September 5, 2008

To: Twin Cities Campus Deans, Directors, and Department Heads

From: E. Thomas Sullivan, Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Re: Student/Employee Absence for Religious Holidays

Please review the following general policy guidelines related to excused absences for students and employees to observe religious holidays. I am asking that you inform faculty, staff and students in your units of this policy and post a copy in a conspicuous place within your department.

Students:

The University of Minnesota permits absences from class for participation in religious observances.

Students who plan to miss class must:

1. Request from instructors excuses for anticipated absences at the beginning of the semester, or as soon as possible;
2. Meet with instructors to reschedule any missed examinations; and
3. Obtain class notes from other students.

Instructors are required to assist students in obtaining course materials and assignments distributed during class sessions and to make arrangements for taking missed examinations.

Employees:

This policy applies to professional and administrative employees, civil service employees and faculty who are on twelve month or A-base appointments. It does not apply to employees who are subject to a collective bargaining agreement which governs their rights and it does not apply to faculty who are on nine month appointments who may make arrangements for observance of religious holidays by arrangement with their department head.
The University of Minnesota permits absences from work for employees to participate in religious observances. These absences must be arranged with the employee's supervisor who is encouraged to accommodate the employee's request to the extent it is practicable in their unit. Employees are responsible for giving supervisors at least two week's notice of the proposed absence.

Employees may request this time as either:

1. Paid vacation,
2. Time off without pay; or
3. The option to make up equivalent time by arrangement with the employee's supervisor.

Questions about this policy as it affects students should be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost and Dean of Undergraduate Education (612-626-9425). Questions about this policy as it affects employees should be directed to your human resources contacts in your individual units.

NOTE: If you maintain a hard copy of the Academic Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, copies of this memo should be added under a new section entitled "Holidays."