



Resolution Label: ASNAU SR-38-03

Date Introduced: 2 April 2026

Authors: Senator Earl-Leal, Senator Harb, Vice Chair Orduno, Senator Welty, Senator Geisler, Senator Denstaedt

Sponsors: ASNAU Academic Affairs Committee, ASNAU Student Affairs Committee, Blue Key Honor Society, Circle K International at NAU, Club Swimming at NAU, College Democrats at NAU, Criminology and Criminal Justice Club, Future Health Professionals, Gamma Upsilon Pi, Graduate Student Government, i5 Space, InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, Investment Club, Louie's Cupboard, Maria and Steve Sanghi College of Nursing, Men's Lacrosse, Men's Ultimate Frisbee Club, Men's Club Volleyball, Model United Nations, NAU Green Fund, NAU Gymnastics, Range Management Club, Self Love Club, Society for Creative Anachronism Club, Society of Physics Students, Women's Club Soccer at NAU, Writers Club

Signatories: Vice Chair Orduno, Senator Carter, Senator Cash, Senator Denstaedt, Senator Dukarm, Senator Earl-Leal, Senator Geisler, Senator Gibson, Senator Harb, Senator Larios, Senator Letofsky, Senator Ludlow, Senator Orr-Randall, Senator Ruelas, and Senator Welty

Resolution for Alternative Class on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving

Whereas, Northern Arizona University currently designates Thanksgiving Day as an official University holiday, as determined by the President, with the following Friday historically reserved as a University Closure¹;

Whereas, "Alternative class" is defined as a class format that replaces the regularly scheduled in-person session with a flexible, alternative option, such as, but not limited to, an online lecture, a recorded lecture, online discussion, or assignment, allowing students to complete required coursework without attending class in person;

Whereas, In a survey of 726 students, 99% of Northern Arizona University students would be in support of a university closure on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving, and that 92% of NAU students have missed or considered missing class on the week of Thanksgiving²;

Whereas, Our research finds that 91% of students that are in-state have to travel more than 60 miles outside of Flagstaff to spend the Thanksgiving holiday with their families and support systems;

Whereas, Many students must leave campus prior to Thanksgiving Day to secure affordable travel arrangements and ensure safe transportation during one of the busiest travel periods of the year³;

¹ Office of the Registrar. "University holiday schedule and closure calendar." *Northern Arizona University*, 2025. <https://nau.edu/holidays-campus-closure/>.

² Kaylee Earl-Leal. "Qualtrics Survey Data." *ASNAU Student Affairs Committee*, April 1, 2026. https://nau0.sharepoint.com/:x:/r/sites/ASNAUStaff/_layouts/15/Doc.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BA6722C66-22AC-4B34-B4CC-A8743BB5F59C%7D&file=Thanksgiving%20Resolution%20Student%20Survey%20Data.xlsx&action=default&mobileredirect=true.

³ Aixa Diaz. "Nearly 82 Million Americans Projected to Travel over Thanksgiving." *AAA Newsroom*, November 17, 2025. <https://newsroom.aaa.com/2025/11/aaa-thanksgiving-travel-forecast-2025/>.

Whereas, The Arizona Department of Transportation advises individuals driving on Thanksgiving week to allow extra time to reach their destination, especially as more travelers are on the roads and highways during holidays⁴;

Whereas, According to the “2024 Motor Vehicle Crash Facts for the State of Arizona,” prepared by The Arizona Department of Transportation Multimodal Planning Division, the week of Thanksgiving has the highest total number of fatal crashes at 67 crashes compared to other holidays (New Year’s Day Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day, and Christmas Day) since 2020⁵;

Whereas, A research study published by Preventive Medicine Reports found a 35% increased risk of traffic fatalities for the Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving compared to an average Wednesday due to a national increase in long-distance travel during this period⁶;

Whereas, By providing alternative classes on Wednesday prior to Thanksgiving, students will be able to travel after class Tuesday, limiting traffic fatalities;

Whereas, By providing an extended travel period, students will be provided with more opportunities to use sustainable driving practices like carpooling and other forms of eco-friendly transportation like Groome Transportation and FlixBus, which will help decrease carbon

⁴ Arizona Department of Transportation. “Road Trip Safety.” *Road Trip Safety | Department of Transportation*, 2026. <https://azdot.gov/about/transportation-safety/road-trip-safety> .

⁵ Arizona Department of Transportation Multimodal Planning Division. “Arizona Motor Vehicle Crash Facts 2024.” *Department of Transportation*, July 9, 2025. <https://azdot.gov/sites/default/files/2025-07/2024-Crash-Facts.pdf>.

