

Anti-Muslim Racism at Colorado College: Report and Recommendations

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Introduction

One out of every four humans on the planet is Muslim.¹

But time and time again during my visit to Colorado College, students, faculty, staff, and administrators--both Muslim and non-Muslim--told me that for the most part, Muslims are invisible at the college.

This spectral absence haunted me given the power that U.S. citizens have to affect the lives of 1.8 billion Muslims in the United States and abroad. In the past two decades, our government has engaged in military action in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Niger, and other sites that has resulted in the deaths of at least hundreds of thousands, and U.S. military and intelligence services remain focused on the “war on terror” in Muslim-majority African and Asian countries as well as in the United States.² As the world’s sole superpower, the U.S. often plays a consequential, if not deciding role in the well-being of Muslims everywhere.

Whether one sees the impact of U.S. power over Muslims in a negative or positive light, educators committed to graduating informed citizens of the United States and the world must bring meaningful attention to Muslim people and their cultures.

Because Colorado College aims to “value all persons and seek[s] to learn from their diverse experiences and perspectives,” it is up to everyone, but especially non-Muslim students, faculty, and staff, to create an environment in which Muslims and non-Muslims are able to live and learn together on and off campus.

Anti-Muslim racism, more often referred to in popular and scholarly discourse as Islamophobia, is a form of discrimination and violence against Muslims or those presumed to be Muslim both in the United States and around the world. The scholarly literature on Islamophobia does not see anti-Muslim discrimination and violence so much as a psychological illness, but rather as a political and social problem. Islamophobia is the product not only of individuals who dislike, are ignorant about, or fear Muslims but also of institutional and structural bias. Islamophobia takes shape through war-making in Muslim lands; anti-immigrant policies targeting Muslims; domestic counter-intelligence operations against Muslims; prosecution of Muslims under anti-terror laws; negative media coverage; anti-Muslim public interest groups; anti-Muslim scholarship; and anti-Muslim popular literature, films, TV, and so on.³ Many

¹ Pew Research Center, “Why Muslims are the world’s fastest-growing religious group,” April 6, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/06/why-muslims-are-the-worlds-fastest-growing-religious-group/>.

² Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs, Brown University, “Civilians Killed & Wounded,” March 2019, <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs/human/civilians>; Andrew McCabe, “Statement Before the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies: FBI Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2018,” June 21, 2017, www.fbi.gov.

³ Analysis of the institutional and structural roots of anti-Muslim racism and xenophobia can be found in Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World*, updated ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1997); Junaid Rana, *Terrifying Muslims: Race and Labor in the South Asian Diaspora* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011); Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012); Carl W. Ernst, ed., *Islamophobia in America: The Anatomy of Intolerance* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Christopher Bail, *Terrified: How Anti-Muslim Fringe Organizations Became Mainstream* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2015); Todd H. Green, *The Fear of Islam: An Introduction to*

scholars analyze Islamophobia as a form of racialization.⁴ Such Anti-Muslim racism relies on centuries-old stereotypes that associate Muslims with violence, misogyny, duplicity, religious fanaticism, political tyranny, and foreign-ness.⁵ About half of my interviewees reported that they had heard one or more of these stereotypes expressed at Colorado College.

Interviews with Muslim faculty, students, and staff as well as Muslim allies revealed a pattern of covert and subtle Islamophobia on campus that often intersected with gender, ethnicity, race, and immigration status. For example, the competence of some male and female Muslim faculty members has been questioned by colleagues and students. Muslim faculty are told to “be careful” in how they interact with senior, non-Muslim faculty members. Comments have been made about faculty immigration status--“I hope your immigration papers are in order.” Paternalistic views are expressed about the oppressive nature of Muslim women’s clothing. Because of this subtle, but alienating environment, some Muslim students, faculty, and staff are afraid to bring attention to themselves as Muslims and prefer to remain silent. “I feel like I would be singled out if I spoke about Eid, about my identity,” said one member of the community. It did not surprise me that there was a lack of awareness of this problem among most non-Muslims, since covert racism is often “embedded in normal operations of institutions” and “avoids direct racial terminology.”⁶ In addition to subtle racism on campus, Muslims face overt racism, including anti-Muslim violence, in the town of Colorado Springs, where Muslim parents are reasonably concerned not simply about whether their kids will fit in at school but also about whether they will be the victims of anti-Muslim hate crimes.⁷

