

HUMA



HARVARD UNIVERSITY MUSLIM ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER

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As-salaamu alaikum wa rahmatullahi wa barakatuh,

We hope this newsletter finds you in the best of health and faith, insha'Allah. I am proud to present to you HUMA's growth and success in the past year, as well as ask for your help to continue growing this community that can be an exemplary source of institutional development for our American and worldwide Muslim community.

We are still working hard at establishing and expanding the Harvard Muslim Life Fund (HMLF). It has been just over one year since HUMA hired Harvard's first paid Muslim chaplain, Taymullah Abdur-Rahman, who has served the community beautifully. We are grateful for Chaplain Taymullah's service and are glad that he will be continuing to serve in his position this upcoming academic year.

The chaplaincy is entirely funded by HUMA, and HUMA member contributions are the best way to raise the money required for supporting the institutions we are trying to build. From a chaplaincy to establishing dedicated Muslim space on campus, our success depends on your willingness to support the growth of Muslim institutions at Harvard. We are extremely grateful to the many individuals who have provided the generous support to enable the progress thus far, but we need more member support to make this fund sustainable and for it to grow.

We want to reinforce that the HMLF is not just about supporting a chaplain, it is about building on-campus Muslim institutions. This includes a chaplaincy, but also social and religious spaces, a stronger Muslim voice, and better resources for Muslim students, faculty, and staff at Harvard. This is reflected in the mission: "The HMLF seeks to empower the on-campus Harvard Muslim community to foster communal fellowship and create positive societal changes by creating and supporting institutions that enable the personal, spiritual, and professional growth of its members."

Outside the HMLF, HUMA has had other successes. Our annual dinner was again a great chance to pull the community together, with an enlightening talk on Islam and the arts by Dr. Hussein Rashid and a great turnout. This newsletter contains reports on our Global Iftaar Program, HUMA's financials, and campus news. We launched a mentorship program this Spring and oversaw the first HUMA Islamic Finance Conference, October 14 and 15 on Harvard's campus.

This is a time of growth and expansion for HUMA, and the board is invigorated by your backing and the impact that we can have. But for us to succeed in continuing this trajectory to increase our support for the Harvard Muslim community, we need funds to succeed. Please consider donating whatever you can to let us continue our work.

Thank you all for supporting HUMA and our efforts. We hope to see you at one of our events soon!

President

Financial Report

2015 Final Report

2015 marked the launch of major programming associated with the Harvard Muslim Life Fund, including hiring the first paid Muslim chaplain at Harvard in August and providing a small Muslim Life Scholarship to students on campus. This was the first year of major expenditures by the fund, and the costs at the end of the year were \$7,150. Our other notable expenses for the year were for overhead for the website and bookkeeping software, and a summer intern, totaling around \$1,000. As HUMA deals with larger numbers and amounts of donations, PayPal fees become a notable expense, and last year cost \$375.

In an effort to increase the capacity of the Muslim Life Fund and begin to build a base for future projects and sustained growth, we set our HMLF fundraising goal at \$35,000. We reached \$15,100 of that goal, reflecting the challenges in maintaining a large fundraising capacity for multiple years in a row - a challenge that will need to be solved to ensure the fund's sustainability in future years. As in prior years, our recurring donations covered the day-to-day expenses of HUMA, totaling \$920. The Annual Dinner was profitable this year, with expenses of about \$3,500 and ticket sales near \$4,000. Our total operating budget was \$4,000, and our income was about \$4,400.

Want to Support HUMA?

You can donate online at HarvardMuslimAlumni.org/donate, or by mailing a check made payable to "Harvard University Muslim Alumni" to 21 Beacon Road, Scituate, MA 02066.

2016 Preliminary Report

Our work to grow the Muslim Life Fund has continued this year, and we have set our fundraising goal at \$30,000. We have raised \$6,000 of that so far, and are planning for a major fundraising drive before the end of the year (watch for emails!) Our goal this year is to ensure the sustainability of the fund by identifying the most productive ways to raise money on a yearly basis. HMLF expenses so far have been \$13,400, and are anticipated to total \$18,900.

