

2022-2023

Annual Report

Embracing Growth



Muslim Student Life
Syracuse University



About MSL@SU

Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University is a 501(c)3 Nonprofit Corporation Under the Section 193 Law of NYS and serves in lieu of Muslim Chaplaincy at Syracuse University.

Vision

Our vision is to be the model University-based spiritual & education center in the USA.

Mission

Our mission is to create an inclusive community and to engage in sincere reflections that result in religious, intellectual, and social growth through educational programs and spiritual guidance based on Islamic principles.

Goals

1) Acquisition of Information (“What will I learn?”):

Example: By participating in the Muslim Chaplaincy, students will receive a greater understanding of the history, core beliefs, and practices of Islam.

2) Vocational Preparation (“How will this prepare me for my future career?”):

Example: By participating in Muslim Chaplaincy, Muslim students will learn to lead by example and exercise servant leadership.

3) Personal Formation (“In what ways will I grow as a person?”):

Example: By participating in Muslim Chaplaincy, students will develop the capacity to perfect their moral character and exercise ethics in all aspects of their lives.

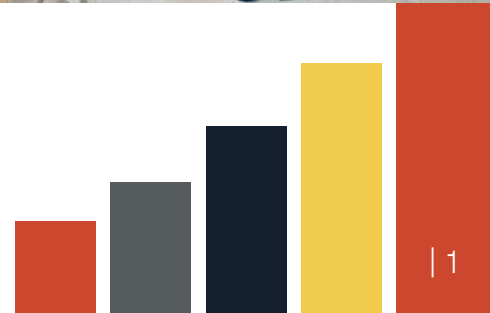
4) Community Transformation (“How will I change the world for the better?”):

Example: By participating in Muslim Chaplaincy, students will have the opportunity to advocate for justice, equality, and prosperity for local, national, and international causes for all people.

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Chaplain's Message

Assalamu Alaikum!

Reflecting on this past academic year, I want to share our appreciation for your continuous support of Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University. Because of your support, Syracuse University is a better place for Muslim students, and it is already reflected in the enrollment numbers. We continue to write pages of history and create long-lasting legacy, in sha Allah. We secured the first waqf, an investment property that will contribute to sustaining programs and support for Muslim students and the presence and understanding of Islam on campus. In the 2022/23 academic year, enrollment of Muslim students increased by 16%, and alhamdulillah, we were busier than ever in meeting their needs and achieving some milestones in developing our organization.

Our team grew by welcoming an assistant Muslim Chaplain, a student coordinator, and a few new board members. Each of them has already made significant contributions to our organization through additional programming, community outreach, social capital, revenue increase, and a more prominent presence on campus, among others. This was best reflected during the university's annual day of giving that coincided with the first day of Ramadan when the Muslim Chaplaincy Gift Fund ended up among the top three university funds (among more than three thousand funds) based on the number of participants. While our total revenue in the campaign was far from the top funds, the number of participants who engaged with our fund promises a bright future.

On Fridays, over a hundred students count on free lunch and a hot beverage after Jumuah. This tradition demonstrated hospitality that we cherished in our faith and ignited a spark of community that keeps growing. As a result, we now have seventeen prayer rooms across the campus. Main Chapel accommodates over 120 students for Jumuah each week. Halal food can be found in all five dining halls and during major university events. Understanding Islam Class keeps attracting and educating students, faculty, and staff on Islam. Muslim Student Life Welcome orientation and the mentoring program became a stepping stone for many Muslim students in getting familiar with the campus and CNY area. Weekly Qur'an, Tafsir, Tajweed, and other religious classes are provided. Chaplain regular office hours and faith-based counseling and guidance are available. Last Ramadan, we offered and facilitated Iftars for 21 out of 29 nights of Ramadan, Iftars, and suhoors for over 1500 individuals. We also provided financial aid to students who needed additional support with Ramadan meals. A robust Muslim community helps Muslim students find a sense of belonging and grow in confidence while away from home.

