Including Muslim, Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African Students in the University's Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
The Islamophobia Working Group
February 25, 2016

I: Overview

The national climate of Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism impacts students, faculty, and staff at the University of Michigan. Students have reported hostility from faculty and other students; verbal assaults on the streets; the receipt of hate mail; hostility toward activists organizing around MENA-related issues, especially the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; and a reluctance to call the police or to report bias incidents. Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified faculty report various challenges in areas of teaching, research, and service, such as having their authority challenged in the classroom, lack of recognition of the challenge to their research, and being overburdened with unacknowledged service. This report's objective is to identify the experiences of Arab, Muslim, and MENA (Middle Eastern and North African) students and faculty and to suggest ways for the administration to build upon the initiatives that it has already implemented to create a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students. We offer some suggestions on how to build upon existing efforts and propose some additional ideas to improve the climate for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students, staff, and faculty. We structure these suggestions around three categories: resource building, crisis support, and education.

II: Current Political Climate

Since September 11, 2001, there has been a rise in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment across the nation. In the year after 9/11, the FBI reported a 1600% increase in hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims. Since then, hate crimes have been commonplace and have increased following other terrorist attacks committed by Arabs and Muslims, such as in Paris in November 2015 and the San Bernardino, California shootings in December 2015. The recent Super Survey[1] published by the Bridge Initiative at Georgetown University reveals two decades of Americans having an unfavorable view of Arabs and Islam. Notable in recent statistics is that 4 in 10 Americans view Islam unfavorably; 47% of Americans said that Islam was more likely to encourage violence than other religions; and 43% percent of American Muslims have faced hostility, been racially profiled, or attacked. At the

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[1] The Super Survey: Two Decades of Americans' Views on Islam & Muslims," The Bridge Initiative, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Georgetown University, 2015, http://bridge.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/The-Super-Survey.pdf

University of Michigan, a survey of 200 students who self-identified as Muslim American revealed that 63% have experienced discrimination based on their religious identity. Another survey of 110 students who identify as Muslim at the University of Michigan indicated that 50% have witnessed the perpetuation of Islamophobia on campus by staff, faculty, and students.

Anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment in the current political climate is not only the result of individual perspectives and actions, but also of state policies and practices. Post-9/11 domestic and foreign policies, from the USA PATRIOT Act to invading Afghanistan and Iraq, to the NYPD's surveillance of mosques and Muslim Students' Associations on college campuses, have positioned Arabs, Muslims, and those who appear to be Arab or Muslim as suspected potential terrorists.

Discrimination, intimidation, threats, and violence targeting American Muslims (or those perceived to be Muslim) and Islamic institutions are routine occurrences. Mosque burnings, hate crimes, workplace and airline discrimination have become commonplace. Murdering Muslims or those who appear to be Muslim is also not unusual. Last year, three Muslim students in Chapel Hill, North Carolina were killed, and in 2012, seven Sikhs were killed in the Oak Creek Massacre in Wisconsin. Islamophobia does not affect only Muslims; it also affects those who are erroneously assumed to be Muslim (even though Muslims are of all backgrounds) – this includes Arab Christians, Iranian Jews, Sikhs, and Hindus. Often people most at risk are those who display religious symbols – the hijab or headscarf, a long beard, or a Sikh turban.

Though anti-Muslim rhetoric by public figures and political leaders is not new, a few recent examples include Republican Presidential Candidate Ben Carson's statements last September that a Muslim should not be president because Islam is not compatible with American values and the Constitution; and Republican Presidential Candidate Donald Trump's statement last December that all Muslim refugees and immigrants should be banned from entering the U.S. Such public statements have the effect of normalizing anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment.

These government policies, public opinion polls, discriminatory actions, and rhetoric reveal a refusal to understand that the 1.6 billion Muslims of the world are people like any other people, with a wide range of experiences and characteristics. It is simply not possible to describe 1.6 billion people with any kind of accuracy. It reveals that Islam is perceived in a very reductive way, as having nothing in common with Christianity and Judaism, as un-American, as violent, and as threatening.

