



Academic Calendar & Commencement Timeline Proposal

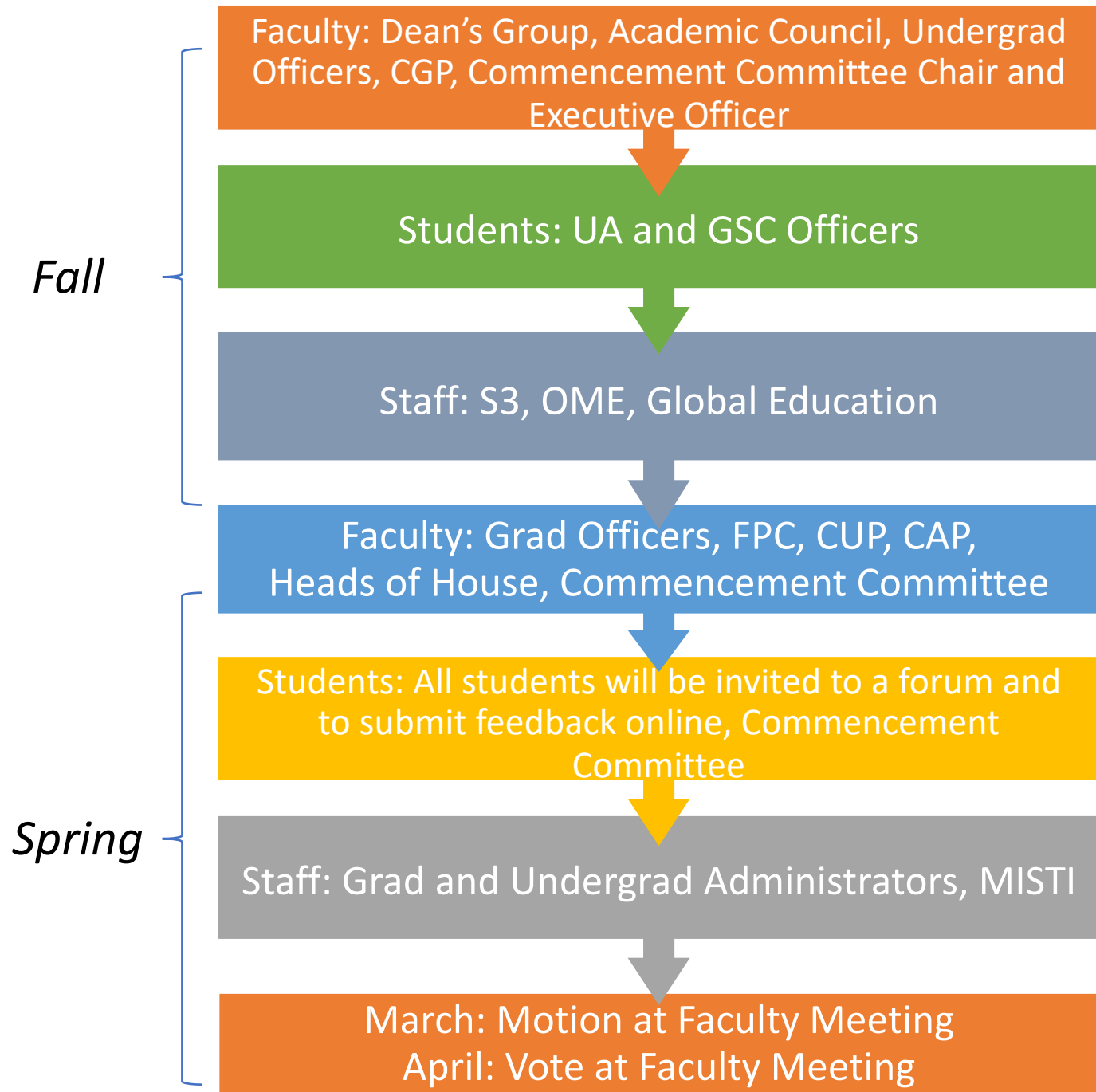
Mary Callahan, Registrar,
Senior Associate Dean

Ian A. Waitz, Vice Chancellor
for Undergraduate and
Graduate Education

Winter 2019 - OVC

Objectives

- Make adjustments to the IAP and spring term academic calendars to enable a **longer summer period and move Commencement into late-May** most years.
- **Gather community feedback** to inform the final calendar proposal.
- Submit final proposal for faculty approval so that **modifications go into effect during the 2019-20 Academic Year**.



