

**From:** [Campus Climate Proposal form](#)  
**To:** [Libby Peterek](#); [Carrie Olson](#)  
**Subject:** New submission from Campus Climate Proposals  
**Date:** Thursday, April 21, 2016 10:15:53 PM

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**Group name (if applicable):**

Center for South Asia

**What is your affiliation with UW-Madison? For group submissions, please respond for main contact.**

- Academic Staff

**Describe the concept. If already in use here or elsewhere, please indicate this.**

We live in the post-9/11 world in which one leading presidential candidate is calling for an all-out ban on Muslim immigrants. It is no surprise that we have witnessed an alarming rise of Islamophobia across the nation. On February 10th I participated in a vigil organized by the Muslim Students Association, after reports of a Muslim student being shot near UNC-Chapel Hill. On March 3, 2016, I was listening to Wisconsin Public Radio and heard a story on the Kathleen Dunn show about increasing reports of Islamophobia in schools in Wisconsin. As Outreach Director at the Center for South Asia on campus, and as someone who has lived among Muslims in India, these stories are troubling to me. Consequently, I want to begin a conversation about this issue on campus.

When I learned of the Chancellor's open call for ideas to combat hate, I thought this would be an opportunity to explore the possibility of a campus-wide initiative "Being Muslim: A Conversation about Racism and Islamophobia." The initiative I envision would include a colloquium, theatrical performance, and facilitated dialogue. Nothing of this nature is currently taking place on our UW Madison campus. All events would be free and open to campus and local community (registration required). In addition, UW students would have an option to register for a 3-credit course and would be required to participate in all activities and prepare a final project/poster session to be held on campus.

**Colloquium**

The two-day colloquium would explore the Islamic faith from an academic perspective exploring its complex evolution and multifaceted nature. The discussion would then progress to include personal narratives, in an effort to seek a better understanding of the complexities of "Being Muslim" and the harm caused by Islamophobia. The colloquium will bring together academic, governmental, and leading activists whose work addresses the multiplicity of lived human experiences and practices of Muslims, past and present. A list of possible speakers is offered under the section on additional information.

**Theatrical Performance/Workshop**

Following the colloquium, the theatrical performance "Coming out Muslim: Radical Acts of Love" will be presented. This production, first performed at the WOW Café Theater in NYC, captures stories and experiences of being at the intersections of Islam and queerness and its relationship to family, loves, and one's sense of self and relationship with faith. The artists, Terna and Wazina, then move into a workshop with the audience. The performers are interested to work with organizers to tailor their show according to the needs of the audience,

offering workshops entitled “Interrupting Islamophobia,” “Beyond Tolerance: Inclusion and Social Justice,” as well as writing workshops where participants explore the intersections of their identities and relationship with faith through writing prompts and movement.

#### Diversity Dialogues

Partnering with the existing program, Diversity Dialogues (an initiative of the office of the Vice Provost for Campus Climate and Department of Counseling Psychology), coordinators would collaborate on a public Diversity Dialogues on Combating Islamophobia (registration required) and student-focused Diversity Dialogues for students enrolled in the 3-credit course. These dialogues will focus on the sharing and learning of personal perspectives and experiences and encourage some sense of community. Every person registered for the public or student-focused group would be required to agree to the following guidelines:

Create a safe space

Engage honestly

Take risks and explore your beliefs

Keep an open attitude

Treat this as an opportunity for learning

Focus on personal experiences

Show a willingness to learn and respect differences

Identify 1-2 issues of personal interest

#### **How would this affect cultural change on campus?**

By confronting the real issue of hate and Islamophobia – both globally and locally – we would (1) be welcoming and creating an honest and safe platform to explore the Islamic faith and religious beliefs of Muslims and (2) be open to hearing stories of our students and community members who have been at the cross-fire of hate crimes, and participated in facilitated dialogues to combat misunderstanding and ignorance. This initiative seeks to create a campus climate that embraces our faculty, staff and students who come from Muslim faiths—and to expose our non-Muslim campus body to ways that Islamophobia can be silenced.

#### **For new ideas, how would you propose piloting this idea to see if it would work? If the idea is already in use at UW-Madison, how would you propose expanding or altering this program for greater impact?**

As Diversity Dialogues are already happening on campus, and have a terrific response rate and mechanism in place for credits, etc. the first idea would be to pilot some student-centered sessions, following one or two public lectures by social leaders or public figures speaking out on the issue of Islamophobia. Based on these pilots, discussions could address how to create experiences for a public audience -- proposed colloquiums, community forums, and/or theatrical performances. Another important step would be to reach out to the Muslim Students Association and other interested student organizations, and local community groups (like the Milwaukee Muslim Women’s Coalition) to make sure we are working in harmony with efforts they have been engaged with in combating hate and anti-Muslim rhetoric locally.

#### **What resources would be needed to implement your suggestion?**

Funds would largely be needed to support the travel of invited speakers, hotel stay, per diem and a modest honorarium. Additionally, funds would be required for the use of any space or audio visual equipment required by speakers. There would be a performance fee for the theatrical piece, along with travel for the artists (hotel and per diem), and a possible rental fee for the performance space. Organizers would be actively pursuant in finding matching campus funds, arts grants, and other donors to support this initiative.

#### **If this proposal was developed in partnership with any other organizations, please list them below.**

If successful the Center for South Asia would reach out to confirm collaboration with the following UW campus partners: UW South Madison Partnership Office, Lubar Institute, Middle East Studies Program, African Studies Program, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Muslim Student Association, Pakistani Student Association, Indian Student Association, Indian Graduate Student Association, International Student Services/Reach programs, and the faculty director of the Diversity Dialogue programs in the Counseling Psychology Department. In support of the theatrical performance collaboration, faculty/staff would be invited from the Department of Theatre and Drama, the Arts Institute, Gender and Women’s

Studies Department, and the 4W Initiative on campus.

**Please use this space for any additional information about your proposal that you wish to share:**

List of possible invited speakers for two-day colloquium

UW experts:

Michael Chamberlain – Professor Department of History

Charles Cohen - Gordon Fox Professor of American Institutions, and Director of the Lubar Institute for the Study of the Abrahamic Religions

Aparna Dharwadker - Professor, English and Interdisciplinary Theatre Studies

Anna M. Gade, – Vilas Distinguished Achievement Professor in the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies

Mary Layoun – Professor, Comparative Literature and Folklore

Asifa Quraishi – Associate Professor of Law

Uli Schamiloglu – Professor of Central Asian Studies

André Wink – Professor of History and Senior Fellow, Institute for Research in the Humanities

Non-UW scholars:

Michael Cook - Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University

Engseng Ho - Professor of Cultural Anthropology, History and Islamic Studies Center, Duke University;

Shahnaz Rouse – Department of Sociology, Sarah Lawrence

Social leaders and public figures

Mohamed Abdel-Kader, Deputy Assistant Secretary, International and Foreign Language Education, US Department of Education

Sana Amanat - Award-winning creator of Ms. Marvel (Kamala Khan)

Manzoor Cheema - founding member of Movement to End Racism and Islamophobia (MERI)

Deepa Iyer - Strategic Consultant, South Asian Americans Leading Together (SAALT)

Farhan Latif - President, El-Hibri Foundation

Janan Najeeb - President and Founder of the Milwaukee Muslim Women's Coalition

Eboo Patel - Founder and President of Interfaith Core

Jasjit Singh - Executive Director, Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund