



HUMA

HARVARD UNIVERSITY MUSLIM ALUMNI

NEWSLETTER

Assalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh,

A belated Eid Mubarak! I pray that you enjoyed this Ramadan surrounded by friends and family.

As we launch our 3rd newsletter and this board is starting on its new term I think it's worth some time to reflect on how far we have come as an organization. In the span of two short years much has been done to build and institutionalize HUMA so that we are better equipped to serve the needs of Harvard's Muslim Alumni. We recently achieved 501(c3) nonprofit status and are developing a budgeting plan to ensure financial strength in the coming years. We worked with one of our alumni, Abdurrahman Syed, on a rebranding project, which you can see from our new and improved logo. We are also very excited about the launch of our new website – www.harvardmuslimalumni.org, with special thanks to Saba Zaidi and Ana Nast for their tireless efforts. Last fall we sponsored our first HUMA Cares event, which had a number of current students and alumni work with Habitat for Humanity to build homes in the North Shore of Massachusetts. Our Global Iftaar program continues to bring together alumni from around the world. We are proud to support HIS in their annual iftaar program, which consistently fed 70-100+ people 3 times a week during the month.

And yet, there is still much work to be done. We are exploring opportunities for networking among the alumni community and a continued social agenda which will bring grads together in their own cities. We are developing a mentoring program to connect alumni with current students and each other. The long term vision of providing additional support to the Muslim community on campus – whether it be through scholarships, advocacy, supporting the role of the Muslim Chaplain or developing a separate prayer space – is something we are actively working towards. There is no shortage of ideas on how to further support the community, so please let us know if you have any thoughts or things you would like us to focus on. We rely on your contributions to help us fund these endeavors. You can support us at <http://harvardmuslimalumni.org/donate>.

This spring we held our 3rd annual Alumni dinner on April 13th and had over 140 alumni and students from all different Harvard schools in attendance. We were very excited to have Shahzad Bhatti HLS '97/HKS '06 and Dr. Sherman Jackson as our guest speakers.

As always, please do not hesitate to reach out to me, or any member of the board if you have any questions or suggestions for improvement.

And Allah Knows Best,

Khalid Yasin

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Global Iftaars 2012

Fasting during the month of Ramadan is one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, a tradition that binds us as one Ummah. The Muslim community is so ethnically diverse and geographically dispersed, yet we can be assured that during this holy month the majority of Muslims alive on this earth are following the example of our Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and making the same sacrifice of fasting for the sake of Allah.

In the fall of 2008, with the intention of building a stronger community, HUMA launched its first Global Iftar program. Since then, a series of alumni iftaars have been held all around the world. The program has been quite successful in bringing together Harvard's Muslim graduates, who are scattered in far corners of the world. These iftar dinners are continually a great opportunity to reconnect with fellow graduates, reminisce, network in a casual setting, as well as learn about HUMA's latest initiatives.



In 2012 HUMA's Global Iftar program was a great success. With the help of our enthusiastic members, we were able to put together nine iftaars in 15 cities around the world across the globe, compared to 8 in the previous year. These iftaars were hosted in: New York, Boston, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Providence, Ann Arbor, Cairo, Lahore, Dubai, Istanbul, New Haven, London, DC, Houston, and Riyadh. Some of these iftaars were in restaurants, while others had a more informal potluck format. A few of the dinners were co-sponsored with other Muslim alumni organizations and one of the Boston iftaars was co-sponsored with the Harvard Islamic Society, where undergraduates had the chance to get to know some of the Boston-area alums.

In 2013 we are hosting 17 iftaars in cities across the world (Boston, New York, Houston, Kuala Lumpur, Karachi, Islamabad, San Francisco, LA, Philadelphia, Istanbul, London, Dhaka, Dubai, etc) with members across different generations in attendance. We sincerely thank our volunteer hosts and participants for all their time and energy – we could not have done it without their support!

A Note From the Treasurer

Salaam alaykum!

