

Resolution for Adopting an Interfaith Meditation Space on Campus
2017-2018

WHEREAS, the current political climate has explicitly targeted Muslims through executive orders, such as the Muslim Ban along with the current US administration being openly Islamophobic¹;

WHEREAS, there has been a 44 percent increase in anti-Muslim hate crimes and from 2014 to 2016, anti-Muslim bias incidents jumped 65 percent²;

WHEREAS, there have been reported incidents of Islamophobia on local campuses such as a Muslim woman getting her hijab pulled off at San Jose State University³;

WHEREAS, white supremacists have been emboldened to express hate against marginalized communities on campuses across the nation including at UCSC⁴;

WHEREAS, Muslims at UCSC do not feel safe to freely practice Islam on campus;

WHEREAS, Muslims have 5 obligatory prayers to perform daily⁵ and there is no permanent, accessible, and designated safe space on campus or off campus to perform these prayers, given that the nearest mosque is in Capitola⁶;

WHEREAS, Muslim students resort to praying outside or in uncomfortable public spaces that make them vulnerable to attack or scrutiny such as parking garages, in narrow hallways, or even underneath staircases;

WHEREAS, praying is a crucial component to the mental and spiritual health of Muslim students at UCSC and without a permanent, accessible, designated safe space

¹https://www.brennancenter.org/sites/default/files/publications/BCJ_Islamophobic_Administration.pdf

²<https://www.cair.com/press-center/14322-new-cair-report-shows-more-than-50-percent-spike-in-anti-muslim-incidents.html>

³<https://www.sfgate.com/crime/article/Muslim-student-at-SJSU-assaulted-while-wearing-a-10607068.php>

⁴<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=791077614376941&set=pcb.1475655092449222&type=3&heater>

⁵ <https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/9/second-pillar-of-islam/>

⁶<https://www.google.com/maps/dir/University+of+California+Santa+Cruz,+1156+High+St,+Santa+Cruz,+CA+95064/@@36.9788196,-122.0600884,13z/data=!3m1!4b1!4m13!4m12!1m5!1m1!1s0x808e41a2ff8cbf4f:0x3a8e3b7c928320d5!2m2!1d-122.0582972!2d36.9914738!1m5!1m1!1s0x808e15492376e017:0x18c056f61de1002e!2m2!1d-121.984828!2d36.967525>

for Muslims to practice their faith, their ability to succeed academically and socially is inhibited⁷;

WHEREAS, in an MSA survey in 2017, 45 out of the 45 students who responded said they would like and will use a place to pray and that is only a portion of the Muslim students on campus who are in dire need of a space to practice their religion, along with the entire UCSC student population who will be able to use this meditation/contemplation space no matter their religious or non-religious affiliations (as long as they are respecting the students in the space);

WHEREAS, UCSC is the only UC that does not provide a space for prayer or reflection for its students⁸;

WHEREAS, UCSC strives to create a campus environment that is inclusive to all students with principles of community that include diversity and justice;

WHEREAS, it is the role of UCSC campus administrators to support all students and ensure their well-being;

WHEREAS, mental health has become a UC-wide concern especially among marginalized communities on campus that are less likely to be able to reach out to campus mental health resources⁹;

WHEREAS, having an interfaith meditation space on campus for students to reflect, worship, or meditate safely would be positive for overall student health on campus and would be a great way to build community and foster relationships between people of all faiths;

WHEREAS, Muslim students at UCSC have been addressing this issue to administrators for over 20 years without any results and Chancellor Blumenthal has told MSA on multiple occasions that he supports this space however no actions have been taken;

⁷<https://www.nbcnews.com/feature/college-game-plan/mindfulness-meditation-may-help-students-combat-high-levels-stress-depression-n759971>

⁸<https://usac.ucla.edu/documents/resolutions/AResolutioninSupportofaNon-DenominationalPrayerSpace.pdf>

⁹<https://usac.ucla.edu/documents/resolutions/AResolutioninSupportofaNon-DenominationalPrayerSpace.pdf>

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Student Union Assembly strongly advocates for and urges that the UCSC administration adhere to the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment of the US Constitution which states that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” by ensuring that Muslim students at UCSC are not prohibited from exercising their right to religious freedom.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Student Union Assembly agrees that Muslim students at UCSC have the right to worship freely and must be given a permanent, accessible, and safe space to exercise this worship.

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Student Union Assembly demands that Chancellor Blumenthal and Executive Vice Chancellor and Campus Provost Tromp publicly express their commitment to support the designation of an interfaith meditation/contemplation space that can be used by all students on campus as a safe and accessible space for reflection, worship, or contemplation. This space must be made available to Muslim students for daily use in order to allow Muslim students to practice their religion freely and safely, which is especially pertinent for the spiritual, mental, academic, physical and social well-being of Muslim students in this current political climate of open and extreme Islamophobia.

THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that if the UCSC Administration does not respond accordingly to the utter *lack* of a permanent and accessible space for Muslim students to practice their religion freely and safely, meanwhile other UC campuses have already ensured this for their students, the Student Union Assembly will support any and all direct actions, such as *protests*, by working with our MSA, Muslim students at UCSC, Muslim students at other UC campuses, and allies to ensure that Muslim students at UCSC are heard and our collective need for a permanent, accessible, and safe space to worship are addressed as stated above.