

TO: STUDENTS AND PARENTS  
 FROM: RABBI HERSHEY NOVACK  
 CO-DIRECTOR / SR. CAMPUS RABBI  
 CHABAD AT WASHU - ROHR CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE  
 RABBI@CHABADONCAMPUS.ORG  
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# Memo

## RE. INITIATIVES FOR OBSERVANT STUDENTS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

Welcome to WashU! Chabad strives to be a warm, welcoming and inclusive space for students of all Jewish backgrounds and affiliations. We seek to foster Jewish life on campus by delivering accessible and meaningful Jewish experiences to the broad campus community.

Students who choose to follow a religiously observant Jewish lifestyle are pillars of the campus community and exemplars to their peers. We – along with many campus partners – offer a plethora of opportunities and resources that enable students to maintain a meaningful sense of Jewish involvement while in college.

Members of the campus community celebrate with each other during good times, and support each other during challenging ones. Our team is always available for students and their families. With any questions, contact Rabbi Hershey Novack at 314-757-2884 or Chana R. Novack at 314-359-0085.

The following list of programs and initiatives may be of interest to observant students and their families:

- ✓ **Kosher Food** - Kosher food, prepared by WashU's own catering company is readily available on campus. Hot lunches and dinners are served Sunday through Thursday in the Bears' Den eatery on the South 40, the main dining areas for First Year students and Sophomores. There are also pre-packaged sandwiches and salads available at most campus eateries for purchase with cash or meal points. On Pesach, Dining Services provides Kosher-for-Pesach meals on every night of Chol haMoed, as well as pre-packaged options available for purchase. Kashrut is certified by the Vaad Hoer of St. Louis ([www.ovkosher.org](http://www.ovkosher.org)). For meals on Shabbat and holidays, continue reading!
- ✓ **Tefila** - Prayer is an integral component of a Jewish life. Chabad House hosts a Shacharis Minyan on weekdays, subject to student participation. Daily Mincha and Maariv have proven to be trickier to organize on a regular basis, though we are working on it. Each Friday evening, a Minyan for Kabbalat Shabbos and Maariv is hosted in the Chabad House, as is a Minyan on Shabbat mornings during the semester. Additionally, there are a number of Shuls in the community, including Bais Abraham, which is on the Delmar Loop. Further down Delmar, there is the Bais Menachem Shul (Chabad), a Young Israel, and others.
- ✓ **Torah Learning** - Study is available in a variety of settings. Chabad hosts a high-level Beit Midrash-style program called The ARI Fellowship. Chabad also offers classes in Chasidic philosophy. Additionally, we host lunch-and-learn programs throughout the year and help set up Chavrusas with a peer or professional educator. There is also a weekly Mishmar (learning gathering) hosted by students with refreshments provided by Chabad. The Chabad House has a library with many hundreds of Sefarim that are available for students to study and enjoy, and WashU's Olin Library also contains several hundred books of Judaica.

- ✓ **Shabbat Dinner** – Well over 100 students attend the family-style Shabbat dinner held each week at Chabad, making it the largest regularly-scheduled gathering of Jewish students at WashU. A wonderfully diverse group of students choose to participate, together building the campus community. Often the crowd includes prospective students, parents, deans, professors and other guests. Shabbat dinner at Chabad continues during school breaks as well. The dinners at Chabad are sponsored by families, alumni and community members who enable us to provide these festive meals at no charge to students. Please contact Rabbi Novack if you know someone who may be interested in becoming a sponsor.
- ✓ **Post-Shabbat Dinner** - Onegs, Farbrengens and social activities – including board games and tea – take place most Friday nights, either at Chabad House or at nearby student apartments. The Chabad Student Association has also initiated a post-dinner series to invite university professors and community members to engage students in discussion and share their insights.
- ✓ **Shabbat Lunch** - After services conclude on Shabbat morning, the “Shabbos-lunch community” comes together to enjoy a delicious and festive weekly meal. Lunches rotate between Chabad and Hillel. Chabad’s pledge is to ensure that students always have a place to celebrate Shabbat lunch at an accessible location and at no direct cost to students.
- ✓ **Shabbat Spot and Seduah Shlishit** - The Chabad House is open during the entire Shabbos with a stocked refrigerator for students to lounge, grab a bite and hang out! Each week about an hour before the conclusion of Shabbos, students gather for light snacks and soulful singing, followed by Havdala.
- ✓ **Eruv** - Chabad has partnered with the St. Louis Eruv Committee to extend the community Eruv to include much of WashU’s Danforth campus. All of the South 40, where most freshmen and sophomores reside, most of the academic buildings, the Chabad House, Hillel, and Bais Abe are all within the Eruv. The Eruv **does not include** the Loop Lofts, the Moonrise Hotel or Forest Park. More at [www.stleruv.org](http://www.stleruv.org).
- ✓ **Holidays** - Jewish holidays are a special time to develop community. Chabad hosts Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur services and holiday meals. For Sukkot, we construct a large Sukkah in the lot behind the Chabad House. In addition, the Chabad Student Association erects a Sukkah in the DUC courtyard where a Lulav and Etrog are available for student use. Chabad also helps students find hospitality with observant families proximate to campus. Students can sign up for home hospitality using Chabad WashU’s Google Doc matching system.
- ✓ **Shabbat Keys** - Mechanical keys are available for Shomer Shabbos students through the Office of Residential Life. If you anticipate needing a mechanical key, please reach out to Rabbi Novack; Residential Life requires written confirmation from a rabbi before a key is assigned.
- ✓ **Holiday exams** - Tests scheduled during the chagim can be a challenge for observant students. Under recent guidelines that were sought by enterprising undergraduates, WashU faculty members ought to be “understanding” of students who face religious conflicts with exam scheduling. If a professor gives a student difficulty please contact Rabbi Novack.
- ✓ **Mezuzahs** - For a \$40 deposit, Chabad provides a handwritten scroll with a case and double-stick tape approved by Residential Life for use in the dorm buildings.
- ✓ **WUCholent** - Is the irreverently-named email group listserv designed to facilitate person-to-person communication among the observant student population. It serves as a forum for connecting students with each other in order to build a sense of community.

Thank you for reading.