As a young organization with ambitious plans to strengthen our Harvard Muslim alumni community, we kindly ask for your continued financial support for HUMA. We have grown our programs and activities significantly over the past few years, and this progress could not have been made without your generosity! As a recent testament to our growing reach, this Ramadan, we hosted hundreds of HUMA members at our 17 Global Iftars and sponsored 3 iftars on the Harvard campus for the HIS community. These were entirely made possible by your support! To continue to enhance our engagement with members, HUMA plans to expand our programs, both in the types of events we host and in our geographic reach, as well as to develop new tools that foster greater community within our membership. In the coming year, we plan to remain committed to numerous initiatives, including, but not limited to:

- Networking events in major cities in the US and across the globe
- HUMA Cares community volunteer and outreach opportunities
- Development of an alumni database, accessible to all members
- Continued support to the Harvard Islamic Society

With a view towards the future, the 2013-2015 Executive Board also plans in the coming term to explore longer-term initiatives for HUMA.

We are closely listening to feedback from members, and this dialogue has helped inform us as we shape the future aspirations for our organization. Stay tuned in the coming months as we announce new initiatives and programs, and please continue to provide comments and ideas to our team.

Our future will be powered by the financial generosity of our members. We hope that our track record speaks for itself and gives you the confidence to invest in the future of this community.

Please consider making a donation to HUMA. We ask that you donate only within your ability - every dollar counts! We have also introduced a monthly recurring donation plan, should you find it easier to donate a modest amount on a periodic basis.

You can donate online via PayPal at

www.harvardmuslimalumni.org/donate. We also honor checks made payable to "Harvard University Muslim Alumni" and mailed to:

Harvard University Muslim Alumni
c/o Ryan Starks, Treasurer
250 Kendall Street, #1103
Cambridge, MA 02142 USA.

**Hadith:
"The most beloved deed
before Allah is that
which is continuous,
even if it is little."**

Other HUMA Fun

In addition to our Global Iftaar initiative, we hosted many other fun activities in the past six months. Since our last newsletter, we hosted a few mixers with other Muslim alumni associations, including Columbia, Stanford, UPenn, and MIT in Boston and New York City. We hope that these inter-MSA socials will not only encourage new friendships, but also will serve as a platform for future collaborations such as volunteer initiatives and other partnerships.

We also hosted several graduate student socials. In the past, the majority of HUMA's active membership was primarily comprised of Harvard College graduates. Muslim graduate students frequently did not develop a strong tie to their MSAs mainly due to the lack of a common graduate student organization, as well as the short duration of Harvard's graduate programs. In order to address this issue and introduce Harvard's graduate students to HUMA, we hosted several social mixers on campus that brought together more than 50 graduate students and alumni. We distributed our

inaugural newsletter at the event and received a lot of positive feedback about and interest in joining HUMA from the graduate student community.

We also launched our HUMA Cares volunteer initiative to increase community engagement and provide an alternative opportunity for people to meet and interact with other alumni. In the fall of 2012 we teamed up with HIS undergrads and Habitat for Humanity to help build a home for a family in the area. This was a fun-filled day with fellow alumni that gave us a chance to not only get to know undergraduate and graduate students, but also power tools

In the upcoming few months, we are planning to host a few more socials, so please be on the lookout for our emails. Finally, if you'd like to host a HUMA social in your city or have any suggestions for future events, please contact our VP Internal at dyergasheva@post.harvard.edu.



HUMA Dinner

The 2013 annual HUMA dinner was attended by 130-140 Harvard alumni, students, faculty, and affiliates with a keynote address by Shahzad Bhatti. Shahzad Bhatti is Director of Investments at Khazanah Nasional where he covers the Muslim-majority world, education, renewable energy and the creative economy. Prior to Khazanah, Bhatti was founder/CEO of the SAB Group, a US-based consulting firm working on transactions worth above US\$ 10 billion with over 100 of the Fortune 500, 45 governments and many charitable causes. Bhatti has a JD from Harvard Law School and an MPA from KSG.

