Vaisakhi

In support of our staff, students, faculty and postdocs, this information is offered as a resource about the Sikh observance of Vaisakhi.

APRIL 14, 2019

HISTORY AND MEANING

Vaisakhi is a celebration of spring. It marks the harvest of the rabi (rice, maize, sorghum, millet, soy beans, wheat and barley) crop in India. There is thanksgiving and hope in the joyous celebration.

Vaisakhi is celebrated on April 13 every year. Once every 36 years, Vaisakhi is celebrated on April 14 to reconcile with the Indian solar calendar. The day is celebrated by Sikhs in India. It is also celebrated by Buddhists, as it is said that on April 13, the Buddha attained enlightenment.

TYPICAL OBSERVANCES

• There are prayers for a bountiful harvest and blessings in the planting of the new crop.
• People will wear their best clothes and dance in celebration.
• There will be a festival-like atmosphere with special foods and music.

TIPS FOR SUPPORTING THE VANDERBILT COMMUNITY.

• Staff members should be aware of these festivals and how they can support and encourage their Sikh and Buddhist colleagues who are celebrating this observance.
• While students are not automatically excused from class for this observance, they may work with their course instructors to make accommodations. Graduate and professional students must refer to their own school and departmental vacation policies and calendars for more specific information.
• Staff members may request paid time off for this observance. Support their preference to take leave for their religious observance.

RESOURCES FOR MANAGING WELL-BEING AND MENTAL HEALTH

People feel many types of emotions during the holidays—joy, peace, stress and depression, to name a few. Whatever you feel, know you are not alone, and Vanderbilt has resources to help you through these challenges.

For more information, please contact Equity, Diversity and Inclusion at edi@vanderbilt.edu. For more information on the university’s policy on religious holy days and observances, contact the Office of the University Chaplain and Religious Life at religiouslife@vanderbilt.edu or Human Resources at human.resources@vanderbilt.edu.