a week I would be able to see my family and be rejuvenated for the following weeks. Along with that, it would give students the opportunity to catch up on work and complete tasks beyond the scope of just engineering coursework such as design teams/projects and various personal initiatives.

I believe a full week break in early November is a great opportunity to catch up on studies that were delayed due to midterms. What usually happens to me is during midterms, my focus would be studying for midterms instead of studying new materials. And I desperately need a break to catch up on the course material after midterms.

I believe a full week break would have a large, positive impact on both my wellbeing and learning. During the first semester, I felt that there was never a break and I always had to be on the ball or else I would fall behind quickly. By the end of the semester I was drained and as a result I felt as though I couldn't give my all for exams. I was emotionally drained, always tired, and wasn't able to focus. I believe that if i was given more of a break, it would offer me a reset and an emotional and academic break. Additionally, I could use the time to catch up on any material I feel I may be behind on. Overall, I think that introducing a break into the fall term would impact the student body in a positive way.

I believe majority of students will very well benefit from a fall reading week as it would allow time for students to organize themselves for school, work, or other personal issues. I strongly support a fall reading week in general, but if I were given a choice to select where to place it, I would choose a week after thanksgiving. It is at an optimal time where school is beginning to pick up and with this week, students can prepare themselves for the rest of the semester as oppose to going straight till exams when entering school. On the other hand, with the fall reading week being place in the week in early November, from my personal experiences, I believe this is around the time students are getting into the momentum of their courses and putting a break here might affect that. So like second semester, putting fall reading week one month into the semester is the most optimal.

I believe students of the faculty of engineering deserve a week off. We have just as much work as other faculties (if not, more) and they have a week off. Having a week off will present students the opportunity to catch up with their classes, instead of falling more and more behind. This will help students recharge and stay motivated, as if you are extremely behind, motivation gets deteriorated.

I believe that a full week of break, especially in November when many students have multiple assignments and final exam studying simultaneously, would be very beneficial. If a full week in November or Thanksgiving, which would help with midterms, isn't possible, then an extra two days break would be the second best option (whether it be during thanksgiving week, beginning/end of November, or prior to start of exams).

I believe that by having at least 2 days break in November will allow students to relieve stress and catch up with the material. From my experience, the Fall semester is very stressful and a small break will be beneficial both in terms of well-being and academic excellence.

I believe that having time off from class is very beneficial to my overall mental health to complete needed work and take a breather. I would not however wish to push exams later if we had a week off as that would add stress.

I believe that we need a period in the semester to recharge as well as properly study and catch up on anything missed without classes or assignments and midterms. I believe we would all benefit from it and it would have a very beneficial impact on students (improve grades and physical and mental health)

I believe that, regardless of when the week-long break is given (whether it is around Thanksgiving or early November), it is absolutely necessary for both student well-being and academic performance. I personally do much worse in the fall semesters than I do in winter semesters, purely because I feel like I have no chance to take a break and catch up to work. Although courses may become more content-heavy due to the introduction of a break, I believe any difference in workload would be balanced by being able to take a breather for a week and catch up to any missed work during fall reading week.

I cannot learn effectively without time - time to relax, time to think, time to work - something that is seriously lacking in this program from my perspective

I don't feel that a reading week would benefit me

I don't think it would take a genius to figure it out :)

I don't feel that the addition of any breaks would really benefit my learning experience, I think it would be WAY more efficient to spread out the workload through the year. For example, the 3rd year civil eng students are always bombarded with ridiculous schedules and it makes getting through the year impossible. It's not uncommon for students to cry during study periods in the evening, it's truly sad.

I don't know how I avoided a total meltdown in first semester of this year. I nearly ruined important friendships, I had periods of time where I just couldn't bring myself to study. I needed a few days to breathe and process, but I had no realistic way of getting that, so instead I just ignored my mental health and pushed through. I did well academically, but I'm pretty sure I have ruined my mental health for a long time.

I don't think having 2 days break at the end of the term for completion of projects is effective, since everyone would just push it till those 2 days, and professors will make the deadlines in December, which is when final exam starts. This actually creates more stress in my opinion. I prioritize having a break to study before exam over that is because I once had 5 of my finals all on the first week, starting from the first day of the exam season. The first day of exam is 2 days after the last class, which I only had 1 day left to study. The final included materials from the last class too. Since none of my first week exams had any conflict, and were all spread throughout first week, I couldn't do much about it. Unless there are policies that could avoid this from happening, I think I do need more days to study before the first exam occurs.

I feel as though a week break in the fall term would really benefit my mental health and help me focus more throughout the semester, as i will be distressed and have something to look forward to
I feel burnt out at around the midpoint of the semester so a week break would be great for my mental health as well as keeping my interest in the courses I am taking.
I feel like a week of break near the start of November makes the most sense.
I feel like beginning of November is just too random, it's not in the middle and not near the end.
I feel like I would rather have one longer break (e.g. 2 days added onto Thanksgiving, or a 4-day weekend) over 2 random class-free days during the week.
I feel that a week of break like the rest of the school would make us feel mentally better.
I feel that Engineering students deserve a break considering how many assessments are going on.
I feel that having a week long break from classes during the semester allows me to recharge and feel less overwhelmed to allow me to perform better in exams and assignment. It will also prevent me from burning out due to the stress and workload, and catch up on any courses I am behind on.
I feel that sometimes when a whole weeks break is given, I end up feeling guilty about not doing anything, but I feel like just having a weekend extended a bit longer will help out the most, since I can have some time to actually get some sleep, and work again but with less pressure.
I feel that the winter term is much easier to keep up with work because of reading week. I am able to catch up on assigned homework, labs, and concepts. During the fall term where there is no break aside from Thanksgiving (which gets spent with family), I often see myself fall behind my courses because of the workload. When midterms come around, I see myself spending the whole weekend studying for the midterm I have that week. Thus, I am unable to study for other courses and stay updated. This leads me to being lost in lecture for those classes. All in all, it's just a ripple effect that can be mitigated with the addition of a break during the fall term.
I feel very overwhelmed by the beginning of November. Would be nice to have a 'break' time to look forward to and know I will have the time to prepare for further assignments/tests
I figure out that I am really exhausted at the beginning of the November and my energy level decline dramatically, if I could I have a whole week break that would really fuel me up and make me able to fight again
I find having a week break during the middle of the semester very useful to think about how I am doing with my coursework. I am able to catch up with my courses as well as reorganize my goals for the end of the semester.
I find the winter semester always runs smoother than fall because of reading week. I think its important to give that break to students for them to catch up, reset their focus and spend some time with friends & family. I am always more motivated at the beginning of the semester when its exciting, new classes and a fresh start. Without the break the semester drags on and it can be discouraging when you feel overwhelmed and can't catch a break. I think it would be extremely beneficial academically as well as mentally for students.
I gave the same answers for both questions because I believe that any break beneficial to my well-being results in it being beneficial to my learning. Last winter break I didn't feel relaxed until the very end of it, and I feel like the stress and exhaustion carried over to this semester as well. This could've been avoided with a sufficiently long break during the semester, providing us with some relief during the hectic time.
I get really burnt out by the middle of the term, a break is a good way to reset and have a break from the heavy workload. It's also especially hard when friends in other programs/schools get a break while I'm not able to rest
I have always found midterm season to be the most stressful, so to have a real break at Thanksgiving allows time for family and friends, and a chance to slow down during the busyness of midterms.
I have found November to be very stressful and work piles on too fast and it would be great to get a chance to catch up without having to worry about other assignments and lectures I need to catch up on.
I hope the instructors could better manage their course plan according to the break
I just don't want a break. Distracts from studying - would rather just get out of school earlier for a longer break.
I just don't want more class.
I just feel like the best thing would be for an actual reading week to happen during the fall. It gives everyone a break and time to catch up. Two days just isn't enough.

i just feel super burnt out in the middle of the semester tbh it would be really nice to get a reading week like the artscis
I just need a break, and Thanksgiving should be spent with family one weekend isn't enough
I just need two more days during the midterm to catch up. If I stay at home for a week, I cannot go back and study well.
I just really wish we had some sort of break in the Fall semester to prevent me from burning out near finals.
I know there's a lot of issues because no one wants to start the semester earlier or end the semester later than we already do. Unfortunately the issue becomes that we get 1 day off (Thanksgiving Monday) between beginning classes and the end of the semester. As has been suggested, even a 2 day break or 1-2 long weekends in October/November would be seriously help a lot to alleviate the pressures.
I like reading. and weeks. Therefore reading week is nice. Also extra time to complete projects and things for clubs allows me to be more productive and focused.
I like the idea of having a short break before the exam week, especially because I usually take both engineering and arts and science courses.
I live in Saskatchewan and the first semester was really hard to get through because I couldn't go home. I think a lot of students could benefit from a chance to go home and see family. Especially around thanksgiving, which is when a lot of other schools have their breaks, meaning families can be together. Academically I don't think this poses much of an issue because other schools have successfully implemented a break.
I need a break
I need a break before the start of midterm tests. That is important.
I need full week breaks
I need several days before the exams to go over all materials. I did not feel prepared in previous years before exams.
I need to sleep
I noticed that there isn't really a lot of time to study before exams begin. A lot of times, there are assignments due and new content being taught all the way up to the beginning of exams. That leaves little room to study for the first exam of the exam season.
I opted for less of a break when regarding academic well being because I understand the time restrictions of teaching the material, but I also notice that I am mentally at ease when coming back to school after longer breaks such as from the winter reading week.
I ranked assessment free weeks relatively low because we had to complete all the work in the following weeks, which doesn't make much difference. However, fall breaks at around the beginning of November would be beneficial, as I need to rest after finishing midterm one and before starting midterm two.
I ranked the options that would most benefit me and the students in engineering. Our program requires so many hours in class and with course work it provides little time to catch up with other courses. A fall reading week could benefit our mental health and give students a chance to catch up with all work and do assignments that aren't mandatory for better understanding.
I really do think adding a reading week like the arts and science department will be beneficial (they have it in place for a reason).
I really don't care about breaks, what interest me is to finish the course as fast as possible but am able to take on one by one, instead of 5 projects all duo in 2 weeks.
I really don't think nothing should change, a lot of engineering programs at other schools have a Fall reading week. Maybe a full week break isn't needed just because I know I would probably waste some days doing nothing (some may argue that this is needed relaxation time, but I dont really know tbh). However, a 2 day break would be greatly appreciated because the course work gets really heavy and it'd be nice to have some time to just catch up. Adding the break days around Thanksgiving would let us spend Thanksgiving as Thanksgiving instead of studying, but it would also clump together all the break days which could be a good thing or a bad thing, depends on who you ask.
I really don't want to start school earlier. I'm fine with how things are now.
I really just want an extra few days around Thanksgiving. It's the best time to go home and have a break. I don't want school to be on a break in November.

<p>I really want a full week break because I think it would make me very happy but I'm afraid that professors will cram all the same projects and assessments into a shorter period of time and the weeks around which would make it more stressful because it already feels stressful and it feels like they can't sleep if they haven't given us an assignment/project/quiz/exam even if we already have multiple for each of the other courses all due at the same time :'(</p>
<p>I selected full week breaks for the highest ratings because it provides a proper break to reset oneself midway through the semester. It is incredibly exhausting to power through a whole semester with no designated days off, which can lead to burnout or skipping classes towards the end of the semester. A week does not represent a significant enough amount of class time lost. Having this week off would provide students with an opportunity to review and catch up on material before it gets too overwhelming, as well as allowing physical rest and to catch up on lost sleep time.</p>
<p>I selected my choices considering that sometimes we need a break, but those breaks will also make us have to learn more content in less time so that could also potentially increase stress.</p>
<p>I struggled a lot with the work load this past semester, a break would have seriously improved my ability to do effective work throughout the entire semester.</p>
<p>I tend to fall behind and lose motivation as the semester progresses. A break in early November would let me refresh and catch up. Thanksgiving is quite early, so not as much course content is covered by then and most midterms happen anytime from the start of October until late November. The weather is also generally nicer and days are longer, so I feel better.</p>
<p>I think a break early October would be too early but a break between our midterm would help catch up and wine down</p>
<p>I think a break would really benefit my moral through the semester and help improve my performance.</p>
<p>I think a couple days break around Remembrance Day would be most helpful. I feel that a break at the very end of November or in the last week of classes would not be the most helpful.</p>
<p>I think a full break is good for engineering students in the fall, as opposed to a week without assignments (this has barely any effect since let's of assignments can take 2+ weeks)</p>
<p>I think a full week feels too much like a vacation but definitely being given multiple days in order to catch up on work and sleep is necessary.</p>
<p>I think a full week is necessary to let student actually feel like they are getting a break</p>
<p>I think a full week is too long and it would be hard to get back into routine and school would be too packed the rest of the year. I like time near the end so people can get caught up on things, but not right at the end so that people can still seek clarification if needed.</p>
<p>I think a single day or two does not really help that much. I prefer a full reading week provided just like arts&amp;science students without additional work load/working days at the beginning or the end of semester (needs sometime to prepare for final, otherwise more stressful)</p>
<p>I think breaks are more beneficial than "assessment-free periods" as it seems fairly easy for those to be manipulated - by covering extra content and giving extra homework, by making assessments worth less so they don't technically qualify as assessments, etc.</p>
<p>I think either having an extended Thanksgiving break or having an additional break in November would be a big help to both my learning and wellbeing. I typically start feeling burnt out around the beginning of November (with the usual 3-day weekend in October for Thanksgiving) which I usually attribute to having no extended fall break and continuous assignments/midterms/deliverables/etc.</p>
<p>I think having a break around Thanksgiving may not be as necessary as a break around early November, simply because we haven't gotten too far into the semester. Early November is when most students are in the heat of design projects/workload, so I think it would be the best time for a breather.</p>
<p>I think having a fall reading week will be extremely beneficial for engineering students not only in terms of academics but also mental health wise.</p>

I think having some sort of fall break is good because its a good time for us to catch up on work and destress. Also it's unfair that the students in other faculties get a fall reading week but we don't.
I think it is really Important to have a week off, sometimes you have mandatory appointments during school hours and commitments a break would be good for mental health too
I think no assignment and have class is the worst of all, since assignments help learning and eventually we will do assignments later or sooner.
I think one or two additional days of break would be highly beneficial during the end of october or the beginning of november to catch up on rest and work. A full week break might be too long though - I feel it would compress the lecture material too much.
I think people need to get over themselves; university is hard and adding a week off just inhibits others who want to learn
I think school is too busy, I think it is beneficial to have short breaks but more frequently. Even if it is an extra day, it'll be good for catching up and taking a minute to breathe and relax a bit.
i think Thanksgiving is too early for a full break as the bulk of heavy school work and stress occurs in November. For the past two years, this is when I have been finding myself really in need of a break
I think that a full week in November is optional but might overload the courses before and after it. As such I think adding a few more days to a Thanksgiving week may be the best option.
I think that getting breaks during the most stressful part of the semester being exam week is far more important than any 4 month break. I'd rather have school itself be structured around being longer with more breaks in between so I can delve deeper into my learning. I genuinely feel like I'm working like a machine to do things and losing passion because of the amount of work we are expected to do in such a short amount of time.
I think the fact that Engineering does not have a reading week and art-sci has is not fair
I think the most valuable thing we need is time to catch up on school work. Looking forward to this reading week is the only thing encouraging me to get through the next two weeks, and makes me optimistic that I can come back prepared and even ahead on the readings.
I think we must have a full reading week like other programs and all other universities. This is because our workload can be overwhelming and if anything we need a reading week more than other programs that have less work. So it makes no sense that they have one while we don't and our mental health deteriorates.
I think we really need a few days break three weeks before the exam since all projects are accumulated.
I tried to favor longer breaks that involved less reduction in class time and breaks closer to the middle of the semester over breaks later in the semester.
I understand there is a lot to cover, so there has to indeed be a balance between no break whatsoever and a the existence of one.
I want a reading week
I want change
I want to have a reading week just because it is very stressful for engineers and I dont understand why the university has made it even harder for us in the fall term. If you're concerned about mental health then you should've been quick to include a reading week in the fall term.
I would like the break to be in November as that's when classes get the busiest
I would not use a week with classes and without assignments that productively unless it was around midterm time.
I would prefer classes continue so that lectures do not become too fast paced to adjust old the syllabus for a new schedule.

