Happy Kwanzaa!

Kwanzaa
Interfaith/African-American

Kwanzaa is an annual seven-day African-American and pan-African holiday celebration that takes place from December 26 to January 1. For seven days, a principle (Nguzo Saba) is reflected upon such as unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, cooperative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith. The final day climaxes with gift-giving and a feast called Karamu Ya Imani. The festival is a nonreligious holiday inspired by West African harvest celebrations. The word Kwanzaa means “first fruits.”

Date
- December 26 - January 1 of each year.
- Check the Calendar Index for Religious Holidays during the current academic year for the exact date.

Greetings
If you would like to recognize Kwanzaa with your colleagues and friends, saying, “Happy Kwanzaa” would be appropriate.

Common Practices and Celebrations
- Singing songs, telling stories and sharing of meals.
- Candles in red, green, and black are used; one candle is lit for each day of the holiday.
- Symbols of importance include fruits, vegetables, nuts, a straw mat, a candle holder known as a kinara, ears of corn, gifts, a communal cup.

Impact to U-M Community
- Kwanzaa is typically celebrated outside of standard work hours, but it is important to remember that employees may request time off or a modified schedule to be with their families during the week of the celebration.
- Link to U-M Guidance Regarding Conflicts.

U-M Campus Resources
- U-M Programs and Resources
- Maize Black Organizations, U-M
- Association of Religious Counselors, U-M

Information Sources
- Official Kwanzaa Website
- Black Culture Connection, PBS
- Kwanzaa Fact Sheet, Tanenbaum

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