As if this political climate was not enough to contend with, many students who identity as Arab, Muslim, or MENA are involved in campus activism to spread awareness on the impacts of complex geopolitical shifts in the Middle East. This includes the Israeli occupation on Palestinian life and livelihood. Needless to say, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most polarizing conflicts of our time. The public discourse often privileges Israeli narratives over Palestinian ones. It is a common trend across the country for engagements in this conflict that criticize Israeli government policies to lead to hostility and accusations of anti-Semitism and even of supporting terrorism, rather than a critical analysis of the differentiation of anti-Semitism from critiques of Israeli policies regarding Palestinians.[2]

III: The Impact of the Political Climate on Students on Campus

The University of Michigan is certainly not shielded from the larger political climate in the U.S. Students have reported microaggressions from faculty and students; verbal and physical assaults on the bus and on the streets; the receipt of hate mail; hostility toward activists organizing around Palestine and other MENA-related issues such as the Winter '15 *American Sniper* incident; and a reluctance to call the police or to report bias incidents. The examples below are based on personal communications; a focus group conducted with some Arab and Muslim undergraduate students; informal surveys with Arab, Muslim, and MENA students; and an Islamophobia Working Group meeting.

In a February 2016 survey of Anti-Muslim Bias at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor, Muslim, MENA and South Asian alumni and undergraduate and graduate student respondents reported overwhelmingly being the target of and/or witnessing bias and discrimination against those perceived to be Muslim (or Arab) in classrooms, in and around campus, and from students, faculty and staff. Alarmingly, threats of violence, verbal harassment, and fear and anxiety were expressed. 50% of the respondents reported University of Michigan staff, faculty, students and institutions perpetuate Islamophobia against Muslim, MENA and South Asian communities on campus and 33% of all respondents reported feeling marginalized in UM classrooms. The survey overwhelmingly cited social media, namely yik yak, as a site of discrimination and racism.

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[2] Burg, A. (2009) The Holocaust is over: We must rise from its ashes. St. Martin's Griffin; Don-Yehiya, E. (2012).Orthodox and Other American Jews and their Attitude to the State of Israel. Israel Studies, 17 (2),120-128; Mearsheimer, J. &Walt, S. (2008). The Israel lobby and U.S. foreign policy. Farrar, Straus and Giroux; and Sokhey, A.E., & Djupe, P. A. (2006). Rabbi Engagement with the Peace Process in the Middle East. Social Science Quarterly, 87 (4), 903-923.

Survey comments included:

• Fear and reluctance around self-expression of Muslim, MENA and South Asian identities in the classroom and on and around campus.

• Concerns over both mental and physical safety and an ineffectual bias reporting system. One respondent reported the most unsafe s/he ever felt was "on this campus."

• Lack of institutional response to matters on campus related to Islamophobia such as Harbaugh's comments in the WI/15 *American Sniper* incident

• A need for education and awareness workshops and programming for the campus community, namely faculty and staff. One respondent noted the negative impact on the learning process: "While all of these experiences are problematic and upsetting, when they take place in classroom discussions, students in the minority, without defense from the instructor or even in the face of discrimination by the instructor, often feel insulted or attacked with no means of rebuttal or self-defense. *It hinders one's ability to participate, to learn, and to feel like a respected or valued member of an intellectual discussion.*"

As with other forms of discrimination and bias, it impacts the learning process and emotional and physical well-being of these UM community members.

While the information below is based on undergraduate students, the February 2016 Anti Muslim Bias Survey reflected graduate student concerns. Additional communication with the Muslim graduate student population at the University of Michigan revealed similar issues. They too encounter threats and hateful remarks as a result of the expression of their faith. Some graduate students in professional programs reported difficult scenarios with advisors who made dismissive comments about Islam, implying that they do not take their Muslim students seriously. Graduate students often find it difficult to challenge such situations without institutional support. They fear that such interactions with advisors could directly influence their progress and careers.