The first ever HUMA dinner was held in 2011 with about 60-70 attendees, and since then the dinner has become a yearly tradition. It is typically held at a banquet hall on the Harvard campus, and includes a program of events with a keynote address. Aamir Rehman, Harvard College, GSAS, and HBS grad, will insha Allah be the keynote speaker at the 4th Annual HUMA dinner. Aamir Rehman is a Managing Director of Fajr Capital, an Islamic investment management firm, the former global head of strategy at HSBC Amanah, a former fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington DC, and the

author of the books "Gulf Capital and Islamic Finance" and "Dubai & Co" published by McGraw-Hill

The annual dinner brings HUMA members from across the globe together at a single venue. This serves the important objective of building a strong alumni community, necessary to further HUMA's long-term objectives: facilitating professional networking and mentoring for alumni and students, supporting a full-time Muslim chaplain and a Muslim community center on campus, offering scholarships so more students can access Harvard, etc. The dinner is also a great way for old friends to catch up, and we try our best to minimize program time in order to allow for that.

The annual dinners have been extremely well received by our community. It raises HUMA's profile and presence on campus as well as provides students with an opportunity to meet alumni. We are planning to host many more alumni reunion dinners in future years to establish a long-lasting tradition that reunites old friends and fosters new connections within the Harvard Muslim community.

HIS News

As-salaam Alaikum Wa RahmutAllah wa baraktum,

In the Name of God, The All-Merciful, The Dispenser of Mercy

It is our distinct pleasure to share with you the many wonderful events that Harvard Islamic Society has planned for the rest of the year. In an effort to foster a supporting community, we have numerous events planned for the year.

With the hopes of creating a welcoming campus for Muslims (and Muslim-loving non-Muslims) HIS hosts many events on a weekly basis. The week begins as Muslim students make their way to the Harvard Yard Musalla every Sunday before sunrise to pray as a community. On Monday evenings, we host a halal dinner for all undergraduate students in Dunster House. The following day, many students can be found on Tuesday nights in the basement of Greys, studying Quranic Arabic under the guidance of a Harvard teaching fellow. On Thursday evenings, HIS hosts full community halal dinners in Adams House, open to undergraduates and outer community. Alhamdulillah, the attendance at these dinners has been consistently increasing and HIS is working with Adams House to accommodate as many people as possible. Only a few hours afterwards, HIS hosts a talk titled the Synergy of the Prophet in the Musalla, focusing on the love for Allah and his creation. The Muslim community at Harvard gathers the next day for Friday prayer. Once again, Islamic Learning steps it up by hosting an informal spiritual gathering Friday night, which offers a space for discussion and reflection. Finally, we hold an open HIS meeting every Saturday, to which we invite community members to share their views and ideas with us.

In addition to these weekly events, we offer a monthly chaplain dinner with one of our two chaplains. The dinners also allow students to discuss a range of different issues



relevant to Islam and college. Our two chaplains, Nuri and Taha provide the students here with guidance on Islam and form a solid support structure that the students can rely on. One of the chaplains has recently led a popular khutba workshop which taught students how to write a khutba with the option of delivering it during the weekly Jummah Prayer. We are very thankful for the efforts of our chaplains in fostering a community and making HIS a great resource for students on campus.

As our main purpose is to serve as a support network for Muslim undergraduates at Harvard we have created a very active big sib-little sib program. At the beginning of the year, freshmen are paired with upper-classmen who then serve as mentors, advisors, and friends for the rest of the year but many continue to be friends throughout their Harvard careers. At any one point you can find generations of such sib ships. We facilitate a strong bond by organizing fun outings for sibs, such as sib skate and sib night at Unos.

In an effort to establish a relationship with the various graduate schools, we have created the positions of graduate student liaisons. These liaisons span from all the graduate schools and help facilitate solidarity across the University among Muslims. The graduate students have served as great mentors and resources for many undergraduate students, and HIS hopes to strengthen the connection between the graduate and undergraduate Harvard community.

The next few months are filled with exciting events that will engage the broader Harvard community. This includes the Islamic Awareness Month (IAM), in which we will hold a panel on Sharia, a poetry night event, study break, and invite renown speakers. Adhan will also be given in the yard during this month, and we hope that it can serve as a way to spread knowledge of Islam to non-Muslims. IAM will be followed by Spring Dinner, hosted during Veritas Prefrosh Weekend, during which students of the prospective class come to visit campus. We hope to present to them an inviting, friendly, and enthusiastic community with smaller events following the Spring Dinner and an enthusiastic performance by our very own Musallah Boyz.