Community Engagement & Timeline

Why change is being considered

- **Members of the MIT community have complained that** Commencement is too late.
- Current calendar leaves **a two-week gap between the end of finals and Commencement ceremonies.**
- As a result...
 - There is a **shorter summer period.**
 - Some students have to...
 - **delay employment and/or internship opportunities.**
 - **extend housing rental agreements for the entire month of June.**
 - Some faculty must **avoid research and conference travel that starts in June.**
 - Other challenges arise such as: **delays in performing maintenance of residence halls and classrooms, and launching summer programs hosted in residences.**

Some history

- **From 1980-1994...**

- Commencement was typically scheduled 9-12 calendar days (7-8 business days) after the last day of finals.
- The ceremony was most frequently scheduled on a Monday, though some years it shifted to Friday or Tuesday.

- **In 1994...**

- We moved from 3.5 weeks to 4 weeks of IAP, resulting in the current schedule we have today.

Some peer data: How MIT compares

Peer Institution	Final Exam Period	Commencement Date	Days from end of finals until Commencement
Brown	May 8-17	May 26	9
Columbia	May 10-17	May 22	5
Cornell	May 11-18	May 26	8
Dartmouth	May 31-June 4	June 9	5
Harvard	May 9-18	May 30	12
MIT	May 20-24	June 7	14
Princeton	May 15-25	June 4	10
Stanford	June 7-12	June 16	4
U Chicago	June 10-14	June 15	1
U Penn	May 6-14	May 20	6
Yale	May 2-8	May 20	12

Additional information

- 7000 G and 4500 UG students at MIT.
- **Last IAP, we had 20 classes meet on the last day with 571 registrants** (six G subjects with 107 registrants, one UG/G with two registrants, and 13 UG subjects with 462 registrants).
- **Final exams by student load spring 2018:** 2424 students had one exam, 1485 had two exams, 943 had three exams, 274 had four exams, 26 had more than four exams.
- Over the past 10 years, we have experienced a modest **downward trend in final exams:** 201 in 2008 vs. 187 in 2018.
- The majority of faculty who turn in grades late are not those with finals.

Changing the timing is not a new effort

- From **2015-2016**, as part of an examination of moving the dates for Commencement earlier in the calendar, the **Commencement Committee conducted a student survey and focus groups, asking students to react to the possibility of holding the ceremony on Memorial Day in some years.**
- Highlights:
 - While there was some support for shifting the date, **overall reaction was mixed or neutral.**
 - Graduate students noted that earlier ceremonies would allow them to **start internships sooner and potentially have a positive impact on their housing costs** by reducing time spent in Cambridge.
 - Undergraduates expressed **concerns about how a calendar change could impact senior week.**