<u>Microaggressions and Harassment</u>
Students have reported insensitive, inappropriate, or offensive comments about Arabs and Islam from faculty members both inside and outside of the classroom. The power dynamics often prevent students from addressing issues with their professor or GSI. One example from inside the classroom is associating Islam with terrorism in a class on warfare. Students reported an instance in an introduction to Arabic course in which they were asked on the first day as an icebreaker where they were on 9/11, associating the learning of the Arabic language with terrorism. Other students reported learning militarized words (e.g. military, war, United Nations, terrorism) in first year Arabic and not learning numbers or colors until the second year of language instruction. Examples of microaggressions outside of the classroom include a professor asking a student if she is denying Israel's right to exist by wearing a necklace of a map of Palestine. Furthermore, MENA-identified female students

report that they are asked often about their hijab. Students report that because it is a challenge to explain why the incident was offensive and then to ask someone with more authority to talk with the professor, they hesitate to take it further. Students report a lack of cultural competency across the university; they often feel as if they are expected to be spokespersons for their identities. Some students tend to take courses with the same few faculty members to minimize experiences with microaggressions in the classroom.

Campus Incidents
Particular incidents on campus have lead to students feeling unsupported by the administration.

When the film *American Sniper* was released, it was controversial because some viewers stated that the film inspired them to want to join the U.S. military to kill Arabs.[3] One viewer posted to Facebook: "American Sniper' made me appreciate soldiers 100x more and hate Muslims 1000000x more." The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee reported an increase in hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims after the release of the film.

Last year's *American Sniper* campus controversy (Winter 2015) led to students receiving hate email and Facebook posts, documented at http://umgotmail.tumblr.com, that stated for example, "Your 'religion' is a direct contradiction to our Bill of Rights and an insult to all Americans. Please take yourselves and all of your followers back to the Mideast and stay there," and "Go kill yourself." The hate posts include both visually offensive images as well as verbally offensive speech. Many students felt unsafe walking around campus alone during this time. One student received a death threat on the diag. She called DPS, waited over an hour, and when the officer arrived, her concerns were minimized. Another student reported that she had been followed home and harassed by strangers asking if she was "Arabic." The student didn't call the police because she didn't think it would be worthwhile. Students often no longer report incidents because they don't expect to be heard.

Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified students state that they would have felt safer if they had been in direct communication with the administration and had more administrative support throughout the process. Support could have been in the form of an email from the Dean of Students office or the President (condemning the hate mail) or an email to deans encouraging faculty to be as flexible as possible in arranging accommodations for targeted students. Someone in the administration told a student that the administration had supported not screening the film; yet the administration then reversed its decision and proceeded with the screening without informing with students. Students say the

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[3] Dominique Mosbergen, "'American Sniper' Triggers Flood of Anti-Muslim Venom, Civil Rights Group Warns," *Huffington Post*, January, 24, 2015, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/01/24/american-sniper-anti-muslim-threats_n_6537950.html

university's decision might have contributed to an increase in bias incidents given that those who sent hate email and posts were empowered to engage in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim hate speech as a result of the university's decision (and the coach's tweet).

This particular moment has had a lasting impact and has resulted in a sense of apathy and anxiety among students. One student stated that there is an overall feeling that the UM administration "does not care about them" or take their issues of safety seriously. As a result some Arab, Muslim, and/or MENA students have reported that they do not feel safe on campus, and furthermore, they do not feel that reporting their issues is worthwhile because they no longer expect any positive outcome; instead, they feel they will only make themselves vulnerable and relive traumatic experiences. These comments reveal the impact on the emotional and psychological well being of students - well being necessary for optimal academic performance and engagement.