You have a fair share in all this and more, and we thank you. We keep developing this legacy for future generations together. This all is not just a great story but an imprint of history! May God Almighty accept from us!

Sincerely,



Imam Amir Durić
Muslim Chaplain



Meet Our Team



IMAM AMIR DURİĆ
MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

Amir Durić joined the Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University in 2017. He oversees various programs supporting Muslim students, faculty, and staff. Durić has an extensive experience and training in Muslim community leadership, Islamic studies, interfaith relations, and Islamic Chaplaincy. This skillset makes him an excellent resource for confidential conversations, faith-based counseling, and understanding Islam in a contemporary context. He is currently in Social Science Ph.D. Program at Syracuse University, and his research broadly focuses on Muslim student experiences in higher education.



HANAN GUSAU
STUDENT COORDINATOR

Hanan Gusau joined our team at the beginning of the 2022/23 academic year. She mostly focuses on outreach and campus engagement. Hanan completed her third year studying Biotechnology and Neuroscience. She grew up in Lawrence, Kansas (Home of the Jayhawks!) and lived in Lagos, Nigeria, for two years as a teenager. In her free time, Hanan enjoys reading and exploring new places.



IMAM DŽEMAL CRNIĆ
ASSISTANT MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

Imam Dzemal leads Qur'an study classes and assists Muslim Chaplain in building relationships with on and off-campus partners, interfaith dialogue, and development. He spent nine years in Turkey, pursuing degrees in theology, Islamic studies, and Muslim community leadership. He has been a full-time imam for the past eleven years, six years in New Jersey and five years in Pennsylvania, where he extensively focused on developing and facilitating programs for high school and college students. Imam Dzemal is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Leadership at Alvernia University.



IMAM AHMET ÇELİK
SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE

Çelik leads our Friday Tafsir Class and facilitates discussion groups and seminars on political thought, Islamic political and legal theory, law, jurisprudence, exegesis, and how they relate to contemporary issues and context. Ahmet Çelik is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religion at Syracuse University. His dissertation project sits at the intersection of religion, philosophy, and political theory, and it examines the concept of sovereignty in Islamic political thought. He also serves as an imam and instructor at Colgate University.

Programming

MSL WELCOME & MENTORING PROGRAM

This program is specifically designed with the needs of SU's incoming Muslim students in mind! Sessions include study tips, navigating the University, getting familiar with the area, balancing academic and spiritual life and needs, and more. The program is led by Muslim student leaders known as Muslim Student Life Mentors. Muslim Student Life Pre-Welcome is the best way to settle on campus and meet other Muslim students.



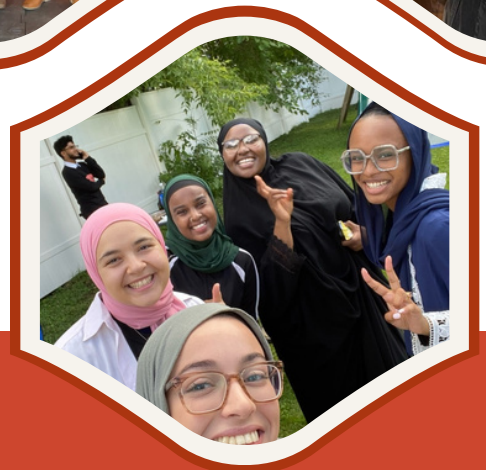
ISLAMIC INITIATIVES

MSL offers weekly classes on Understanding Islam, Tafsir, reading the Qur'an, and Tajweed. Besides, khateeb training is provided at least once a year.



STUDENT LEADERSHIP

In late August each year, we host a day-long retreat to prepare our student leaders for a successful year through team-building activities and various exercises. Besides, student leaders engage in weekly meetings, mandatory training, and events that empower them and help them develop as leaders.



RAMADAN

This Ramadan, we facilitated iftars on 21 out of 29 nights. We collaborated with multiple organizations, departments, and restaurants, including Hendricks Chapel, 119 Euclid, local mosques, Hillel, Touch of Broadway, African Student Union, Bridge, and others. Suhoor items were available to those who did not have meal plans. Besides, MSL had mini-grants for students who needed financial support to get through Ramadan.