I would prefer classes to start earlier if a break were implemented as opposed to ending later. I think a 2 day break may be the best compromise.
I would prefer to have a full week of break, because it is easier to book a ticket to visit my family over a week. If it was only a couple days, it would not be worth going all the way back home for me. Also I found the no assignment week to be not very beneficial because it was not enough for me to catch up on school work, despite spending 90% of my time on school work that week. Also, we still had problem sets that week, so for me it just felt like a regular week, just with no midterms, so it did not have an effect on me.
I would really prefer short breaks spread over the semester rather than a whole week as I think that promotes procrastination in students including myself
I'm too tired with loads of work.
I'd like a two day break rather than a week, because I convince myself not to work (as efficiently) during longer breaks by saying that there's still time - until there isn't. Also, a break near Thanksgiving seems like it would be too close to September to get much real benefit, while a break in November would be better if it was at the beginning of the month (mid-semester). As someone who had lectures end on December 4th, along with major assignments due on December 4th, and two exams on December 6th and 7th, a mandatory couple of study days before the exam period would also be really good.
Tl;dr: Best times for a break: early November or right before exams.
I'd prefer to have a break in early November because it's usually during that time where there are the most things due (assignments / labs / exams / etc), so having time to have a breather and just focus on studying for those instead of that + new material being taught in class would be very beneficial
Ideally more time off and ideally more spread out. Days to study or complete projects are just more stressful.
If anything changes, please start in Fall 2020
If it's assessment free week, profs will just make it due or have the test before or after that week.
If UofT actually cared about the mental health of the students they would've implemented this eons ago. It's about time you gave us a reading week.
If we still cover the same amount of course content covered in a much smaller amount of class time, probably more stressful. I am definitely in favour of a Fall break, but a week long break will probably be worse than a two day break since the course will just get compressed into a smaller number of lectures.
I'm overworked, any break will be much appreciated
I'm sorry but we were told in first year that there'd be a "week with regular classes but no assessments" but we literally had an in-class midterm during that time, so I really don't believe in that statement anymore.
In my experience from my fourth year, November is busier than October. However this may have been different in second and third years. Longer breaks are better for my well-being, but shorter breaks are better to allow me some time to catch up on school work.
In terms of learning experience, late October- Early November is normally a busy time when things start to pile up. So having a 2-day break or so around that time would help students catch up on some material. In terms of well-being, it is also November when things start to get stressful and so having a week break where students can catch-up and also relax would be awesome.
Indy 3rd year fall term is a disaster. We have project due the day before final exams and 3 final in the first 4 exam days. There was no time to review at all and I was mentally and physically exhausted. A break would really help.
It balanced study and having a rest
It gets very hectic in start of November and it results in exhaustion, a break in the start of November or in the middle would help me reduce the stress levels.
It is extremely important for a week or so off at least once in the semester (as there is in the winter semester). I found that I did much better academically and mentally in winter when I had a chance to go back and see my family for a bit. Adding a week off in Fall for me is a no brainer.
It is very demoralizing when Arts and Science students have reading week in the fall, and engineers don't. I get very sad and jealous during this time

It might be better to have long enough break for relief. It should be placed between end of October - start of November
It would be beneficial to have the fall break on a week other than thanksgiving so that we can have an extra day off for thanksgiving as well as a week off on another occasion (i.e. having 2 breaks)
It would be nice to have a break that corresponded to students in many other Ontario universities. If adding more days with no class is difficult, at least having time for students to catch up on work would be appreciated.
It would be really nice to have some kind of extra break during the first semester regardless of what shape or form the break comes in.
It's best to have reading week coincide with the reading weeks of other faculties so that we can spend time with friends from Art Sci. Their reading week is at a decent time in terms of where/when in the semester it happens
It's best to have reading week coincide with the reading weeks of other faculties so that we can spend time with friends from Art Sci. Their reading week is at a decent time in terms of where/when in the semester it happens
It's hard to learn when the 2nd set of midterms happen right after the first. There's no break in between so it feels like we're just studying for tests, rather than learning interesting things. It's also really easy to start falling behind by focusing on tests rather than new content. The feeling of falling behind is also a really big stressor, especially when considering all 6 courses.
It's really important to make the students feel motivated with a break, no break is seriously dreadful. A short break, before AND after midterms can help us to study well for midterms and handle projects, and then catch up to lectures as well (after midterm). A small break before exams helps us catch up and study. Do not give a long break, it's a bad idea for mental exercise. There's a learning machine (our brains) we shouldn't stop in the middle of the semester, just 3-4 day weekends are perfect. For Thanksgiving, I'd prefer one extra day, not two, and certainly not a week.
It's related to my academic life and performance.
Its unfair to have no reading week when other disciplines and schools do - missing family and friends
I've personally found that students would prefer either longer breaks which opens up the opportunity to travel, as well as more time during the holidays to spend with their families, if there had to be a reading week around that time. Having days dedicated to completing projects would also do a lot to cut down on stress before exams.  The survey was also difficult to fill out in terms of formatting. I would have preferred giving a rating independent to each option rather than having to adjust the options so that only one was for each column.
Just having a reading week would do so much for everyone. Wish I had something like this in my first few years at UofT.
Last fall I really felt overwhelmed by the end of November and it affected me negatively during finals and I was unable to hold on to my focus till then.
Last fall term was hell with little to no breaks when the midterms started. We need a 2 day or a full week break right before the midterms or after 1 or 2 of them.
Last semester starting in October we've had assessments every week worth around 10% until exams. That was extremely stressful.
Last semester, I found myself really really wanting a break, especially during November, which is why I prioritized ones in that timeframe. I feel like if during Thanksgiving, the workload can be lowered, and if we can have a proper break during November, my wellbeing would benefit greatly.
Last year I got stressed and exhausted by the huge workload and pressure. Everything got to the worst point during early November, which was when all the midterms and projects crammed together while many students were trying to catch up on some courses at the same time. Due to the lack of chances to break and to catch up on my courses, I was constantly in a stressed mindset. Consequently, I experienced a huge mental breakdown right after the "Assignment Free Week". The breakdown lasted for more than three weeks and has largely impacted my grade as well as my mental state. Thus, I think it is necessary to give us a one-week break in early November so we can either catch up on courses or just relax.
Life is so hard in Engineering

Living outside of Toronto, it would be really useful to have a week off so I can go back home and take care of myself academically and mentally.
mans need some time off still
MENTAL HEALTH
more break better, more time before or during particularly high-workload times.
more time off is better than less time off
time off later in the semester is better than earlier in the semester, because that's when you start getting swamped
More time off is better; you're killing us
Most often, the workload accumulates and it is hard to catch up in time for lectures to make the most out of courses. It would be best to have a reading week to focus entirely on catching up for efficient learning.
Mostly want a week throughout the semester to catch a breath, get some rest, and work on assignments.
My fall experience last year was from september 30 to december 2 (which is the week of exams) we had at least one midterm every week, sometimes two, on top of projects, lab reports and essays. A week break, even if school starts early, would be very beneficial for my mental health and my learning (my grades were way higher in the early half of the midterm streak than the second half)
My friends from art and science have a full reading week to take a break. Also, thanksgiving week is too early for the holiday because the semester would just begin for a month.
My learning is directly correlated to my well being, I think incorporating a break (besides) thanksgiving weekend would be very beneficial.
My learning is linked to my well-being, and my well-being is linked to my stress levels. A week with no assignments due will just push the dates to pile on another week while not giving us a proper relaxing break from school. Middle of the semester is more necessary than before exams since this is heaviest workload and stress. Middle of the semester gives a chance to catch up before the end. Longer breaks means people can visit home, which can be the most relaxing and stress-relieving activity for many people. Multiple separated breaks feels better for me than all bunched together since you get the illusion of more breaks.
My mental health is the overwhelming factor affecting my learning, not class time or assignments. If I am not in a good frame of mind, I won't get anything out of lectures or assignments. If I am too stressed out by projects or assignments I will sacrifice sleep to complete them, and then be too sleepy during lecture to pay attention. If I am in a good frame of mind I can learn very efficiently (provided the class isn't too slow).
It is also extremely beneficial to mental health to get support from one's family. Like many students my family is not close to Toronto, so a longer break (5 days or a week) gives me the option to fly home, something shorter breaks, or fake breaks (breaks with either implicit or explicit academic commitments, either classes, studying, assignments, or projects) make impossible. It is natural for professors to make assignments or projects which would be impossible to complete without working full effort through the break; this must be strongly resisted.
My well being really suffers from constant uni, and the reading week gives students something to work towards, a reward for continued effort for 1 or 2 months
N/A
N/A
N/A
N/A
Nah
Need a break for mental health.
Need more time to complete projects as profs like to clump all projects for their subjects together at the same time towards the end of the semester assuming we don't take any other courses —> that also causes us to not have enough time to study for the exam. The fact that I gave up choosing 1 full week break during fall term in exchange for 2 extra days to complete projects/Study for exams is just ridiculously sad. Good job UofT for not taking care of our physical ability and mental health :)
No

no
No assessment week was more stressful for me this year, as I had more assignments due the week before and after, causing me more stress. I also think it is a little ridiculous we are unable to have a reading week, or even a reading weekend when almost every other engineering program in Canada is able to accommodate for these needs. Especially in a world
No assessment week was not beneficial. I was still assigned work to do.
no long break in a whole semester is really stressful
None
November gets very busy with several projects and tougher course content. The break should be when the projects have been assigned earlier on and the students have started their research and resolved any questions they had. That way, the break could act as a way to relieve them from any stress especially because they can meet up during the break if needed. This year, several projects were all very close to each other and it was very difficult to not feel overwhelmed.
November too stressful
November's the busiest time and optimal for a week or 2 days of break
Out of all the universities in Ontario, I think only UofT is one of the only ones that does not offer a fall reading week for engineering students, which is really unfair. Especially as a first-year, the transition to university is already quite hard, so having a break time to go home and spend time with family would really help with the adjustment process. Also, having an assessment free week is completely useless because professors just make all the assignments due right before the week and right after the week. Students are stressed out beforehand because they have so much work to do but then also during that week because there's so much to do afterwards.
Overall i think a week without assignments is best considering that course content wont necessarily condensed to compensate. Otherwise a longer thanksgiving break is better to allow for preparation for midterm season.
Overall, I believe having more break time is crucial for improving both student's learning and their well being. During school, my sleep schedule gets thrown seriously off course and breaks are some of the only chances I get to sleep the amount someone my age should. On top of fixing one's sleep schedule, I personally learn much better when I study a topic by myself at my own pace rather than sitting in a lecture where the pace does not match own, or the professor is not adept in teaching (however knowledgeable they may be). I've taken 18 classes during my university career, and I actively learned during lecture for only 6 of them. With this in mind, more break time for me means more time to actually learn the content that is being presented, which is the end goal.
Overall, no tests or exams are the most important things for me to behave well.
People go home for Thanksgiving and the addition of a break would help with fatigue
Personally - my academic performance is entirely dependent on my overall well-being and vice-versa.
Personally, a full-week break during the week of Thanksgiving seems the most reasonable to me for the following reasons:  1. Four school days off as opposed to five if we were to have a reading break in early November. 2. Lots of midterms happen around this time, so it would be a good time to prepare for exams, catch-up with course material. 3. We already have a reading break in the winter semester that is structured the same way and works: Four-day break extended from a provincial holiday (Family Day), and it is around the sixth/seventh week into the semester, which is when most midterms happen. This reading week has worked very well for me, and it would be nice to have the same in the fall semester.

Please do not have an assessment-free week. I felt like it was NOT beneficial to my learning because instead of having a week free of assessments, I felt like all the assessments that would've taken place that week was just pushed onto the next week. Therefore, the next week I was VERY overwhelmed.
Please do the breaks!
Please give us a reading week
Plz start from next semester
Professors never follow no assignment weeks
Projects at the end of semesters tend to require more time to complete. And every course has a big project due at the end. Hard to have time to study for the exams. One study day is definitely not enough if we have an exam the next day. Super exhausted.
Proper days off give students more of an opportunity to catch up on work or to take a breather when things start picking up in school. I think a full week off is the most beneficial as it gives the most time to work on catching up or moving forward. It also gives students the chance to have a life during the fall semester. A couple days off isn't the same. I like the idea of having a full reading week during thanksgiving to allow students to visit family during that time and to not have a midterm immediately after a holiday (which many professors enjoy doing). My mental health would be significantly better if I had a reading week in first semester as that is when I feel the most stressed. I understand that some people will see students waste this time period, but that's mostly on the student to use the time wisely. Also, sometimes people just need a break from school to relax and unwind and then get back to doing work, like a vacation.
rather than give students more time, professors should actually confer with each other and not schedual exams all on the same week/day
Reading week in the Fall would help me quite a bit.
Reading week is a chance to breathe a little, and it's crazy what we don't have one in the fall, but do in the winter. More time between the end of classes+projects and start of exams would also make a huge difference, especially when you get shafted with early exams, which is crazy stressful. Last fall iirc I had all my exams within about week of the end of classes. Not sick
Reading week is a good refresher that allows students to recooperate and come back ready to learn again. Otherwise students get burned out
Reading week is incredibly important for mental health and wellbeing, especially for a program like engineering.
Reading week not only helps us catch up with any assignments but also gives us a mental break for better mental health and time to catch a breath.
Reading weeks generally become a week of getting absolutely no work done and ruining routines, so I find having something like a couple days off before exams would be very beneficial (especially for the exams scheduled on one of the first few days of the exam period). I am also fine with no changes to the status quo.
Right around the 6/7-week mark into the 1st semester, I can feel intense exhaustion mounting and desperately need a break. Usually 3-5 is enough without feeling like "I'm not doing anything" or having the fear of catching up accelerated material at the end of the semester.
Semesters are already very short, adding breaks will further increase the amount of materials taught in each class.
Short breaks vs. long breaks are better for retaining knowledge and course content from class, but may not necessarily be beneficial for well-being, from my experience.
Similar to above, my ratings reflect that shorter breaks allow for time to keep up with course material, whether that be for studying, finishing assignments, or projects while longer breaks allow for more time to de-stress as well allow for catching up on course material.
Similar to the initial point, early breaks are not really beneficial, because people are not yet overwhelmed with work.
Since we have l a lot of midterms, it would be nice to have a break in the middle
Some sort of break would be nice to have
Sometimes fall is really heavy and a week of break would give us the opportunity to catch up on material

Students need a set amount of time where they do not have classes and truly have control over their schedule. This is even more true for commuters, as it would be beneficial not to spend 9-10 hours commuting for a week. That's why we feel assessment free week was not as helpful as it is made out to be. Still having classes meant less time for self-guided study.
Students need a week to catch up and rest
students need breaks, we're not machines just yet
Switching the order of the two questions makes it harder to answer the same way for both, but the answers should be the same and if people don't rate them the same the wellness is more important
Thanksgiving break is preferable to November as our midterm season skews towards starting in October. I often use reading week to catch up on lecture content. I would not find extra study days/project completion days before exams as helpful, as I find that it is ongoing projects during midterms/regular classes that are the most demanding.
Thanksgiving is already a natural pause for work. Adding days to that doesn't have much of an effect on my well-being. A full-week break provides sufficient time to decompress and de-stress from school, regardless of when it occurs. With regard to learning, a full week break means that content would have to be shifted to before and after the break, which I believe would result in too much stress, as learning must be accelerated to accommodate this. As a result, I believe that the two-day break provides sufficient time to de-stress while balancing the need to spread out the teaching of content.
Thanksgiving is too early for an effective break.
Thanksgiving is too early for long breaks, it's convenient but too early in the semester to be beneficial for learning & well-being
Thanksgiving is too early in the semester for a break, not many projects will have accumulated by then. I think November is more appropriate since much more school work will have accumulated by this time. Any break similar to the arts and science fall reading week would be ideal. Alternatively, a few days to complete projects before the final exam period would be welcome since this would allow students extra time to study for finals instead of being bogged down by somewhat unrelated tasks.
Thanksgiving is too early in the semester for a break, we do not have nearly as much work to complete in comparison to November
Thanksgiving is too early in the semester to have a full week off, by early or late November people are tired and have had one or even two rounds of midterms and would appreciate a break before finals and project submission season.
Thanksgiving is too early to break, courses are only beginning to gear up
Thanksgiving is too early to have lots of work to catch up on so it would be a great break in terms of relaxing and doing things other than school, which is good for well-being. However, a week break later on would be better for actually catching up on school work. I think the Thanksgiving long weekend plus a week off in November would be a good balance.
thanksgiving is too early, long break may distract students from studying
Thanksgiving seems too early to be as useful as early to mid November. End of November seems too late.
Thanksgiving specially can be a good time for an extended break due to family reunions, which usually cheers me up. A week without assignments would be ideal and could be a perfect opportunity to catch up on classes.
Thanksgiving time and November usually busy in the fall term, it may be a good idea to add just one day or two to take the pace back on track
The assessment free week during first semester was not actually assessment free as all the regular assignments were due the night before the start of the assessment free week, or right at the end completely defeating the purpose of having an assessment free week.
The beginning/middle of November is typically the most stressful time and a full week break (like for Arts and Science students) would have greatly reduced stress in my 1st and 2nd years (even if course content would have to be studied independently).
The constant grind of the engineering course load takes a toll on my physical and mental well-being, therefore affecting my academics. Having a 2 day break will mostly result in work being done and no actual time to rest, therefore a full week break is most desirable.

