ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC ASSEMBLY

FOURTEENTH SESSION

BILL NO. 14 - 41

INTRODUCED BY: Schare SECONDED BY: Kaplan

A BILL TO: Change the Religious Observance Policy to accommodate individual religious practices

THE ASSOCIATED STUDENTS OF MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY ENACT:

WHEREAS, Diversity in the faculty, students and staff is a major source of Michigan State University’s intellectual vitality and innovative spirit; and

WHEREAS, The current Religious Observance policy state that “The faculty and staff should be sensitive to the observance of these holidays so that students who absent themselves from class on these days are not seriously disadvantaged […] Some instructors attempt to cover all reasons for student absences from required academic events such as quizzes or exams with a blanket policy, e.g., allowing the student to drop one grade or two quizzes without policy. If this is meant to extend to religious observances, the instructor should state this clearly at the beginning of the term”; and

WHEREAS, The current policy does not require faculty to accommodate students for absences due to religious observances; and

WHEREAS, All students should have a fair and equal opportunity and should not be penalized from earning full credit in a class, regardless of religious belief; and

WHEREAS, Dropping of examinations should not extend to religious holidays. All students should have the opportunity to drop their lowest grade, where applied, without discrimination and regardless of religious belief; and

WHEREAS, Faculty should be sent a list of religious holidays to be made aware of the observance and absences of students at the beginning of each semester or year; and

WHEREAS, Faculty members are expected to reasonably accommodate individual religious practices, in accordance with Federal Law; and

WHEREAS, A Modified Religious Observance Policy could include the following: “It is the policy of Michigan State University, as it is also Federal Law, that instructors will, without prejudice, provide students with accommodations who provide instructors with proper notification and wish to observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observations. Students must be allowed an opportunity to make up any examination, in class extra credit, other written test, or class work, have access to any handouts or other material distributed in class and have the opportunity to obtain or to review and duplicated lecture notes or slides presented in class. A makeup examination must be at a time feasible to both instructor and students, cover only the material for which the student is originally responsible, and be given within a reasonable limit that retains currency of the material.”; therefore be it
RESOLVED, The Office of the Chair should meet with the appropriate administration and faculty to modify the current policy and should advocate for a specific Religious Observance Policy to accommodate for individual religious practices as stated above.

INTRODUCED ON March 21, 2006

SPECIAL ACTION TAKEN __________________________ DATE ______________________

FINAL ACTION TAKEN X 26-0-0 March 21, 2006
PASSED FAILED VOTE DATE

CHAIRPERSON SECRETARY