May 5, 2016

Hi All,

I am writing to follow up on the Islamophobia Working Group's third meeting on April 25, 2016. At the end of the meeting, many expressed a desire to work together over the summer to ensure that we are not starting from scratch again in September. Five areas were identified as priority areas, listed below. Some students already signed up to work on each issue. I encourage other students to sign up as well if you will be in Ann Arbor for part of the spring of summer term.

Haleema Aqel and I have created a google drive folder where we have uploaded documents produced by or related to our group. We hope that this will facilitate sharing information and also documenting our activities.

The Five Areas Identified

1. Improve the Bias Reporting System

· Students suggested that the bias response team attend events organized by SAFE and other groups when there is a high chance of a bias incident. Some stated that Zikra Hussain's presence at a recent event was helpful. It was also suggested that the bias response team attend a student group's mass meeting after a bias incident occurs.
· Will Sherry suggested Bystander Intervention workshops as a strategy to reduce bias incidents.

(The Bias Response Team plans to revise their system this summer.)

2. Create a Hate Mail Policy

· There have been efforts to draft hate mail policies in the past that have not passed. Jack Bernard in the office of the general counsel could come and speak to us on the legal prohibitions about such efforts. Our efforts might be better spent on other kinds of actions, such as:
· Defining what hate mail is.
· Incentivizing students to report hate mail/hate speech
· Outreach to social media to remove posts
· Asking The Daily to monitor and remove offensive comments
· Making the ITS computer policy and UM technology policy known
· Making Student Rights and Responsibilities known
· OSCR already initiates a conversation with the perpetrator of hate speech (whether the person is responsive and comes to the meeting is another matter)
· Finding a way to address the double-standard in how pro-Palestinian activists are accused of anti-Semitism and held accountable while other students can say hateful things and are protected.

(I don't remember who signed up for this)

3. Increase Funding for Student Programming

· Students should come up with a plan to become an umbrella group. Research how other student groups have done this, such as the Black Student Union. Research their funding structure and draft a funding proposal based on this model.
(Maryam Ahmed, Areeba Jibril, Tizarat Gil – in conjunction with Evelyn Alsultany and Dahlia Petrus)

4. Provide more prayer spaces
· This must be a non-denominational space. The Muslim Coalition and MESA are already working on this.
(Muslim Coalition, Alaa Hajeissa, Adam Mageed, Asma Baban – contact Trey at MESA)

5. Add a distinct designation for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and faculty on the undergraduate application and on pool reports when faculty and staff are hired.
· This is complicated for a variety of reasons: Religion is not documented and perhaps should not be documented to avoid surveillance of Muslim communities; and the Census will include a MENA category in 2020.
· There are other ways to solicit this information informally in the interim.
· Someone suggested a pool report model for undergraduate students in which optional information would be solicited after admissions.
· Will Sherry at the Spectrum Center has a lot of experience with trying to account for LBGTQ students and can be a resource on this. A document he provided us with has been uploaded to our new Islamophobia Working Group google drive.
· UM is joining "common app." Perhaps a MENA category could be added there in the interim?
· Have a discussion with the Director of Enrollment Management (Kedra Ishop) and the Director of Admissions (Erica Sanders). Also collaborate with UM Dearborn and UM Flint on this matter.
(Jad Elharake will contact Kedra and Erica; Devin Jones, Ibtihal Makki – contact Will Sherry)

These notes also appear as a google doc. Please feel free to edit and add to this document. I am sure that others might have better notes or have notes on things that I missed. Also please sign up if you are able to help in any way.

Thank you all for working together this semester. I look forward to our continued collaboration next term.

Best,
Evelyn