Another example of students feeling marginalized by an administrative response was after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015. Arab, Muslim, and MENA students were upset by an email communication sent from Dean Laura Blake Jones to students that expressed support for "our French students studying in Ann Arbor, for others directly affected by this situation and all international students," but did not explicitly mention Muslim students, who were negatively impacted by the attack in Paris. These students took this communication as evidence that the administration prioritizes some students over others and avoids taking a stance to protect Muslim students on campus during times of increased anti-Muslim sentiment across the country. Arab, Muslim, and MENA students would have liked to see the administration issue a public condemnation of Islamophobia and a public offering of assistance and support to these specific communities during that time of crisis, which were done later by SACUA, Dean Martin, Associate Dean Dillard, and Assistant Dean Horton.

Student activism around Palestine
Leaders of the #UMDivest campaign in Winter 2014 faced targeted backlash for their organizing around Palestine.[4] Students in support of the movement were also met with hate mail on multiple forms of social media, stating, for example, "Get out, you Palestinian murderer."[5] Students turned to "Michigan in Color," an opinion section of *The Michigan Daily* reserved for people of color, to voice their frustrations with the campus climate surrounding Palestine. One student described her experiences in terms of having to defend her humanity.

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[4] Yazan Kherallah, "Viewpoint: Pineapple Express," *The Michigan Daily*, March 28, 2014, http://www.michigandaily.com/opinion/03viewpoint-pineapple-express28
[5] http://umdivestfanmail.tumblr.com

Students who participated in #UMDivest in 2014 reported that they were accused of anti-Semitism and were slandered in personal ways that threatened their emotional and psychological well-being as well as their academic and professional career. During these instances, many Arab, Muslim, and Palestinian student activists did not feel protected by the University and concluded that the University was not made for them.

Students who engage in pro-Israeli activism have institutional support, whether through Hillel, Central Student Government, or other units, advisors and resources. In contrast, students who engage in pro-Palestinian activism do not have comparable support. Faculty who want to support them often shy away from the issue for numerous reasons, including fear of slander or negative impact on tenure applications given the power dynamics involved in discussing Israeli politics.[6] This dynamic mirrors the larger U.S. political context in which the U.S. government has consistently supported Israeli state policies at the expense of Palestinian lives and sovereignty.[7]

Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified students operate within a climate of wariness at best and mistrust at worst in their relations with the administration as a result of these negative experiences. They have concluded that the needs of the administration and other students far outweigh concerns for their own safety and their sense of belonging on this campus.

IV: Faculty Experiences
Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified faculty report various challenges in areas of teaching, research, and service.

Teaching
The experiences of Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified faculty often parallel those of faculty of color.[8] In particular, Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified women faculty often face accusations of bias and challenges to their authority in the classroom, often from white male students. They also often face challenges to their grading. Some faculty who teach courses specifically on Arab and Muslim topics, often face criticisms from students because the course does not also cover other groups. As a result, some students conclude that the exclusion of other groups makes the class biased.

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[6] (https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2013/08/16/university-michigan-rescinds-invitation-alice-walker).
[7] Sasson, T.(2010). Mass mobilization to direct engagement: American Jews' changing relationship to Israel. Israel Studies, 15 (2), 173-195; Shain, Y. (2002). The Role of Diasporas in Conflict Perpetuation or Resolution SAIS Review, 22 (2), 115-144; and Weinzimmer, J. (2011). Homeland conflict and identity for Palestinian and Jewish Israeli Americans. El Paso, TX: LFB Scholarly Publishing.
[8] Chavella T. Pittman, "Race and Gender Oppression in the Classroom: The Experiences of Women Faculty of Color with White Male Students," Teaching Sociology 38(3), 183-196.

Faculty who teach about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also face hostility in the classroom and accusations of bias from certain students, regardless of how much effort they put into presenting multiple perspective on the issue. Some faculty avoid the topic entirely both inside and outside of the classroom in order to avoid the potential harassment that comes with it and to avoid any potential harm to their tenure process. In both of these examples, student attitudes can negatively influence evaluations of the instructor and class. This is of particular concern for assistant professors on the tenure track. Some faculty feel that the time and energy they put into classroom management and preparing lectures that will then be challenged goes unacknowledged by the administration.