<p>The current lack of a break in the fall term, particularly around midterms in late October/early-mid November, causes significant problems for me due to my disability. I have had to miss class, both to write my midterms and afterward to try to manage my exacerbated symptoms, and that in turn causes me to fall behind in the course material. A break of significant duration (more than one or two days) with no classes, midterms, or assignments, would directly improve my ability to manage my course work and my health. As an ECE student, I am concerned that condensing the 2nd year fall workload even more than it already is would make those courses too difficult. In terms of course work, I think that a break close to midterms would help more than a break in mid-October. But I still think that a full-week break in November would have the most significant benefit to my course work and health. It would give me time to both rest and study, helping my disability symptoms and catching up on my courses.</p>
<p>The different treatment between arts and sci and engineering makes us hard to concentrate in class while they are having the Fall break.</p>
<p>The end of November &amp; early December is always the busiest due to multiple labs due and exams. In the past, I have had to skip that last few days of classes just to finish all assignments and have time for studying before exams. Therefore, I believe additional study days prior to exams would be beneficial for most students.</p>
<p>The engsci schedule sucks.</p>
<p>The extra time off is valuable, but the biggest thing is timing. Early November is then things feel very crushing, especially given that midterms have started and there are truly still more to come. Extra study days at the start of exams probably helps with learning, but wouldn't change my well-being during the semester and may just make me more likely to accept bad grades with plans to "fix it on the exam".</p>
<p>The fact that engineers don't get a fall reading week blows my mind. Seems like a simple solution to give us one.</p>
<p>The fall reading week should be provided to students in engineering as it let's students re visit their contents that they are stuck with and also take a break from classes.</p>
<p>The full week breaks I feel will not help much, as yes there is time to do work but in order to get oriented with the university environment, especially for the second semester of first year when deadlines are much closer together and in a larger quantity, having these prolonged breaks does not help mentally prepare for the intensity of the upcoming semester. Adding two days to already existing breaks seems to be the best way to incorporate additional rest while still maintaining that needed environment to be productive in.</p>
<p>The full week off would be the most helpful but it should be closer to exams rather than closer to September.</p>
<p>The full-week break might be long and may have trouble to go back to study mode after the break.</p>
<p>The full-week break might be long and may have trouble to go back to study mode after the break.</p>
<p>The idea of having extra days to study for exams is a really good idea. During the semester having a Fall Reading Week will help catch up with everything and relax during the peak time. This time can be used for studying for midterms.</p>
<p>The less time I am in school the more time I have to prepare for school. Commuting to campus takes a lot out of my day this would allow me to study with out feeling like I'm missing anything in lecture.</p>
<p>The more break days the better. Sometimes the workload gets overwhelming, and we lose weekends to catch up on work missed during the week. There is so many hours of class to compensate with studying outside class.</p>
<p>The more days off in the middle of the term, after midterms, the better. If there are more days added in October, then we'll come back, go through a bunch of midterms and then right into exams. So the break is essentially too early. If it's in the first week of November like the Arts and Science students, we get through midterms, have a break to reset, then come back for exams. That is why I would really like to see a full week break the first week of November.</p>
<p>The more rest, the better. Two days is insignificant in reality (they rank very similarly), while a week at exhausting times such as November are very very valuable.</p>
<p>The system works because of its structure. One reading week in the second semester. Everything would be rushed in the first semester because F!rosh takes up one week in any case and we take that week off as well (basically)</p>
<p>The time off is most beneficial when it is right before midterms or exams. We already have some weeks with classes but without assignments, and it tires us out after when we go home to study.</p>
<p>The two perspectives are intertwined, therefore I gave the same response.</p>

The workload gets very overwhelming at the start of November, a break would be nice to catch up
There are some things I believe to be equally weighted in terms of my wellbeing and learning experience, but I was forced to rank them in this scheme. The closer I get to ranking top and bottom choices, the more accurate my ranking is
There is a reason that Arts and Science has their reading week in the first week of November. It is a perfect time to have a break. Two months of school have been completed, so it is an excellent time to rest and relax for a short while, before beginning the final push before final exams. Students have time to rest and relax, improving their mental health, while also refreshing them before taking the end of their courses, which often times contain the most difficult material. I think as it stands right now, the current system of no break is unacceptable, and as such I have rated it the lowest. Expecting students to work non-stop for 4 months with only a 1 day break for the whole time is detrimental to their mental health, and negatively impacts their performance, since they have no time to stop and catch their breath. Any form of extended break is preferable to nothing at all.
There obviously needs to be a change made here, doing nothing would be a bad look. An assessment free week is simply unenforceable, with some Professors still being able to get away with annoying quizzes and lengthy labs during that week still. It also doesn't alleviate all of my 9am classes which drain me the most, and doesn't let me catch up on sleep. The two day breaks to study for exams/finish projects are simply not beneficial for everyone, my first exam was approximately a week after classes ended for example, and that would not have helped me in the slightest. While having a break during Thanksgiving is better than nothing, it still feels a bit too early to have a break, as not that many midterms would have happened yet, and the beginning of November would be better, as that is around when I personally started burning out last semester. Lastly, a full week is completely superior to just two days, I used the single day we got for Thanksgiving to sleep in and rest a bit but it did nothing to help me catch up overall compared to the Spring Reading Week the year prior.
Things aren't usually super crazy around thanksgiving long weekend so a break around that time wouldn't be that beneficial.
This half-ass "two day break," "week without assessments" is total BS.
This is a bad google form, you should have drag and drop for options, so it's easire to understand.
This way the schedule will not be too tight and all the assessments will not be squeezed together. Also because there's not enough study days before the final exam and sometimes the first final exam is scheduled to be two days after the last day of class, I can get easily stressed.
This will be best for mental wellness.
Time becomes more valuable the closer to exams you are, that was the basis for most of my choices. Days off would provide time to organize and prepare myself. I am also not sure why there are two sections with the same questions but I was consistent between both.
To prevent burn out. If artscis get it so should we
UofT never cares anyways
We as human need to have breaks from time to time especially during high workload period.
We deserve a reading week.
We don't need a break, these problems you are diagnosing don't disappear during the winter semester when we do have a week off. It's something else and you are just chasing this avenue to look good
We don't need any more break. We pay so much tuition to learn, not to be on break!!
We have way too much in second year
We need a fall reading week to help prepare right around midterm time since that's also when we usually have a lot of assignments which isn't necessarily the case around exam season.
we need a reading week
We need a reading week like everyone else. We are in the most stressful and difficult program in the school and we are the ones who don't get a break. For the sake of everyone's mental health we need a fall reading week.
We need break
We need breaks, its too mentally stressful

We need more breaks in the fall season, it's four consecutive months of an inhumane workload. We are human beings and not machines and I hope the faculty actually does something substantial to help us, we don't need more suicide barriers and half-attempts at helping us, treat us like human beings. I didn't come to this school to be in a constant state of depression, and I don't want to leave this school hating engineering because of what this school put me through.
We need time off it's crazy
We really need a break in the first semester.
We really need a full week break
We really need a reading week for us to catch up in busy term.
We really need some sort of a break during the fall.
we really need the break to adjust and maybe finishing projects
Week long breaks just give me a reason not to pay attention in class and then cram everything in during that week. I also don't want class material to be rushed due to the break. An extra 2-day break would be optimal for project completion, while not causing me to lose focus.
What's beneficial for my well being is pretty much the same as what's best for my learning experience, as the more stressed I am about school the worse my mental health gets.
when there are days where no midterms occur, people are just as stressed to do assignments anyways
While full week long breaks are nice, they force the week before and after to be overloaded with work. Extra time around Thanksgiving would be useful, but extra time to study before exams would absolutely be the best. This would drastically reduce the chance we are being tested on something we learned the day before.
Why don't we have a reading week in the first place? Every other Canadian university does. Maybe there's a reason? More time to study, catch-up, and take a break without classes will be beneficial. "Assessment Free Week" is literally useless. Give us an actual reading week. Please.
With a full plate of family, financial, and possible extra-curricular commitments alongside whatever academic goals/stresses that a student may have, I feel like once you fall behind (normally due to reasons out of your control), there's a very large possibility that you stay behind for the entirety of the semester.
Without addressing the mental health issues here, people are always going to struggle much more than they have to. Mental health directly affects academic performance.
Work load for engineering is high. More break time would provide engineering student a more relax learning environment.
You should have a week break at least to feel properly recharged (two days will just leave you to do lots of assignments, won't really feel like a break). in this way, even a week with no assignments will feel better because you won't have to worry about anything outside of class (in regards to school) for the week

*Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?*

- do not have 2 day break for assignments - too many group things will be a procrastination pressure cooker. week off is nice - especially before exams - thanksgiving would be a great time to rest. give much needed rest.
"No assessment" weeks don't work. Like at all. All it does it put more work and stress on the students either the week before or the week after your "no assessment" week. So basically you get no break.
(Only uni without a fall reading break for engineering students is UOFT)
^
^ Next time make the order of the rows the same for both questions to be filled in easier, the answers are correlated
^these questions were hard to answer in the way that they were formatted. I would have preferred a drop down menu to see my answers better. I think your data is going to be slightly tainted due to difficulty in answering
A better solution for the problem of workload and stress in the EngSci program at least would be an overhaul of the curriculum.
A break and time to recover are necessary for good mental health.

A break in the fall without any classes, assignments, or midterms is desperately needed. Every single student I spoke to in the fall was unhappy with the fact that we didn't have a break. I think this is a critical step to making the faculty more welcoming to its students, particularly those with disabilities.
A full break is needed for my mental health. In my opinion U of T is cruel for not giving the engineering department a week off!
A full semester with one day off is too stressful
A full week break is by far the most helpful thing to my learning and my mental health. If cramming course content is a concern, even starting a week earlier in august would be fine.
A full week break just before finals would be most beneficial to relieving exam stresses and allowing for sufficient study time.
A full week break should be mandatory to improve students' overall mental health at school.
A week break helps me find peace
A week of destressing and/or catching up would give people a well-needed mental health break! Currently, the fall semester feels a lot heavier than the winter semester. I'm not sure if there's a correlation between that fact and reading week, but I know a fall reading week would really boost morale!
A week off is very helpful
A week off may sound like a good idea but for me personally, I find I lose my rhythm in the week off of February and end up cramming before the exam anyway so its really not beneficial for me.
Accreditation seems to require a minimum level of in class time, which would extend start or end dates.
Add a reading week in fall term
Additional breaks will push the semester either into august (bad), or result in exam period ending on the 22nd (bad)
additional one day or two to get back on pace is beneficial enough, I personally don't believe a completed week off is more beneficial, it may only make the time less efficient (only from my personal experience)
after 4 years in this program, ever single term-1 produces burn-out by winter break, and students overall struggle to get through second term a lot more. Introducing REAL break days in first term is both beneficial during the semester and for long-term wellbeing.
All faculty members and course instructors must be involved so that they don't cram extra assignments in at this time(giving us extra due dates immediately after the break). Also, many courses to fast as it is, and so professors need to be involved so that the course material is reduced.
All four years of my undergraduate career I have consistently performed worse in the fall semester in terms of GPA. I attribute this to the lack of fall reading week. The semester always seems so rushed and stressful as compared with the winter.
Another thing that would be beneficial would be having midterms, exams and assignments back in a more timely manner. It is stressful for example to spend the entire winter break concerned about exam and final marks.
Around exam time, classes are usually done in any case.
ArtSci starts exams earlier than engineering. As a result, engineering students who are taking ArtSci courses may have to complete an exam while still going to classes & finishing projects. It is a severe disadvantage to those students.
As a third year PEY student, I really hope we could have the Fall term break at 2020 Fall term.
As an engineering student, i really need a week breakperiod to relax and adjust myself due to the heavy work load
As the professors might have to restructure the lectures to fit more information, there should also be even more help sessions too such that students can receive help.
Assessment free week was a decent solution, but is it perhaps possible to combine it with a short two additional two day break and still work effectively without drastically increasing the overall workload?
Assignment free breaks are never assignment or evaluation free. I don't think a whole week would be beneficial because profs will probably just assign work over the break to compensate. Self study is not fun.
Break please.

Break week during American Thanksgiving
break!!!! YES!!!! please, engineering is super tiring. I, as well as MOST of my friends weren't able to enjoy our christmas breaks in 1st-3rd year because of how tired we were from the fall semester, and therefore we already have a poor start to the winter semester. A fall break will help in many ways that may not seem initially obvious, and this is just one of them! Great that faculty is actually considering this and finally taking action into its possible implementation.
Breaks are always encouraged when studying as it doesn't overstimulate the brain, as one can only do so much within a certain time frame. I believe the same goes for a semester where a one week break is deserving for students, especially in the gruelling program of engineering. Hope this is taken into serious consideration as many students would benefit from it mentally, physically and emotionally!
Breaks are very important!
Breaks mid-semester are more preferable since it eases workload.
Brilliant idea to have a fall reading week, only 20 years too late.
Can this be effective on Fall 2020
Can we please have less assignments and tests? Thanks.
Coming from a student who is registered with accessibility services because of mental health reasons, I think this fall reading is very much needed for the sake of all students well being.
Continue to be happy and look after my wellbeing, it will allow me to also do my skule soccer and extracurricular societies, and to see my friends who aren't in engineering
Days off are always welcomed
Doing this is a no brainer. I don't understand why the most difficult programs in most universities do not have a break like every other program. If it had to do with the amount of information either reevaluate what is taught or be better at time management
Don't give people breaks if you're gonna abuse them by loading midterms and assignment before and after . If you wanna give a break don't give the illusion of one
Don't give us a break please, I like things the way they are. Engineers don't do readings so we don't need a reading week. I'd rather not have any lecture material crammed in, and I can't start a week early due to summer work. Please don't make me quit my summer job just to start a week earlier.
Don't keep the schedule the same and rely on the excuse of fulfilling required time for accreditation. Start a week early or something.
don't shorten the winter break! we'd rather start the term earlier
During the winter semesters professors use reading week as an excuse to assign unreasonable amounts of work. Because midterms tend to cluster around reading week already it becomes more of a stressful week to cram study instead of a chance to catch up or recover from the semester
Engineering is hard, and having to go through November with no tires on your wheels and metal scraping across the asphalt is... harder.
Engineering puts too many exams early in the period when people are finishing projects
Engineers need a reading week in fall just like the arts and science students
Every other student at U of T gets a fall reading week and we are in one of the most difficult programs at U of T and need a mental break in the fall just like everyone else.

Everyone (and I mean EVERYONE) around me (at residence and university) only talks about work. Be it another midterm coming up or another assignment due, work is all people have to talk about. There is no time to balance yourself (especially in engineering). Days are often from 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. (my friends have classes till 8 or 9 p.m. due to electives) and we are forced to get back and study to complete said assignments or prepare for a midterm. RIDICULOUS... It is no surprise then that a mental health of most students is abysmally low. Nobody speaks up because the university doesn't care about our suggestions, mental health and overall well-being. My friends are going back home in the reading week in FEB and said it'll be a task for them to come back here cause life is pathetic.