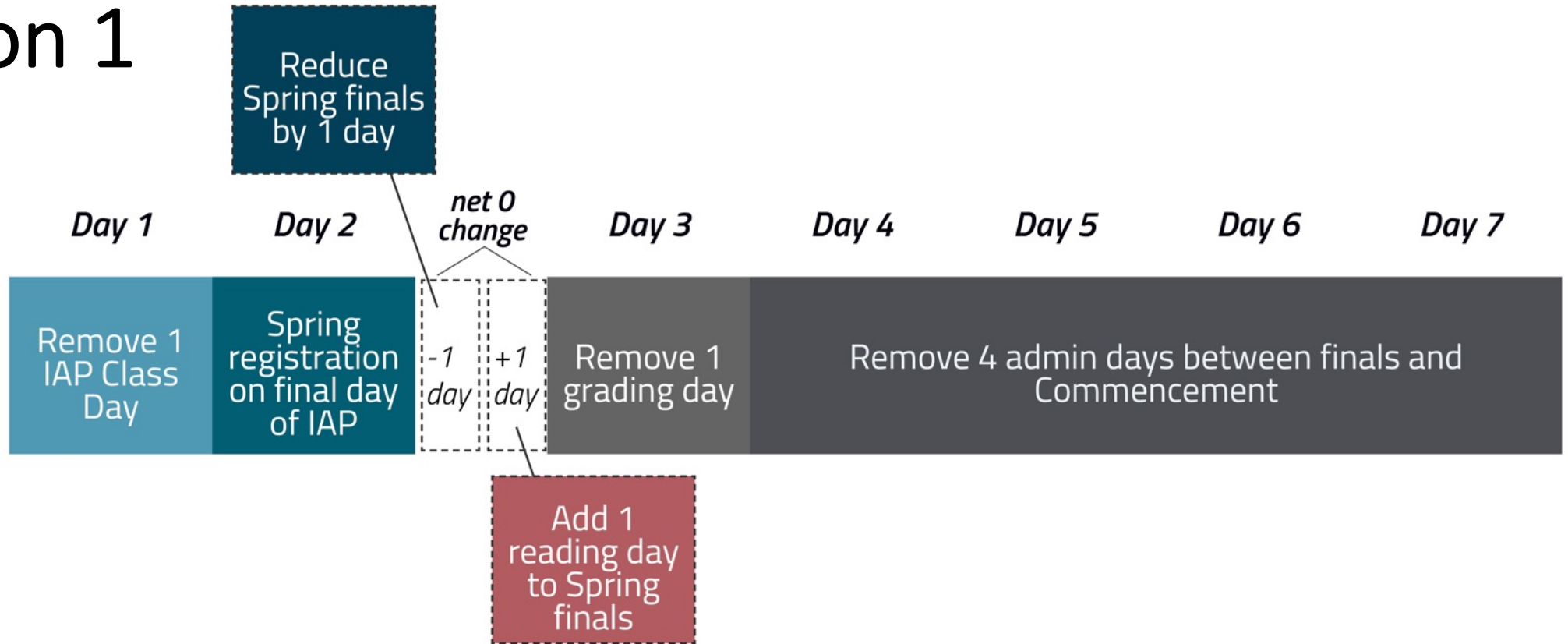
Our approach to achieving the objectives

- To move Commencement earlier by one week, **seven days must be removed from the current calendar** between the start of IAP and commencement.
- Our strategy is to investigate options that make multiple small adjustments (versus one big change).
- After considering dozens of permutations we are presenting three options that achieve the objectives.
- They have different pluses and minuses for different stakeholders.
- **Which is why it is important for us to get community feedback before finalizing a proposal.**

Options for the seven days

- **Four** of these days could feasibly come **from the administrative period between the submission of final grades and commencement**, and **one** from the grading period after finals. The **remaining two** must come **from IAP and/or Spring semester and/or the Reading and Final Exam periods**.
- **Three plans for doing so are under consideration.**
 - Option 1:** Remove the final day of IAP classes and instead begin Spring classes on that day (i.e. IAP ends on Thursday and Spring semester begins on Friday).
 - Option 2:** Reduce the Patriots' Day holiday to a 3-day-weekend and hold classes on the Tuesday.
 - Option 3:** Use a Saturday as one of the four days of final exams.
- **All three options involve** registering for spring subjects during the final week of IAP to make better use of our online registration period. **All three also** reduce spring exams from five days to four, though in most cases these days would overlap with a weekend, building in extra studying time and enabling Options 1 and 2 to add an extra day to the reading period for spring finals.

