New and Notable

The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy Benefits from a Dedicated Multifaith Prayer and Meditation Room

Centrally located in Cabot 207A, the space opened in February after several months of planning and construction. In addition to its beautiful decor, the space features a foot bath, meditation cushions, bookshelves and a wall-to-wall carpet aligned toward Mecca.

A multifaith group of Fletcher students advocated for the space, including Muslims who were seeking a convenient space for performing daily prayers. Fletcher School administrators gave the idea a warm embrace. All Tufts affiliates are encouraged to visit the new sacred space.

There’s a New Program Associate in Town

Abubakr Fakhry Abou-Elala joined the Tufts University Chaplaincy team this spring semester as a Muslim Associate. Abubakr comes to Tufts through the Islamic Society of Boston Cultural Center (ISBCC), where he works with Muslim youth and young adults to engage them with the beauty and inspiration of Islamic civilizations and to cultivate their Muslim values, including through travel experiences to such places as Spain and Malaysia. Born in Saudi Arabia and raised in Egypt, Abubakr was educated as an electrical engineer. He memorized the Qur’an at an early age. We are happy to have him in our midst.
In the Nation’s Service

In his talk, “Muslim Americans in the Armed Forces: The Story of a First Generation Palestinian-American,” Captain Nadi Kassim’s shared insights from his path to the United States Military Academy at West Point and his subsequent experiences serving in the U.S. Army. The event, held in March, was a collaboration of the International Security Studies Program (ISSP) and the Fletcher Islamic Society (FIS).

Fall Dinner Featuring Chaplain Kameelah Rashad, MS

Activism and Wellness: Spiritual Resources for Effective and Holistic Social Justice Work

Drawing on her experiences as a chaplain, her training in clinical psychology, and her work in communities on mental health and racial justice issues, Kameelah Mu’Min Rashad, MS, MRP, MeD, brings insights on how to sustain ones spiritual, emotional and physical well-being while being an effective voice for issues on social justice.
Coalition-Building in Post-Election America

Saad Ansari visited Tufts in November of 2016 where he spoke about strategies for effective grassroots political activism and coalition building to a large and diverse student crowd in the Tufts Interfaith Center. Saad Ansari has served in many government posts, including in the Obama Administration in the Office of the Under Secretary of the Navy, as Defense representative to the White House’s Detroit Working Group (an interagency initiative to rebuild Detroit), and in the Office of the Secretary of Defense focusing on Stability and Humanitarian Affairs policy. Prior to joining government, Saad worked in a tech startup and also co-founded Fawakih, a pioneer Arabic and Islamic Studies institute in America.

Supporting One Another and Standing in Solidarity

With the exponential rise in hate crimes against ethnic and religious minorities, there is great apprehension about what the future holds for America’s pluralism. These trends deeply affect students, faculty, and staff who are themselves from diverse backgrounds, who have family and friends that are religious and racial minorities, and who see inclusion as a core social imperative and American ethic. In this context, many at Tufts are working overtime to ensure that targeted minorities and Tufts affiliates in general have robust support systems. Tufts affiliates have commendably stepped up to meet this needed support with different initiatives across the university to support students in an uncertain political climate.

Above: Staff and students from Tufts Hillel delivered surprise hand-baked sweets during Muslim Friday prayer.
Alumni Spotlights

Tying the Knot

Congratulations and blessings to these happy couples!


Safiya Subegdjo A15, G16 and Osman Aijazi A16 tie the knot on July 16, 2016 in Windham, New Hampshire in the company of an adoring Tufts extended family.

The Tufts University Muslim Alumni Association (TUMAA) was established in January 2016 with a mission to support Tufts University alumni from all schools and academic programs in their ongoing involvement in the educational mission of Tufts University. TUMAA is a network to mentor current students and a platform to support alumni in connecting to other professionals in their field. It is also a core mission of TUMAA to work against the dangerous effects of Islamophobia and xenophobia by promoting the stories of Tufts Muslim alumni who are making valuable contributions to the arts, science, and society.

