

## Interfaith Council at Ohio State University

June 20, 2018

Provost McPheron,

As the new academic year sneaks up on us, I am reaching out to you on behalf of our interfaith community at Ohio State. We have been building an Interfaith Council for the spiritual leaders who are both on and adjacent to campus. Currently, there are over 40 members in the group representing over 30 diverse faith organizations.

Last fall, you were very accommodating as we helped our Muslim students negotiate a sacred holiday with their classes and coursework. This year there are several holidays sacred to both the Jewish and Muslim community during the first few weeks of school. Although many universities continue to treat religion and faith on campus as a private affair for students, intentionally separating religious beliefs and identity from campus life, there are critical moments this fall semester that will affect the success of a significant group of our students.

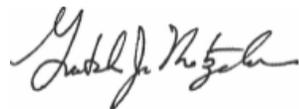
As you can see from the table attached there are several religious holidays that occur in late August and during the month of September. One of our main concerns this fall is that instructors may elect to drop students who are not present in class because of a sacred holiday during the critical first few weeks of school.

We would ask that instructors recognize that some students will not be able to, because of their religious beliefs, attend classes or to participate in any examination or study requirement on a sacred holiday. We would ask that those students who have sought accommodation not be dropped from the class roster and be excused from any such examination or study requirement, and be provided with an opportunity to make up such examination, study, or work requirement which they may have missed because of such absence.

Instructors should accept a student's assertion of the need to be absent from class for religious reasons, but students should notify instructors in advance that they will miss class in order to observe a religious holiday.

Thank you for your support, please let us know what we can do to be of assistance.

On behalf of the Interfaith Council,



Gretchen Metzelaars, PhD  
Advisor to the Muslim Student Association