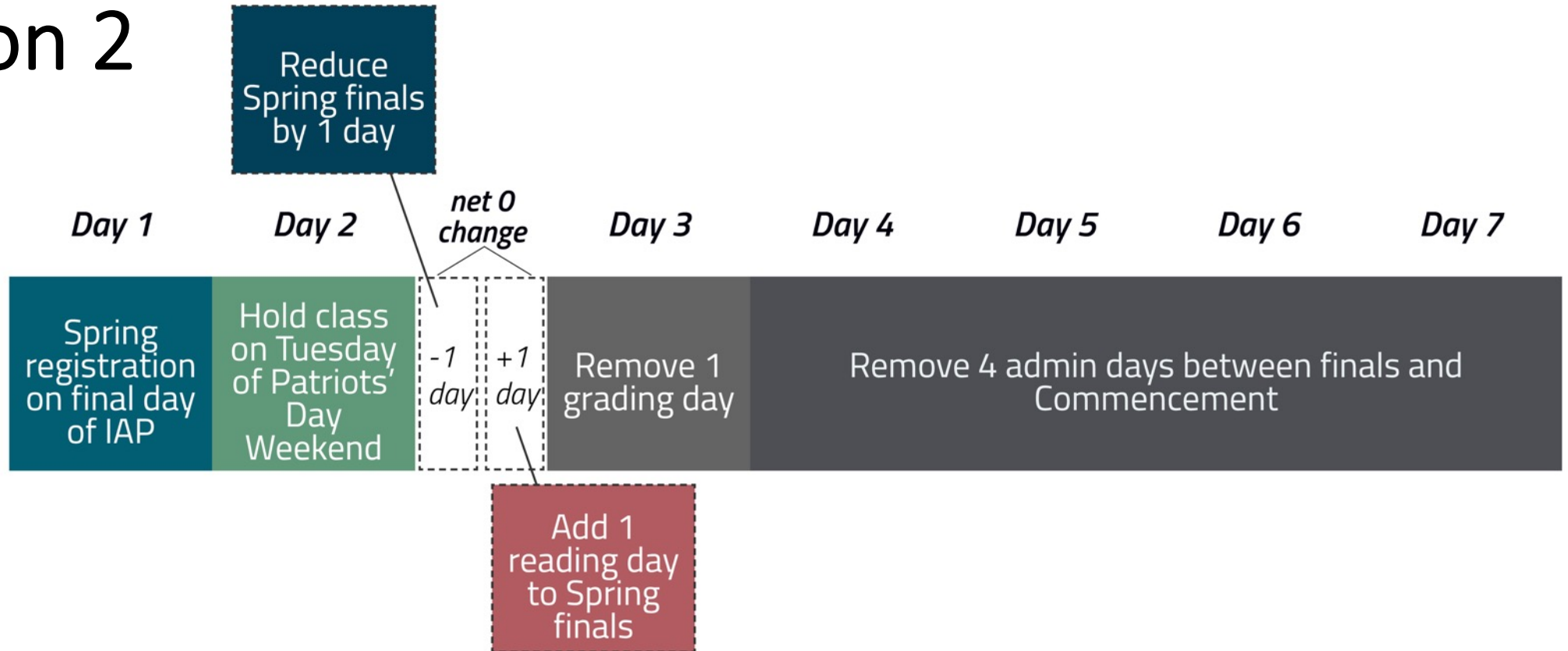
Option 1



Option 1: Remove one day from IAP

The last day is removed from IAP classes. Reg Day on last day of IAP classes (Thursday). First day of spring classes is on Friday after IAP. No impact on Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, but straddling the weekend, which adds a reading day (2 reading, 1 exam, 2 reading, 3 exam days). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