ANY SORT OF BREAK WOULD BE APPRECIATED. REDUCE THE PORTION AND DIFFICULTY OF CLASSES IF THEY AREN'T PERMITTING A BREAK!

Extending the fall reading week already offered to Arts and Science students to engineering students would be most beneficial. The next best option is a two day break before exams begin for finishing up course work (projects, assignments, etc.)

Fall break would give us time to catch up with highschool friends during their reading weeks

Few days off are better than a full week off to ensure that courses don't decide to pile everything on students once coming back from the break - usually what happens during the winter term

For me, full weeks are more helpful than two days, as I would have more time to take a deep breath and reflect on the coursework and beyond.

Getting student feedback for when is great and important. The exam schedules should be released much more in advance. It's frustrating to have to book flights home with less time and I know other universities release their schedules further in advance.

Give us a reading break like everyone else!

Give us a real reading week like literally everyone else in the country.

Glad that the faculty is considering a break for students, but they must ensure that they do not have an unduly amount of work during the rest of the semester as a result.

Go mental health!

have no projects or assignments due within a week of finals

Have the different profs actually talk to each other to set test dates

Having a break right before exams would be great

Having a reading week during the fall semester is common in most universities in Canada, including UofT in the faculty of arts and science.

Having a week without assignments etc sounds good in theory, but I think it will only serve to put people further behind in their studies. Without deliverables, people slack off. And if the work keeps on coming during this time, it's just going to make matters worse. Plus, this probably means that work will just get piled up more before and after this week

Having a week-long break that coincides with the Fall reading week provides further benefits than academic - it's an opportunity to reconnect with friends and family outside of the UofT faculty of engineering. A full week provides students with a chance to travel home to visit friends and family. Additionally, it allows students to connect with their friends that go to other universities who have reading week at the same time; a very rare opportunity for those whose schedules are constantly busy with their respective classes. From the perspective of a student, it feels incredibly isolating when all of your friends from other universities and faculties are on their break, while you continue to go to class, write exams, etc. Deciding whether or not a break should be introduced in the fall should not be based purely on academic performance, but take into consideration other factors such as these to provide students with a better experience.

HUMANITY PLEASE

I agree with having shorter (more frequent breaks) as they allow me to stay focused on school and catch up while also getting more sleep

I always procrastinate during reading week and get really stressed toward the end. Can we just scrap February reading week too? Also please shorten your survey and make the format more easily understood.

I am not opposed to assigned readings or professors assigning parts of the course for us to learn on our own. I am also not opposed to assignments being due during the break. These options could help reduce the professors' stress from having to cram more material into lectures due to the reduced time frame.
I believe having any additional break would be extremely beneficial to the mental health of all students.
I can really only speak to the civil eng curriculum, but I know that our classes are jam-packed with content and taking mandated days off could very well not be an option. But mental health really needs to be considered for incoming students in this discipline!
I completely burnt out around the beginning of November last year due to the constant intense work I needed to put in for my program, and still have not recovered since, well into the second semester, and I am not alone in ECE second year saying this. There absolutely needs to be something done, and this would go a long way for alleviating some of my more difficult years for programs like mine, without much change needed to be done to the course structures. This is more relevant than ever next year, when our winter break seems to be a bit shorter, and exams are squeezed together even more, which seem like big detriments for student mental health.
I do think that a break helps relieve the stress of the semester. It gives you a very crucial chance to reset. For example, last semester I fell slightly behind in my courses due to design teams, then I had interviews, all the while there was zero break to catch up until exams. A week would have given me the space to not go overboard.
I don't mind extending the time of school by a day or two to have them as breaks in the middle of the semester
I don't see having more study material fit into a smaller timeframe as a problem, as long as professors and teaching assistants are still available to answer questions during these breaks.
I don't understand why reading week works in second semester and not first.
i feel like a thanksgiving break would be best bc we'd miss one day less of school (similar to how this year's reading week is technically 4 days long bc of family day) and then we'd have to rush less? just my two cents though
I feel like allocating 2 days along with a long weekend once or twice in a year is the best (and would work best for me personally) because it will be balanced to relieve load and shorter weeks are always more stress relieving than full weeks off that can sort of put me in a rut sometimes where I potentially might go back to classes lazy and the week might be unproductive.
I feel like having a break fo the first semester would really help with my mental health because I need a break to relax a bit, catch up on school work and have enough time to travel to visit my family. Also, seeing other students enjoy their reading week, while I still have to go to class, makes me feel horrible and it feels unfair since we get in a very difficult discipline. Therefore, I feel like we deserve a break as much as the other students outside of engineering.
I feel like it would be overall very beneficial to peoples' well being if the break was during the semester instead of after, because it's usually during the semester and midterm season that we burn out more easily because we have to juggle assignments with new material being taught in class, and we can't fall behind in either
I feel that a break scheduled at the same time as that of the other faculties at the university would be most beneficial. Most event (like sport competitions) are scheduled around this period and having the same schedule would help a lot with schedule management.
I feel that especially around November, I (along with many classmates) begin to burn out. Having this time to rebuild our mental health while having the chance to catch up on school work would not only improve our quality of life, but also the quality of our learning, which should be the central purpose of University.
I felt like the no assessment week was very unhelpful. Personally, I felt that admin just put a no assessment week to make themselves feel better without thinking about the well being of students.

<p>I find the Fall semester particularly stressful and draining without any break. It is a constant workload without any low-workload periods. I very much prefer the winter semester because we get a week in the middle to reset and take a break, my mental health is so much better during this semester and I find everything much more manageable. In my opinion the Fall semester without any breaks is almost mentally impossible and extremely degrading to my mental health, and I really hope something will be done to help the well-being of the students. That's why I feel a full week break in November like the Arts and Science students get will be so beneficial. It would be a nice break after midterms to mentally reset before exams. I do think having a full week in October is too early, it's before midterms. So you would come back and have to midterms and exams!</p>
<p>I hope that this is a gift instead of a trade-off (a reading week vs start date pushed forward/end date pushed backward)</p>
<p>I hope this changes before 2020 Fall semester so I can actually make use of it before I graduate :)</p>
<p>I personally think the best form of break would be similar to that of the reading week in March since as an engineering we have multiple midterms for each course. Because of this, I believe one week after in between the 2 sets of midterms would be very beneficial as it will allow students to catch up with work that was left behind because of midterm studying.</p>
<p>I prefer the choice of accelerated course, where you do 1 final project and exam to pass the course.</p>
<p>I really appreciate people who brought this up. We do need a fall break. Thank you.</p>
<p>I really don't want to start school earlier. I'm fine with how things are now.</p>
<p>I really think we should be getting a week's break in first semester. It's mentally and physically exhausting to work for 4 months straight.</p>
<p>I strongly believe that having some form of break during the first semester would be extremely beneficial to students. Most other Canadian Engineering programs have a fall reading week alongside a winter reading week, while U of T does not. Whether such a break would be an extension of the Thanksgiving weekend, or an entirely new break in early November/late October (at a time period approximately equivalent to the winter term reading week), it would give students the much-needed chance to take a breather, study, and catch up in their coursework.</p>
<p>I strongly feel that during these breaks, the workload should be significantly lowered. During thanksgiving, we typically just got more homework, which diminished my ability to relax, and made the break just feel like more time to do extra assignments.</p>
<p>I think a big stress contributor in October/November is the fact that we have multiple midterms within one week, sometimes on consecutive days. Along with other assignments due in those weeks, it becomes difficult to balance study time and time spent on assignments. Additionally, going from intensive study of one subject straight to another one right after a midterm is mentally draining and not conducive to good studying. Better course coordination on planning midterm dates needs to take effect so that in the best case scenario, in October/November there is only one midterm per week or at the very least, have one/two days in between different midterms.</p>
<p>I think a break is needed.</p>
<p>I think a fall break would be extremely beneficial to engineering students. Mental health in all students this time of year is very delicate and although many of us have a good support system to get us through this challenging time of the year, we are all struggling mentally and physically. We are exhausted, not eating or sleeping properly and extremely stressed out whether it is visible in every student or not. We are all overwhelmed and this is one step that would allow us some time to get things back under control and regroup to tackle the rest of the semester.</p>

<p>I think another thing that is worth noting is if this is done to improve the students well being, the best possible thing to do is give them a week off where they don't need to worry about school.</p>
<p>I would also encourage to not have due dates/midterms the 1st day back after a break. E.g our February break I noticed most profs put midterms on the Monday or Tuesday back now if this break is supposed to improve the students well being I think that is counter productive as now they will spend their week stressing and studying. But if it is just to be used as study time e.g the few days off before finals, then that's fine.</p>
<p>But trying to improve students well being (which I do believe U of T needs) I believe that is largely counterproductive to the break</p>
<p>I think any of the above options is better than no change, when no breaks are introduced it makes students feel like they need to skip classes in order to study for the next test, which may make them fall behind requiring them to skip even more classes to catch up.</p>
<p>I think having a break is very important, as last fall term, there were several weeks close to the middle/end of the term that got very stressful. So, more time for work as well as time to rest would be really beneficial. A full week is ideal.</p>
<p>I think it makes for better engineers to process what they are learning, rather than cram as much as possible to do well on tests. We need to have time to live our lives and study, as everyday is stressful.</p>
<p>I think reading week is a good way for students to catch up on anything they may have missed, rather than have it snowball into missing a whole bunch of content. It also gives us time to work on projects and to actually absorb and understand content.</p>
<p>I think sort breaks (extra day or two here and there during busy periods) is the sweet spot that gives us a breather while not cutting class time</p>
<p>I think that a full week break would be nice but even just a few extra days off around thanksgiving would be most appreciated. I know a lot of people who miss class around then as they are home visiting family and need an extra day or two for travel.</p>
<p>I think that a mid-term break is more beneficial than a pre-exam break</p>
<p>I think that the status quo is definitely not enough.</p>
<p>I think that this is an important thing to implement because right now after thanksgiving there is very little time to break until winter holidays and it's a lot.</p>
<p>I think that we should have the same reading week as the other uoft students because it gives a break from all the work and it's good for our mental health to be able to de stress.</p>
<p>I think the best option is to give us a couple of days before exams because that is a hectic time especially when trying to study for exams and still complete course work and final projects.</p>
<p>I think the survey is poorly laid out. Even though we are asked to select each column response once, the option to do it more than once is available which makes it confusing.</p>
<p>I wish I can know my exam schedule earlier, since I want to go back to my home country during the break but sometimes unable to do so since by the time the exam schedule is out and I know how long my winter break is, the tickets are too expensive. Sometimes the winter break is so short that I cannot go back to my home country, and I've been experiencing home sickness and it is stressful.</p>
<p>I wish I could spend time with my family over Thanksgiving and not have to think about school constantly</p>
<p>I would be perfectly happy to extend the semester by another week if it meant a week of break in the middle of the school year. I need that time to rest and recharge, otherwise both my academic performance and my mental health suffer.</p>
<p>I would prefer there was an option for a week break between mid-end November. That would be my first choice.</p>
<p>I would rather have longer periods of study with more breaks than whatever this is.</p>
<p>I would rather start school a week early in the summer if it allows us to have a fall break rather than having no break at all.</p>
<p>I would really appreciate ANY kind of break. Fall semester is really hard!</p>

I would really appreciate it if we could get a week long break in fall semester. I am grateful you guys are looking into this.
I wouldn't mind coming back to school earlier than A&S students to make the reading week or similar break possible
I'm glad the board is taking steps such as organising this survey to improve the experience of students.
Ideally, a break should be in November, it would allow me to catch up on work that I have fallen behind in, October is too early and we haven't covered enough material or have enough assignments/midterms to make it worth while and by the start of exams a break doesn't really provide any additional benefit.
If it were the same time as the arts and science reading week it would be great, to allow people to make friends outside engineering and have time to see them (during school were too busy).
If there is going to be a break schedule change, please be available next Fall semester
If we are given the fall break, will teachers still be required to teach the amount of course material? Bc then it leads to issue of overloading students upon our return from break.
If we get a Fall break I will be very happy and not cry everyday during the Fall. Only reason I'm not crying right now is because I know that reading week is coming (sorta joking, but sorta serious).
If you are going to give a break at the expense of compressing everything else into the other weeks, consider maybe extending the semester a week before (one less week of summer), because otherwise the stress is the same.
If you're going to have an assessment free week, don't allow courses to have deadlines on that week like you did in my first year. That is just misleading, especially for first year students who don't expect to be misled like that.
In my opinion, one of the major reasons for such a break to exist is to act as a buffer for homework and learning. Engineering is a very demanding program, and one of the major challenges is once you start getting behind, you can only focus on the next major assignment to ensure it is completed on time. However, once that assignment is completed, the next one is waiting, and all that must now be focused on completely. This is a very challenging way to learn, and is much less effective than balancing one's workload and completing several projects in tandem. Providing a significant fall break would allow students who have fallen into this narrowly focused work state to complete their pressing projects and return to a balanced learning style. This is possible in the second semester because of Reading Week, but not in the first semester. Granted, there is the possibility that some students will not take advantage of this opportunity and suffer because they will still be behind upon returning from the break. But the current system does not provide this chance to students who ARE willing to put in the effort and improve their learning situation.
Instead of giving day's off why not try making a manageable curriculum that doesn't have 35 hours of class and 10+ midterms for the first two years
Instead of having a two day break before exams, there could be a rule where all assignments must be handed in a couple days before exams start. This will mean students are only responsible for attending class and studying for exams, effectively giving them a couple extra days to study.
instructors may still try to get around this "break" by requiring work over the break or rushing courses
Is two, two-day breaks an option instead of one full week? (around remembrance day and thanksgiving perhaps)
It is beneficial for our mental health
It is foolish to consider having breaks to encourage student's well-being if, as a result, professors have to stack midterms the weeks before and after the break. This semester, the week before reading week we have two midterms. The week after reading week, we then have three midterms. There has to be a better way. I am more stressed for reading week than I think I was in the winter semester, when I had no break. This is why I think the extra two days in early November might be the perfect medium; professors can still schedule evenly-spaced exams, and we get a nice pause/long-weekend.
It is more relevant to have the break in November than October since the workload is not that bad in October but really piles up in November.

It was kind of difficult to differentiate between what is best for learning and best for well being because they are so closely linked. If my well being goes down, so does my learning.
It would be good to not assign any work during the rest days. Also, the current system of "assessment-free" week felt good at the start and during that week, but the subsequent weeks we had to catch up on assignments that were shifted from that week. It would be important to design workload/schedule so that we don't have to try so hard to catch up later.
Its completely unfair that we as engineers don't get a reading week.
Just follow the campus's reading week would be fine
Just having a break can cause more stress by just shifting assignments to be due after the break, please consider this.
Just make our life happier and easier
Just treat us like humans. I don't understand why it hasn't already happened. If we need a certain amount of hours to be accredited then just start the school year slightly earlier to accommodate a mid-semester break in the fall, stop making us genuinely suffer.
Lack of fall break leads to burn out among students and exhaustion as the semester drags onward. A break would allow students to recharge, catch up or get ahead in classes, put focus towards other personal projects, and would allow people from outside of the GTA more time to go home and visit family/friends, reducing isolation.
Learning and overall well-being shouldn't be separate
Life is hard especially engineers
Longer thanksgiving break!!!
Mad workload
Make F!week a full week before Labour Day
Make the sessional schedule consistent with Arts & Science and extend the sessional dates (class days) by 3-4 days to make up for loss time like it is in the Winter term. We clearly don't have as many exams as a faculty so 10-11 days should be enough for finals?
Mans need a break
Materials can be covered at a faster pace, but the instructor must do more practice excercise with us / allow more time for practicing questions.
Maybe adjust the project due dates to be due around reading week so we have time to work on them instead of working our heads off for projects before finals.
Mental health issues related to course load actually doesn't come from assignment load. It occurs because instructors in UofT are bad at their jobs; ergo, students spend a lot of time understanding the concepts by themselves while required to compete those assignments. Profs in engineering have to be replaced ASAP.
More break pls
More days of break
Most of the other programs have reading weeks in the fall which emotionally affects the well-being of engineering students.
My ability and willingness to learn comes with having good well-being.
My key criteria is "can I go home for this break?"
My overall well-being is the same as my learning experience.
N/A

no
No comment
None
None
None
Nope that's all! Thank you for doing this :)
not everyone celebrates thanksgiving and maybe it wouldn't be an equal amount of break for people actually celebrating it compared to those who don't.
One week break minimum makes sense because we have it in the spring term.
Other facilities, in which students have lighter course loads than engineering students, have a fall reading week. Engineering students need it more than most for the sake of our health, yet we do not have an extended fall break.
Our engineering course load is arguably the heaviest of all the disciplines. I believe that the system is designed in a way that grinds people down until they are just hollow shells of themselves. I find myself losing my memory by the end of the semester since there is no time for rest. We need this.
Overall, I feel that the Fall Term should be treated no differently than the Spring Term, as most students take the same number of classes in both terms and cover virtually the same raw volume of content. As such, I think that a week off from school, with or without the inclusion of a holiday inside it is the best course of action. Students can relax, destress, and reset knowing that they don't have to worry about deadlines taking place that week. However, having assessments prior to or after reading week is still fair game, and is within the student's responsibility to ensure that they meet them.
People are killing them selves time to make changes
Please add a reading week
Please arrange the assignment due and exams well. It really drives everyone crazy.
Please give the exact fall break time same as art and science students.
Please give us a break
Please give us a break
please give us a fall reading week
please give us a fall reading week! PLEASE
Please give us a fall study break!!!!!!!! AND not putting every midterm/assignment during that period of time
Please give us reading week
PLEASE implement a Fall break - it would truly help so many people who struggle to keep up with the UofT Engineering workload
From experience, I can say that had I had a break during the Fall semesters of 1st and 2nd year EngSci, I would have had a much more positive experience.
Please implement this as soon as possible. It's blessed. Also a week would be great so I can job hunt properly.
Please just give us a full week, we really need it.

