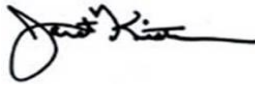




FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

MEMORANDUM

To: Deans, Chairs and Director for distribution to Members of the Faculty and All Instructors

From: Janet Kistner   
Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement

Date: Tuesday, September 1, 2020

Subject: Policy on Observance of Religious Holy Days

Florida State University welcomes students, faculty, and staff of all faiths and encourages them to observe the religious holy days of their choice. In the summer of 2020, President Thrasher sent a special message to the FSU community in response to specific concerns regarding religious discrimination. It can be read [here](#). The Faculty Senate Policy states:

Per Section 1006.53, Florida Statutes, the Florida State University policy on observance of religious holy days provides that reasonable accommodations will be provided to students who request to be excused from class to observe a religious holy day of their faith. Students will make the request in writing to their instructor, preferably upon receipt of the course syllabus but not later than two weeks before the holy day observance. Note that such an accommodation may not be possible when the religious holy day conflicts with group work or experiential learning projects that cannot reasonably be rescheduled; therefore, students should avoid potential conflicts when scheduling courses or joining particular student groups. While excused students will be held responsible for the material covered in their absence, they shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed. Instructors and University administrators shall not penalize students who are absent from academic activities because of excused religious holy day observance (*FSU Faculty Handbook*, p. 129).

Instructors may find information provided in these links to be helpful when responding to student requests concerning holy day observation: <https://interfaithcouncil.fsu.edu/>, [https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/religious\\_holidays/](https://registrar.fsu.edu/calendar/religious_holidays/) and <http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/>. Students who allege that this policy has been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process (<http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergraduate/information/integrity/>). In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the department chair, and finally to the academic dean appropriate to the course involved, stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. This committee has the authority to recommend to the Vice President for Academic Affairs that corrective action be taken when justified. Consult the 'Grievance Procedure' section of the Bulletin for a complete description of the general academic appeals process.

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Florida State University policy also provides that "For an anticipated absence, such as religious holy day observance or for conference attendance that is approved in advance by the program or department chair, instructors should find an acceptable substitute for their classes or obtain the chair's approval for an alternate means of making up the student contact hours (*FSU Faculty Handbook*, p. 123).

cc: Provost Sally McRorie  
Vice Presidents  
Dr. Kimberly Barber, Registrar  
Dr. Eric Chicken, Faculty Senate President and Professor  
Renisha Gibbs, Associate Vice President