



Cornell University Student Assembly

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| Originally Presented on: | (03/01/2018) |
| Type of Action: | Recommendation |
| Status/Result: | New Business |

1 S.A. Resolution #32
2 Accommodating Muslim Religious Holidays
3
4 ABSTRACT: This resolution urges the University to allow for academic exemptions and
5 accommodations for Muslim students celebrating religious holidays.
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7 **Sponsored by: Omar Din '19, Khaddy Kebbeh '19**
8
9 **WHEREAS**, Cornell University is an institution founded on the principle: “any person...any
10 study.”;
11
12 **WHEREAS**, Article II of the Student Assembly Charter states the Student Assembly has “the
13 authority and the responsibility to examine any matters which involve the interests or concern the
14 welfare of the student community”;
15
16 **WHEREAS**, the diverse Cornell University student body includes individuals from many faiths and
17 background;
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19 **WHEREAS**, there have been numerous studies showing the link between faith and overall
20 wellbeing and improved mental health;
21
22 **WHEREAS**, most academic calendars, including Cornell’s, have been built to accommodate
23 Christian holidays (ex. Christmas during winter break, Easter during spring break);
24
25 **WHEREAS**, Section 3 of New York State Education Law states:
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27 “3. It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and of the administrative officials of each
28 institution of higher education to make available to each student who is absent from school,
29 because of his or her religious beliefs, an equivalent opportunity to . . . make up any
30 examination, study or work requirements which he or she may have missed because of such
31 absence on any particular day or days”
32
33 **WHEREAS**, Muslim religious holidays such as Eid-al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha often conflict with
34 course schedules, forcing students to choose between their education and their religious observance;
35
36 **WHEREAS**, Ramadan is a required month-long religious holiday, during which Muslims can
37 neither eat nor drink anything from sunrise to sunset, occurring in 2018 from May 16th to June 14th;
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39 **WHEREAS**, Final examinations for the spring 2018 semester are slated from May 14th to May
40 22nd, thus overlapping with Ramadan;
41



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42 **WHEREAS**, students observing these holidays are often fatigued and drained physically, leading to
43 difficulty retaining information and reduced attention span, which negatively impacts exam
44 performance;

45
46 **WHEREAS**, the University recommends for instructors to allow students to move scheduled finals
47 or take make up examinations if there are more than two examinations in a 24 hour period;

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49 **BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED**, the Student Assembly affirms students should never be
50 required to choose between their faith and education;

51
52 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Student Assembly requests the Faculty Senate Educational
53 Policy Committee review procedures and policies regarding religious holiday accommodations;

54
55 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Student Assembly requests that, where practical and
56 appropriate, instructors should outline policies regarding said religious holiday accommodation, for
57 any religion, on distributed syllabi;

58
59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that for final examinations that conflict with students fasting
60 for Ramadan, students are given the option to either take the finals before Ramadan begins or to
61 take them in the evening after they have broken their fast;

62
63 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that takeout or to-go boxes are made available on North, West,
64 and Central Campus dining halls to students upon request, where they are not otherwise provided,
65 so that students may still utilize their meal plan and save the food for when they are able to eat;;

66
67 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that such opportunities for religious exemptions are made
68 aware to the student body as a whole through a campus wide email sent out by the Vice President
69 for Student and Campus life in the weeks leading up to Ramadan (among other religious holidays);

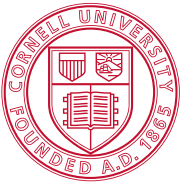
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71 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that a copy of this resolution be conveyed to the Vice President
72 for Student and Campus Life, the Provost, the Dean of Faculty, the Cornell Dining Director, the
73 Deans of each college, and the Chairs of each academic department.

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75 **Respectfully Submitted,**

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77 Omar Din '19
78 *Board Member, Muslim Educational & Cultural Association*
79 *Human Ecology Rep, Student Assembly*

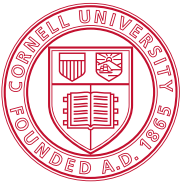
80
81 Khaddy Kebbeh '19
82 *Board Member, Women of Color Coalition*

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84 Mahfuza Shovik '19



Cornell University Student Assembly

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86 Syed Samin '19
87 *President, Muslim Educational & Cultural Association*
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89 Varun Devatha '19
90 *Executive Vice President, Student Assembly*
91
92 Mishcat Ibrahim '19
93
94 Arwa Ali '18
95
96 Zaynub Ibrahim '18
97
98 Salma Shitia '18
99 *Former President, Cornell Welcomes Refugees*
100 *Former President, Arab Student Association*
101
102 Aneeqa Karu '19
103
104 Raashed Raziuddin '18
105 *Resident Advisor, Ecology House*
106 *Executive Board Member, Muslim Educational and Cultural Association (MECA)*
107
108 Roanne Yehia '20
109
110 Ghali Jorio '21
111
112 Abdullah Tahir '20
113
114 Emine Özen '21
115
116 Aaliya Khan '19
117 *Vice President of Finance, ALANA*
118 *Former Vice President, PSA*
119
120 Aisha Rupasingha '18
121
122 Shamma Ahammad '19
123
124 Hannah Rashdan '19
125 *President, Arab Student Association*
126
127 Travis Cabbell '18



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- 128 *Director of Elections, Student Assembly*
129
130 Shivani Parikh '19
131 *President, South Asian Council*
132 *Presidential Task Force on Campus Climate, Campus Response Committee*
133
134 Anuush Vejalla
135 *Vice President, South Asian Council*
136 *Secretary, Hindu Student Council*
137
138 Aliza Adhami '19
139 *Former President, Pakistani Students Association*
140 *Advocacy Chair, South Asian Council*
141 *HE Dean's Advisory Council*
142
143 Alekhya Chaparala '18
144
145 Kimaya Raje '20
146 *President, Hindu Students Council*
147
148 Samir Salih '19
149 *Executive Board, Men of Color Council*
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153 *(Reviewed by: Academic policy, 09-0-1, 02/11/2018)*