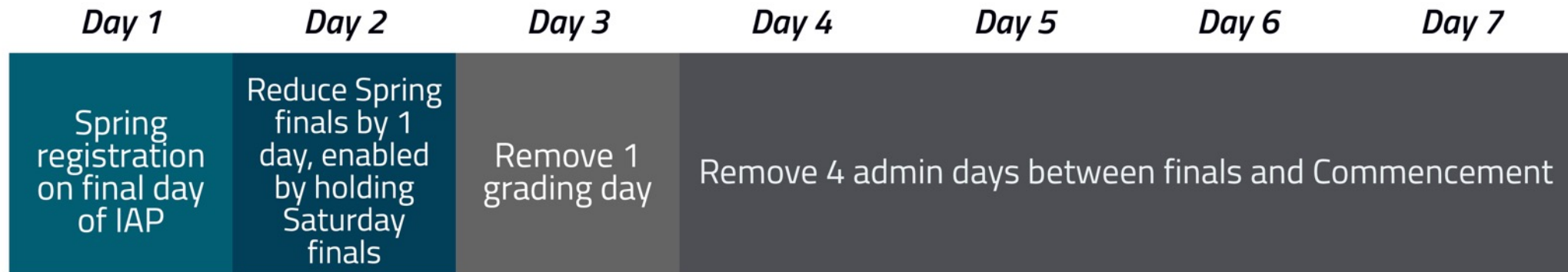
Option 2



Option 2: Remove Tuesday Patriots' Day student holiday

IAP stays the same. Reg Day on last day of IAP (Friday). First day of spring classes on a Monday. Remove Tuesday Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, but straddling the weekend, which adds a reading day (2 reading, 1 exam, 2 reading, 3 exam). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

