



## **A RESOLUTION TO EXPAND RELIGIOUS HOLIDAY ACCOMMODATIONS (21/14)**

**WHEREAS**, GW's current policy limiting the timeframe for requesting faith-based accommodations to the first week of the semester is unnecessarily restrictive; and

**WHEREAS**, the Muslim holiday of Ramadan will coincide with the Spring final examination period for the next two years, thus posing a challenge to the academic performance of students who observe the holiday and whose faith requires them to fast throughout the entirety of the examination period; and

**WHEREAS**, in comparison to its market basket range, GW's Religious Holiday Calendar has the smallest number of distinct faiths represented (six) and has the third-smallest number of holidays included (thirty-two); and

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility of GW as a preeminent institution of higher education and global scholarship to provide students from all cultural backgrounds with an equitable academic experience;

### **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY**

- 1) That the Faculty Senate hereby recommend the following changes be made to the University Religious Holiday Policy, effective immediately:

#### **Religious Holiday Policy**

1. Students must notify faculty ~~during the first week of the semester~~ as early as possible, but no later than three weeks prior to the absence, of their intention to be absent from class on their day(s) of religious observance. ~~If the holiday falls in the first three weeks of class, the student must inform the faculty within the first week of the semester that they are enrolled in the course.~~
2. ~~To the greatest extent possible~~, faculty must continue to extend to these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up examinations.
3. Faculty who intend to observe a religious holiday must arrange at the beginning of the semester to reschedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.
4. Prior to each semester, the administration must circulate to faculty a schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by GW students.

5. Student members of **all** religious groups **are** entitled to the same courtesies and accommodations.
  6. The administration must convey this policy to students by including it in the Schedule of Classes and other places deemed appropriate.
- 2) That the Faculty Senate hereby recommend the following change be made to the University Final Examination Conflict Policy, effective immediately:

### **Final Examination Conflict Policy**

1. There must be written regulation affirming the University policy to have one final examination rescheduled if a student has three or more final examinations scheduled on the same day.
  2. **To the greatest extent possible and without interfering with the integrity of the exam, students who are observing a religious holiday during the final examination period shall be allowed to have any examination rescheduled that conflicts with their day(s) of religious observance. In the case that a student is observing a religious holiday that coincides with the entirety of the examination period, the student shall be allowed to reschedule necessary examinations to alternative days/times to eliminate the need to take more than one final examination in a given day.**
  3. The rescheduling must take place at least three weeks prior to the last day of classes and, whenever possible, the make-up examination be rescheduled during the examination period.
  4. The rescheduling must be achieved in consultation with the instructors involved and, whenever possible, the student selects which examination to reschedule.
- 3) That the Faculty Senate hereby recommend the Office of the Provost updates the GW Religious Holiday Calendar to include the complete list of religious observances proposed by the Student Association and the GW Interfaith Council (Appendix C), effective immediately.

Educational Policy & Technology Committee  
October 5, 2020

Adopted by the Faculty Senate  
November 13, 2020

## **Appendix A (from the Office of the Registrar)**

### **Religious Holidays**

The Faculty Senate has set guidelines pertaining to the observation of religious holidays. These have become university policy and are as follows:

1. 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.
2. That faculty continue to extend these students the courtesy of absence without penalty on such occasions, including permission to make up final examinations.
3. That faculty who intend to observe religious holidays arrange at the beginning of the semester to re-schedule missed classes or to make other provisions for their course-related activities.
4. That, prior to each semester, the administration circulate to faculty a schedule of religious holidays most frequently observed by GW students.
5. That student members of other religious groups are also entitled to courtesies and accommodations.
6. That the administration convey this policy to students by including in the Schedule of Classes and other places deemed appropriate.

## **Appendix B (from the Office of the Registrar)**

### **Final Examination Conflicts**

The administration has accepted a resolution of the Faculty Senate regarding final examination conflicts. The Senate recommended:

1. That there be written regulation affirming the University policy to have one final examination rescheduled if a student has three or more final examinations scheduled on the same day.
2. That the rescheduling take place at least three weeks prior to the last day of classes and that, whenever possible, the make-up examination be rescheduled during the examination period.
3. That the rescheduling be achieved in consultation with the instructors involved and that, whenever possible, the student selects which examination to reschedule.