This report contains forward-looking recommendations meant to assist Colorado College better support Muslim students, faculty, and staff in an age of Islamophobia while also advocating for additional education about and engagement with Muslim communities in Colorado and around the globe. It suggests concrete actions to be undertaken as the college implements the Antiracism Initiative. I developed these recommendations by applying my expertise on Islamophobia and community-based Islamophobia prevention⁸ in response to what I

Islamophobia in the West (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015); and Nathan Lean, *The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Hatred of Muslims*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto, 2017).

⁴ Saher Selod, “Citizenship Denied: The Racialization of Muslim American Men and Women Post-9/11,” *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2014): 77–95; Sherene Razack, *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008); Sylvester A. Johnson, *African American Religions, 1500–2000: Colonialism, Democracy, and Freedom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

⁵ Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg, *Islamophobia and Anti-Muslim Bias: Picturing the Enemy*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

⁶ Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Rethinking Racism: Toward a Structural Interpretation,” *American Sociological Review* Vol. 62, No. 3 (June 1997), 477.

⁷ To prevent and respond to such incidents, see “Know Your Rights Pocket Guide,” “Islamophobia Pocket Guide,” and Community Safety Kit” of the Council of American-Islamic Relations, <https://www.cair.com/guides-and-toolkits>

⁸ My scholarship on the causes of Islamophobia and Muslim reactions to the phenomenon includes *Muslim American Politics and the Future of U.S. Democracy* (New York: New York University Press, 2019); “The Black Muslim Scare of the Twentieth Century: The History of State Islamophobia and Its Post-9/11 Variations,” in *Islamophobia in America*, 75-106; and “The Islamophobic History of the United States,” *Bulletin for the Study of Religion* 40.2 (April 2011): 30-35. To read about Indianapolis’ community-based Islamophobia prevention efforts, see Domenica Bongiovanni, “IUPUI prof offers grants to battle Islamophobia,” *Indianapolis Star*, June 15, 2017, <https://www.indystar.com/story/entertainment/arts/2017/06/15/iupui-professor-offers-grants-creative-types-battle-islamophobia/393793001/>; Ben Lashar, “Database Preserves Indianapolis Muslim History,” *Indianapolis Recorder*, Aug. 29, 2019, http://www.indianapolisrecorder.com/news/article_2f4bc13c-ca5e-11e9-ad78-9b96cc4a968c.html;

learned from conducting interviews with 21 people at the college from Dec. 2-4; examining available data from various college offices; meeting with two leaders of the Colorado Springs Muslim community; and gathering the ideas of 53 students, faculty, staff, and community members who attended the anti-Muslim racism workshop. I hope that all of them will suggest additional ideas; they are bound to agree with some of my suggestions and object to others. Providing ample opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the implementation of anti-Muslim racism proposals is essential.

Goal 1: Make diversity and inclusion central to college leadership

Recommendation 1A: As the college hires and organizes the offices of the three new senior associate deans, be sure that they are qualified and prepared to address religion in their work on behalf of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The invisibility of Muslims on campus is in part a product of a broader pattern of religious invisibility on campus. As the Antiracism Initiative is implemented, and the racial and ethnic diversity of the campus increases, it is likely that the presence of religious diversity will also increase. This has to do with the history and sociology of religion in the United States, a country in which religion, race, and ethnicity are codetermining factors of community- and network-making.⁹ Ignoring such religious diversity or hoping that religion will remain a private matter leads to conflict and often disproportionately affects religious minorities.¹⁰ Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the college is prohibited from discriminating against persons on account of their religion, and so the college also exposes itself to unnecessary liability if it does not anticipate the challenges of religious diversity. More importantly, embracing religious diversity can become a source of intellectual excellence, cultural vitality, and social unity as Christians, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, humanists, Indigenous people, Wiccans, Pagans, “spiritual but not religious” persons, New Age practitioners, secularists, atheists, and others feel recognized and valued by one another. Hence, all three new senior associate deans should be prepared, as appropriate to their position, to create and implement policies that accommodate and welcome persons of diverse religious backgrounds at the college.¹¹

Recommendation 1B: The Director of Human Resources or the new Diversity and Inclusion Human Resources Leader should hold sit-down meetings with Muslim faculty, students, and staff to explain their rights under Title VII, how to file a complaint, and how HR handles complaints.

