

May 22, 1998

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Vice Chancellor for Administration
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The Vanderbilt University Staff Advisory Council would like to express its concern about the recent policy changes regarding holidays recognized by the University: specifically, the replacing of the choice of one holiday between either President's Day or Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with one personal day. First, please be advised that the concern is not over the perceived "loss of holidays." It is evident the nine holidays are being replaced with seven holidays and two personal days; therefore, the total numbers of paid days off is not an issue.

What is of concern are the potentially adverse messages that may be sent to the University and Nashville communities. The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday was established to honor Dr. King, a historic civil rights leader. The President's Day holiday was established to honor our country's past leaders. Vanderbilt University is an institution where both tradition and honor are well established and respected. It is a campus that is justifiably proud of its recent accomplishments in diversifying campus life. By replacing the single holiday currently allocated for these two traditional and honoring holidays with a "floating" personal day, the University may be perceived as attaching less significance to the commemorative nature of these holidays. While it is true that staff members can choose to celebrate either day with the new "personal day", the University itself is no longer officially recognizing the holidays. In addition, while this action may not actually reflect the University's position regarding the importance of either of these two nationally-observed holidays, the image of the University as a socially responsible institution could very well suffer as a result of the changes.

We would therefore urge the administration to reconsider the apportionment of holiday time for staff members and return these important dates to the officially observed holiday schedule.

Respectfully,

For the Executive Committee of the University Staff Advisory Council
Virginia B. Featherston, Vice-President, University Staff Advisory Council