GUEST SPEAKERS



COMMUNITY IFTAR

On April 4th, Muslim Chaplaincy and MSA hosted now a traditional annual community Iftar. The Iftar was organized in collaboration with Hendricks Chapel, and close to 400 guests of various faiths and backgrounds were welcomed to Goldstein Auditorium of Schine Student Center, where they had an opportunity to enjoy a reach program, experience an iftar/break fast with Muslims, and learn about Ramadan and Islam in general.



THE FIRST IFTAR AT CHANCELLOR'S HOUSE

Each year, Chancellor Kent Syverud and his wife, Dr. Ruth Chen, host various chaplaincies to show appreciation for everything they do to enhance the student experience. This year's appreciation dinner was notable for Muslim Chaplaincy and historic for Syracuse University. It was the first-ever Iftar at the Chancellor's House in 123 years of its history, with over 120 guests in attendance, including SU students, alums, faculty, staff, and friends.



NASHEED CONCERT



RAMADAN COOKING CLASSES

In collaboration with 119 Euclid, MSL organized a few cooking classes during Ramadan. Considering that many students miss their families and homes during Ramadan, one objective of those classes was to create a family atmosphere for those away from home and those new to practicing Islam and observing Ramadan.





VISITING LOCAL ISLAMIC CENTERS

We are so blessed to have multiple Islamic centers and Muslim organizations in the City of Syracuse, and our goal is to offer those as resources to Syracuse University and SUNY ESF Muslim students. Among the centers we have visited this year are the Islamic Society of Central New York, Masjid 'Isa Ibn Maryam, Islamic Cultural Center of Bosniaks, Masjid Bilal, Al-Huda Mosque, and RISE Center.





EID PRAYER & CELEBRATION



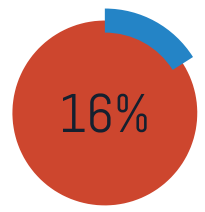
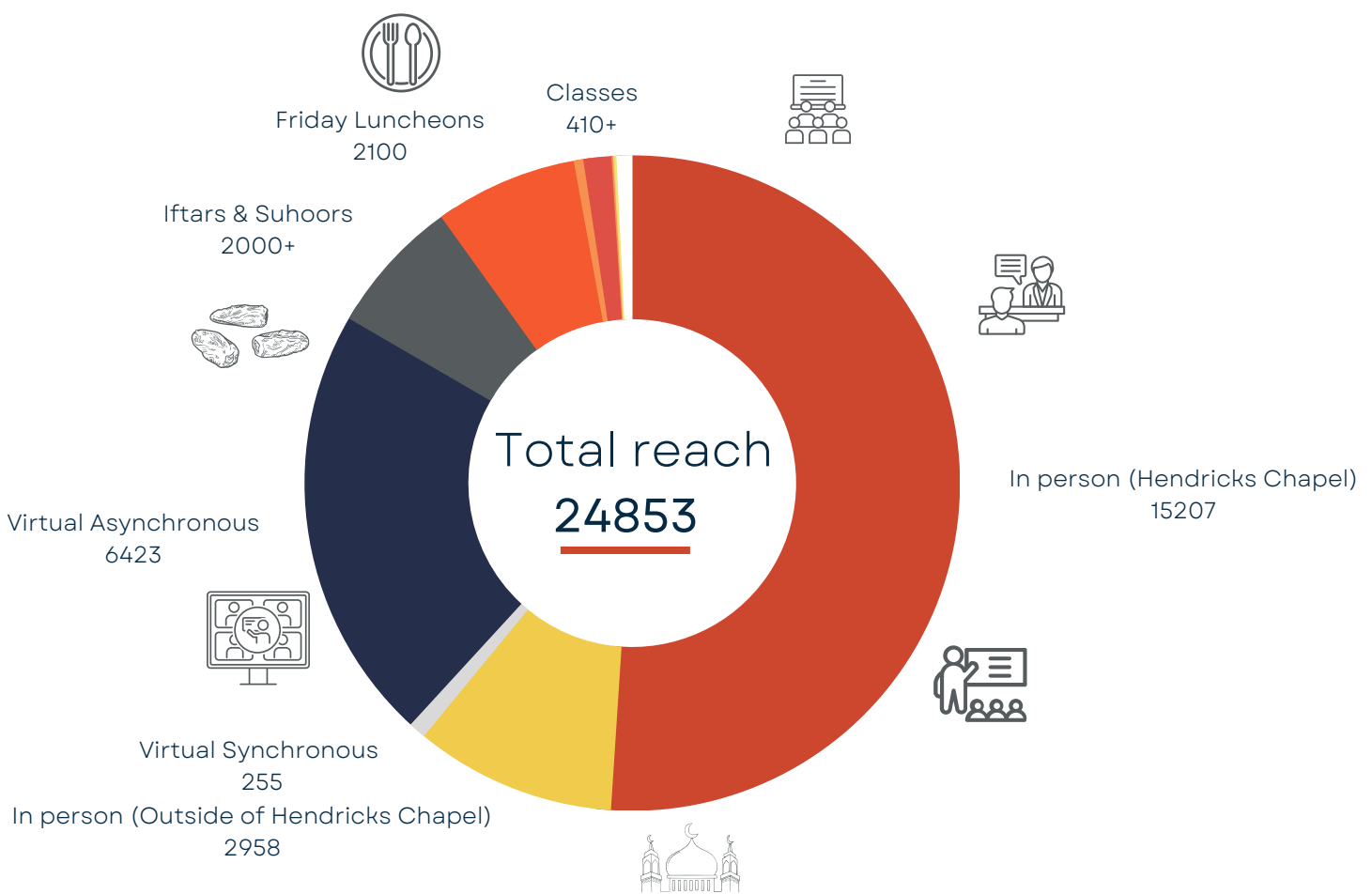
For the third year, Muslim Chaplaincy organized Eid al-Fitr prayer and brunch at Hendricks Chapel since many students stayed on campus and expressed a need for it. Besides the prayer, MSA hosted an Eid BBQ this year at Tahera Azmath Community Center.