<p>Please just give us something, having no break (especially not even having a "no assessment week" was brutal for me in first semester</p> <p>I also believe that to help with the workload starting the semester a week earlier for engineering students could be useful. I think few students would have a problem with that considering the workload we have to deal with during the semester.</p>
<p>Please keep us updated on what the drawbacks will be, if the fall break idea goes forward; I'd particularly like to avoid assignment pileups, where everything is due in the span of 1-3 days directly before the break. Also, if adding two days of break into the semester means that class schedules are less flexible, or we get fewer days of winter break, I would not support that.</p>
<p>Thanks! (:</p>
<p>Please let me go home and see my family.</p>
<p>Please make the reading week!!!</p>
<p>Please pay attention to the students' overall well-being.</p>
<p>Please we need a break even just for an additional few days in the middle of the semester. I'd even rather start the semester a few days earlier just to have a break in the middle.</p>
<p>Please, a week break would help a lot with the stress. This is the reason why I feel like the winter semester is easier even though the work load is much more hectic. A week would really help me get everything organized and get some time to focus on my mental health.</p>
<p>Please, make the decision valid ASAP—apply it to 2020 fall term immediately if you don't want more engineering students to jump off bahen or Robarts</p>
<p>Reading week break in November HIGHLY recommended. Wouldn't mind one less week of summer break. Please consider extending winter break to 3 weeks.</p>
<p>Reading week or at least a few days off during the fall semester is very helpful for students to catch up on classes and rejuvenate for later half of the course and final exams.</p>
<p>Reading week please.</p>
<p>Rules must be set to prevent professors from putting project and assignment deadlines during or shortly after the break, because students would still have stuff to stress about and trips can't be booked over the break.</p>
<p>Rules should be put in place around the number of midterms/major assignments that can be due the week before/after/during the break, whenever it is. A single crushing week can easily be enough to throw off an entire semester.</p> <p>It would be difficult to get the required 600 hours of experience in one summer term if the summer is 1 week shorter. The change to break schedules should not be placed entirely at one end or on one break. One day at the start/end of summer, same at the winter break, and one day somewhere else unless thanksgiving week is the option chosen.</p> <p>Also please do not try to force profs to cram their curriculums any shorter... they are already short enough at 12 to 13 weeks. In fact, shortening exam periods via more exam time flexibility and giving an extra week of lectures dedicated to review would be even more beneficial than a week off, but that's just a thought.</p>
<p>School is heavy and having breaks can help tremendously</p>
<p>Second year definitely needs this please</p>
<p>Second year is hard for ECE and could use additional accommodation.</p>
<p>Shorter days (Classes start later and/or end earlier) would give students more time in the day to do work, relive a lot of stress, and improve health (such as sleeping habits). Additionally, by the last lecture of the day, most students are too exhausted to gain anything meaningful from the lecture.</p>

Since coming to UofT (and specifically since transferring from Track One to Civil Engineering, and no longer taking more abstract, thinking focused courses such as Linear Algebra or Calculus II) I lost all my desire to learn. I feel that I have been trained that my understanding of course material and my development as a critical thinking human and future engineer has come second to an academic culture that values volume of work rather than quality of work, and through it's assignments and testing practices actively rewards students based off ability to regurgitate answers to past finals and do so quickly. Professors have admirably tried to fix this by writing questions which require enhanced problem solving and critical thinking - however this occasionally this has led to sub-par course averages and complaints of unfair difficulty from students. I would argue that this is because, overall, the education climate and grading structures do not give students leeway for failure and to learn from their mistakes. Commonly, for example, midterms with only 2-3 questions will have at least one, and often two questions where the challenge or unorthodoxy present in the question that allows students to exercise both their knowledge of the subject and their critical thinking abilities occurs in the initial premise of the question. To clarify, by this I mean that, if students are unable to grasp the "trick" inherent in the beginning step of the problem that allows them to approach and answer the question, they will often receive no grades for the question at all - leading to an instant and significant drop in their overall grade for the course. Importantly, the "trick" is often founded on interpreting the wording of a question in a specific way, or assuming that certain assumptions can be made. Where students are not allowed to ask questions, this penalizes students who may misinterpret a question that may be written poorly or ambiguously (as questions occasionally are). Even in the majority of cases, where questions are written thoughtfully, students conferring and discussing results of a midterm after they have been released frequently lament about misunderstanding what a question was asking for. I personally have received midterms back where, upon a professor or TA clarifying one small aspect of the problem, I find myself in position where I would have been able to solve the problem to its completion. One method for addressing this (as well as reducing the general pressure that students face) is the implementation of "best two out of three" midterm grading structures where the best two midterm grades (out of three midterms) are used to calculate a students final grade, or by the delivery of quizzes where only your best 8/10 (for example) of them count, etc. This allows instructors and professors to give more challenging, thought provoking questions where students have room for error. Even better, professors can provide, for example, multiple difficult (and thought-provoking) questions from which students can choose a subset of questions to answer. The brilliance of this pedagogical technique is that it forces students to think about all the questions or problems and practice their problem solving abilities, tests them on their ability to solve novel problems, but does not penalize students greatly simply for not being able to, under time pressure, solve one of the novel problems.

Since we have reading week in Winter Term, I suggest cancel or decrease days of reading week. Because I notice that I need to take two exams in one week (there are two weeks containing 2 exams), and I need to finish Lab and other assignments, which is too stressful

Some courses have a tight schedule, Professors may need to cancel some for a whole week break.

Some kind of break is necessary.

Sometimes I think that having that feeling of too much school work and tests will be good for self growth, as it forces us to fix bad habits with studying and remove procrastination. Students should not be coddled too much. But having a week of break will help that feeling from becoming overwhelming.

Stating the curriculum required time of lectures for engineering would be helpful for people who do not know why they don't have a Fall break when their peers in other faculties do.

Status Quo= bad. Look at how McMaster does it. Earlier welcome/frosh week, classes start at the beginning of our frosh week. They have a full week for welcome week without classes. And they have a reading week. And it's an accredited program.

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Tests and exams gives students a lot of stress. Especially for engineering students, they got too much stress on each term.

<p>The "no assessment" week we are currently using doesn't really help relieve stress. Since the deadlines are merely pushed back which usually means the next week having double the homework.</p>
<p>The assessment free week during first semester was not actually assessment free as all the regular assignments were due the night before the start of the assessment free week, or right at the end completely defeating the purpose of having an assessment free week.</p>
<p>The break should be around the time other universities are having a break as well. Of course, you should know that we will not be solely studying during the break, we need an opportunity to relax and have fun with all of our friends in and outside of uoft. I cant imagine going the next three years like how i've spent my first year, absolutely soul crushing!</p>
<p>The fact that only engineering faculty does not getting a break on fall term is discriminating</p>
<p>The most mentally taxing part of undergraduate engineering is the unending workload caused by a higher number of classes, labs, and applied assignments than many other majors. It is counterintuitive to exclude engineering students from a university-wide fall reading week when we are one of the faculties with the highest rates of student burnout and mental health issues.</p>
<p>The only reason I put a week off for Thanksgiving as my #1 is because I don't know when other schools do reading week. Please sync the weeks together if that is the ultimate decision</p>
<p>The rest of the school gets a break and I noticed how it helps them do better in school and with their mental well being so I believe it would help us being in a more rigorous program with more hours of class to have some time to relax and catch up.</p>
<p>The thing that would be most beneficial to my well-being and learning is to have resources like food and snacks available when workloads are heavy. This way I can focus on my work and make sure I am getting essential nutrition. Usually when I have a lot of work eating enough food can fall low on a student's priorities and it has a negative effect on performance.</p>
<p>The two days off in the middle of the school year will be useless, and having a few extra study days days before exams is not always helpful (most people do not have exams on the first day of exams, and most people plan their coursework in advance to have enough time to study for exams). Please introduce a week-long break and let the students prioritize their time within it</p>
<p>The two designated days for project completion seems like it could be easily abused. It would likely lead to many projects all being due within a week of that break, which would be very stressful and not conducive to learning.</p>
<p>The wholesale education system that this university offers, that profits off of policies and subsystems that are driven by competition and the undermining of undergraduate students mental health by seeing how far they can push students in exchange for monetary reward is disgustingly unethical. Unfortunately, this can be said for the entire higher education industry, but just because The University of Toronto does not behave significantly worse than it's peers does not make its choices, policies, greed, and total apathy to the mental health of its students even remotely acceptable.</p>
<p>It is obvious that the university's recent attempts at change are a reaction to having finally pushed too many students too far in this exact regard, and to see its efforts carried out so half-heartedly and insincerely is horrifying. Introducing a break without reducing course content is a perfect example of the university making changes that have students bear almost all of the weight. Building barriers in Bahen to stop students from committing suicide on campus without any sincere attempt at systemic change sounds like the university saying "this can continue but not in our house." The university should be shining a light on the manufactured averages of courses and the fabricated difficulty caused by forcing students to compete against each other. If a course is curved up due to a failing average in consecutive years then that courses structure, content, difficulty, course load, and prerequisites ought to be reevaluated.</p>
<p>There definitely needs to be a change made, and the status quo shouldn't be stuck to.</p>
<p>There is no reason not to have a fall break just like everyone else (arts and science students, etc.). The course loads can just be reduced by one week to accommodate.</p>

There is no reason these options should be mutually exclusive. Fake breaks (breaks from one but not all aspects of school) like the extra study days, dedicated project days, or week of lecture without assignments) are good at reducing stress, but are not a substitute for a real weeklong break (either in october or november) in which students can go home, visit their family, and completely disconnect from school.

The timing of the weeklong break should be coordinated with faculty of arts and science to ensure that arts and sciences have the break at the same time, otherwise it wouldn't be useful for students to go home and visit their family, which is the whole point.

The worry about reducing instructional time is not a worry in my mind. I wouldn't mind one bit if lectures went 10% or 20% faster if I was able to actually have the mental energy to pay attention, not miss them (in body or in mind) due to other assignments, and so forth. It's not a battle between health and academics; build health first and academics will follow.

There's a lot of pressure on students to gain experience outside of school, so people increasingly have at least one major commitment that isn't class. This is probably a good thing - varied interests are good for our mental health, and students are graduating as more well-rounded people. But given that the CEAB isn't very likely to budge on making graduation requirements less stringent, a break in the middle of the semester is a natural and very welcomed way to improve both student learning and well-being.

This could help the battle with mental health

This fall break is sorely needed

This focus of mental health at the sacrifice of our education is extremely puzzling when i'm paying some of the highest tuition in the country

This is VERY necessary

This should've been done a long time ago. Getting a reading week is so necessary. I felt as a 3rd year mech student, October was extremely hectic and i felt burnt out and really wished we had a reading week because PEY search+ midterms+ quizzes+ interviews+ project deadlines all piled up made it very overwhelming and a week off is extremely necessary.

This would greatly improve the overall wellbeing of students. Giving just this one week can make such a huge difference to a struggling student. Reading week gives you the time to catch up on work, catch up on sleep, and finally be able to take care of your physical and mental wellbeing.

Reading week also provides students with a time to reflect on how they are doing. Racing through each semester gives so little time to realize where you are at mentally. This time will help students evaluate if they need to reach out for help.

Further, being given the time to go home and see family for a week can also make a huge difference for students who are living on their own in the downtown core. Whether this helps with home-sickness, or even just getting some higher quality home cooked food, seeing family can positively impact students' performance and mental health.

Time for midterms, finals. Please arrangement wisely and in a good order. Neither too close nor too separated.

To be completely honest, I rarely use that break to do anything related to school (Winter Reading Week) but it increases my productivity by a whole lot. With such a hectic schedule - many hours of classes combined with multiple projects (especially the weekly lab reports!) and midterms means the stress levels are going through the roof and thus a student's mental health takes a hit. This overall causes worse performance in academics and in general. We need some time to take a break from the craziness.

It also helps with the image - a lot of students complain about the lack of Reading Week in the Fall. It hurts when they compare to other students at the University of Toronto with Reading Week, even though their overall course load is way less intensive. However, nobody notices the extra week of classes at the end of the Winter term, because the Reading Week provided a much needed mid-semester break that refreshes everybody and improves their overall mental and physical health.

I personally found that my second semester was always better than my first semester, even though my second semester often had more difficult or intensive courses. The Winter Reading Week - even though it was not spent studying or working - greatly improved my academic performance when returning.

Also, having an "end" in sight helps people get through the mid-semester glut of work, as they can look forward to a break.

Too many assignments at end of semester prevent from being able to study for exams  
took you long enough to prioritize students mental health

Try not to have evaluations piled up after reading week. That makes it feel very unrelaxing. It's the start of winter reading week right now and I have 3 midterm, 2 labs and a quiz in my first week back. Safe to say I won't have much time to relax this week. Reading weeks are supposed to be a time to recharge and having so many evaluations immediately following does not allow for any recharging.

U of T best

we can just have the same reading week as artsci

We could have a full week study week during thanksgiving week if the fall term started on the Tuesday after labour Day, and ended on the first Friday of December instead of the wednesday

we could use more free time during the learning semester.

We definitely need some kind of break in the fall semester.

We desperately need a fall reading week.

We do really need a break during fall semester for less pressure

We just need a break and we deserve it too

We need more breaks.

We need the last week before exams to be free of projects and assignments

We need the last week before exams to be free of projects and assignments

We one of the only (if not the only) faculty to not provide a reading week in the fall. Arguably we, are one of the faculties that need's it the most, compared to other programs. Frankly, if we are worried about not having enough time to cover material, we should get rid of the useless first week of class introductions (where we just go through the syllabus) and instead jump right into material. I can read a syllabus on my own thanks, it should be posted a few days before the start of terms anyways.

We really need this. Super exhausted and not good for our mental and physical health.

Wellness is more important and integral to academic success! Having a break will reduce the stress and strain of the semester. And in general, if we are going to have a fall reading week (and this should be implemented in the winter reading week as well) assignments should not be due or designed to be completed over the break week!! It should be for "catch up", mental and academic rest and recuperation. Please make sure that this is evident to profs and course coordinators!

What the University of Toronto is doing by opening doors to this possibility is truly taking a step forward in the right direction to help make university life a bit more manageable for university student. I love this idea.