Option 3

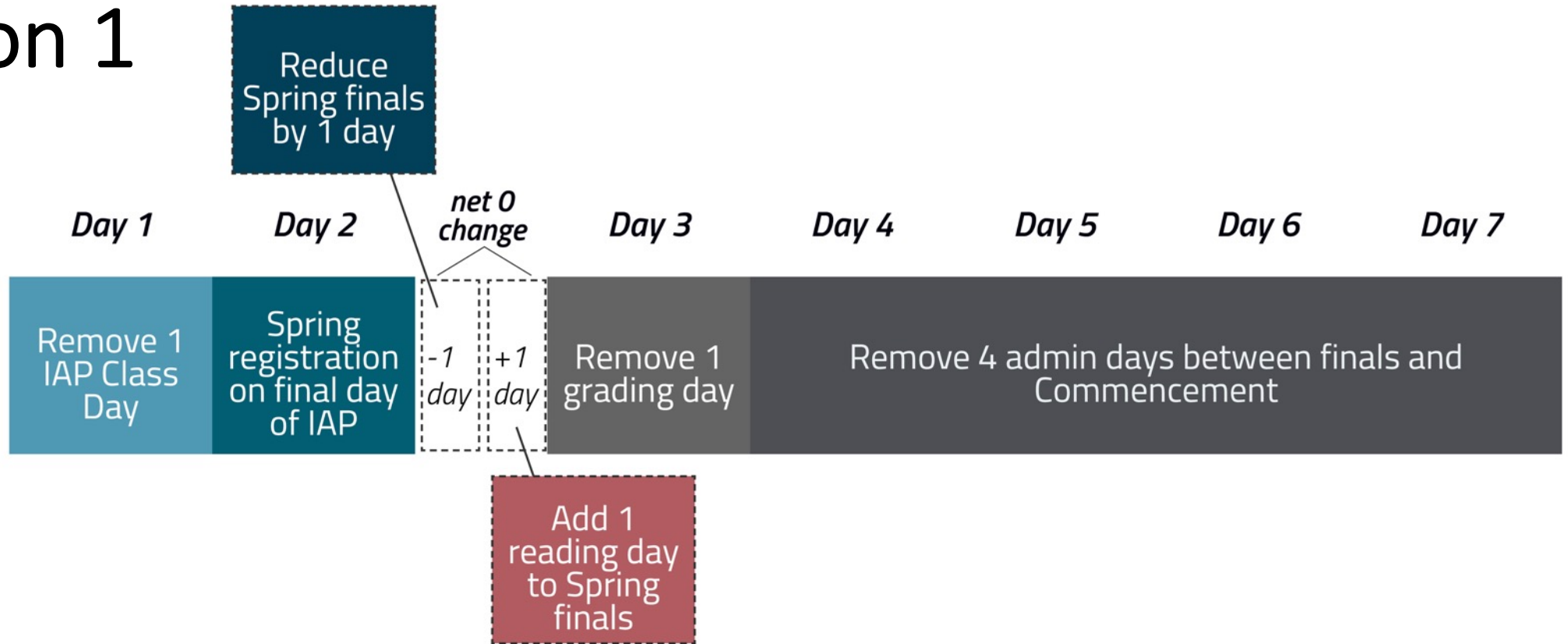


Option 3: Saturday exams

IAP stays the same. Reg Day on last day of IAP (Friday). First day of spring classes on a Monday. No impact on Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, straddling the weekend, but exams on Saturday (2 reading, 1 exam (Sat), 1 reading (Sun), 3 exam days). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

**More detail on
each of the options**

Option 1



Option 1: Remove one day from IAP

The last day is removed from IAP classes. Reg Day on last day of IAP classes (Thursday). First day of spring classes is on Friday after IAP. No impact on Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, but straddling the weekend, which adds a reading day (2 reading, 1 exam, 2 reading, 3 exam days). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

Option 1

For illustrative purposes only

Example end of IAP / Start spring schedule

Current 2019 Schedule = Green || 2019 Schedule with Option 1= Red

January – February 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31 Last Day of IAP Spring Reg Day	Feb 1 Last Day of IAP First Day of Classes	2
3	4 Spring Reg Day	5 First Day of Classes	6	7	8	9

Option 1

For illustrative purposes only

Example end of spring schedule

Current 2019 Schedule = Green || Proposed 2019 Schedule = Red

May – June 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			May 1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
		Last Day of Classes	Reading Day	Last Day of Classes Reading Day	Reading Day Final Exams	Reading Day Reading Day
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Reading Day Reading Day	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams	Final Exams Grade Deadline: 12 noon	
26	27	28	29	30	31	June 1
	Memorial Day	Final Grade Deadline	CAP/CGP mtgs	Hooding	Commencement	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	CAP/CGP mtgs			Hooding	Commencement	

Option 1

Key benefits for students

- Allows for **longer contiguous time in summer to do research, internships, MISTI, vacation, transition to next role (two days for continuing students, one week for graduating students)**.
- Bookending the first day of finals with 2 reading days on each side provides students with **additional preparation time**.
- **Cost-savings:** Reduces situations where graduates must pay an additional month of rent for housing and/or delay the start of employment.
- **2-day Patriots' Day student holiday is preserved.**
- Extends time to complete **residence hall, classroom upgrades, and repairs** that benefit students.

Option 1

Key benefits for faculty & staff

- Commencement complete **on or before May 31 in 5 of 7 years.**
- **Reduced impact on research, travel, and other activities that begin in June.**
- Spring term grades are due on a weekday, which allows for **more efficient collection of late grades** compared to other possible models.
- **A bigger window to run summer programs** for current students as well as other populations, such as high school students or adult learners.
- **Minimal disruption to existing processes**, rules & regulations, etc. compared to other possible models.