For general HUMA income, our recurring donations continue to provide the majority of funds for HUMA's overhead expenses. The amount expected in recurring donations this year is \$1000. Our website renews biennially, so our expenses are lower this year, and include \$575 for bookkeeping software. We will be exploring the most productive way to use the additional funds on resources and programming to expand HUMA's capacity to provide value to our members. The cost of PayPal donation processing is \$180 so far, and is expected to be around \$400 (distributed between the Muslim Life Fund and general HUMA expenses). Despite a shift to a more expensive venue, the Annual Dinner was slightly profitable again this year, with expenses of \$3,500 and income of \$3,700. The Annual Dinner was profitable this year, with expenses of about \$3,500 and ticket sales near \$4,000.

Chaplaincy Retrospective

Thanks to the determined effort of countless individuals, and support from the broader membership, the Harvard community welcomed its first paid Muslim chaplain to campus one year ago. We are grateful to have Taymullah Abdur-Rahman and the institution of the chaplaincy, and take this opportunity of commemorating our first anniversary to reflect on our time together.

The new chaplaincy has enabled novel programming for students and neighbors, both for explicit religious learning as well as establishing and strengthening bonds. Feedback for Taymullah's bi-weekly Jummahs has been overwhelmingly positive and he has encouraged community members to follow in his footsteps by hosting Khutba classes, resulting in engaging student-led sermons. The Friday bounty continued with evening lectures in the Musallah. The fall semester focused on the Stories of the Prophets and it has since evolved into a safe forum for members to engage in meaningful discussion about challenging topics such as Black Lives Matter and women leading prayers, which has brought many new faces to the table.

Beyond the lecture setting, Taymullah also helped to address the spiritual and social needs of the community, hosting study breaks and mixers. He and four students drove together to the Yale Ivy League Muslim conference. Taymullah has also orchestrated White Qiyaams that brought students together for a shared night of worship and reflection. In a break from the norm, each attendant had the opportunity to lead some prayers.

While programming at the College, through HIS, has continued to flourish, Taymullah has also made great strides at bridging the divide between Harvard's many different schools and Muslim communities and has plans to institute regular visits to schools this fall.

This past year was unfortunately marked by a number of global tragedies. Taymullah consoled and comforted members of our community while also acting as a spokesperson to address and engage with the broader campus. Following the misfortunes in Paris and San Bernardino, Taymullah spoke to a full house at the Chan School, alongside Dr. Ali Asani, about Islamophobia and how the audience could ally with the Muslim community. He spoke again at the vigil following June's Orlando shooting and engaged with Muslims identifying as LGBTQ to continue the conversation.

Taymullah's contributions did not stop with the Muslim community; he served as a bridge to other religious and secular communities around campus. He and Rabbis Dani and Getzel teamed up for various lectures and discussions, from dietary codes and cultural practices to the position of Moses. Working with Memorial Church, he and several other chaplains hosted dinners around Cambridge on how religions engaged with a range of topics, including social justice and environmental responsibility.

It has been an exciting inaugural year for Harvard's first paid Muslim chaplaincy and we look forward to even more advances and community building from Taymullah as we start the new academic year.

Chaplain Reflection

Our Universe of Obligation

Recently in my personal life, I've been challenged to re-evaluate the friends and family who should occupy my universe of obligation. As we enter into a new academic year at Harvard, as a concerned, responsible religiously-committed group, I wonder who is in the universe of obligation for the Harvard Muslim community? The traditional definition is "individuals and/or groups to whom we owe allegiance and to whom rules apply and whose injuries call for amends". For Harvard Muslims, who fits that description?

This is the question I recently asked the HIS board at our annual retreat. As Allah's designated vicegerents on earth, we must necessarily look beyond ourselves and peer into the lives of those around us, right? Or maybe not. While we certainly owe the world, our nation, our community and our campus a debt of service, we must not forget to first tend to our own wounds and mend our own differences if we hope to later help others.

As I stood before an easel and jotted down answers from board members on who should orbit in our universe of obligation I got all the right answers you would expect from highly intelligent young men and women: *Muslim freshman, the lonely, the injured, the campus community at-large, faculty and staff and even the city of Cambridge*. But I thought to myself "What about us? Why aren't we thinking to put one another in the circle of those we will nurture?"