Why are my well-being and learning treated separately? There is nothing that can benefit my learning if it doesn't benefit my well-being as well.
why are we the only people without fall reading week
WHY DID WE NOT HAVE THIS IN THE FIRST PLACE. I understand that material has to be covered. There is only so much that you can expect to cover reasonably. To quote a friend who studied illustration: "even I get a reading week, and I draw. You guys are the ones who actually need it."
Why did you change the order of the options in the second question? Why is it a series of radio buttons and not a "drag to order" form?
Why do students who have less work than us get a break, whereas the students with more work don't? I don't think that is very fair at all. Either everyone gets a break, or no one.
Why don't we have a special schedule for the first couple of weeks of school when there are no labs or practicals? We could have additional lectures in those times to make up for the lectures we would miss during the break days. Right now we have big gaps in our schedule for the first couple of weeks where we usually just don't do anything productive, having class during these times would make sense. I know it would be a lot of trouble booking rooms and scheduling professors, but this would be great in my opinion. Usually the first couple of lectures are review, so clumping them all together into the first 2 weeks would make the review period shorter as well, so we won't spend as much time going over things we already know. Whatever the choice, please give us more break days in the Fall! But also try not to cram the content in lectures, some classes go too fast as is (Calc 3 in ECE).
Will the break make our regular week much longer?
With plant design in fourth year, ANY break during November would have been helpful, but the study break at the end of the semester and the Thanksgiving breaks would have been particularly unhelpful. I don't see any benefit really to an assignment-free week since I had no weeks which would have benefitted from only this change. Not having classes is a MUCH more effective way to have enough time to complete assignments and study for tests.
Wondering if the break will affect the class hour or the tuition fee.
Wondering if the break will affect the class hour or the tuition fee.
Would any of these changes affect when we start or end classes? Additionally, it would be good to point out that courses should aim to crowd weeks with assignments AFTER any breaks we have, not before. We've had several cases where they do that with Reading Week, with a handful of assignments, midterms, and quizzes both before and after Reading Week. :(
Would classes have to start a week earlier in order to accommodate these options? Would exam schedules be more compressed? If so, that would also change the usefulness of such options.
Would definitely help emotionally and academically to have a short break
Would NOT like to start school before Labour Day. This may interfere with work terms, or, if work terms end the week earlier, students still need at least a week to reset and/or enjoy the last bits of summer.
Wouldnt mind starting a week earlier in august to get a reading week during the semester. Definitely would not want to shorten christmas break.
Yes, can you please start the fall break from this year (Fall 2020)? As soon as possible.

# Summary of Engineering Society's Faculty Survey on a Fall Study Break

March 2020

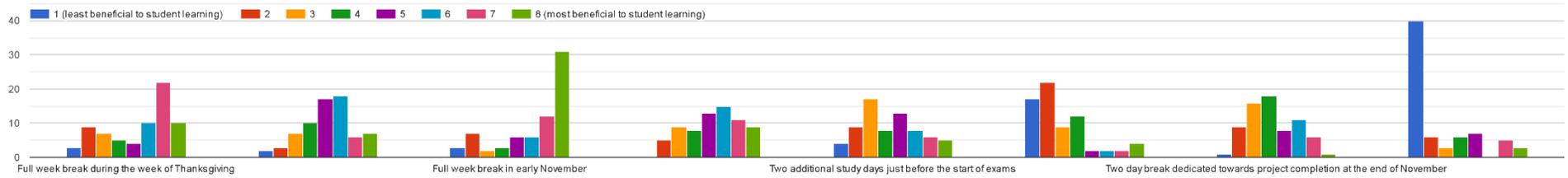
The survey was sent to all faculty members in FASE from February 21, 2020 to March 2, 2020. Seventy responses were received (an approximately 23% response rate). The survey questions are included in **Appendix A** below, and the verbatim comments are included in **Appendix B**.

The chart summarizing these results is shown below:

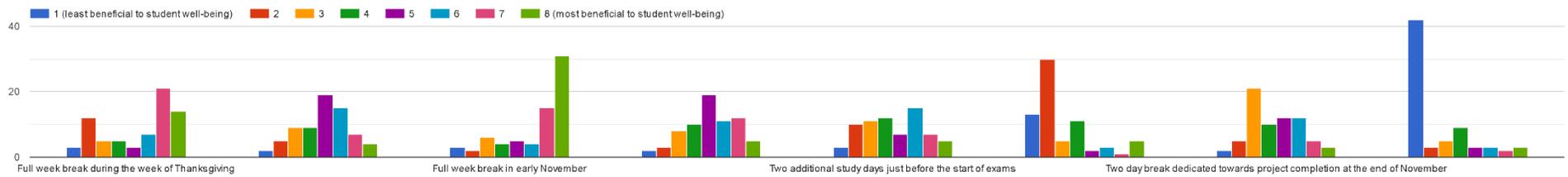
Category	Fall Break Option	Average (out of 8)	Standard Deviation	Percentage who Chose 7 or 8	Percentage who Chose 1 or 2
<b>Impact on Student Learning</b>	Full week break in early November	6.19	2.26	61.4%	14.3%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	5.37	2.21	45.7%	17.1%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	5.33	1.78	28.6%	7.1%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	5.14	1.69	18.6%	7.1%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.29	1.94	15.7%	18.6%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.21	1.60	10.0%	14.3%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	2.91	1.93	8.6%	55.7%
	No changes to the status quo	2.56	2.21	11.4%	65.7%
<b>Impact on Student Well-Being</b>	Full week break in early November	6.33	2.12	65.7%	7.1%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	5.40	2.35	50.0%	21.4%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	5.10	1.71	24.3%	7.1%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	4.87	1.69	15.7%	10.0%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.54	1.95	17.1%	18.6%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.37	1.70	11.4%	10.0%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	2.96	1.96	8.6%	61.4%
	No changes to the status quo	2.43	2.08	7.1%	64.3%

## Appendix 2

Consider the following options regarding a Fall Break and how these might impact your undergraduate students. Please rank these according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall learning experience\*\*** of your students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.



Please rank the following Fall Break options according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall well-being\*\*** of your students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column.



## Appendix A: Survey

### Fall Break Survey

The Undergraduate Curriculum Committee has had discussions on ways to improve student learning and well-being in the Faculty of Applied Science and Engineering.

Through these discussions, a number of suggestions have emerged on introducing a break during the Fall term and the committee would like the input of the student body on how beneficial they feel these measures may be at improving the student learning experience and well-being.

Each of the ideas have various advantages and disadvantages depending on the length and timing of when they take place. Longer breaks give students more time to rest, but also creates the challenge of having to cover more material in a lower number of classes for some courses. Feedback from students at other universities has also shown that relatively shorter breaks help students relax while not losing focus on course content. If the break is held too early in the semester, it may not provide much stress relief for students whereas if the break is held too late in the semester, it may reduce the flexibility associated with how students use the time.

Q1: Please consider the following options regarding a Fall Break. From the perspective of your overall learning experience, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.

	1 (least beneficial to my learning)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my learning)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								
Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q2: From the perspective of your overall well-being, please rank these according to most to least beneficial. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.

	1 (least beneficial to my well-being)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my well-being)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								
Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q3: Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?

Q4: Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?

## Appendix B: Faculty Comments

*Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?*

A full week break is a good idea especially around Nov as it may given a number of students the opportunity to catch-up whereas the additional days before exam time may be a tad too rushed and too late!
A full week break is ideal, the timing of the break would be better in November, but good in October too.
A full week midterm break is a much better option as I have seen students usually travel during the reading week. Two days break will not have much effect on releasing the stress.
A short break early in the term would be particularly helpful to first year students as they try to adjust to university. Two short breaks would be better than one entire week.
A short break is necessary in each semester.
Adding a break in the Fall semester will decrease the number of lecture hours, but the instructors will not reduce the content covered in each course, unless they are specifically mandated to do so. If the Faculty is serious about such a lecture hour reduction, then the Faculty must undergo a mega-review of all Fall courses, and work with the instructors to reduce the course content. If the Faculty instead simply adds days of break without doing the above, the net result will be a worsening of the quality of instruction (same content will be covered in less time), a cramming of course components (labs and tutorials that occur on regular intervals will have to be cancelled, resulting in students missing as much as 10-20% of the course), and more importantly, it will add stress to an already stressed out student population. The devil is in the details, and I really hope the Faculty will not take the disastrous decision to add a break. Think of a course with a tutorial on Monday, a 3-hour lab on Tuesday, and lectures on Monday and Tuesday. Students in that tutorial and practical sections will miss the material and will have to be rescheduled. But reschedule when and where? There is a shortage of classrooms in the Faculty, and the students' timetables are hopelessly dense. There is no way to handle the logistical nightmare that would ensue. If you simply neglect the problem and ask the instructors to figure it out, that would be grossly unfair.
As a professor I feel that a week long break gives students a chance to decompress and refocus.
As Fall semesters are already shorter than premiere US schools, it's tough to fit a 7 day break. Also this option of "no project" for seven days it's absurd, my class has 3-week long HWs and I am sure other classes have the same issue, I strongly discourage.
Breaks incorporating Thanksgiving are too early in the semester to be useful, and result in the loss of an existing three-day weekend
Cramming the same material into fewer days is counterproductive. The reduction in days needs to match a reduction in delivery of material, and assignments.
Extending days during thanksgiving allow them to have more family time (outside class environment)
First-year Students in particular could benefit from a break which enables them to reconcile the effects of transition with getting up to speed the the realities of first year. This may include meeting with first year advisors, their TAs during office hours, or more practically for those students who live on residence, to reconvene with their families (who are often also very concerned about their child's well being!)
Given the tight timeline of our classes, I believe imposing constraints could hurt students - for example, a week without exams means more exams other weeks. There have to be a 100-marks worth of assessments in a course.
hard to see all answers at once!
I am against two days here and there as it disproportionately disadvantages those whose classes run once a week.
I am in favor of providing the students as much time to decompress ahead of exams as possible. Loss of one week of classes will have no effect on the delivery of any of the courses I teach.
I am in favour of reducing stress on students, but I am also concerned about ultimately squeezing the same amount of material into less time.
I believe a full week at the students' disposal to work on accumulated tasks allows for the largest amount of flexibility to the student to best manage his/her individual situation.

I don't believe having a non assessment week will address the issue of improving student mental health and well being. While it relieves stress it doesn't reduce the number of deliverable/assignments and/or gives student additional time to "catch-up" (whether that be sleep or their studies). Part of the leaving process is having time to reflect on ones work and/or progress). Maybe 2 days is enough but speaking from my own experience, having a week to do this is most beneficial. Thus I ranked the "one" week higher for both student learning and well-being as the two are linked in my opinion.
I feel that students are most overwhelmed towards the end of the semester, so ranked most highly a week break towards beginning of November. I don't think a two day break would make much difference.
i find the survey ambiguous. what are the goals
I think closer to the middle of the term is best, not too early which is why I placed more emphasis on the November breaks
I think the inclusion of a fall break in some form will enhance student learning and well-being.
I think the only beneficial break would be in November. October/Thanksgiving is too early in semester -- students only get really busy/stressed after Oct 15..
It's not clear that many profs have much insight into the situations experienced by the students across all courses.
My ratings devolved into my personal preferences. It's too convoluted to give a general response imaging what my vast range of students might think. I had to redo the survey and now I'm just submitting an answer as I've spent too much time after getting an error message.
no
On reviewing my ratings I see they are different for the two questions; I imagine this is because I feel an improvement in well-being may not correlate exactly with an improvement in academic performance.
Proving two days will provide time to study and relax on/near campus while a week will encourage students to travel home.
Really little more than gut reaction.
Students are overloaded, they are not given sufficient time to think. We should consider eliminating the vast number of labs and make tutorials strictly optional.
Students have mentioned that the full spring break is very helpful. I think a fall break should be the same.
The students need a break in the Fall. I keep hearing this from them in my role as option chair in Engineering Science. I think a week off is a must. Having that week in early October is OK, but it may be most beneficial in late October.
The workload in our students is simply too high. We are trying to cram as much info and knowledge down students throats. Yet, less is more. With less material taught,, the students will actually understand better and retain more.
Too much time off leads students to stress that they don't have enough time to get things done (not always accomplished on break). However, I believe some sort of break would be extremely beneficial.
You asked the same questions twice, given that learning experience and well-being are related. Some

*Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?*

A break at the start of November would be best
Have the a two day break on Thursday and Friday to balance the Thursday and Friday at the start of term.
I feel strongly that the break would help to improve mental health - I see EngSci students who are always very stressed in November.
I had a hard time distinguishing between the two questions. Student well-being is related to their academic learning experience.
I would have rated many options much lower if the survey format allowed this.
If this would mean that the semester would have to start earlier or end later I would be strongly in favour of status quo.

Important that courses cut back on material they try to cover if break days are implemented. Hopefully FASE has discussed with other universities and Arts and Sci who already implement breaks to understand lessons learned/best practices.
Mid-November options should be considered
No
no
no comment
Not one of the options above, but two days around Thanksgiving, plus two days in November would be better than one longer break. A dedicated midterm week would also be helpful to students for time management purposes.
Organizing student assessments and assessment free periods is important.
see above
Shouldn't be considered a vacation week. Also, the effect of inserting a break on scheduling ought to be considered.
Some of the targeted dates and goals overlap: For example, getting two days off to complete projects works in the same direction as "full break" without stated goals. Most students use those breaks to complete assignments and prepare for exams.
There needs to be a break at some point. Just removing assignments will not help. However, if this is implemented there needs to be some monitoring to ensure that things are not just squeezed on either side but that there actually is a content reduction.
To say that students need a break is, in my view, a distortion of the real problem. The real problem in Engineering is the absurd quantity of deliverables, labs, quizzes, and exams. The students I talk with complain bitterly about the workload. The only sensible option then is to mandate a week with no assessments and deliverables of any kind. In fact I think this agenda should be pushed further. There should be a check on instructors that bombard students with weekly deliverables. Create a database, maybe starting with a pilot project, in which each instructor logs each deliverable and it's timing. Once you have a picture of the workload, you will be able to assess the problem and seek solutions.
Watching that two Mondays are not lost is important
Way back, in ECE, the course load was 6 courses with 2 hrs of lectures each. There was general consensus that the workload was too high for students, and the course load was reduced to 5 courses. But then over the next few years a strange thing happened: for just about all courses the number of lectures was increased from 2 to 3 and for many courses tutorials were introduced. The end result: the load increased to above what it was when most thought the load was unacceptably high. We are far to beholden to the accreditation process, and should be willing to push back harder. We offer the best ECE undergrad education in the country, yet we are intimidated by a committee filled with academics from second and third rate universities.
We may have a full week if we start the semester a few days earlier.
We need to do something, as we seem to be driving the students to despair.
We should make use of the CEAB appeal to count elearning activities and K factor courses - that would increase the AU count, and open the door to reduce courses.
Whatever we do will require serious changes to our curriculum. This will require a lot of work both at the faculty and department level. We need to be prepared to invest time and money if we are truly going to address student-workload and mental health and well-being.
Why can't we just start the fall semester a week earlier?
would like to see student response first but different questions

## Summary of Engineering Society's Advisors Survey on a Fall Study Break

### March 2020

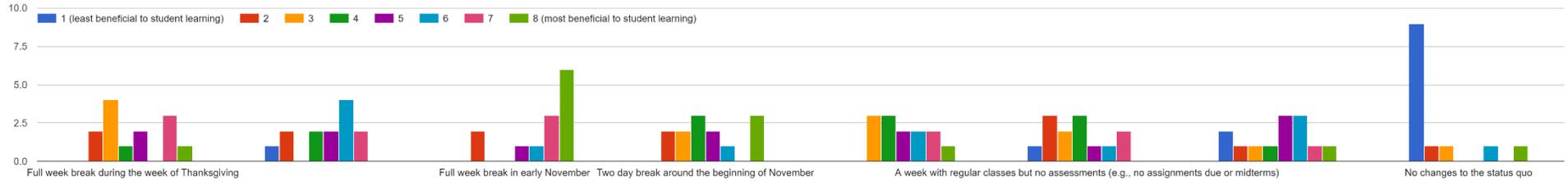
The survey was sent to the FASE team of Advisors from February 21, 2020 to March 2, 2020. Thirteen responses were received (a 76% response rate). The survey questions are included in **Appendix A** below, and the verbatim comments are included in **Appendix B**.