Option 1

Potential disadvantages for students

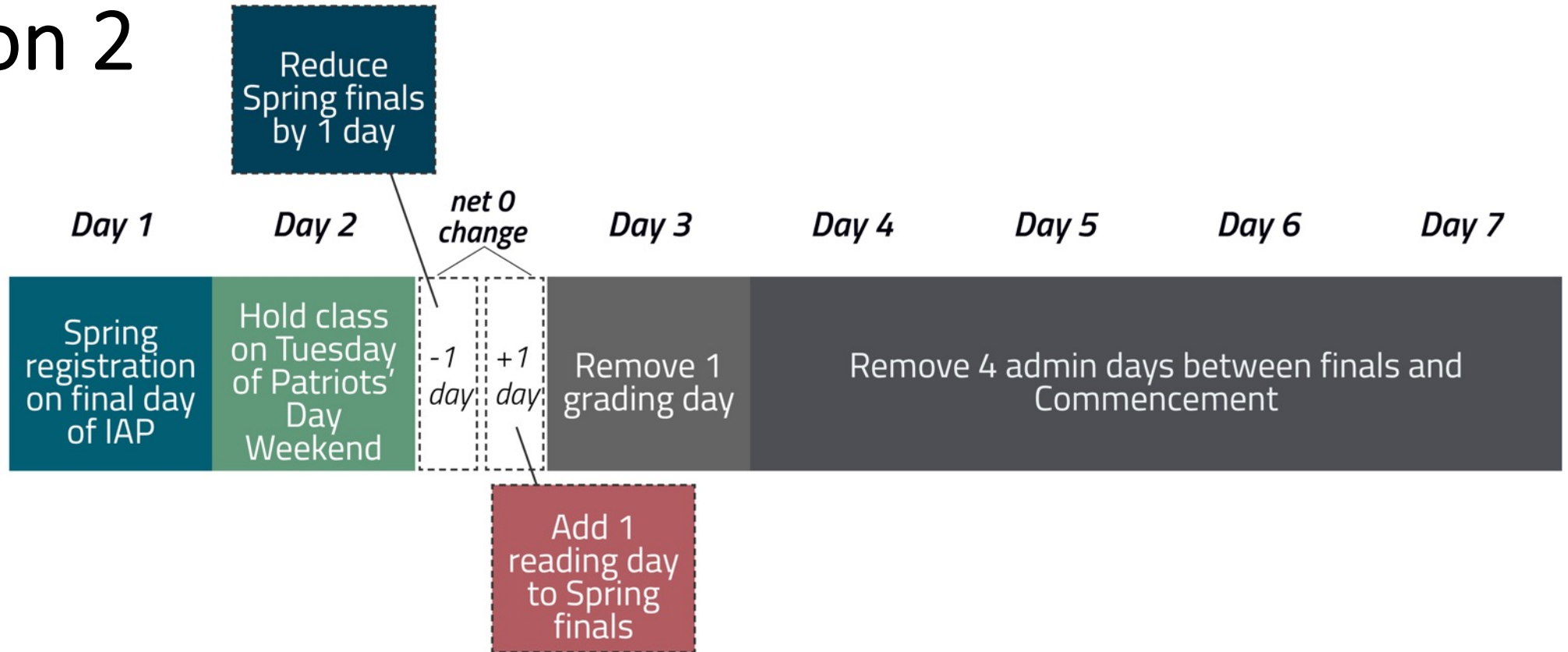
- Risk of more graduates being **unable to complete requirements**.
- Increased possibility of having **back-to-back exams** in spring term.
- One fewer Tuesday/Thursday class day, if the Tuesday after **Patriots' Day is retained as a student holiday**. However, shifting that holiday to the Friday before Patriots' Day weekend would balance Tuesday/Thursday and Monday/Friday teaching days if desired.
- **Less time for students to complete outstanding work** from previous terms.

Option 1

Potential disadvantages for faculty & staff

- **One fewer teaching day** in IAP.
- **Spring term begins on a Friday** potentially impacting large lecture classes that may prefer to meet in lecture ahead of recitations.
- **Shorter period to submit grades.** Grades will be due on the Friday before Memorial Day in 5 out of 7 years (rather than grading over Memorial Day weekend).
- One **fewer work day for departments** to collect grades and review satisfactory progress for degree candidates in the spring term.

