Policy on Observance of Religious Holidays

At its meeting of November 21, 2000, the Academic Senate unanimously approved the following policy on observance of religious holidays:

1. Policy

The faculty of San Francisco State University shall make reasonable accommodations for students to observe religious holidays when such observances require students to be absent from class activities. It is the responsibility of the student to inform the instructor, in writing, about such holidays during the first two weeks of the class each semester. If such holidays occur during the first two weeks of the semester, the student must notify the instructor, in writing, at least three days before the date that he/she will be absent. It is the responsibility of the instructor to make every reasonable effort to honor the student request without penalty, and of the student to make up the work missed.

2. Rationale

The San Francisco State University community recognizes and takes pride in the diversity of religious and spiritual backgrounds of its student body. The University strives to make every reasonable effort to give its students the opportunity to observe their recognized religious holidays.

In order to observe days of religious significance, students may occasionally be absent from class. Faculty are required by law to make reasonable accommodations to allow students time off from class to observe such holidays. This is in accordance with Section 89320 of the Education Code which states that the University must ". . . permit any student who is eligible to undergo the test or examination to do so, without penalty, at a time when the activity would not violate the student's religious creed."

3. Implementation

This policy shall be included in the University Bulletin and appropriate websites. Faculty are encouraged to include the policy statement in their course syllabi. Students wishing to be excused from class attendance for religious observances must submit a written request to their instructors prior to their absences, as stated in the policy above.

The Office of Human Relations should publish a calendar of exemplar observances each academic year, on the SFSU website, so faculty can plan their syllabi with current information.

4. Review

The policy shall be reviewed by the Student Affairs Committee three years after its implementation and suggest changes, if any, to the Academic Policies Committee.