

Memo from SACDI to President Capilouto regarding the recommendations of the Taskforce for Religious Holidays

January 4, 2020

## MEMORANDUM

TO: President Eli Capilouto  
FROM: Senate Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (SACDI)  
RE: **Recommendations from Taskforce on Religious Holidays**  
Attachment: Summary provided to SACDI from the Taskforce

Dear President Capilouto:

In the 2018-19 academic year, the Senate Advisory Committee on Diversity and Inclusion (SACDI) asked for the creation of a Taskforce on Religious Holidays, to develop recommendations for the University of Kentucky regarding the observance of religious holidays by members of the campus community. The full findings from this taskforce, led by Dr. Victor Hazard, Associate Vice President for Student Engagement, and Dr. Kathryn Cardarelli, Senior Assistant Provost for Faculty Affairs, are attached, and include a set of recommendations. SACDI is grateful for the thorough and diligent effort by the taskforce, and endorses the following recommendations based on their report:

### Recommendations

1. Disseminate the Interfaith Calendar found at <http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/>, as a resource for scheduling.
2. Widely communicate information to the University community on religious holidays and events to further the University goal of promoting global and cultural awareness and acceptance. Add a note from the President such as, *“We recognize the importance of freedom, acceptance, and respect of a variety of beliefs in a diverse and inclusive community. For that reason, we are committed to encouraging and allowing members of our community to engage in the religious practice of their choice. Our rules and administrative practices enable individuals within our community to work with their faculty or supervisors in order to achieve the best practice balance between religious practice and other community needs and obligations.”*
3. Remind faculty of the existence of specific language referring to religious holiday accommodations in the syllabus template as approved by University Senate.
4. Remind community of the existence of specific language referring to religious holiday accommodations on the [Academic Ombud](#) website, in particular *“The Offices of Institutional Diversity, the Dean of Students, and the Ombud are available for consultation.”*
5. Include content related to religious holiday accommodations in New Faculty Orientation.
6. Improve the visibility (and possibly the language) in [HR Policy #83](#) regarding religious holiday accommodations for staff.

7. Improve awareness on campus that the Office of Institutional Equity and Equal Opportunity is the adjudicator of inquiries regarding religious holiday accommodations/disputes related to faculty, staff and students.

Based on the report and the recommendations within, it is the committee's belief that the existing university policies serve to protect the freedom of religion of the UK community, and as described in recommendation #2 above, we respectfully request that the Office of the President release a statement articulating UK's respect of, and commitment to, religious diversity. Such a statement would, we believe, increase campus awareness of the current policies, and empower members of our community to seek accommodation for religious holidays where needed.

We thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Beth S. Guiton, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor, Department of Chemistry  
Chair, Senate Advisory Committee for Diversity and Inclusion  
University of Kentucky