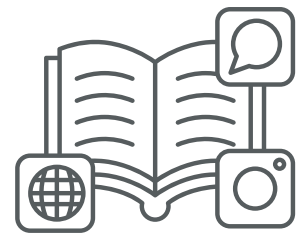


A Snapshot of Our Impact

REACH STATISTICS



increase
in the enrollment of Muslim students



In 2022/23,
our work was featured in Islamic Horizons,
Islamic Society of North America Magazine,
Syracuse University Fall Magazine,
Daily Orange, and in over 20 digital news
articles and stories.

One University Awards



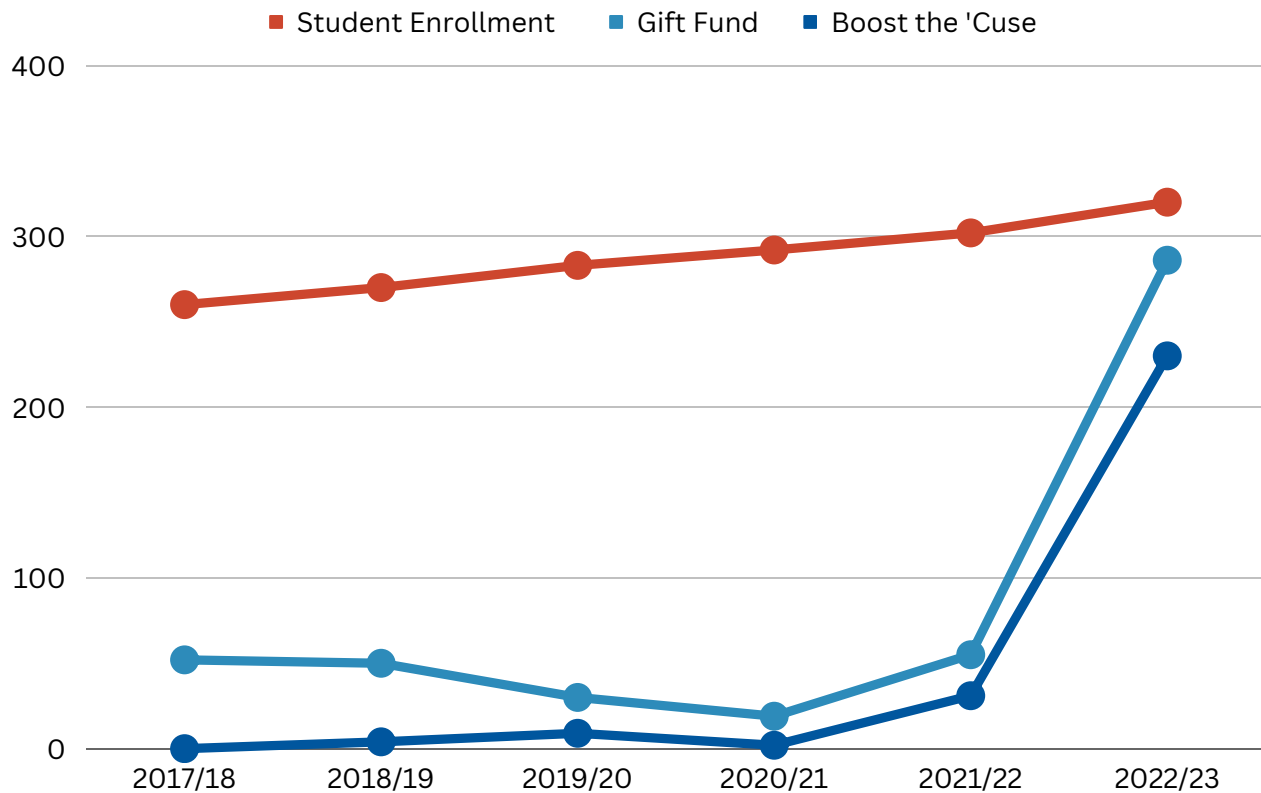
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AWARD

During the One University Awards Ceremony on April 21, 2023, Imam Amir Durić, Muslim Chaplain at Hendricks Chapel, was awarded the Diversity and Inclusion Award. The Diversity and Inclusion Award recognizes an individual who is integral in helping the University achieve academic excellence at a university that is welcoming to all through investments in a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible campus community. The award is an outstanding recognition of Chaplain Durić's and Muslim Chaplaincy's work.





Development



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During the university's annual day of giving, Boost the 'Cuse, Muslim Chaplaincy Gift Fund ended up among the top three university funds (among more than three thousand funds) based on the number of participants. While our total revenue in the campaign was far from the top funds, the number of participants who engaged with our fund increased by 642% compared to last year's participation.

There is a similar trend in our general gift fund; participants grew from 55 to 286 this year. We are honored by the opportunity to serve Muslim students on campus and trust you all are giving us. This might be the best time for Muslim Chaplaincy in its history, and we are excited to use this momentum to create a long-lasting legacy for generations to come. Thank you for being a part of this beautiful story and historic moment!

Waqf

TAHERA AZMATH COMMUNITY CENTER



A long-term MSL objective is to make Muslim Chaplaincy at Syracuse University sustainable. As a part of this vision and with your support, we secured property at 1443 E Genesee St. to serve as the first MSL waqf. We held an open house in October of 2022. We envisioned it as a community center that will bridge on and off-campus communities and support Muslim Chaplaincy's development, programming, and sustainability. This property is a 12-15 minute walking distance from the heart of campus, and It has also already hosted a few potlucks, iftars, picnics, and receptions.

The house's second floor was somewhat updated and became home to three Muslim students. We plan to update the property in phases and on an ongoing basis. There is a need to replace windows and doors in the house, paint the siding, fix the fence, furnish the first floor, and remodel the attic. If you want to build yourself and your family in this long-lasting legacy and an ongoing charity, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at msl@syr.edu.





