To: Carnegie Mellon Faculty and Staff  
From: Anne R. Witchner, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs  
Date: August 6, 2013  
Subject: Class Attendance and Scheduling of Exams on Religious Holidays for Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

As you are aware, Carnegie Mellon is a very diverse community in which many different religious and ethnic groups are represented. Given the diversity of our student body, it is clear that we cannot avoid assigning academic work or sponsoring student events on every religious observance. However, five particular holidays that affect a great number of our students are: Rosh Hashanah (begins Wednesday, September 4 at sundown), Yom Kippur (begins Friday, September 13 at sundown), Passover (begins Monday, April 14 at sundown), Good Friday (April 18) and Easter (Sunday, April 20). We should be sensitive to these dates when planning mandatory activities, both academic and co-curricular.

I urge each of you to make an effort to minimize the scheduling of required assignments and/or events during these religious observances. Faculty members should invite students to bring scheduling conflicts to their attention so that a reasonable accommodation may be made. University policy dictates that when a student has a conflict between a religious holiday and a graded assignment, he or she should contact the faculty member directly in an effort to work out a resolution.

There are several valuable resources, which can provide detailed information about religious observances and celebrations. Please see http://www.interfaithcalendar.org. An additional resource is an online Julian Orthodox calendar at http://www.holytrinityorthodox.com/calendar/

I appreciate your assistance in this important matter. Please feel free to contact me at 268-4886 should you have questions.