Research
Those faculty whose research is on Islam and/or Arabs face challenges given that this field is not as advanced as those of other underrepresented groups.

There are no specialized journals, especially in the social sciences, which have reputable impact factors that are encouraging work on this population. This means that if "mainstream" journals do not accept their work, they can't go to a specialized journal because its impact factor will not be considered acceptable for tenure requirements. Reviewers often come with their own set of biases, often asking questions such as, "Why is it necessary to examine issues of discrimination for Muslims? How are these experiences likely to be different than what we already know for other groups?" Such questions are not necessarily asked regarding research on other groups where it is a given that discrimination has detrimental consequences. Often, funding agencies that focus on social issues tend to prioritize racial and ethnic discrimination over religious discrimination. Without funding, it is almost impossible to conduct quantitative or qualitative research.

Faculty accomplishments are often met with hate mail. One faculty member's recent publication was featured in the University Record, leading to hate mail. Another faculty member was featured on the Wolverines of Ann Arbor Facebook page. It led to hateful comments because he states that he teaches about anti-Arab racism. The offensive posts were removed. Another faculty member receives hate mail whenever she publishes an op-ed or any kind of public scholarship. She has developed a routine of calling the campus police approximately once per semester to report it. As a result, some Arab and Muslim faculty prefer not to highlight and celebrate their accomplishments publicly; which goes against the norm and unsaid expectation that departments publicize faculty achievements. This scenario highlights the need of departments to think about strategies to protect faculty from these kinds of negative reactions as well as value their work even if it is not publicized in the same way as that of others.

Recruiting graduate students who are interested in these topics is very difficult considering the lack of diversity in LSA graduate pools. Faculty also have to take into consideration the impact of the climate upon graduate students who conduct research on issues that draw considerable scrutiny and harassment, such as Islamophobia and Palestine, and personally see to their emotional and psychological well being. This is another example of the unacknowledged work of Arab, Muslim and MENA faculty that contributes towards creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment on campus.

Service
Arab and Muslim faculty tend to mentor a critical mass of Arab and Muslim students who feel marginalized at the university. These students come to faculty members because they don't know where else to go. Like other faculty of color, Arab, Muslim, and MENA faculty try to provide validation that these students have a place on this campus. However, this kind of advising requires time and effort and often gets unacknowledged as service and as contributing to diversity on campus by the department and the college.

When there is a rise in terrorism or Islamophobia, the same few faculty members are called upon to give lectures or advise the administration. The problem is not that these faculty members do not want to be called upon; rather, because the numbers of these faculty are small, the burden is extremely high. These faculty members are asked for more labor with little consideration of the impact on their already extensive time commitment. Faculty who are needed to do significant advising or campus education should, at the very least, receive course releases and stipends to support them in doing this work. This problem also points to the need for more faculty members who do this kind of work to reduce the individual burden of speaking and advising on topics related to the national climate.

V: A More Inclusive Campus Environment
The national context of Islamophobia and the political environment surrounding the conflict in Israel and Palestine create a complex challenge for college campuses. Nonetheless, a few measures could contribute to creating a more inclusive campus environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified students to thrive and feel a sense of belonging.

We acknowledge the administration's efforts and the strides it has made to create a more inclusive campus environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students over the last few years. The administration has been responsive to student needs in crisis situations. The efforts initiated by the administration provide an important foundation upon which to build. These are a few examples, and we are likely overlooking others:

- In response to student requests for an Arab and Muslim-themed multicultural lounge, staff members from Housing, the Dean of Students office, and other administrative units worked with students to create the Edward Said lounge in North Quad that was officially inaugurated in fall 2015.

- The Dean of Students' office's hire of a Bias Response Coordinator reflects recognition of Arab and Muslims experiences with bias and need for support.

- The arrangement for a Muslim Chaplain, funded through the Felicity Foundation, is also a welcome initiative to meet the religious needs of Muslim students.

