

## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** 11 August 2009

**To:** Faculty and Officers of the Administration

**FROM:** Donald R. Lehman  
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

**RE:** Religious Holidays

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Attached is a statement of the University's policy regarding our recognition of the obligations of religiously observant students and faculty, and the University list of religious holidays most frequently observed by our students. Religious holidays that are observed during breaks between semesters (i.e. Christmas) are not included in the attachment because no special accommodations are required. The Senate Resolution that defined this policy also reminds us that student members of all religious groups are entitled to courteous accommodation of religious holidays.

This memorandum is distributed twice each year to assist faculty with planning for the fall and spring semesters. Deans and department chairs are asked to see that this information reaches our limited service, visiting and research faculty as well as all newly-hired faculty who may arrive on campus after the distribution of this memorandum. Please direct any questions to the Office of the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs at 202-994-6510.

Thank you for your compliance with this policy.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

## **UNIVERSITY POLICY REGARDING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS**

The administration has accepted a resolution of the Faculty Senate regarding the accommodation of the obligations of religiously observant students and faculty. The Senate recommended:

- That students notify faculty during the first week of the semester of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance;
- That faculty continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations;
- That faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities;
- That the administration continue to circulate to faculty by the last week of the previous semester a schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by our students with the notation that student members of other religious groups are also entitled to the same courtesies and accommodations; and
- That the administration convey this policy to students by including it in the schedule of classes and other places deemed appropriate.

In keeping with the Senate Resolution, the administration has compiled the following schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by our students.

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY  
RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY CALENDAR\*

<u>HOLIDAY</u>	<u>AY 2009-2010</u>	<u>DAY</u>	<u>RELIGION</u>
Krishna Janmashtami	August 14	Friday	Hindu
First Day of Ramadan (30 days)	August 22	Saturday	Islamic
Rosh Hashanah	September 19-20	Saturday-Sunday	Jewish
Eid al Fitr	September 21	Monday	Islamic
Yom Kippur	September 28	Monday	Jewish
Dassera	September 28	Monday	Hindu
Sukkot	October 3-4	Saturday-Sunday	Jewish
Shemini Atzeret	October 10	Saturday	Jewish
Simchat Torah	October 11	Sunday	Jewish
Deepavali (Diwali)	October 17	Saturday	Hindu
Guru Nanak's Birthday	November 2	Monday	Sikh
Eid al Adha	November 28	Saturday	Islamic
Bodhi Day	December 8	Tuesday	Buddhist
Hanukkah (Chanukah)	December 12	Saturday	Jewish
Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)	December 18	Friday	Islamic
Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday	January 5	Tuesday	Sikh
Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese New Year	February 14	Sunday	n/a
Ash Wednesday	February 17	Wednesday	Christian
Mawlid-an-Nabi	February 26	Friday	Islamic
Purim	February 28	Sunday	Jewish
Ram Navami	March 24	Wednesday	Hindu
Palm Sunday	March 28	Sunday	Christian
Pesach (Passover) - first two days	March 30-31	Tuesday-Wednesday	Jewish
Good Friday	April 2	Friday	Christian
Easter	April 4	Sunday	Christian
Pesach (Passover) - last two days	April 5-6	Monday-Tuesday	Jewish
Vaisakhi	April 14	Wednesday	Sikh
Birth of Buddha (Wesak)	**PLEASE SEE NOTE BELOW		Buddhist

**\*PLEASE NOTE: Although these dates were taken from sources that we feel are reliable, dates often vary by source.**

\*\* The Birth of Buddha is observed on different days in different countries. The various dates are due to the numerous calendars used throughout the world. Some dates confirmed by religious leaders are April 8, May 15-21, 27, 2010

According to several schools of Islamic law, which are followed by many of our Muslim students, attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is a required religious duty. Although the precise time of observance varies from year-to-year, it always remains within the time period of 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m.

Jewish holidays begin at sunset of the previous evening.