

To: The Purdue University Community

From: Alysa Christmas Rollock
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Subject: Religious, Ethnic, and Civic Observances

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life.

I urge you to be sensitive to the fact that the scheduling of examinations, class assignments, meetings, and other significant events on certain holidays or days of religious observance may place some members of the University Community in a very difficult situation. Your cooperation in helping members of the Purdue Community observe their religious traditions is appreciated. Students requesting special consideration in scheduling will be expected to make their needs known to their course instructors in advance and be flexible in arranging alternative times to complete any assignments they might miss. This week, the Diversity Resource Office is distributing a Calendar of Religious, Ethnic, and Civic Observances for the 2008-2009 academic year. It is also online at <http://www.purdue.edu/humanrel/dro>.

We are quickly approaching the most sacred time period in the Hebrew/Jewish calendar, The Days of Awe. This period commences with Rosh Hashanah (New Year's Day) on September 30 and October 1 and concludes with Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) on October 9. (Since Jewish holidays continue from sundown of one day to sundown of the concluding day, the holidays commence on the evening of September 29 and October 8, respectively.) On these very special days, observant Jews are prohibited from engaging in any activities that are likely to divert their attention from the solemnity of prayer and deep introspection. Thus, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, many students will not travel, write, watch television, listen to music, prepare foods, or do other things that may be deemed "work" for themselves or for others.

We are currently in the midst of Ramadan, the most sacred holiday of the Muslim year. This year in the United States, Ramadan will continue through October 1, 2008. During this period, Muslims will fast from sunrise to sunset.

Thank you for your contribution to Purdue's celebration of diversity and its commitment to inclusivity.