



WISCONSIN COUNCIL  
OF CHURCHES  
COURAGE. JUSTICE. HOLY IMAGINATION.

May 5, 2021

Office of the Board of Regents  
1860 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706

Dear University of Wisconsin Board of Regents:

I am writing on behalf of the Wisconsin Council of Churches to urge that the Fall 2020 starting date of classes at six UW System campuses be moved to avoid a conflict with Rosh Hashana and the holiest time of the Jewish year.

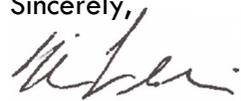
As a statewide network of thirty diverse Christian traditions, respect for religious diversity and a spirit of inclusiveness and equity is central to our mission. We therefore support the request by the Wisconsin Jewish Conference, the Wisconsin Council of Rabbis, the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, the Jewish Federation of Madison, and others to move the 2021 start date of classes at UW-Madison, UW-Oshkosh, UW-Parkside, UW-Superior, UW-Stout and UW-La Crosse to September 2, 3 or 9.

Requiring a student or faculty member to choose between attending the first day of classes and observing a religious holiday sends a message of exclusion and disrespect that flies in the face of the University's own stated values of inclusion, equity, and respect.

We realize that academic calendars are set well in advance, and that making changes at this point will not be easy. However, these campuses still have the time and the flexibility to correct this error, if there is the will to do so.

We hope you will not only correct this particular mistake, but also work to develop a system-wide, inclusive and transparent process for setting academic calendars that will avoid such conflicts in the future.

Thank you for attention to our concerns.

Sincerely,  


Rev. Kerri Parker  
Executive Director  
Wisconsin Council of Churches

cc: President Thompson