

TO: INCOMING STUDENTS AND PARENTS  
 FROM: RABBI HERSHEY NOVACK  
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# Memo

## RE. INITIATIVES FOR OBSERVANT STUDENTS OF ALL BACKGROUNDS

Welcome to campus! Chabad strives to be a warmly 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 opportunities 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 to enable students to maintain a meaningful sense of Jewish involvement while in college.

Members of the campus community rely on each other during good times, and support each other during challenges. Our people are also available for students and their families. Feel free to contact Rabbi Hershey Novack at 314-757-2884 or Chana R. Novack at 314-359-0085 (both numbers voice/text). For more information about any of these programs, please reach out and we will be glad to respond.

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 catering company is readily available on campus. Freshly prepared dinner is served Sunday through Thursday evenings at the Bears' Den eatery on the South 40. → *New for this semester: freshly prepared hot Kosher breakfasts and lunches!* There are also pre-packed 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-pack options available for purchase. Kashrut is by the Vaad Hoer of St. Louis ([www.ovkosher.org](http://www.ovkosher.org)). For meals on Shabbat and other holiday, 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. Each Friday evening, a Minyan for Kabalas Shabbos and Maariv is hosted in the Chabad House, as is a Minyan on most Shabbat mornings and afternoons during the semester. Additionally, Bais Abraham Congregation is located under a mile from campus and graciously welcomes students. For more information visit [www.baisabe.com](http://www.baisabe.com) or email Rabbi Hyim Shafner at [rabbi@baisabe.com](mailto:rabbi@baisabe.com).
- ✓ **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 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 Seforim that are available for students to study and enjoy, and WashU's Olin Library also contains several hundred books of Judaica.

- ✓ **Shabbat Dinner** - Over 100 students attend the 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, and together build campus community. In addition to student-guests, prospective students, parents, deans, and professors often join as well. Shabbat dinner at Chabad continues during most school breaks as well. The dinners at Chabad are sponsored by families, alumni, and community members, who enable us to provide them 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 “Shabbat lunch community” comes together to enjoy a delicious and festive weekly meal. Lunches rotate between Chabad, Bais Abe, 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** - The Chabad House is open throughout Shabbos with a stocked refrigerator for students to lounge, grab a bite, hang out and connect!
- ✓ **Shaleshudes** - Each week about an hour before the conclusion of Shabbos, students gather at the Chabad House for light snacks and soulful singing .This is typically followed by Havadala.
- ✓ **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 freshmen and sophomores reside), most of the academic buildings, and Chabad, Hillel, and Bais Abe facilities are all within the Eruv. The Eruv does not include the Loop Lofts, the Moonrise Hotel, all of 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 courtyard of the DUC, where a Lulav and Etrog are available for students. Chabad also helps students find hospitality with observant families proximate to campus.
- ✓ **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 the scheduling of their exams. This is not a blanket exemption. If a professor gives a student difficulty with changing exam times please contact Rabbi Novack.
- ✓ **Mezuzahs** - For \$30 we will provide 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.