Option 2



Option 2: Remove Tuesday Patriots' Day student holiday

IAP stays the same. Reg Day on last day of IAP (Friday). First day of spring classes on a Monday. Remove Tuesday Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, but straddling the weekend, which adds a reading day (2 reading, 1 exam, 2 reading, 3 exam). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

Option 2

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Example end IAP / Start of spring schedule

Current 2019 Schedule = Green || Proposed 2019 Schedule = Red

January - February 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
27	28	29	30	31	Feb 1 Last Day of IAP Spring Reg Day	2
3	4 Spring Reg Day First Day of Classes	5 First Day of Spring Classes	6	7	8	9

April 2019						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
14	15 Patriots Day – No Classes	16 Student Holiday – No Classes Classes Held	17	18	19	20

Option 2

Things to keep in mind

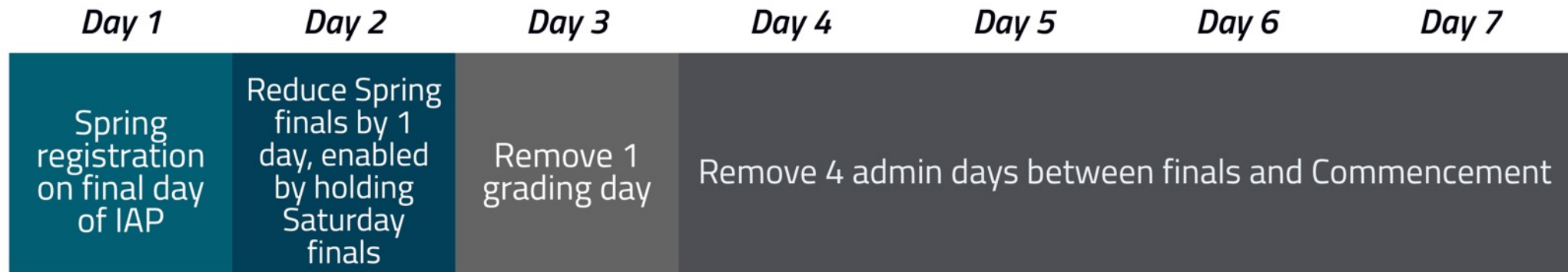
Potential benefits

- No loss in a day of teaching during IAP.
- Classes would begin on a Monday, allowing a full week for the first cycle of lectures/recitations.
- Number of classes would be balanced across each day of the week.

Potential disadvantages

- 3-day Patriots' Day weekend may not mitigate stress as much as current four-day weekend.
- With Spring Registration Day occurring on a Friday, there might be a decrease in the number of students that register before classes begin and the class lists may not be as accurate.

Option 3



Option 3: Saturday exams

IAP stays the same. Reg Day on last day of IAP (Friday). First day of spring classes on a Monday. No impact on Patriots' Day student holiday. Four days of finals, straddling the weekend, but exams on Saturday (2 reading, 1 exam (Sat), 1 reading (Sun), 3 exam days). Remove one grading day. Shorter administrative time after finals.

Option 3

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12	13	14	15	16	17	18
			Last Day of Classes	Last Day of Classes Reading Day	Reading Day Reading Day	Reading Day Final Exams
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Reading Day Reading Day	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams Final Exams	Final Exams	Final Exams Grade Deadline 12 noon	
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	CAP/CGP mtgs			Hooding	Commencement	

Option 3

Things to keep in mind

Potential benefits

- Day of teaching preserved during IAP.
- Spring classes would begin on a Monday, which allows a full week for the first cycle of lectures/recitations.
- Patriots' Day student holiday maintained.

Potential disadvantages

- Adds final exams on a Saturday.
- Students will have three reading days, two before the first day of exams, and one between exam days 2 and 3.

Questions and discussion?

For more information and to provide feedback visit:

https://ovc.mit.edu/academic_timing/

We encourage you to fill out the feedback form **by February 15, 2019 so that your input can be incorporated into our final proposal to the faculty.**