- During the *American Sniper* incident, President Schlissel, VP Royster Harper, and Dean Laura Blake Jones met with students to learn from their experiences.

- MESA, the Dean of Students office, and Housing have made consistent efforts to be more inclusive of Arab and Muslim students through programming, outreach, and trainings.

- Dean Martin approved the formalizing of Arab and Muslim American Studies as an official Ethnic Studies unit within the Department of American Culture as of Fall 2015 (the program was founded in 2005). A hire for a faculty member who specializes in Muslim American Studies has also been approved.

- MESA launched Arab Heritage Month last year and is planning another one this year.

- OAMI launched an Arab graduation ceremony last year and is planning another one for this year.

- After the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, multiple administrative units responded. The Assistant Dean and Associate Dean for Undergraduate Education took the initiative to collaborate with Arab and Muslim students in organizing an event, "Sharing Stories, Building Allyhood: Students Speak Out Against Islamophobia." This event was successful not only in educating the campus community, but in providing institutional support to Arab and Muslim students. Also, President Schlissel and VP Harper invited Arab, Muslim, and MENA students to breakfast after the Paris attacks. Along similar lines, mass emails were sent out by Dean Martin and Associate Dean Dillard to underscore that Muslims are part of the UM community and SACUA passed a resolution in support of UM's Muslim community.

Below, we offer some suggestions on how to build on the effort that the administration has already initiated to create a more inclusive campus environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students, staff, and faculty. We structure these suggestions around three categories: resource building, crisis support, and education.

Resource Building
a) Hire more Arab/Muslim/MENA identified faculty and staff: Given the importance for institutional diversity for students to have faculty in their identity group, we suggest additional hiring at both the faculty and staff levels. This effort would also decrease the burden on the few faculty members who mentor students and seek to educate the campus on the impacts of anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia. Various administrative units would benefit from staff members who are knowledgeable about the issues this group of students face.

b) Add a distinct designation for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and faculty on the undergraduate application and on pool reports when faculty and staff are hired. The U.S. Census has plans to include a MENA category in the 2020 Census. Because of Census classifications, Arab students have been counted as white and not counted as adding to diversity initiatives. Data on religion is not collected. We would suggest tracking Arab, Middle Eastern, and South Asian populations in data collected about demographics at UM or consulting with students and community leaders on developing a more appropriate option than the existing one.

c) Continue and increase support and recognition of Ethnic Studies units. Ethnic Studies at the University of Michigan and at campuses across the country offer courses that educate the student body on questions of race and racism and also empower underrepresented students by validating their experiences of marginalization and providing academic frameworks to address this marginalization. The Department of American Culture houses an Arab and Muslim American Studies (AMAS) program, one of only three in the country (the other two being at UM-Dearborn and San Francisco State University). AMAS offers a minor, internship opportunities, programming, courses, and advising to students. The program offers students an institutional "safe space" – sometimes physically and more often than not, intellectually. Many Arab, Muslim, and MENA students take Arab and Muslim American Studies courses because they see themselves reflected in the academic curriculum and seek out Arab and Muslim-sensitive faculty or Arab and Muslim-identified faculty. AMAS has provided safe study spaces during finals and also during the *American Sniper* screening. AMAS does the work of creating a place of belonging for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and in offering classes and diversity-related curriculum. Ethnic Studies directors do not receive the same kind of support as, for example, a director of an area studies institute. Furthermore, Ethnic Studies programs receive $9,600 per year for

programming, which does not compare to how other units are funded. More funding is needed to support the director positions, for programming to educate the campus community, and to support the work of students and student groups on campus. Additional funding would support Ethnic Studies units in making a greater impact on campus.

d) Increase funding for student programming: There are numerous Arab, Muslim, and MENA student groups who organize educational and cultural events to combat discrimination. Students suggest additional funding in the form of a five-year perpetual plan for these student groups. Students should be consulted on the best structure for allocating, approving, and implementing programming proposals by student organizations (e.g. Dean of Students, MESA, AMAS, etc.).