Community

POTLUCKS @
TAHERA AZMATH
COMMUNITY CENTER





GRADUATE STUDENT INITIATIVE

During the MSL campus impulse interviews, it was brought to our attention that Muslim graduate students would appreciate and need more programs geared toward them. As a result, we introduced a graduate student initiative. We hosted a meet and greet in March of this year where graduate students had an opportunity to bond with each other and share what they would like to see on campus.





INTERFAITH

Hendricks Chapel is home to many religious and spiritual student groups and chaplaincies. It opens many collaboration opportunities. Among others, we highlight Iftar and the day of service at CNY Diaper Bank with Syracuse Hillel, Interfaith Exploration Week, Blessing of Students, and Annual Service of Commemoration.



JUMUAH AT HENDRICKS



WELCOME BACK DINNER

It is traditionally hosted in September to welcome incoming and returning Muslim students to campus. The number of students attending the event keeps growing, and we hosted close to two hundred guests this academic year.



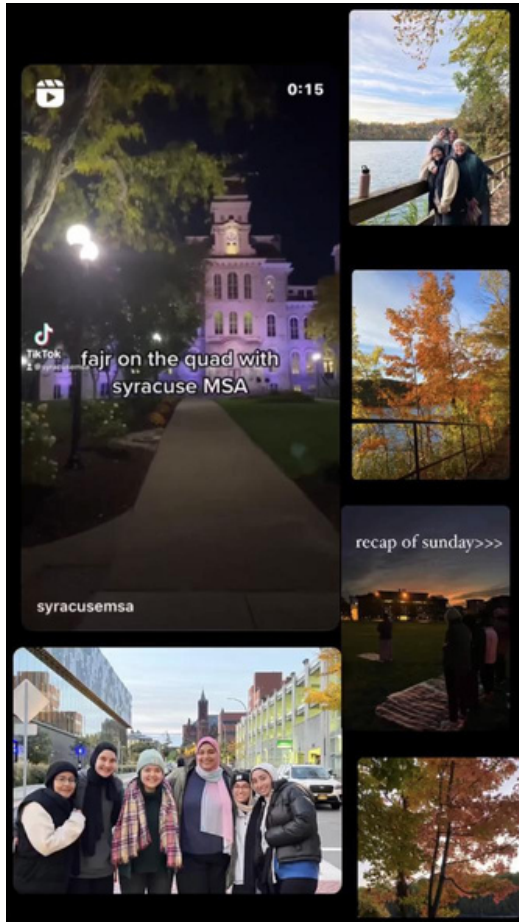


CHARITY WEEK WITH MSA & ISLAMIC RELIEF USA

The ultimate vision of Charity Week is to become a vehicle to inspire young people to become active, socially engaged, and united upon our shared Islamic and humanitarian values. The project began life as a vision in 2000 - a vision that the world's problems could not be solved by money but through unity.



MSA SOCIAL HANGOUTS



APPLE PICKING WITH MSA

It is traditionally organized in the fall to enjoy beautiful CNY colors and build community.





Black History Month Initiatives



Black History Month is celebrated in February and has received official recognition from governments in the United States and Canada, and more recently has been observed in Ireland and the United Kingdom in October. It began as a way of remembering important people and events in the history of the African diaspora.



World Hijab Day with MSA



World Hijab Day is an annual event founded by Nazma Khan in 2013, taking place on 1 February each year in 140 countries worldwide. Its stated purpose is to encourage women of all religions and backgrounds to wear and experience the hijab for a day and to educate and spread awareness on why hijab is worn. Nazma Khan said her goal was also to normalize hijab wearing.



Photos by
SOLON QUINN





Community Outreach & Alumni Engagement





THANK YOU!

MSL Advisory Board:

Raizur Rahaman

Abu Badruddin

Mirza Tihic

Esmir Omerovic

Mehdi Meghezzi

Tahsin Tahmid

Onboarding:

Jehan Muhialdain, Kaitlynn Chopra, Ibrahim Diallo



Muslim Student Life
Syracuse University

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