

June 15, 2021

To: Tommy Thompson, President, UW System
Ed Manydeeds, President, UW Board of Regents

From: Debbie Ford, Chancellor, UW-Parkside *Debbie Ford*

Dear President Thompson and Regent Manydeeds,

This letter is to provide you with the information regarding our efforts at UW-Parkside to address concerns raised by representatives of various campus, state, and international faith-based organizations concerning the conflict created by the scheduling of the 2021 fall semester start date during Rosh Hashanah.

We are taking the following steps, both in the short-term for the fall session and in the long term:

- We will send a communication to the campus community, including all new students, apologizing for the oversight, and stating our commitment to accommodate students, faculty, and staff for their religious observances as well as and taking steps to ensure we won't have the same conflict in the future.
- We will be sending a memo to faculty and teaching staff for distribution in late June noting the conflict for September 2021, reminding them of our current policy regarding religious observances, and asking that they communicate with students regarding steps to be taken if students will miss the first day of class.
- We are also asking our faculty and instructors who have classes that may create those conflicts to make course materials available in an online format or provide other material, ideally in advance, so that a student is not disadvantaged by missing any class.
- We will conduct our housing check-in Sunday, September 5th -Tuesday, September 7th so individuals will have the opportunity to move into their residence halls prior to the start of Rosh Hashanah.
- Evening dining hours will be available to accommodate the fasting schedule.
- Ranger Welcome events on Tuesday, September 7th for new students will be encouraged but not mandatory.
- We will review our religious observances policy and consider revisions to remove some of the burden from students; specifically, the requirement that students notify faculty about missed classes at least two weeks before the start of the term.
- Finally, the provost's office will coordinate a discussion with the registrar to review academic calendars through 2024-2025 and consider changes to prevent conflicts with major religious holidays.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have additional questions about these steps. Thank you.