The chart summarizing these results is shown below:

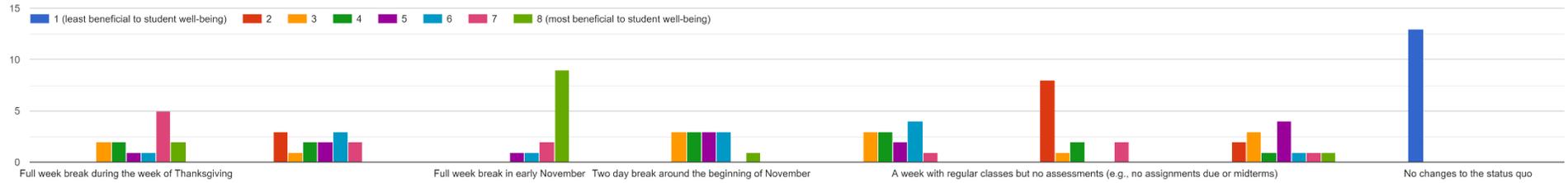
Category	Fall Break Option	Average (out of 8)	Standard Deviation	Percentage who Chose 7 or 8	Percentage who Chose 1 or 2
<b>Impact on Student Learning</b>	Full week break in early November	6.46	2.10	69.2%	15.4%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	5.00	1.62	23.1%	0.0%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.77	2.08	23.1%	15.4%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	4.69	1.90	15.4%	23.1%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.54	2.13	15.4%	23.1%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	4.54	2.02	30.8%	15.4%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.85	1.87	15.4%	30.8%
	No changes to the status quo	2.15	2.18	7.7%	76.9%
<b>Impact on Student Well-Being</b>	Full week break in early November	7.46	0.93	84.6%	0.0%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	5.85	1.75	53.8%	0.0%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.77	1.42	7.7%	0.0%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.77	1.31	7.7%	0.0%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	4.54	1.78	15.4%	23.1%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.46	1.78	15.4%	15.4%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.15	1.79	15.4%	61.5%
	No changes to the status quo	1.00	0.00	0.0%	100.0%

### Appendix 3

Consider the following options regarding a Fall Break and how these might impact our undergraduate students. Please rank these according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall learning experience\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.



Please rank the following Fall Break options according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall well-being\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column.



## Appendix A: Survey

### Fall Break Survey

One of the recommendations of the Faculty's recent Joint Task Force on Academic Advising and Student Mental Health\*, was for the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to consider the implementation of a Fall Break to improve student learning and well-being.

Since then a number of suggestions have emerged on introducing a break during the Fall term and the committee would like the input from members of the Faculty on how beneficial they feel these measures may be at improving the student learning experience and well-being.

Each of the ideas have various advantages and disadvantages depending on the length and timing of when they take place. Longer breaks give students more time to rest, but also result in having to cover less material through a reduced number of classes. If the break is held too early in the semester, it may not provide much stress relief for students whereas if the break is held too late in the semester, it may reduce the flexibility associated with how students use the time.

In the past a major concern in our Faculty has been the restrictions associated with accreditation. However, it is important to note that a number of other accredited engineering programs in Ontario already have a full-week Fall Break.

\*<https://www.engineering.utoronto.ca/files/2019/12/06-Report-3644-JTF-AA-MH-Final-Report.pdf>

Q1: Consider the following options regarding a Fall Break and how these might impact our undergraduate students. Please rank these according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall learning experience\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.

	1 (least beneficial to my learning)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my learning)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								

Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q2: Please rank the following Fall Break options according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall well-being\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column.

	1 (least beneficial to my well-being)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 (most beneficial to my well-being)
Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving								
Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving								
Full week break in early November								
Two day break around the beginning of November								
Two additional study days just before the start of exams								
A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)								
Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
No changes to the status quo								

Q3: Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?

Q4: Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?

## Appendix B: Advisor Comments

*Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?*

A break in November obtains the best balance of providing a reprieve from constant new information, a break for students need it, and an opportunity for students to review and fill knowledge gaps highlighted by assignments and midterms from the 1st half of the semester.
A break too early in the term would not be helpful as students are not at their peak in terms of stress or workload. A break in the middle of term would allow students to genuinely feel a relief of stress.
A key component to this decision I think is the impact of not having to commute to campus. For our students who commute 1+ hour each way the option to not have the stress of commuting during rush hour will have an impact on wellness and learning that other research on Fall Breaks might not capture if the institutions in these studies are not commuter campuses. So my ratings were impacted by whether these breaks allow students more autonomy over their schedules and time to catch-up, work ahead, rest, and not have to commute etc. I think the times could all be beneficial but think a break mid-term would be more impactful than time before exams or time without assessments but still needing to be on campus for classes.
I think a break for students is beneficial - I picked options earlier in term, as the transition is often a huge shift for students, and they may need time to recalibrate before they embark on the second half of the semester.
I would highly recommend students to have a week long break at beginning of November or during the week of Thanksgiving in order to provide them with the time and refresher most needed to them at this time during the fall semester.
No
Our status quo of a first-year assessment free week is a good starting point, but I feel that students are calling for a fall break en masse; it would also be beneficial from the perspective of PR - even if the scientific benefits are not clear that a fall break reduces stress, students and the public *believe* it does, which is important for the University's overall mental health messaging, etc. I believe the break would be most valuable in November as opposed to Thanksgiving; they already have a s
Reading week or extended break at thanksgiving seems too early as workload and stress both build through the term.

*Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?*

Engineering students can benefit from having a week long break as they also have more total class hours than other faculties who have a fall reading week.
Engineering students in first year have shared that they'd like a few days in the Fall to slow down, after being ushered into a new way of learning and working. Their peers at different institutions have some sort of Fall Break and I've heard from students how difficult it is for them to attend classes when their FAS classmates get time off.
I think the break needs to align with the Faculty of Arts & Science fall break; for logistical reasons (students taking both Eng & FAS courses having the same time off), and for social reasons (friends being able to spend time together, etc.).
I'm not sure why wellness and learning were separated in this survey because I think they are correlated. If a break will be good for wellness then wouldn't it also be good for learning? We can't learn effectively when we are not well. Also I don't think the timing is as important as the understanding that time away from class should mean the work load and content is distributed right before or after the break.
My students felt especially burned out in early November, so erring on the side of a November break - whether a full week or a few days - would benefit them greatly

## Summary of Engineering Society's Advisors Survey on a Fall Study Break

### March 2020

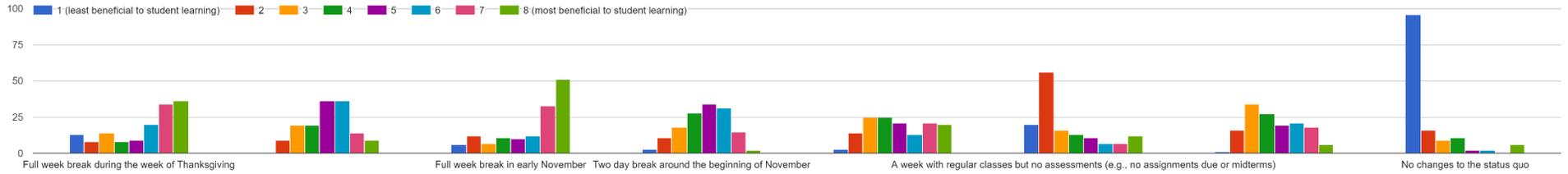
The survey was sent to all FASE graduate students from March 10, 2020 to March 22, 2020. Of the roughly 2000 graduate students, 142 responded (a 7% response rate). The survey questions are included in **Appendix A** below, and the verbatim comments are included in **Appendix B**.

The chart summarizing these results is shown below:

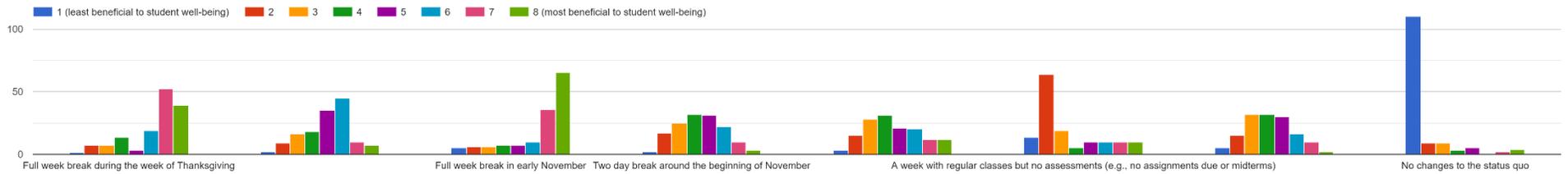
Category	Fall Break Option	Average (out of 8)	Standard Deviation	Percentage who Chose 7 or 8	Percentage who Chose 1 or 2
<b>Impact on Student Learning</b>	Full week break in early November	6.00	2.22	58.4%	13.1%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	5.59	2.35	49.6%	15.3%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	5.03	1.57	15.3%	6.6%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.89	2.03	29.2%	12.4%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.73	1.55	12.4%	9.5%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.50	1.75	17.5%	11.7%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.38	2.16	13.9%	52.6%
	No changes to the status quo	1.88	1.65	3.6%	78.8%
<b>Impact on Student Well-Being</b>	Full week break in early November	6.52	2.02	70.1%	8.0%
	Full week break during the week of Thanksgiving	6.31	1.81	65.7%	5.8%
	Two additional days break (five days total) during the week of Thanksgiving	5.02	1.57	12.4%	8.0%
	Two additional study days just before the start of exams	4.51	1.82	16.1%	13.1%
	Two day break around the beginning of November	4.44	1.54	9.5%	10.9%
	Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November	4.17	1.59	8.8%	14.6%
	A week with regular classes but no assessments (e.g., no assignments due or midterms)	3.39	2.13	13.9%	54.7%
	No changes to the status quo	1.64	1.51	3.6%	84.7%

## Appendix 4

Consider the following options regarding a Fall Break and how these might impact our undergraduate students. Please rank these according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall learning experience\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column. Please review all the options before making your selections.



Please rank the following Fall Break options according to most to least beneficial for the **\*\*overall well-being\*\*** of our students. You must provide a response for each row, and can only select one response for each column.



## Appendix A: Survey

### Fall Break Survey

One of the recommendations of the Faculty's recent Joint Task Force on Academic Advising and Student Mental Health\*, was for the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee to consider the implementation of a Fall Break to improve student learning and well-being.

Since then a number of suggestions have emerged on introducing a break during the Fall term and the committee would like the input from members of the Faculty on how beneficial they feel these measures may be at improving the student learning experience and well-being.

Each of the ideas have various advantages and disadvantages depending on the length and timing of when they take place. Longer breaks give students more time to rest, but also result in having to cover less material through a reduced number of classes. If the break is held too early in the semester, it may not provide much stress relief for students whereas if the break is held too late in the semester, it may reduce the flexibility associated with how students use the time.

In the past a major concern in our Faculty has been the restrictions associated with accreditation. However, it is important to note that a number of other accredited engineering programs in Ontario already have a full-week Fall Break.

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No changes to the status quo								

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Two day break dedicated towards project completion at the end of November								
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Q3: Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?

Q4: Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?

## Appendix B: Advisor Comments

*Do you have any comments on why you provided the above ratings?*

A break during thanksgiving time may allow students to go home and visit family to recharge. An extra two-day break would be helpful as well, but not to the extent of a week-long break.
A full break would be ideal. Students need thanksgiving to reconnect with family and friends so that they have good social relationships, this in turn will make them happier to study and do assignments because they won't be struggling as much. Adding two extra days to thanksgiving will also be better than nothing. Also, no point in giving a week break in November because midterms already start beginning or mid October. I would rather that students get a break around midterm time rather than finals because during finals we don't have any classes or ongoing assignments so more time to study, also during finals students sometimes have days off in between exams. Midterm time is the worst because not only are they studying for exams, they're continually learning new material and juggling assignments as well.
A full extended break is the only remedy to stress when studying. Days off help, but the extended time is where it counts.
A full week off can let students catch up and study for the upcoming exams and assignments.
A longer break in the middle of term may make students feel better during the week, but may increase the stress and accumulation of exams and deliverables for their courses in the time outside the breaks.
a no-assessment week is a bad idea, because it will not be enforced and profs will just end up assigning a bunch of things all due on the Monday the week after the no-assesment week
Additional breaks don't mean much if the number of assessments is the same
Additional days on existing holidays (thanksgiving) are not as helpful as a separate breaks during a time when holidays and long-weekends are sparse.

Anything less than a full week off will do nothing. I strongly encourage the Faculty to implement a full week off. Please do this. There is prescient and it is very clear that engineering students struggle with mental health, likely because of unrealistic course demands.

As a previous student at the University of Alberta, when I started my degree we had no fall breaks, but a 1 week fall break in November was implemented in my third year. Class time was not affected, as "study days"/exams periods were slightly reduced and school started a couple days earlier. Overall, these changes were definitely worth the mental break from a full week off. A couple days off may be useful for some to provide less disruption, but I personally find that it takes a full week to have enough time for mental relief as well as school catch up. On a break of a few days, there is usually only time to catch up on work, but no time to take breaks for self-care. As such, I think a full week break is critical. If disruption is to be limited, thanksgiving would probably be a better time, but November is probably more suitable for reducing student stress, as this is a time when school starts to get very busy and deadlines approach.

As a TA, I have seen students suffer from stress and anxiety in November. I think having a break is useful in whatever format that can be

Benefit to student learning is given time to prepare final projects. midterms and finals. Overall well being is giving students a break half-way in semester to re-energize. From experience, half of fall break is spend with family and friends (Thanksgiving) with the other half course projects and studying for midterms.

Coursework difficulties raise sharply after midterm and therefore it is better to have the breaks after midterm

Creating specific times for extra studying or project work will make procrastination more tempting. Students, especially those who are having a harder time, will leave a lot of things they could get down early for these setup periods of time which is both negative for their learning and well-being. Adding long breaks may also have negative effects as students will treat a full week break (9 days including weekend) as a vacation, which will likely put them farther behind which again seems bad for learning and well-being. An additional 2-days break with no intended purpose seems useful as students can use this to either catch up on something they are behind on or to relax and unwind.

From my personal undergraduate experience, having more seminars and less assignments is more valuable to my learning. Having a reading week mid- semester lets students fight burnt out after mid-terms. Would suggest a break right before exams, because some courses may end early December.
Full week break during the Thanksgiving is not helpful since they don't have much work around that time;;; I like the idea of having a buffer zone right before the exam
Ggg
Give students time to decompress and connect with whats important. Keep our heads clear.
Giving undergrads time when they don't need it is a waste, giving them a buffer to switch from final projects to final exam mode is beneficial.
Having an entire week off may encourage vacations, which I think can be good for overall wellbeing, but may not be as productive for educational purposes. A few days off compared to a week in many ways can be more restful and productive than an entire week.
I am a grad student and I am diagnosed with major depression. I manage the symptoms through a combination of psychotherapy and medication. Providing full weeks off does not help in the long term. It is effectively an avoidance strategy which makes the symptoms worse once the stressor is back in place. I experienced this while working. I would take a week of vacation once work became too much for me to handle, but once I came back to work I felt worse than before I left. I am sure many people can relate to this. Improving mental health can only be brought about by facing whatever your stressor is and learning how to manage the stress that it is causing you. That is why I provided high ratings to options that kept the stress on but reduced it a bit to allow students a chance to catch up. Having classes but no assignments sounds like a good compromise. It allows students time in the evening to relax, but they get to maintain their regular schedule. Maintaining a routine is a very important aspect of managing mental health. It prevents you from isolating yourself.
I am actually a grad student.
I am paying a lot of money to learn. I want to be in class learning, but need to be given time to study and do assignments
I believe it's better to give people break during the middle of the semester because it will give them chance to recharge and catch up on assignments, study for midterm, , etc.
I donâ€™t want to see kids jumping from upper floors at Bahen to kill themselves, have some mercy
I feel that well-being and learning experience are tightly correlated. A two day or week break in November, I feel, is the best time to have a break. It is after midterms and gives students something to look forward too. November is also a particularly bleak month weather-wise, so this will be appreciated.
I like the idea of pairing the break with a holiday weekend, lose least amount of work days. Breaks before exams (end of Nov) are useful to catch up and avoid the stress of having exams the day after classes finish. A week with class but no assessment is a bad idea; it will push all assessments into the following week and make student's schedules worse.
I personally did not find I was very productive over reading week and it kinda felt like work was hanging over my head anyway so I never found "breaks" during the semester to be true breaks.
I rather check out for an entire week than having a shorter. Itâ€™s hard to get engage when starting halfway through the week. I rather have short weeks were off days are Thursday Friday, rather than Monday Tuesday.
I think in general a later break is better than earlier based on catching up. Adding the break around thanksgiving also will likely not materialize as a long break due to potential family obligations
I think November is a good mid point for a holiday as long as midterms are done before the break, see comments below. Extra days before exams add stress, rather than helping.
I think the issues with academic performance are almost completely due to a lack of wellbeing, and that this should be placed well above any other considerations.
In my undergrad I experienced both a 2 day break at the beginning of November, no fall break, and a full week (at Thanksgiving) break. I cannot stress enough how a break is beneficial to well being, but for learning I think early November is better than Thanksgiving. The ability to rest, see family, even make doctors appts is key to health.
In the first week of November, the students will have seen at least 50% of the course content, and I believe they will have more chance to review more things than if the fall break is during the thanksgiving week.