Allah has mentioned in His Book, "**O you who believe, save yourselves and then your family from a fire whose fuel is men and stones.**" (Quran-Tahrim 6:66). The sequence in this verse is significant because Allah has set a priority for us to follow. When the messenger of Allah made Hajj, the companions did not know whether to start the Sai at Safa or Marwah. The messenger of Allah recited the verse of Hajj in Surah Baqarah 2:158 "**Verily Safa and Marwah are symbols of Allah!**" He told the companions, "We will begin with what Allah began with." He meant that Allah mentioned Safa first so Safa should be the starting point of the Sai. Likewise, in the verse of salvation above, Allah mentions that we should save ourselves before we try to encompass efforts to help others. Certainly there is proof that both can be done simultaneously, but our elders told us that priority must be given to ourselves.

In keep with that understanding, before we concern ourselves with others, how do we concern ourselves with one another, as a campus community, an alumni community, and as Muslims generally? What does it look like for

each Muslim to make sure that his or her fellow brother or sister is safe, sound, whole and healthy? How does it feel to edify our faith and religion by apologizing for wrongs we may have unknowingly or deliberately committed against one another? What does it look



"...how do we concern ourselves with one another, as a campus community, an alumni community, and as Muslims generally?"

like to befriend a Muslim stranger? How do we create a community founded on authenticity?

College is no playground. There are times of immense stress, anxiety, pressure and even pain. However, where there is a community there is no suffering. There may be pain, but suffering is only for those who are abandoned. I would like to participate in creating a community at Harvard where anyone who identifies as Muslim feels not only welcomed but vested. It's only when begin to work on healing one another that we will be equipped to take the path ahead.

I advise myself first, to start the year clean; free from grudges, anger, or resentment towards anyone. Let us walk away from avenging a word of insult or perceived slight against us. We have work to do - work that can only be accomplished with all hands on deck and all hearts as one. When we behave with integrity and love for one another, our universe of obligation will naturally expand and overflow into the lives of those around us, bringing an ease to suffering, a path toward righteousness, and peace flowing from the Divine.

- Chaplain Taymullah

Community Updates

Checking in with recent grads

The class of 2016 is five months into their post-graduate lives. We caught up with a few of them to learn about what they have been up to and what they have planned for the future.

This past summer, my family and I made the move back to Istanbul, Turkey. In addition to exploring the city, I've been getting accustomed to all of the stares I get while running outside. This fall, I will be conducting research in artificial intelligence and machine learning at a local university. My biggest news to date is the adoption of my first kitty, Oliver. - **Fatma Akcay, FAS**

I decided to push my full-time start date at BCG Dubai to January in order to get public sector insights, fulfill my decade long dream of living in NYC AND most importantly to postpone reality ;) These days I am interning at the NYC Mayor's office working on health-related policies. Shoot me a message if you ever pass through Dubai! - **Rabiya Mahmood, HKS**

Member updates

Umair Khan (HBS 2010) recently joined the board of a pre-K through 12 Islamic school in Phoenix. His first project is to define a five-year school improvement plan. If any HUMA members have an interest in sharing insights on this topic, let the HUMA board know and we'll put you in touch with Umair.

Tanvir Uddin (HLS 2012) was selected into Batch #5 of the Islamic Finance Talent Development Program at the Islamic Corporation for Development in Jeddah. He is currently three months into 2-years of work rotations and a sponsored Masters of Islamic Finance and Leadership at the IE Business School.

Stephanie Young Marzouk (HLS 2011) and Youssef Marzouk had a baby, Taha Gabriel Marzouk, in January 2016.

Hassaan Shahawy (FAS 2016) and **Iman Masmoudi (FAS 2017)** celebrated their engagement in September.

HIS News

At the start of last Spring, the 2016 Board of HIS was excited to work on three general goals: greater institutionalization of HIS- on campus and internally, activism & civic engagement, and inclusion through community building.

To those ends we accomplished some incredible initiatives and new annual traditions. We started the Spring 2016 semester with the first annual “wintersession” camp to kick off a mentorship relationship with youth in North Cambridge. We wanted to revive HIS’s past with tutoring and mentorship in the area, and used this camp to host 15 underserved Muslim youth at the SOCH for a day of activities and workshops led by students, Chaplain Taymullah, Cambridge City Councilman Nadeem Mazen, and Poet-Activist Mona Haydar. This camp led into the Harvard-Rindge Mentorship Program, which is to be an official Philips Brooks House Association Program this year.

