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Merry Christmas, Father Abbot! Is it really true that SNC students once had to study for their final exams right through Christmas?

Kyra Kronberg '20

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December 2018

Question:

Merry Christmas, Father Abbot! Is it really true that SNC students once had to study for their final exams right through Christmas?

Kyra Kronberg '20

Answer:

My dearest Kyra,

Oh, I remember when our beloved college made a temporary transition in its scheduling that resulted in this sad state of affairs. I remember, too, what a stir it caused!

It was in 1963 that the college dropped its traditional semester plan in favor of a three-term system, and this new system would stay in place for the ensuing six years. An unlooked-for and unpopular outcome, given that the middle trimester bridged the Christmas break, was that our students would leave for the festivities with their work unfinished.

For the duly conscientious, the examinations still in prospect would hang over their head even as they should have been enjoying the holiness of the season and the loving company of their families. Those, on the other hand, who rightly threw themselves wholeheartedly into the season of giving and plentiful sharing would return to the examination hall fatigued by elaborate holiday meals and festive excitement. (I must confess, I myself would experience something of the same condition after the hectic pace of the season!) Some, indeed, would also find themselves facing the consequences of



Ask the Abbot

As the founder of St. Norbert College, and having a prime seat in the center of campus throughout the years, I, Abbot Bernard Pennings, hold the answers to many of your burning questions about the college.

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problematic procrastination over what my dear friend President Neil Webb dubbed this “lame duck” period. It was a sad dilemma all round.

To curb this period of sedation, our college decided in 1969 to revert to its former adherence to the semester system, which has certainly worked well for our students over the many years since.

And now, dear Kyra, allow me to wish you all the felicitations and blessings of this most holy season! A very merry Christmas indeed to you and your family, and to all those who enjoy reading my letters!

Responses to “Ask the Abbot” questions are penned by St. Norbert College staff in the name of Abbot Bernard Pennings, who founded St. Norbert College in 1898.

St. Norbert College

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