## Appendix C (from the Student Association)

### Recommended 2020-2021 Religious Holiday Calendar:

Holiday	Date	Week Day	Faith
<b>Eid al-Adha</b>	July 30th - August 3rd	Thursday - Monday	Islamic
<b>Krishna Janmashtami</b>	August 11th	Tuesday	Hindu
<b>Assumption of the Blessed Mother (Holy Day of Obligation)</b>	August 15th	Saturday	Catholic
<b>Paryushana</b>	August 16th - August 23rd	Sunday - Sunday	Jain
<b>Al-Hijra (Islamic New Year)</b>	August 19th - August 20th	Wednesday - Thursday	Islamic
<b>Onam</b>	August 22nd - September 2nd	Saturday - Wednesday	Hindu
<b>Ganesh Chaturthi</b>	August 22nd	Saturday	Hindu
<b>Ashura</b>	August 28th - August 29th	Friday - Saturday	Islamic
<b>Rosh Hashanah</b>	September 18th - September 20th	Friday - Sunday	Jewish
<b>Meskal</b>	September 28th	Monday	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian
<b>Navratri</b>	October 17th - October 26th	Saturday - Monday	Hindu
<b>Yom Kippur</b>	September 27th - September 28th	Sunday - Monday	Jewish
<b>Sukkot</b>	October 2nd - October 9th	Friday - Friday	Jewish

<b>Shmini Atzeret</b>	October 9th - October 11th	Friday - Sunday	Jewish
<b>Simchat Torah</b>	October 10th - October 11th	Saturday - Sunday	Jewish
<b>Installation of Scriptures of Guru Granth Sahib</b>	October 16th	Friday	Sikh
<b>Birth of B'ab</b>	October 18th	Sunday	Baha'i
<b>Birth of Baha'u'llah</b>	October 19th	Monday	Baha'i
<b>Dussehra (Dasara)</b>	October 25th	Sunday	Hindu
<b>Mawlid-an-Nabi</b>	October 28th - October 29th	Wednesday - Thursday	Islamic
<b>All Saint's Day (Catholic Holy Day of Obligation)</b>	November 1st	Sunday	Catholic/ Christian
<b>Deepavali (Diwali)</b>	November 14th	Saturday	Hindu
<b>Bandi Chhor Diwas</b>	November 14th	Saturday	Sikh
<b>Jain New Year</b>	November 15th	Sunday	Jain
<b>Day of the Covenant</b>	November 24th - November 25th	Tuesday - Wednesday	Baha'i
<b>Guru Nanak's Birthday</b>	November 30th	Monday	Sikh
<b>Immaculate Conception (Holy Day of Obligation)</b>	December 8th	Tuesday	Catholic
<b>Hanukkah/ Chanukah</b>	December 10th - December 18th	Thursday - Friday	Jewish
<b>The Nativity of Our Lord (Holy Day of Obligation) / Christmas</b>	December 25th	Friday	Christian/ Catholic
<b>Epiphany</b>	January 6th	Wednesday	Christian
<b>Feast of the Nativity (Russian Orthodox Christmas)</b>	January 7th	Thursday	Eastern Orthodox Christian
<b>Pongal/Sankranti</b>	January 14th	Thursday	Hindu
<b>Guru Gobind Singh's Birthday</b>	January 20th	Wednesday	Sikh

<b>Bodhi Day</b>	January 21st	Thursday	Buddhist
<b>Timkat</b>	January 19th	Tuesday	Ethiopian Orthodox Christian
<b>Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese New Year</b>	February 12th	Friday	N/A
<b>Ash Wednesday</b>	February 17th	Wednesday	Christian/ Catholic
<b>Purim</b>	February 25th - February 26th	Thursday - Friday	Jewish
<b>Maha Shivaratri</b>	March 11th	Thursday	Hindu
<b>Nineteen-Day Fast</b>	March 1st - March 19th	Monday - Friday	Baha'i
<b>Nowruz (Persian New Year)</b>	March 21st - March 22nd	Sunday - Monday	N/A
<b>Pesach (Passover) - first two days</b>	March 27th - March 28th	Saturday - Sunday	Jewish
<b>Palm Sunday</b>	March 28th	Sunday	Christian/ Catholic
<b>Holika Dahan</b>	March 28th	Sunday	Hindu
<b>Holika Dahan - Holi</b>	March 29th	Monday	Hindu
<b>Holy Thursday</b>	April 1st	Thursday	Christian/Catholic
<b>Good Friday</b>	April 2nd	Friday	Christian/ Catholic
<b>Pesach (passover) - last two days</b>	April 3rd - April 4th	Saturday - Sunday	Jewish
<b>Easter (Western)</b>	April 4th	Sunday	Christian/ Catholic
<b>Ramadan</b>	April 12th - May 11th	Monday - Tuesday	Islamic
<b>Ugadi</b>	April 13th	Tuesday	Hindu
<b>Vaisakhi</b>	April 14th	Wednesday	Sikh
<b>Ram Navami</b>	April 21st	Wednesday	Hindu
<b>Hanuman Jayanti</b>	April 26th - April 27th	Monday - Tuesday	Hindu

<b>Good Friday (Orthodox)</b>	April 30th	Friday	Orthodox Christian
<b>Easter (Orthodox)</b>	May 2nd	Sunday	Orthodox Christian
<b>Eid al-Fitr</b>	May 13th	Thursday	Islamic
<b>Shavuot</b>	May 16th - May 18th	Sunday - Tuesday	Jewish
<b>Birth of Buddha (Wesak)</b>	May 19th	Wednesday	Buddhist

*\*Yellow = New Holiday*  
*\*Gray = Existing Holiday*