e) Create more spaces for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students: The Edward Said lounge is a significant effort on the part of the university administration to create a more inclusive environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and reflects a responsiveness to these students' needs. Students have reported a need for another lounge space, one that is not restricted to dorm residences, but that could be used by any Arab, Muslim, or MENA student. One survey respondent said: "We need actual safe spaces. Not like Edward Said, which most people can't get to because it's in the residential part of North Quad or Trotter which is far away and next to the frats which make us uncomfortable at night." We propose another lounge space potentially in the new Trotter House and one on North Campus as well.

f) Provide a Muslim Prayer Space: Observant Muslim students pray five times per day. This is a central facet of the faith. Each prayer must be completed within a limited timeframe, based on a lunar calendar. Having access to a prayer or reflection space is essential to creating an inclusive environment. The Muslim Coalition representing several student organizations on campus surveyed 215 students in Fall 2015 on their use of prayer spaces on campus. The survey revealed that a prayer space in Mason hall is needed, given the high traffic in that building. Therefore, we suggest identifying a space in Mason Hall to be a designated prayer space for Muslim students. Based on the survey results, we also suggest providing better privacy in the Shapiro library prayer space; creating a reflection room map; and improving the existing prayer spaces on campus by installing a compass in the ceiling and to add a chair or two and a shelving unit.

g) Formalize the hiring of the Muslim Chaplain.

h) Designate an advocate for graduate students to provide support in cases of unfair treatment by an advisor and/or abuse due to an Islamophobic mindset.

<u>Crisis Support</u>
a) Improve the Bias Reporting System: While some students have used UM's bias reporting system, there is a general feeling that reporting will not help them. We suggest that the Dean of Student's office work with Arab, Muslim, and MENA students to improve the system so that students feel truly safe.

b) Improve the Safe Ride Service: Muslim female students, particularly those who wear the hijab, feel particularly vulnerable to profiling and harassment when waiting for Safe Ride. They report long wait times leading to students concluding that it is an unreliable service.

c) Create a hate mail policy: Given the frequency in which students have received hateful emails and Facebook posts, students would like to understand whether or not the university policy includes one on email harassment and hate rhetoric sent from umich email accounts. If no such policy exists, we suggest creating one to protect students from harassment and hate mail and providing a means of reporting and dealing with breaches of that policy.

d) Provide administrative support during crisis situations: During crisis situations, students would appreciate if the Dean of Students (or appropriate office) would communicate with faculty on behalf of students to request feasible extensions and other academic accommodations to support them during times of increased distress due to harassment or being targeted as the result of the political climate on campus.

e) Send out campus-wide communications during times of crisis: We applaud the recent resolution passed by SACUA, communications sent by Dean Martin and Associate Dean Dillard, and President Schlissel's winter graduation speech that took stances against discrimination targeting Arabs and Muslims. We encourage more of these kinds of targeted communications during times of crisis that highlight an increase in Islamophobia, that emphasize that Muslims are an important part of our campus community, and that discrimination is not tolerated on our campus. We also suggest considering drafting a communication modeled after the U.S. Department of Education's "Dear Colleague" letters.[9] After the Paris terrorist attacks and San Bernardino shootings, the Department of Education issued a letter to urge schools to take measures to ensure that Muslim, Arab and refugee students are free from harassment. Official communications as such have the potential to shape a more inclusive campus environment.