<p>It is difficult to separate benefit to the learning experience and benefit to overall wellbeing. At this stage of their learning, undergraduate students are learning to manage their time and to balance their activities and responsibilities. With a full week break, U of T can show its students that the university trusts them to divide their time in a manner that is conducive both to their academic success and mental health. I find it difficult to see how faculty/teaching staff's use of shorter breaks with specific purposes (e.g. class but no assessments, project completions) will be monitored. E.g. is the University prepared to ensure that professors are adhering to these guidelines?</p>
<p>It is important that the days off are grouped together so that students feel they have a substantial amount of time to get caught up on assignments and study. 2 days off is short enough that they would still be choosing one or the other.</p>
<p>Mental health should be valued much more highly than a couple of extra hours of course material per class.</p>
<p>Most courses have huge workloads and the instructors doesn't seem to estimate the amount of hours each assignment require.</p>
<p>My experience over the past 6 years as a TA an CI is that students will submit work to whatever deadline is set and, despite best intentions, will not fully capitalize on a full week off mid-term. We can best support our students by structuring the term to include short periods in which students can catch up on work, and then allowing a short gap between the end of term and beginning of exams. Long breaks, particularly centered on existing family holidays, encourage travel home for many. From personnal experience as an undergraduate, as well as part of an instructional team, this is counter productive with regards to learning.</p>
<p>My perspective comes from doing my undegrad at u of t chem eng. An extra 2 days before exam starts would be helpful, especially because we normally have exams back to back (2 in the same day then 1 the next day). A week where it's just lectures and there are no assessments would also be helpful in the middle of the term in between midterms to give students a chance to breathe and catch up. Having an entire full week off may not be helpful for the learning piece because of the accreditation part.</p>
<p>My Previous university had a reading week each semester for Grad and undergrad students. No assignments were allowed be be assigned over the break and none were allowed to be due the week after. This gave students a week to catch up on studying or final projects with no additional stress. It also allows students to decompress and just relax in what is probably the most stressful time of their lives. Think How many students that have comminted suicide due to school would still be here if they had a week to just relax decompress and find time to talk to somebody. Because sometimes taking time to talk to someone is time you have now lost and are farther behind on projects.</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>N/A</p>
<p>No changes to the status quo</p>
<p>Plenty of other schools have fall and winter breaks and it works out just fine.</p>
<p>Prefer more spread out breaks over large 1 week breaks. When every class is disrupted than they all schedule deadlines immediatly before and after the break which causes additional stress for students.</p>
<p>proper time off (vs. a week with no assessments/deliverables) gives a greater sense of calendar space and control over catching up on things. longer breaks (either full weeks or aligned with thanksgiving) allow for family visits or other forms of "getting away" that are probably healthier than content content content.</p>
<p>Students are - for the most part - unlikely to use time off for study or projects. More time off will improve their mental health and stress levels. but is likely to decrease their mastery of course material.</p>
<p>Students are most exhausted by the end of term and it is difficult to balance end of term projects with exams. A break would give them breathing room..</p>
<p>Thanksgiving needs a longer student break. I came from the US and they have Wednesday - Sunday break which i think is the perfect amount of time</p>
<p>The break week time depends on the work load during the full sememster.</p>
<p>The engineering students need a full weak without school to catch up with their courses and assignments and these students need some time out aswell</p>

<p>The month of November tends to be the most difficult month for students to deal with (both in terms of workload and mental health). This is the month where they typically receive their midterm marks while completing the bulk of the work for their assignments and projects. Students can easily become overwhelmed during this month and become depressed that they are not good enough to stay in the programs they are in. Hence, I strongly recommend to place a break during this month.</p>
<p>This is based on my undergraduate experience and what served my learning experience and overall wellbeing best!</p>
<p>two additional days during the week of thanksgiving leaves only two days of school that week, which don't make it feel like a break; having a week with no assessments (and still have classes) is just a matter of readjusting assessment deadlines, it doesn't affect workload or free time to study/work on projects so I don't think it would be effective</p>
<p>two day breaks have typically added confusion and disruption to normal scheduling for students and breaks their routine. one-week break would allow normal scheduling and maintain structure in an already chaotic time (especially first semester of first year)</p>
<p>Week breaks are terrific for well being, but may be directed towards holidays. Two day breaks provide breathing room without a enough time for a real break. This will likely help with school performance, but perhaps to with pressure. Time directly before exams would just encourage cramming.</p>
<p>Week of thanksgiving is far too early for any type of break. If a break is given, it should be done around midterms so the students can use the time wisely, or closer to final exams.</p>
<p>Work tends to pile up at the end of the term more than near midterms. Also, if push comes to shove, finals are much more important than midterms. Having a bit less stress near close to final exams was beneficial in my experience. A full week break early in term will likely be used as a vacation for most students and not for studying.</p>

*Do you have any other comments that you feel are relevant to the topic?*

<p>A break (a full week) at the end of October would also be a great option</p>
<p>A shift in teaching philosophy is more important than a structural change in the term. We do not teach our students effective study habits, frequently do not design our courses to support a variety of learning styles, and provide no room for failure. Students must be given options to repeatedly fail with low risk as they learn material. A high stakes midterm may be a fine evaluation tool, but is a dismal failure as a way to provide feedback to students on their performance. If every piece of work we assign could be the difference between an A and a B, of course our students will be distressed. A few days to catch up on work will not change this. But restructuring our course evaluations and lessons to give more opportunities for low risk feedback and practice as they work towards subject matter mastery might help.</p>
<p>Another way to consider both well-being and academic experience would be better workload balancing - often there is minimal coordination between courses, which results in some weeks that have deliverables due from multiple courses, causing a lot of stress for students</p>
<p>Any of these options would be beneficial for the well being of the student. It is important, however, that the week of break is not followed by 5 midterms, which often happens during other break periods. This has to be a period where the student can calm down, study anything that itâ€™s missing (catch up), and then resume classes like if no break existed. Again, no midterms/assignments the week after the break!</p>
<p>Avoid overloading students during exam week. Spacing exams out is key.</p>
<p>Breaks from coursework are nice but research-stream graduate students are expected to come in daily and continue research activities during breaks as long as the university is open. In order for a fall break to be effective for the mental health of graduate students, the university should be officially closed or there should be some clear signal to students and advisors that students with research positions are not meant to come in to work during this break.</p>

Consider that professors will often set all the midterm dates immediately before and after any breaks which result in cancellation of class (try to gather statistics about midterm scheduling surrounding reading week in the second semester). Additionally, it is very common for larger projects to have due dates immediately after breaks (e.g. reading week). My personal experience in undergrad+masc at this university has been that reading week screws up what would have otherwise been a more spread out timeline of tests/assignments. This experience causes me to believe that spreading out break days such that they do not eclipse an entire week would enable students to focus on fewer subjects at once. For example, class A can hold its test during the week you are considering giving as a break and class B can hold the test the next week and you therefore only have to retain memory of subject matter for one class at a time.

course designers/deliverers need to be forced to reduce the volume of content and assessments whatever changes are made. identify the core concepts and focus learning activities around those. many courses have had content added on over the years without any systematic thought about how students can feasibly internalize it.

Courses need to coordinate to make sure their combined assessment number is below a certain amount -- the number of assessments per course can be okay, but not when a student takes a usual workload of 4-6 courses

Days dedicated for project work are hard to implement across the faculty. A better option is to have a definitive break between classes and exams. This gives everyone a chance to breathe and a chance to study if you happen to have an exam on the first day of exams. I feel this would be the most appreciated and it gives the body a chance to come down from the stress of final project/assignment submissions. In dealing with my mental health the most effective treatment is to learn how to manage the stress. This is what is advocated in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Avoiding what is causing you stress and anxiety only makes it worse the next time you encounter the situation. If the Faculty wants to prepare their students for life outside of campus, transitioning the students to higher levels of stress, and how to handle this stress effectively is the best method. Having a week with no assessments but just classes is another effective intervention. It allows students to catch up or relax a little. I think just after midterms would be a good place to have this and allow everyone to reset. Thanksgiving weekend is already used to finish assignments ahead of midterms and provides a bit of relief before midterms begin. Providing full weeks off doesn't teach the students anything. This accommodation will not exist once they graduate. Training to learn to handle stress is currently ad hoc. It should happen sooner, and I wish it was taught to me earlier when I was still in primary school.

Ensure that profs don't pile assignments and tests before and after the break.

For me the most stressful part was always how late the last day of exams was and trying to figure out when I could book my flight home then trying to get organized for the holidays. If there was a way to release the exam schedule much earlier or end the semester earlier rather than taking a break I would have found that far more beneficial.

For required courses, perhaps some more coordination between professors to see if can spread out assignments, exams, deadlines.

From my experience (both as someone who's gone through undergrad here, and almost 10 years as a grad), students generally do not use the breaks as intended to catch up. From a learning experience point of view, the breaks do very little to help. From a well-being point of view, perhaps more frequent breaks, but shorter, spread out throughout the semester may be better.

Give all students a one week break each semester where no assignments can be due.

Great idea, wished I had this during my undergrad. The week of lectures and no assignment sounds interesting, as long as workload doesn't pile up on the week preceding or after. The two day break before exam would be good to recharge before starting to study for exams.

I am a huge fan of taking the time to do things in a healthy way. Students should not be facing the levels of stress many currently experience. Thank you for exploring these options.

I did ChemE undergrad here. With 35+ hour a week classes and doing more homework after classes, students easily have 80-90 hour work weeks. You are not proving to anyone that UpfT is better or "tougher" by having students struggle like this. Students MENTAL HEALTH is at stake here. I fully believe that UpfT can implement fall break and still have all course material covered. This would've been so essential for studying and just having a breather during a tough semester to catch up on studying, sleep, social life. ALL of which in a good balance are IMPERATIVE towards a students performance. I guarantee you the university, nor the faculty, will lose anything by giving fall break. At this point there is NO EXCUSE to avoid having fall break, it will only improve students performance and overall mental health. I highly urge you, as a former student, to implement this.

I did my undergrad at Western, they first implemented a few days break and it ended up being not enough time for a full step away from school so it was just a long weekend filled with social events and work on design projects. They've since implemented the full week. Comparatively, the one in February allowed me to fully step away from school and enjoy an actual break.

I don't feel as if giving students a break in the middle of term and ultimately compressing the rest of their courses into a smaller time window would address the root of the problem. Students currently have several extended breaks throughout the year (i.e. winter/summer breaks), but don't seem to be managing stress during the school term. From my perspective, the main source of the stress is the intensity and course load of the program that is likely the root cause of student stress, anxiety, depression, etc. Adding a break that will ultimately further compress the school term and increase its intensity may not have the desired effect. Additionally, compressing the term by adding a break may further encourage student to study to simply pass or "get through" exams/course rather than encouraging deeper learning and understanding of the material.

I don't know if security guards in bahen and myhal really change anything. I noticed when i was in undergrad (2012-2017) that there weren't any mental health counsellors available specifically to engineering undergrads. We had to go through the general u of t system and appointments were normally not available without a months notice. Because engineering is intensive, it would be helpful to have specific mental health counsellors assigned to each discipline, or have professors somewhat trained in providing mental health assistance, or maybe even have the academic counsellors for each discipline trained in that (if this hasn't already been implemented).

I feel strongly about having a week with regular classes but no assessments, it gives students a chance to learn without the pressure of deadlines. Learn for the sake of learning.

I think the number of group assignments and projects must increase. I think the best way of studying is in the group and classes should have friendly environment and the instructor must initiate fun group activities.

I think we should have break in the middle of semester similar to winter semester because it gives people a chance to rest and come back with fresh mind.

I would be better to have a break just after midterms so students do not have to worry about studying during their break.

If the full week off option is implemented there should be no assignments due at the end of that week/first day back. At my undergrad university they did this regularly so instead of using our week off to get caught up and study it was like any other week where we had to prepare for multiple assignments due and midterms happening in the first 1-2 days back.

In my opinion well being equates a good learning experience - filling the survey out twice was redundant

It may be a good idea to start with a two day break to see how the response is from students, before trying a full week. Note that breaks also have the effect on scheduling of classes, tests, labs, and midterms, so may end up being more of a disruption if placed in the middle of the semester. More systemic changes would be required to make a strong impact on student well-being and learning experience; I doubt a break will have a big benefit. Except in the case where it is a break before exams, to avoid the horrors of scheduling exams immediately after classes end.

It would be more beneficial to equalize the load by spreading it more evenly, especially for students, who are taking more courses. Having deadlines on the same week for 5 courses is very stressful, and "Fall Break" won't reduce this stress. However, better communication between professors and planning of the assignments due dates, midterms and projects could reduce stress.

It would make the most sense to have the break during Thanksgiving as there is already a holiday there.
make the break the same length and at the same time as other programs and schools. let students hang out with their friends - this should maximize benefit of mental health break. if the break is at a random time when nobody else is off, it just contributes to students' stress by adding to feelings of loneliness and isolation.
Make the Fall break fall in line with a holiday. I think overall well-being (time-off) is better than beneficial to student learning (cramming).
Mindset is everything. If a student believes they are a failure if their grades are not at a certain level, an extra break in the fall isn't going to help. If a student views coursework as an obstacle to get past instead of an opportunity for learning, they are going to be highly stressed. Address the mindset (and maybe drop tuition a bunch) and students will be healthier, more stable, and - in all likelihood - more competent engineers regardless of any additional time off you give them.
N/A
N/A
no
November is a good time to have the break but the school needs to ensure that there are no midterms scheduled immediately after the break and enforce this policy strictly. Having exams after a week off completely defeats the purpose of the week off
Something that would be good to see here is better coordination between course instructors on midterm dates and project due dates. It was not uncommon in undergrad to have a week or two with multiple midterms and projects due in one week or on the same day. This makes it very difficult for students to prepare properly and basically forces them to strategically prep for some tests but not others, setting them up to do poorly in some courses and be additionally stressed as a result.
Students are currently extremely overworked & stressed, with too many classes. This is a step in the right direction, but acknowledgment of the FASE's terrible record for fostering student mental health needs to be the next step. Reducing course loads should be part of this - these students cannot complete all of their assigned tasks so have to triage, and that makes their academic performance suffer while stressing them out. If this is not possible due to accreditation, accommodations should be made with the accreditation board.
Thank you for finally listening to students and taking their mental health seriously. It would be wonderful if this concern and action could be continued through the graduate systems as well.
The faculty finally decided to treat engineering students as humans. Engineering students have approx 30+ hours of courses during a week and x2 hours of study after school. They need a break like the other faculties. Their friends from other faculties have 5-8 hours of classes and they chill while engineers are frustrated with their grades and workload. As a uoft graduate student I am very happy that for the first time the faculty of engineering is caring for the engineering students.
The week without assignments or tests sounds intriguing, but would only likely shirk the work onto the adjacent weeks and would probably not accomplish much.
This survey is poorly designed because the categories for question 1 are in a different order from question 2. There is a very high likelihood that respondents will miss this and fill in question 2 in the order they expected based on question 1.
What about a break after assessments instead of before? In my opinion this is the most stress-free scenario; having a break prior to assessments allows for more study time and is beneficial to student learning but not necessarily to student well-being.
You have to consider the effects of climate on students' mental health, everybody is depressed when it's dark and cold. Have a break when it's darkest and coldest.. shrink class size and encourage discussion in lectures (especially for engineering), will help with learning and encourage students. Just make a change no matter what, people like changes.. you'll measure the effectiveness later.