



**Center for Religion
and Global Citizenry**
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

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Last week, University Housing introduced controversial changes to its dining plan, altering the longstanding “pay as you go” policy. The proposed changes would require students living in dorms to add a minimum of \$1,400 to their dining hall account per year. The new policy stands in stark contrast to the University Housing’s supposed commitment to diversity and inclusion. Though the plan was proposed in the name of diversity and transparency, it fails to recognize the needs of low-income students, those with medical dietary restrictions and those with religious dietary requirements. As such, the Center for Religion and Global Citizenry condemns this discriminatory policy and demands its re-evaluation.

Because kosher and halal laws overlap, the existence of kosher food on campus provides dining options for both Muslim and Jewish students who observe dietary restrictions. However, students who follow kosher and halal dietary restrictions have extremely limited options at dining halls on campus. Currently, the restaurant Adamah provides a pre-packaged, kosher soup and salad option to two dining halls, Dejope and Gordon. These pre-packaged items do not receive the resident hall discount.

The changes to dining policy introduced by University Housing will force students with religious dietary restrictions to spend money on a dining plan that does not service them. Asking students to spend upwards of \$1,400 on the same two soups and salads without providing alternatives is a direct contradiction of the University Housing diversity statement.

In addition to disproportionately impacting Muslim, Jewish and other religiously observant students on campus, the mandatory deposit will force many low-income students to spend beyond their means. The policy also harms students with limited dining options due to health conditions.

For these reasons, the changes to University Housing dining policy should not proceed. As members of the faith community, we stand with our Muslim and Jewish friends and all other students affected by this policy. UW students deserve to know about changes to their dining options, and should be given the opportunity to be active participants in the creation of new policies.

In community,

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