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Recognize Martin Luther King Day

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• Letters

• Recognize Martin Luther King Day

To The Editor:

Each academic year as January nears the University of Maine begins to think again about Martin Luther King, about the day officially designated to honor his life and teachings. Like several other national holidays, this one currently does not bring with it a day off from classes at this university. Several reasons have been cited for this: one is the academic year is already too short. Another is a day off would not guarantee people would pause to reflect adequately upon King's accomplishments.

UMaine has made slow progress toward diversity, but there is ample room for improvement. We could argue Maine is a Caucasian state or that Mainers aren't racist or cite any number of things to demonstrate that the reasons behind this federally-recognized day are less "relevant" here.

King's ideals and racial identity do not have to fit one's own exactly for them to be rel-

evant to all our lives. Some may feel other leaders of color deserve recognition as well; I do, as a matter of fact. However, it is also justifiable to see in the figure of King a legacy for all of those leaders. His day can, if we choose, serve as a point of departure for the celebration of others who served so many communities, as well as to recognize those who are still doing it, whether they be black, Asian or first nation peoples, and regardless of age or sex.

I hope the UMaine faculty senate will unanimously support the designation of a university holiday in honor of King and that as an educational institution it will also flank the day of reflection with events that will promote the sort of pluralistic teaching and learning dialogue King had in mind for our society. After all, he was not thinking only of himself, nor was he thinking of just one race when he articulated his dream. We are all a part of it.

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