During the semester, we became a greater resource on campus for Islamic learning internally and externally through our Sects Ed event. We hosted a panel with representation from various communities of tradition, including Sunni, Twelver Shi’a, Ismaili, and Ahmadi panelists. The discussion



Clockwise from top: Eid al-Adha Family Photo on Widener Steps, Eid BBQ, the class of 2016 at the Senior Farewell Dinner, the community Vigil for #OurThreeBrothers, the HUDS Workers Rally, and Harvard COOP Islamic books display for the Islam in America Series



led to a community-wide interest in greater learning about various Muslim traditions. We also hosted prominent Hadith Professor Jonathan Brown on his new book, Misquoting Muhammad. Weekly, we had fiqh classes, tafseer classes, and a course taught by well-known Arabic and Islamic studies instructor Hisham Mahmoud, “The Prophet and I - Heeding the Voice Within,” discussing virtues from the prophetic sunnah.

In development and external work, we made great progress on Muslim advocacy during this wave of intense Islamophobic rhetoric across America. We met with Rakesh Khurana, Dean of the College, and Harvard University President Drew Faust, among others, regarding the pressing need for a Muslim Life Program, including a paid chaplain and a permanent and central space for Muslims on campus outside of the basement of Canaday. We also opened the Musallah Library Wish List, letting alumnae donate to an expanding Musallah library. Additionally, we hosted a vigil for #OurThreeBrothers after the shootings in Fort Wayne, and brought greater attention to these issues as a support for our community members and advocacy for victims of anti-Muslim violence across the country. Chaplain Taymullah became an essential resource throughout all of this work and amidst anxiety about anti-Muslim sentiment.

address the theme, Justice: An Open Dinner Celebrating Voice & Allyship in the Face of Hate. This event was open to the entire campus in the undergraduate counsel’s #OpenHarvard campaign, launched by UC President and HIS senior, Shaiba Rather. We also got to acknowledge Harvard Dining Service Workers at spring dinner, especially in advance of their campaign against health insurance cutbacks, a campaign we have officially endorsed.

Upcoming this Fall 2016 semester, we are looking forward to:

- Our 2nd-ever Muslim Monologues, sharing stories as diverse as our community!
- More sectarian education, including a Sunni and Twelver Shia Teach-in, and a ‘Ashura event
- Fall Dinner, addressing the upcoming election
- Revival of the HIS Big-Sib-Little-Sib Program
- Hosting Yale for the annual H-Y game with a ‘Slims tailgate and annual Taboo game
- More graduate student-inclusive events and initiatives

We love when alumnae stop by and get involved, so keep checking the HIS Facebook & website for events and pictures! We pray there is blessing and reward in all the work and fun this semester.

Warm wishes from Cambridge, Harvard Islamic Society 2016 Board



The annual Islamic in America Series (IAS) this year brought incredible speakers and scholars to campus on central topics to American Muslims and our diverse history. We hosted Maha Hilal, Shannon Irwin, Sohail Daulatzai, and others. To end IAS, for Spring Dinner we hosted Raheemah Abdulaleem, General Counsel to POTUS and HLS alumna, to

Muslim Life Scholarship Update

Last year, we launched the first-ever HUMA scholarship, called the Muslim Life Scholarship, which aims to provide financial resources to augment personal and educational growth while at Harvard. The scholarship was intended to assist students with educational resources like books as well as other educational, social or cultural activities that enrich a student's academic experience. The 2016 scholarships will be awarded in the coming weeks.

Here is a look at what one of the 2015 recipients, Huma Tahir (FAS 2018), did with his scholarship.

Using the some of the scholarship money, my roommates and I purchased a small charcoal grill, and since then we've held two cook-outs on the Quad lawn. Using the power of halal hot dogs and burgers, we were able to bring in Muslim undergrads and grad students from all over campus to come together to cook and share some quality meat. Even some alums showed up. Halal food has this very strong power to bring the community together and we look forward to having more barbecues in the semesters to come, inshaAllah!



2016 Global Iftaars

HUMA members across the globe observed Ramadan 2016 in diverse ways. With family and loved ones, friends, strangers, and in solitude. Whether striving for closeness to God, empathy for each other, or connection, HUMA members came together in 11 cities, in their home towns or an altogether foreign city in which they found a bit of home. These cities included Boston, Dubai, Houston, Islamabad, London, New York, Philadelphia, Ramallah, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Washington DC.

