

(Published online by the Iowa State Daily on April 18, 2021.)

Students at Iowa State University felt stressed about classwork following the elimination of a spring break this year.

In efforts to protect Iowa State's campus from an increase in COVID-19 cases, the university decided to eliminate the spring break week that's typically in mid-March. Additionally, the spring semester began Jan. 25, a few weeks later than normal. As a result, students reported feeling stressed and desiring a spring break week to take a break from their classes or to catch up on schoolwork.

Iowa State course delivery has been impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 for the past year. Online course delivery and altered academic calendars are among the list of changes the university made to provide a safe campus environment in response to the virus. These changes have affected the lives of students. With March being the typical month for spring break, students recognized the absence of the break this year. A shorter semester has led to course content being delivered at a faster pace than normal. Alex Blomquist, a student at Iowa State University, said, "I feel like as a whole this semester has been all gas, no brakes, with small weekends serving as a place to try and catch your breath."

The elimination of spring break has prevented students from potentially bringing the virus to campus if they were to travel. However, students like Blomquist missed out on opportunities this year. "I was unable to visit my friends in Minnesota to go skiing and hiking for a week way up in Luster, Minnesota," Blomquist said.

Professors are working to deliver course material in the shortened semester. A few professors have been lightening the workload while others have increased it. With midterms near the time spring break would have been, students reportedly felt their workload increase. No week off of school has also impacted the motivation of students. "It's made me less motivated," said Isabel Jackson, a freshman in pre-business. "I just feel as though we need a break from school for at least four days. We deserved a spring break."

On March 12, President Wendy Wintersteen announced the upcoming academic year is scheduled to be a “new normal.” In an email sent to all faculty, staff and students at Iowa State University, Wintersteen wrote, “We are planning to return in-person classes, labs, studios, residence, dining, student activities and campus events to pre-pandemic levels.” The university will continue to implement health practices while attempting to bring the university back to the way it was before the global pandemic. There is currently a spring break scheduled for mid-March for the spring semester of 2022.