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July 6, 2021

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Hesselbein Urges UW System Campuses to Reconsider Start Date

MADISON – The Wisconsin State Journal reported six UW System campuses will start the fall semester during the Jewish High Holy day of Rosh Hashanah. Representative Dianne Hesselbein (D-Middleton), the Democratic ranking member on the Assembly Colleges and Universities Committee, released the following statement:

“No student, faculty, or staff member should ever be forced to choose between their faith or their studies and jobs. Starting off the autumn semester on a date forcing many students, faculty and staff to miss their first day of school is insensitive, unnecessary, and creates an unwelcoming atmosphere. I echo the calls of the Jewish university community for an apology and accommodations from these campuses.”

“Is it too late to establish a new starting date? Wisconsin should strive for further inclusivity throughout all of our institutions, and part of the effort should include considering religious and cultural holidays before establishing conflicting dates that reflect disrespect for numerous students and employees. Providing an adequate apology will go a long way towards making our University of Wisconsin System a place that demonstrates respect for everyone.”

“Moving forward, this instance provides us with the opportunity to reflect and embrace the diversity of our entire campus community. We can learn from our different backgrounds and experiences to exemplify what our colleges and universities represent – a future built on the foundation of knowledge, acceptance and understanding.”

“I applaud the campuses that will remedy this situation by employing the recommendations of their Jewish students, faculty and staff.”

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