Recommendation 1C: The Antiracism Plan Oversight Committee should ensure that the recommendations concerning anti-Muslim racism are implemented.

and “Community Celebrates Efforts to End Anti-Muslim Discrimination,” <https://edward-curtis.com/2018/10/05/community-celebrates-efforts-to-end-anti-muslim-discrimination/>.

⁹ Philip Goff and Paul Harvey, eds., *Themes in Religion and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004).

¹⁰ For a human resources approach to a multireligious workplace, see Douglas A. Hicks, *Religion in the Workplace: Pluralism, Spirituality, Leadership* (New York: Cambridge, 2003).

¹¹ See Douglas Jacobsen and Rhonda Hustedt Jacobsen, *No Longer Invisible: Religion in University Education* (New York: Oxford, 2012); “Higher Education,” in Eboo Patel and Patrice Brodeur, eds., *Building the Interfaith Movement: Beyond Dialogue to Action* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 91-136.

Goal 2: Establish antiracism, equity, and inclusion as foundational to our community expectations

Recommendation 2: Critically examine outcomes, policies, handbooks, procedures, practices, and daily operations with an eye toward systematic and institutional discrimination against racialized religious groups as part of the overall review of racism.

Goal 3: Invest in student antiracism resources and efforts

Recommendation 3A: In order to better support Muslim students, appoint a staff member in student affairs with the responsibility of helping Muslim students “achieve their educational, professional, and personal goals.”

It was clear from my interviews with Muslim students that the Butler Center and Student Affairs already play an important role in student life. Student Affairs officer Mateen Zafer performs much of this service as an informal part of his work. In my view, that role should be formalized by making clear who the point person is for Muslim students. While the Office of the Chaplain is responsible for meeting students’ religious and spiritual needs, many self-identifying Muslim youth do not consider themselves to be traditionally religious or even unconventionally spiritual. Moreover, many student concerns have little to do, at least directly, with religion.

In my interviews, Muslim and non-Muslim students mentioned a number of incidents that furthered or exemplified anti-Muslim racism on campus: (1) the racist criticism of a Muslim RA, (2) negative comments about a Muslim woman’s clothing in the gym; (3) a sense that Muslims don’t know who to turn to when they are the victims of discrimination; (4) a lack of outreach after the federal government’s banning of Muslim visitors; (5) the college’s quiet response to the Christchurch massacre; (6) community engagement opportunities that exclude Muslim communities; and (7) the idea that Muslims are responsible for educating the community about Islamic religion and Muslim cultures. Having a Student Affairs official play the role of “first responder”, even if only to pass the concern along to another appropriate party, is a reasonable and practical response to meeting student needs.

The Muslim student affairs officer should be willing to coordinate with the Office of the Chaplain as well as with Muslim and Muslim-allied faculty.

Recommendation 3B: Increase programs and services offered by the Office of the Chaplain that will (1) meet the needs of Muslim students, faculty, and staff, (2) offer more co-curricular programs on Islam, and (3) provide meaningful opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims from on and off campus to engage one another.

In my interview with Chaplain Kate Holbrook, she expressed a clear desire to serve the needs and interests of Muslim community members while also integrating Islam and Muslims into increased programming sponsored by her office. She proposed, for example, to sponsor a performance art series of “dance, poetry, music, and storytelling” that would include “multiple spiritual and religious traditions;” to increase displays of art in the chapel; and to lead an examination and possible expansion of the groups represented on the stained glass windows in Shove Chapel. These are all excellent proposals.