Our hope for the Global Iftaars Program, initiated in 2008, is to build stronger communities. As you explore new terrain externally and within you, we want to strengthen your safety net. We empower members to host iftaars in their cities for HUMA members and larger communities. We want to increase the number of cities with iftaars for our members by

- 1) Creating a best practices guide for hosting iftaars by our past hosts,
- 2) Reaching out to HUMA members earlier in the year to consider hosting in their cities,
- 3) Asking attendees to share their experiences with hosts and

Grad School Community Updates

HSPH

The Harvard Chan Muslim Students Association's mission is to provide for the needs and interests of Muslim students at the Harvard Chan School, create an environment where non-Muslims can learn about Islam, and provide a platform that promotes dialogue and understanding about the role religion plays in health. The Harvard Chan MSA was established in 2014 and since then has held a variety of events including Ramadan Iftars, an Eid Al-Adha Dinner, an Islamophobia Lunch Talk, an introductory bystander training for anti-Muslim racism/discrimination, Desserts and Dialogue with Dr. Basmaa Ali, an HSPH/HMS Social, as well as working with HUMA for the 2016 dinner.

We look forward to continuing engagement with and providing support to the Harvard Chan community, as well as collaborating across the University. More information, as well as contact information, is available on our website: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/muslim-student-group-so/>

HBS

Last year was a bit of a quiet year for the HBS Islamic Society, aside from getting together for a group dinner. However, our plans for the next year are to build a more engaged and cohesive community for members of HBS Islamic Society. After an informal survey, our goals for the year include events such as larger educational events that integrate into the broader HBS or Harvard Islamic Society, as well as smaller community building events with the aim of promoting greater engagement and cohesion within the HBS, and the as broader Harvard Islamic Society. At the start of the new year, a key priority for us is our membership drive, as well as developing our funding strategy to best meet our goals for the coming year.

We'd also like to wish the broader Harvard Islamic Society Eid Mubarak from our side and all the best for the new school year!



HUMA iftaar in San Francisco.

HUMA members to voice the benefits and increase energy and participation.

As always, the success of this program is driven by our hosts and participants. Your generosity of time and openness give meaning to these iftaars. A special thanks also to Lauren Williams (FAS 2014) for helping organize this year's iftaars.

Rashid Yasin, FAS 2012 President



After graduating in with a BS in Engineering Sciences, Rashid received a master's at UCLA in mechanical engineering, and is currently at Vanderbilt University for his PhD. When not studying, researching, or teaching, he enjoys cooking for his busy wife (Eftitan Akam; FAS 2012) and reading too many articles on the internet.

Nikhat Dharani, FAS 2014 VP of Internal Affairs



Nikhat is a Harvard College 2014 graduate with a BA in Applied Mathematics. She enjoys finding patterns in data to explain behavior and searches for consistency in an ever-changing world. Nikhat spends her time analyzing data, teaching, reflecting on identity, and marveling at nature. Though she spent her formative years in the Deep South, Nikhat has yet to develop a Southern accent.

Rana Abdelhamid, HKS 2017 VP of Campus Relations



Rana, currently in the Masters in Public Policy program at HKS, has spent years organizing around human rights issues with Amnesty International, and has received multiple awards for activism and political organizing. At age 16, she founded the Women's Initiative for Self Empowerment, a self-defense, storytelling and entrepreneurship training program for young Muslim women in NYC. Rana is also currently President of the Muslim Caucus at HKS.

Osman Shawkat, FAS 2011 VP of External Affairs



Osman graduated from Harvard College in 2011 with a degree in physics. After a few years in strategy consulting in Boston, he moved to San Francisco to join a small hardware startup making canes for the elderly. He is also pursuing his Masters in CS through Georgia Tech. When not whispering to computers, he can be found wrenching in the garage or on a rock wall.

Yasmeen Husain, HES 2014 Treasurer



Yasmeen studied International Relations and Economics at Harvard, she graduated in May 2014. She hopes to work in International Development Policy and currently works for a local research institute. Yasmeen spends most of her time fundraising, volunteering, writing and convincing people to move to the best part of the North, the Greater Toronto Area.

Ana Nast, FAS 2012 VP of Communications



Ana studied biology and computer science at Harvard, and graduated in 2012. Now in her second year of medical school at the University of Cincinnati, Ana plans to go into Family Medicine, move to Colorado, and complete her goal of climbing all 14,000ft peaks in the state.