Nominations to serve on the Tufts University Muslim Alumni Association board are accepted every year in April. Board members serve a three-year term and commit to participating in a TUMAA sub-committee. You can put in a nomination or contact TUMAA here: TUMAA@googlegroups.com.
Tufts University Muslim Alumni Association (TUMAA): Young Alumni Honoree

During his time at Tufts, Zaid Qureishi A15 studied chemistry and economics and was a board member of the Tufts Muslim Students Association, first serving as Freshman Representative, then as Vice President of Religious Affairs, and finally as Senior Advisor. During his time, he helped organize many events including Quran study circles and food drives. Zaid also tutored hundreds of students in chemistry and statistics as a Resident Head Tutor for the Tufts Academic Resource Center. In his senior year, Zaid joined the Tufts Marathon Team, raising over $5,000 for the American Medical Athletic Association’s Youth Fund. He successfully completed the 2015 Boston Marathon and went on in 2016 to complete the Chicago and New York City Marathons.

Zaid is now living in New York and working at the public accounting firm Perelson Weiner LLP. When I caught up with him, I asked him if he’d share a lesson learned during his time at Tufts: “If there is one thing I would like to share with you that I’ve learned during my time at Tufts, it’s that ‘you can’t go it alone.’ People always ask me, “how do you run marathons?” The answer is simple: I have lots of help. First and foremost, I pray to Allah to allow me to finish because nothing is possible without the love and mercy of Allah. Next, I have the love and support of my family who provided the means for me to come to Tufts, supported my decision to run, and even took time off to travel to see me race. I also have a great coach at Tufts who guided me during my training and who I still look to for guidance.”

In his speech to current students upon accepting the young alumni award, Zaid encouraged current students: “I hope that while you’re at Tufts, you explore new opportunities and find your passions. But when you find those passions and aspire to achieve your goals, don’t take for granted the support. Don’t forget about God, don’t forget about the people who helped you get here, and don’t forget about those who will help you on your journey in the future.”

Zaid Qureishi A15 (center left) with members of the 2016-2017 MSA board Reshad Bin Harun A18 (left), Mohammad “Hamoody” Hamzee A19, Shaan Shaikh A17 (center right), Iqra Asghar A18, and Rumzah Paracha A18 (right)

Stronger Together

Clare O’Hare F16: I first met Celene, and through her, the Muslim Students Association [MSA] in my first year at Fletcher when I took part in a workshop on redefining the Israeli-Palestine conflict. During the next two years, I took part in a variety of events with people from the MSA and really appreciated the open, friendly environment. I mentioned to Celene one day that I’d like to stay involved after graduating, whether as a resource for students interested in legal careers or as an attendee at future events. I was surprised and touched when the alumni asked me to serve as an inaugural TUMAA board member. The more we engage across communities the more we become allies and the less we see “others”.

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Sakhi Khan A85 was a four year All-American in Squash at Tufts. He went on to earn a graduate certificate in management from Harvard University, to complete seven years on the World Professional Squash Tour, and to represent the USA twice in the PAN AM games. Colby College Squash Coach since 2001, Sakhi Khan also serves as Advisor to the Colby Muslim Student Group.

This is where Chaplain Celene Ibrahim met with him on her visit to Colby’s Maine campus last fall. Sakhi reminisces on his time at Tufts:

“In 1982-1983, a few of us Tufts Muslim students would attend the Jumah prayer at Harvard. It was the closest place around relative to Tufts. One day, the Tufts University Chaplain approached me and asked if holding the prayer at Tufts would be of interest to us. I immediately told him it would be great. He said that we’d need someone to lead and asked if I could coordinate, and thus, we began a Friday prayer at Tufts with rotating khateebs (preachers). Immediately, the Muslims at Tufts and in the surrounding area began to attend the services. During my last visit to Tufts, it was wonderful to see the same sign announcing regular Friday prayers at Tufts and to know that the prayer is still going strong.”

Chaplain’s Appeal: A substantial portion of our annual programs are made possible by community donations. To give to the Tufts Muslim Life Fund online, please visit: http://chaplaincy.tufts.edu/muslimchaplaincy/donate

To make a gift by credit card over the phone please contact Tufts Associate Director of Development Christopher Pinault at: 617-627-3018 or christopher.pinault@tufts.edu. Thank you for your support.