Shove Chapel struck me as a currently under-utilized campus asset in the college’s efforts to become an antiracist institution. This large, centrally-located sacred space should embody and

display the college's deepest dreams and hopes for itself. Students, faculty, and staff should see their rich identities reflected in the objects, images, sounds, even smells that occupy the space. The Office of the Chaplain should help to lead campus stakeholders in discussion on how to make this space more vibrant. Many of the world's sacred spaces are shared,¹² and Shove Chapel can perform that function, too.

The Chaplain's Office should also continue its engagement with Colorado Springs Muslim communities. During my time at the college, I met with Kamel Elwazeir and Yasin Ghazanfar, leaders of the Colorado Springs Islamic Society. It was wonderful to hear them talk about their involvement with the college, and they praised the Islamic Society's longstanding relationship with Chaplain Holbrook. I also shared news that, during my meeting with him, Provost Alan Townsend offered to host a reception for the Muslim community on campus; I recommend that planning for that reception begin early in the new year. The Islamic Center is ready and willing to partner more closely with the college, and even as the Office of the Chaplain remains a primary point of contact for that relationship, other faculty, staff, students, and administrators should seek opportunities to work with the Islamic Society as well as with nonaffiliated Muslim individuals in town and beyond.

Recommendation 3C: Establish a year-long Muslim Religious and Spiritual Life Fellowship.

Muslim students and faculty expressed the desire for the campus to employ a practicing Muslim to provide religious and spiritual support. They mentioned that the college employs a coordinator of Jewish life and an Elder-in-Residence, but that there was no equivalent for the Muslim community. In order to address this need and to build the capacity of the Office of the Chaplain to educate the community and increase Muslim/non-Muslim engagement, I recommend creating a year-long paraprofessional Muslim Religious and Spiritual Life Fellowship. The Muslim Religious and Spiritual Life Fellow could bring new energy and cutting-edge ideas to the campus each year. This fellow should be someone who has been active in undergraduate Muslim life at another university or college and has a record of success in programming and community building. There are an increasing number of Muslims who are training to become chaplains, and this post would offer someone valuable experience before entering divinity school.¹³

Recommendation 3D: Establish a musalla, or space for salat, on campus.

According to most Islamic traditions, Muslims can make their salat (also transliterated salah, the prescribed daily prayers of prostration) in nearly any clean space. Indeed, one famous hadith of the Prophet Muhammad is that the whole earth is a mosque. The only time during the week when, according to most traditions, Muslims are required to pray in a mosque is during the Friday congregational prayers.¹⁴ But around the world, and increasingly in U.S. higher education, Muslims have established the musalla as a quiet place where one can go throughout the week to pray.¹⁵ Since the five daily prayers occur from before sunrise to after sunset, it would be ideal for the space to be available throughout the day. (During the month of Ramadan, when some Muslims pray, read Qur'an, and meditate throughout the night at the mosque, the

¹² For example, see Anna Bigelow, *Sharing the Sacred: Practicing Pluralism in Muslim North India* (New York: Oxford, 2010).

¹³ For more information on Muslim chaplaincy, see the Association of Muslim Chaplains, <https://associationofmuslimchaplains.org/>.

¹⁴ To explore the diversity of Muslim prayer practices in the United States, see Edward E. Curtis IV, *The Practice of Islam in America: An Introduction* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

¹⁵ See, for example, Yale's musalla: <https://chaplain.yale.edu/musalla>.

college should provide transportation to the Islamic Society on request). Setting aside a designated space for salat on campus is an important sign that the Colorado College community accepts and embraces Muslims, even if most Muslims do not use the space. Broad consultations should occur on what space is best for this purpose. Chaplain Holbrook has suggested that a transept of Shove Chapel could be used. Another interviewee mentioned the Interfaith House. At my institution, we set aside a room in the Campus Center. It may be that pragmatic concerns are most important. For example, if the college hires a Muslim Religious and Spiritual Life Fellow, it may be prudent for the musalla to be near that person's office.

