

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Michel Prévost, University Chief Archivist

This year, the University's non-union staff members will be able to take the longest leave—ten business days—for the Holidays since the institution was established in 1848. However, under Ontario's Social Contract, the week before Christmas will be unpaid or come out of annual vacation. A look back on years past shows that this has not always been so.

Until 1969, the University's staff members received very little leave for the Holidays. Christmas and New Year's Day were holidays, of course, but only the half-day before and the day after Christmas plus New Year's Day itself were paid holidays. Records do not show whether productivity remained high during the Holiday season. We do know that the administration operated at a slower pace, because, for example, several employees would take leave to visit family outside the area. Students were also on holidays.

The Board of Governors agreed to make an exception in 1970 to extend the Holiday period from Thursday, December 24 at 5 p.m. to Monday, January 4 at 8:30 a.m. Testimonials from CEPS members—particularly Denise Carroll, administration officer in the President's Office, and Ginette Rozon, assistant to the associate dean of research at the Faculty of Social Sciences—show that this decision was very welcome. As for the exception made by the Board of Governors, it soon became a tradition!

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