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# Holidays at MIT

Recommendations and Benchmarking

**Holidays Working Group**

**March 2021**

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# Charge and options

**In a July 1, 2020 letter to the community, President Reif stated:**

*“We will reexamine our roster of Institute holidays with an eye to equity and inclusion, with leadership from John Dozier and VP for Human Resources Ramona Allen. The best way to make such changes smoothly will be through engaging and educating the community about the need for change.”*

**Working group discussions resulted in four possible options:**

- “Re-Float” day after Thanksgiving for use on day of personal significance: *Does not add an additional day*
- No change to our current Institute holidays: *Does not add an additional day*
- Keep the day after Thanksgiving as a floating holiday, and add a second floating holiday: *Adds one holiday*
- Add Juneteenth as a set holiday: *Adds one holiday*

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# Working group members

Alyce Johnson — HR

Ahsan Ali — HR

Chris Durham — VPF

Maryanne Kirkbride — ICEO

Colleen Leslie — VPR

Stacie Slotnick — HR

Christiaan Stone — Lincoln Lab

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# Process

- Brainstorming sessions and conversations among working group members
- Ivy+ and local peer benchmarking
- Determination of suggestions for possible changes
- Community Input
- Recommendations to Ramona Allen, VP of HR and John Dozier, ICEO

# Options that do not add a paid holiday

Options	Pros	Cons
<b>“Re-Float” day after Thanksgiving for use on day of personal significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows community members to choose what days are significant to them</li><li>• No added costs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Does not honor Juneteenth in same way as days such as Indigenous People’s Day</li><li>• Removes a day that is traditionally a day off for everyone</li></ul>
<b>No change</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• No added costs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some community members have strong feelings about honoring Juneteenth</li></ul>

# Options that add a paid holiday

Options	Pros	Cons
<b>Keep the day after Thanksgiving as a “set floating holiday,” and add a flexible floating holiday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allows community members to choose a day off that is significant to them</li><li>• Keeps day after Thanksgiving as a day off, which many people expect to be a holiday</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential cost issues</li><li>• Does not honor Juneteenth in same way as days such as Indigenous People’s Day</li><li>• Complicates scheduling/coverage for managers of staff members in essential roles</li><li>• Probably eliminates possibility of Election Day being a full-day holiday</li></ul>
<b>Add Juneteenth as a set holiday</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addresses Institute commitment to honoring diversity, equity, and inclusion</li><li>• Adds a paid holiday to a month without one</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Potential cost issues</li><li>• Honors a specific day over others that may have significance to community members</li><li>• Probably eliminates possibility of Election Day being a full-day holiday</li></ul>

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# Financial considerations

- Budgeting/projections
  - Would the day be considered “vacation” entitled to pay out at termination of employment under Mass. law?
- Providing advance notice to governmental and other funders related to contracts (~1 year in advance)
- Collective bargaining units
- Are faculty paid on a nine-month cycle paid for summer holidays?
- Any special pay issues for this day? Is the Floating Holiday “use it or lose it” within a calendar year?

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# Questions and comments

We'd love your feedback.

Send thoughts to [holidays-wg@mit.edu](mailto:holidays-wg@mit.edu).



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# Appendix: Review of peers

1. Floating holidays at Ivy+ peers
2. Election Day at peers
3. Winter Break at peers
4. Overview of holiday calendar at selection of Ivy+ peers
5. Overview of holiday calendar at selection of neighboring institutions (Lesley, Tufts, BU, N'eastern, Wellesley, Brandeis)

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# Sampling of floating holidays

## ***What is a floating holiday at MIT?***

The Institute grants a twelfth holiday each year, with the day to be celebrated announced by the Institute.

We sometimes refer to that as a “floating holiday.” It is a holiday celebrated by all staff on **one specific date** that the Institute decides. For many years, this has been the day after Thanksgiving.

**Brown:** All non-union staff employees who are eligible for paid holidays receive one floating holiday (or equivalent hours) to be used during the calendar year. Staff hired after January 1 will receive the floating holiday the following calendar year.

**Stanford:** For regular, full-time employees, eight hours of floating holiday are available on January 1 (or date of hire for employees hired after January 1) and can be taken on any day or partial day within that calendar year that is mutually agreed upon by the employee and supervisor. For employees working less than full time, the amount of time credited as the floating holiday is prorated based on the employee's regularly scheduled work hours.

**NYU** seems to have two floating holidays; in 2021, on 3/19 and 4/19

**Caltech:** two floating holidays and one personal holiday

*Note: **Yale** has Good Friday and day before Thanksgiving off.*

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# Election Day at peer institutions

**Brown:** Effective September 8, 2020, Election Day observed on all even-numbered years, which include both presidential and midterm Congressional elections.

**Columbia:** Yearly holiday

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# Peer institutions with winter break

**Columbia**

**Yale**

**Cornell**

**Dartmouth**

**NYU**

**Caltech** (includes 2 floating holidays)

**Harvard** (includes half day on 12/23)

## Peer benchmarking | Ivy+: a sample

	Harvard	MIT	Yale	Brown	Penn	Dartmouth	Stanford	Caltech	Cornell	NYU	Columbia	Princeton
<b>New Year's Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes		yes
<b>MLK   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes		yes
<b>Presidents' Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes					yes	yes		yes	yes	
<b>Patriots Day   S</b>		yes										
<b>Memorial Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Juneteenth   S</b>	yes								yes			
<b>4<sup>th</sup> of July   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Labor Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Indigenous Peoples Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes		yes								
<b>Veterans Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes										
<b>Thanksgiving   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
<b>Day after Thanksgiving</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes
<b>Christmas Eve Day</b>	Yes (half day)					yes	yes					yes
<b>Christmas Day   F, S</b>	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes				yes	yes
<b>Winter break</b>	yes	yes	yes					yes	yes	yes	yes	

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# Peer benchmarking, local

*Note that total number of days for institutions with winter break varies from year to year depending on what days of the week Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on.*

**MIT** | 17 paid holidays including winter break

**Harvard** | 17.5 paid holidays including winter break

**Northeastern** | 17 paid holidays including winter break, one of which is a floating holiday (Labor Day)

**Tufts University** | 18 paid holidays including winter break

**Lesley University** | 21.5 paid holidays including winter break

**Boston University** | 16.5 paid holidays including winter break

**Brandeis University** | 20.5 paid holidays, two of which are floating holidays (Patriots Day and Indigenous Peoples Day).

**Wellesley College** | 11 paid holidays (nothing about winter break listed)

**Amherst College** | 9.5 paid holidays, plus 4.5 floating holidays. Floating holidays unused do not accrue