Recommendation 3E: Focus some of the work of the Collaborative for Community Engagement toward preventing and reducing Islamophobia. Be explicit and name Islamophobia in the call for proposals.

One pillar of antiracism is community engagement, which needs to become more central to anti-Muslim racism efforts if the college is to succeed in preventing and reducing bias and discrimination. Muslims on campus are isolated, and building networks and ties between Muslim at the college with Muslims off campus is a proven strategy to reduce feelings of invisibility and isolation while also furthering the entire community's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. Practically speaking, this means that some community engagement will need to be oriented toward Denver, which is home to a dozen or so Muslim religious congregations, several Islamic schools, and other civil society groups. The Collaborative for Community Engagement (CCE) Strategic Plan provides an excellent framework in which to integrate Muslims and Muslim community concerns into the life of Colorado College.¹⁶ To mention a few ideas:

- (1) Reward Community Engaged Scholars who are focused on Islamophobia prevention and reduction in Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region. These scholars can study the work of national organizations such as the Council of American Islamic Relations, the Bridge Initiative of Georgetown University, Emgage USA, and the Institute for Social Policy and Analysis. The scholars could then bring that knowledge to their work with local public interest and civil society organizations, including religious congregations associated with the Interfaith Alliance of Colorado and the Pikes Peak Interfaith Coalition. One group at the Anti-Muslim Racism Workshop suggested that students propose a Citizen's Initiative to the Colorado Springs City Council to conduct programming on anti-Muslim racism in the Springs.
- (2) If it has not already done so, the Refugee Alliance Coalition of the CCE Co-Op could partner with the Council of American-Islamic Relations-Colorado, the International Rescue Committee of Denver, and/or the Colorado Refugee Speakers to assist and raise awareness about Muslim refugees and to organize community resistance to Muslim Ban 3.0 on campus and in Colorado Springs.
- (3) The Prison Project Coalition of the CCE Co-Op could partner with groups such as ACLU Colorado or Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition to challenge systematic religious discrimination against incarcerated Muslims, who are over-represented in U.S. jails and prisons. They could also partner with re-entry programs in Denver to host formerly incarcerated Muslims on campus for speeches and organizing.

¹⁶ See Colorado College Collaborative for Community Engagement Strategic Plan, <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/cce/documents/CCE%20Strategic%20Plan.pdf>.

- (4) Campus Compact and Civic Action can explore the implications of institutional, political, and legal Islamophobia for social and political citizenship in the United States. Political scientist Anne Norton suggests that the “Muslim Question,” like the Jewish Question in nineteenth-century Europe, is the crucible in which our foundational democratic values are being tested, ignored, or abused.¹⁷ Participants in the Anti-Muslim Racism Workshop recommended that Colorado College partner with national Muslim organizations in order to work toward equity on campus and in the nation. Excellent partners would include America Indivisible, the Council of American Islamic Relations, and the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

Recommendation 3F: Support student coalition building by making available antiracism grants “for students proposing to work on specific action steps” to prevent and reduce Islamophobia on campus, in Colorado, and in the world.

The Institute for Social Policy and Analysis (ISPU), a Muslim-focused think-tank, strongly favors the Colorado College Antiracism Initiative emphasis on coalition-building in order to reduce bias and discrimination. ISPU recommends that anti-Islamophobia efforts focus on bringing Muslims and non-Muslims together (1) to educate multiple publics about Islamic religion and Muslim cultures and (2) to create opportunities for Muslims and non-Muslims to build meaningful relationships with one another.¹⁸

Students could work on any number of projects together. Just to name one idea, they might create art, posters, flags, and other media on campus sidewalks, in hallways, and in other campus spaces to communicate short messages about the college’s commitment to antiracism. Feature the images of global leaders who have challenged or transformed racism. Make the physical environment of the college sing with diversity. Include Muslims.

Goal 4: Support and engage all faculty and staff in antiracism work

Recommendation 4A: “Develop faculty evaluation criteria and rewards systems to ensure that” collaboration with and advocacy on behalf of racialized religious populations such as Muslims count as anti-racism work for the purposes of “annual reviews, promotion and tenure, awarding of professorships, and post-tenure review.”