⁶ Kendra Ratnapradipa and Zhu, Motao. “Increased Motor Vehicle Fatalities Tuesday through Thursday during the US Thanksgiving Holiday (1980–2018).” *ScienceDirect*, November 15, 2020. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335520302035?via%3Dihub>.

emissions rates⁷. This will reduce carbon emissions around NAU, Flagstaff, and throughout the State of Arizona, aligning with NAU's 2030 Carbon Neutrality Goal⁸;

Whereas, According to the student survey, holding in person classes on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving creates financial, academic, and personal hardships for students who must choose between attending class and traveling safely;

Whereas, An alternative lecture day on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving would promote student wellbeing, reduce travel related stress, and support student success;

Whereas, ABOR Policy Manual for Academic Year Calendar 2-320 states, 'university may arrange its class and holiday schedule depending upon the needs of its students, local customs, and policy and accreditation requirements⁹;

Whereas, Ball State University¹⁰, East Carolina University¹¹, Florida Atlantic University¹², Georgia Southern University¹³, Illinois State University¹⁴, Mississippi State University¹⁵, Middle Tennessee State University¹⁶, and other public universities across the country, designated by

⁷ Jeremy Koslowski. "Travel Tips During the Holidays." *The Climate Trust*, November 26, 2025. <https://climatetrust.org/news/travel-tips-during-the-holidays/#:~:text=Predictions%20for%20this%20year%20show,sequester%20carbon%20on%20their%20lands.>

⁸Green NAU. "Nau Carbon Neutrality Action Plan Main Page." *Green NAU*, 2023. <https://in.nau.edu/green-nau/nau-climate-action-plan/>.

⁹ Arizona Board of Regents. "Arizona Board of Regents Policy Manual 2-320." *Arizona Board of Regents*, November 20, 2025. <https://public.powerdms.com/ABOR/documents/1491665>.

¹⁰ Ball State University. "Fall 2026." *Academic Calendar*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://www.bsu.edu/calendar/calendars/academic-calendar/fall-2026>.

¹¹ East Carolina University. "University Academic Calendar – Fall Semester 2025." *Faculty Senate*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://facultysenate.ecu.edu/academic-calendars-2/fall-2025/>.

¹² Florida Atlantic University. "Academic Calendar." *Registrar's Office*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://www.fau.edu/registrar/calendar/>.

¹³ Georgia Southern University. "Academic Calendars." *Office of the Registrar*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://www.georgiasouthern.edu/offices/registrar/academic-calendar>.

¹⁴ Illinois State University. "Academic Calendar" *Events*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://events.illinoisstate.edu/academic-calendar/>

¹⁵ Mississippi State University. "Academic Calendar" *Office of the Registrar*, accessed April 1, 2026. <https://www.registrar.msstate.edu/calendars/academic-calendar/2025/fall>

¹⁶ Middle Tennessee State University. "Academic Calendar" *A to Z Index*, accessed April 1, 2026.

ABOR as peer institutions with NAU¹⁷, provide a full Thanksgiving break beginning Wednesday or earlier to better support their campus communities;

Whereas, The Flagstaff Unified School District 2025-2026 Academic Calendar schedules Thanksgiving Break to begin on Monday, November 24th, and similarly lists the break to begin on Monday, November 23rd for the following academic year, helping to reduce travel stress, support student well-being, and allow more family time¹⁸;

Therefore, be it Resolved by the Associated Students of Northern Arizona University, The Associated Students of Northern Arizona University formally request that the Northern Arizona University Administration designate the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as an asynchronous class day, non-in-person instructional day, no later than Fall 2027.

Be It Further Resolved, The Associated Students of Northern Arizona University formally urges Northern Arizona University Administration to conduct a comprehensive review of the academic calendar to implement a recurring alternative class day on the Wednesday preceding Thanksgiving, beginning in the next feasible academic year.

Be It Further Resolved, The Associated Students of Northern Arizona University commits to advocating for this change through continued engagement with university leadership to ensure that student wellness is prioritized in institutional decision making.

Be It Further Resolved, The Associated Students of Northern Arizona University affirms this request as a matter of student equity, safety, financial accessibility, and mental well-being,

<https://www.mtsu.edu/academic-calendar/>

¹⁷ Strategic Planning, Institutional Research, and Analytics. "Peer Data." *Northern Arizona University*, 2025.
<https://in.nau.edu/institutional-research/peer-data/>

¹⁸ Michael Penca. "FUSD 2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Year Calendars Adopted." *Flagstaff Unified School District #1*, January 15, 2026.
<https://www.fusd1.org/index.php?pageID=smartSiteFeed&psqFeed=true&articleID=69572498>.

recognizing that a large number of students are disproportionately impacted by limited holiday travel time.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eesha Syeda". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Eesha Syeda
ASNAU Student Body President
Date of Approval: 04/06/2026

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brooklyn Clayton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

Brooklyn Clayton
ASNAU Vice President of Student Advocacy
Date of Approval: 4/6/2026