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[9] Evie Blad, "Make Schools Welcoming for Muslim, Arab, Refugee Studies, Ed. Dept. Urges," *Education Week*, January 4, 2016, http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/2016/01/make_school_welcoming_for_muslim_arab_refugee_students_ed_dept_urges.html and http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/rulesforengagement/safeschoolsletter.pdf

<u>Education</u>

a) Educate the campus community about the issues Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and faculty face, particularly on how the political climate impacts them and how to reduce microaggressions and bias: The administration has already created some important structures to encourage inclusive teaching practices, such as the LSA Teaching Academy, the CRLT-IGR seminar and various other CRLT workshops, LSA's Institute on Diversity and Climate, and the CRLT Players. Similarly ADVANCE's seminar for faculty who serve on search committees seeks to promote inclusive hiring practices. We would suggest using these existing structures to address the issues raised in this report. The urgency of educational workshops cannot be underestimated as world events, biased media and political trends continue to paint pictures of hate and rancor, the public looks to great institutions of higher learning for answers. Thus, the University of Michigan has an opportunity to implement important changes to address the safety and well-being of its students and be an excellent example for many other institutions.

b) Educate the police and other bias responders so that they fully understand the issues involved given the political climate of Islamophobia and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and insist upon punctual response times.

c) Finally, we suggest conducting a systematic survey of Arab, Muslim, and MENA faculty, staff, and students to gain more information. Given that the university does not currently have data on its Arab, Muslim, and MENA community members, the surveys used to create this report were mostly ad hoc. A more systematic data gathering method could yield important insights in identifying strategies towards creating a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students.

REPORT SUBMITTED BY THE ISLAMOPHOBIA WORKING GROUP

MISSION

Given the recent increase in anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiment internationally, the purpose of this group of faculty, staff, and students is to study the climate and its impact on Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified students, faculty, staff and the campus community at large; strategize on how to create a safe and inclusive campus environment for Arab, Muslim, and MENA students and those who are impacted by anti-Arab and anti-Muslim sentiments (i.e. Sikh, etc.); and create a set of resources for community members, students and faculty included.

GOALS FOR WINTER 2016

1. To draft and submit a report to the administration suggesting ways to include Arab, Muslim, and MENA students in the University of Michigan's strategic plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
2. To create a resource list for Arab, Muslim, and MENA-identified students who are impacted by Islamophobia
3. To create a website that will serve as a clearinghouse for addressing Islamophobia and anti-Arab racism in the classroom

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- Nadia Bazzy, Sexual Misconduct Program Manager, OSCR
- Trelawny Boynton, Director, Multi Ethnic Student Affairs (MESA)
- Abby Chien, Program Manager, Multi Ethnic Student Affairs (MESA)
- Dilip A. Das, Assistant Vice Provost, Office of the Vice Provost for Equity, Inclusion, & Academic Affairs
- Rima Hassouneh, Center for Engaged Academic Learning (CEAL)
- Marjorie Horton, Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education, LSA
- Zikra Hussein, Bias Incidence Response Coordinator, Dean of Students Office
- Diala Khalife, Project Leader and Research Assistant, The Program on Intergroup Relations (IGR)

- Dahlia Petrus, Internship Coordinator, American Culture
- Leena Safi, Felicity Foundation
- Mohammad Tayssir Safi, Muslim Chaplain, Felicity Foundation
- Ayeza Siddiqi, Program Director, Transfer Connections and University Mentorship Program
- Lana Tolaymat, Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Graduate Students
- Maryam Aziz, American Culture
- Fatmeh Baidoun, School of Social Work
- Ziah Dean, Biophysics
- Meryam Kamil, American Culture
- Aliza Kazmi, Public Policy
- Naz Khan, Law

Undergraduate Students
- Tamer Abuhalawah, Kinesiology, Economics, Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Haleema Aqel, Communication Studies and Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Tina Al-khersan, International Studies and AAPTIS
- Noran Alsabahy, Psychology, Community Action and Social Change, Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Fatima Chowdhury, International Studies, Middle East and North African Studies, Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Jad Elharake, Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience
- Mekarem Eljamal, International Studies, Middle East and North African Studies
- Areeba Jibril, Economics, Political Science, and Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Devin Boulos Jones, Economics and Political Science
- Nicole Khamis, International Studies
- Lamees Mekkaoui, Near Eastern Studies and Women's Studies
- Danielle Rabie, International Studies, Middle East and North African Studies, Arab and Muslim American Studies
- Sahal Saleh, Biopsychology, Cognition, and Neuroscience