Recommendation 4B: Include the racialization of religion as part of the Crown Faculty Center’s work with faculty to understand the nature of race and racism in the modern world.

The natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities are rooted in racialized knowledge that has historically defined non-Christian and/or non-white religious groups as racially inferior. These groups have included Native Americans, whose religions were seen as savage; practitioners of African traditional religions, whose religions were associated with primitivity or psychosis; Jews, who were targeted in the Holocaust via the application of modern

¹⁷ Anne Norton, *On the Muslim Question* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

¹⁸ Dalia Mogahed and Azka Mahmood, “American Muslim Poll 2019: Predicting and Preventing Islamophobia,” May 1, 2019, <https://www.ispu.org/american-muslim-poll-2019-predicting-and-preventing-islamophobia/>.

eugenics; Muslims, who are viewed as intolerant, sexist, fanatical, disloyal, violent, and so on; and Hindus and Buddhists, who are often constructed as more naturally prone to spirituality.¹⁹

Recommendation 4C: Offer faculty grants to include coverage of the racialization of religion in their courses and the ways in which racialized religious groups have accommodated and resisted this oppression.

Recommendation 4D: Include Muslim Africa in the Arabic, Islamic, and Middle East Studies program.

The current schedule of Arabic, Islamic, and Middle East Studies should include the relevant courses of Drs. Diop and Wade. For example, “La Littérature Sénégalaise au Féminin” should be added to the 2019-2020 AIMES course list.²⁰ African Muslim women matter; their voices are essential to the study of Islam. The college’s study abroad program in Senegal should also be featured on the AIMES website.²¹ I recommend better communication among all those faculty who teach about Muslims and Islam.

Recommendation 4E: Increase the number of faculty and staff social events in which alcohol is not served and protein options besides pork are offered.

Increasing the number of social events without alcohol will nurture a more welcoming environment for Muslims who choose to observe traditional prohibitions against liquor, and for some Christians, some Buddhists, some Hindus, some Sikhs, some Baha’is, recovering alcoholics, the children of alcoholics, and others who do not drink.

Serving pork-free meat dishes at informal faculty and staff faculty gatherings is an important form of hospitality.

Goal 5: Make antiracism a central value in CC’s academic and co-curricular programs

Recommendation 5: Reward faculty efforts to include coverage of Islamophobia in research, teaching, campus programs, and community-engagement as applicable.

Goal 6: Increase compositional diversity of CC community

Recommendation 6A: As the “Office of Admissions... extends its reach to high schools in major urban areas,” attempt to recruit students from Islamic schools.

¹⁹ Tisa Wenger, *We Have a Religion: The 1920s Pueblo Indian Dance Controversy and American Religious Freedom* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2009); David Chidester, *Empire of Religion: Imperialism and Comparative Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); J. Lorand Matory, *The Fetish Revisited: Marx, Freud, and the Gods Black People Make* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); Stefan Kühl, *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism*, rev. ed (New York: Oxford, 2002); Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Post-Colonial Theory, India, and the “Mystic East”* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

²⁰ “Arabic, Islamic & Middle Eastern Studies,” <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/dept/arabic-islamic/>.

²¹ “Language and Culture Study in Senegal,” <https://www.coloradocollege.edu/offices/globalandfieldstudy/global-education/summer-off-campus/senegal-gs236-fr327-fr201-language-and-culture-study-in-senegal.html>

There are now hundreds of Islamic schools in the United States, including full-time K-12 institutions. Moreover, urban Islamic schools, like urban schools more generally, are often populated by Black and brown students. Many of these students are either the children of foreign-born Muslims or of U.S.-born African Americans. Such schools exist around the country.²²

Recommendation 6B: As the college raises funds to support its Antiracism Initiative, call on Muslim donors.

Muslim American philanthropy is deeply engaged with the education sector, and 54% of Muslim Americans make annual contributions to non-Muslim educational causes.²³ Muslim donors bring experiences to the college community that non-Muslim donors do not possess.

Recommendation 6C: Appoint a representative of Colorado's Muslim community to the Board of Trustees.

Goal 7: Make antiracism central to CC's communication

Recommendation 7A: Include Muslims and college programs related to Muslims in the college's publications.

So many stories about Muslims at Colorado College are waiting to be told. What is the day in the life of a Muslim student who fasts during Ramadan? What are the experiences of students on the Senegal study abroad program? What challenges does the Muslim community in Colorado Springs face? Who are the Muslim-identifying faculty and what do they teach and study? Where are Muslim alumni succeeding after graduation? Public recognition of Muslims and Islam is essential if the college wishes to challenge Islamophobia.

Recommendation 7B: The Office of the President should increase communication about the Antiracism Initiative.

Both non-Muslim and Muslim students expressed the desire for more communication from the President regarding the Antiracism Initiative.

This rang true for me as a visitor, too. In conducting my research for the Antiracism Initiative, Google searches revealed limited information, and I found myself having to dig through various sites in order to obtain a clear sense of (1) what the Antiracism Initiative is, (2) what has happened, and (3) what will happen.²⁴ It would help if a banner or header titled "Antiracism Initiative" were added to the main college portal (<https://www.coloradocollege.edu/>) and web users were then redirected to one landing page where all public documents, updates, and resources on the Antiracism Initiative were made available.

²² In California, see <https://www.privateschoolreview.com/california/islamic-religious-affiliation/high>; in Atlanta, see <http://mohammedschools.org/>; in Indianapolis, see <http://www.isimti.org/>.

²³ Institute for Social Policy and Analysis and Lake Institute on Faith and Giving, "American Muslim Philanthropy," https://www.ispu.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2019_Philanthropy-Report_WEB.pdf?x65050.

²⁴ See, for example, the result of the search for "Antiracism Initiative Colorado College": <https://www.google.com/search?client=firefox-b-1-d&q=antiracism+initiative+colorado+college+>

While many non-Muslims and Muslims acknowledge and are thankful for the Antiracism Initiative, I also heard the fear that the Antiracism Initiative is window-dressing. No amount of communication can or should eliminate dissent, but administrators might want to invest additional time in communicating personally with students and other stakeholders about what, concretely, is happening and how they can participate in the process.

I also recommend that the President make a stronger public case to Colorado College for the Antiracism Initiative by engaging in a year-long internal communications campaign. Using the “bully pulpit,” perhaps the President can issue a statement at the beginning of each block that explicates (1) one particular form of racism and (2) how such oppression is being challenged at the college. For example, during January, the month that coincides with Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, the President could explore the nature of anti-Black racism and how Colorado College is trying to become an institution that corrects past injustice and celebrates Black cultures in the United States and around the world. During September or October, the President might highlight anti-Latinx racism and how Colorado College is challenging xenophobia and anti-immigrant violence.

Contemporary life is defined by a fragmented and yet saturated media landscape. In order to be heard, one must repeat one’s messages in multiple sites and on multiple occasions. Repeated, direct, and personal outreach is sometimes necessary in order to reach community members at Colorado College as I learned in publicizing the Anti-Muslim Racism Workshop and in communicating with college administration, faculty, and staff.

Conclusion

I am deeply grateful to the dozens of college community members who granted me an interview, participated in the anti-racism workshop, generously hosted me, joined me for dinner or lunch, and invited me to participate in various campus activities. Thank you. I hope you will continue to advocate for change and organize to prevent and reduce Islamophobia on a local and global scale.

When I arrived on the Colorado College campus on a December Monday, I felt a little bit like the 18-year-old who first climbed Kenyon College’s Gambier Hill: the sheer physical beauty, that soaring mountain struck me as “some strange spell.” I knew I was projecting innocence onto the place. As I came to learn about the human geography of the college, I heard painful and angry stories. But the magic did not disappear. It was transformed. The resilience, defiance, and passion of Muslim and Muslim-allied faculty, students, and staff inspired me to believe that change is possible. A more beloved community is at hand. But much of the power to change the college from a place of exile into a home, a place where Muslims are no longer invisible, remains in the hands of non-Muslims. I hope they accept the challenge.

Appendix 1

Student, Faculty, Staff, Community Member Brainstorming

The anti-Muslim racism workshop included time for small group brainstorming. About 53 people came up with answers to the question, “What can CC do to challenge anti-Muslim racism locally and globally?”

Create or provide accessible educational programming about Islam and Muslims, including First

Mondays and early childhood education (4)

Mandatory training or classes

Pike Peak library distinct events

Interfaith social events, meetings, dinners with Muslims on and off campus (2)

Provide space for self-reflection on bias (3)

Build a CC curriculum (NSO requirement, more classes) (2)

Recruit more Muslim students

Scholarships and funding for Muslim students

Support groups and advisors for Muslim students (2)

Abolish anti-Islam laws and policies (immigration, surveillance, etc.)

Advocate for more accurate media representation (3)

Youth education

Public sharing of Islamophobia experiences

Space for prayer

No ethnic-racial profiling

Remove anti-Muslim content on social media

Solidarity with Muslim refugees

Hire more Muslim faculty

More workshops on anti-Muslim racism (2)

Examine CC history for anti-Muslim bias plus endowment and trustees

Prison abolition (Muslims are over-represented in US prison population)

Create anti-war activism on campus

Support anti-imperial movements

Solidarity with or conversations about Palestinian people (2)

Challenge resource extraction, including oil

Provide safe space for non-Muslims to ask questions (2)

Understand violence as universal, not particular to one group

Represent Muslims in campus media, public life, leadership; humanize Muslims by hosting Muslim athletes, artists, and public figures

Encourage voting and political participation

Connect students with Muslim community outside CC (2)

Support national Muslim organizations

Hold a Unity Day with workshops, discussions, new perspectives

Celebrate Muslim holidays on campus

Expose CC to religious practices

Study abroad

Skype or global classrooms

Propose Citizen's Initiative to CS City Council to conduct programming/discussion on anti-Muslim racism in the Springs

Engage CS public schools on Islam and anti-Muslim bias

Appendix 2

Questionnaire

I used parts of the following questionnaire to guide my interviews.

Universal

1. What is the campus climate for Muslims at CC?
2. How is CC challenging anti-Muslim racism?
3. Can you think of any anti-Muslim bias incidents.....
Prompts: in the classes, dorms, town, sports, faculty meetings, campus programs, etc.
4. Have you heard stereotypes about Muslims as
Violent?
Sexist?
Intolerant?
Religious rigid?
5. How are campus attitudes toward Islamic religion?
The opposite of Western or American?
What about Sharia?
Muhammad?
The veil?
6. What is the environment in Colorado Springs for Muslims? How does CC fit into that environment?
7. Are any groups on campus actively stoking anti-Muslim views?
8. How do concerns about anti-Muslim bigotry intersect with other CC anti-racism initiatives?
How should they?

Campus Life

1. Are there physical recognitions of Muslims and Islam on campus?
 - a. the recognition of Muslim holidays
 - b. a space for prayer
 - c. displays of art or PR about Muslims at CC
 - d. other media?

Student Life

1. How is life for Muslim students at CC?
2. What accommodations are made for religious practice?
3. What bias do they face in classes?
4. What other challenges do they face in student life? Sports? Dorms?
5. Are there Muslim-focused clubs?
6. How many Muslim students are recruited, retained, and graduated? What is the trend?

7. What attention is being paid to Muslim / non-Muslim student interactions?

Curriculum

1. What classes can students take that include coverage of Islam and Muslims? What kind of coverage is that?
2. How many students take these classes?
3. Are there any efforts to enrich the curriculum through the antiracism initiative or under another guise?
4. Are there efforts to incorporate anti-Muslim racism into classes?
5. Do faculty have sufficient encouragement and resources to include coverage of Muslims and Anti-Muslim racism?

Faculty and Staff

1. How is life for Muslim faculty and staff?
2. What religious accommodations are made for them?
3. What bias or discrimination have they faced?
4. What efforts are made to recruit and retain Muslim faculty and staff?