Insha'Allah, Harvard Islamic Society hopes to have a very successful year, and we sincerely hope that we can receive HUMA's support as HIS grows as a community and as an institution at Harvard. It is through the mentorship, kindness, and donations of alumni that HIS has been able to function with the freedom that it has and offer many of the programs for the community. We hope to continue to receive HUMA's support to improve as an organization and as a community.

Sincerely,

Executive Board 2013
Harvard Islamic Society

HUMA's Mission Statement			
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide resources and support for Muslim Alumni from all of Harvard School for initiatives and networking on and off campus 			
Alumni Networking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUMA will serve as a network for Harvard Muslim alumni and faculty. Through HUMA, members will be able to connect more easily with each other and with Harvard. 	Supporting Muslims on Campus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUMA will strive to create more resources at Harvard for Muslims, including providing financial or other support for Muslim student organizations at Harvard. 	Increasing Islamic Resources on Campus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUMA will promote a positive image of Islam and Muslims. In line with this objective, it will strive to create more resources at Harvard for those interested in Islam. 	Increasing Access to Harvard for Muslims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HUMA will support the pursuit and civil right of Muslims to obtain high quality education, working with young Muslims to encourage them to apply to Harvard.



Community News!

Saima and her husband Imran were blessed with a baby girl last summer, Maryam S. Yusuf. She's a cute bundle of joy!

Rashid Yasin and Eftitan Akam, President Emeritus and Vice President Emeritus (respectively), were wed the 22nd of December 2012 in Yuma, AZ.

Tariq Yasin FAS '04/HBS '08 and Somaira Rafiq were married this April in Philadelphia, PA.



American Islam is thriving. Or so claim recent reports published by Gallup, the Pew Research Center, and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). An August 2011 Gallup report cites American Muslims as exhibiting “strong identification” with God and country. One month later, CFR published a report demonstrating that American Muslims are better “culturally integrated” than their European counterparts and are generally more affluent.

American Muslims transcend ethnic/sectarian identities to mold a unique American Islam. Like the Daily Show comedian Asif Mandvi and world-renowned boxer Muhammad Ali, American Muslims have adopted the United States of America as their homeland and left their indelible imprint on its history and society. Citing President Thomas Jefferson’s copy of the Holy Qur’an as an indication, President Obama remarked, “And that’s a reminder, along with the generations

American Muslims A Faith-Inspired Citizenry

By Sadia Ahsanuddin

of patriotic Muslims in America, that Islam—like so many faiths—is part of our national story.” Inspired by their faith, American Muslims continue to contribute to the intellectual and cultural life of this country.

American Muslims are involved in grassroots activism to bring about societal change. One example is the Chicago-based Inner-City Muslim Action Network (IMAN), which focuses on social and economic reform and was recently covered by NPR. Or consider the New York-based Muslim American Civil Liberties Coalition

(MACLC), which is collaborating with grassroots civil rights and minority groups in New York City to introduce accountability for the NYPD. The advocacy centers on the NYPD’s stop and frisk practices and controversial surveillance programs. Comprised of legal, religious, and cultural groups, MACLC is playing a prominent role in promoting legislation that would introduce oversight for the NYPD (the legislation is currently being reviewed by the New York City Council).

Local masjid and Muslim Student

...No matter what way one looks at Islam, the question will always remain – what does God have to do with any of this?

Associations also play a vital role in American communities, providing shelter and/or resources for the destitute. Social activism and liberation theology are core to urban mosques. The high regard that Imam Siraj Wahhaj and Masjid At-Taqwa receive reflects foremost the spirit of urban activism. These mosques seek to raise the individual from the cycle of violence, poverty, and drugs; their action and rhetoric inspires criminals and disempowered youth to become men and women of integrity. As Assistant Professor Akel Ismail Kahera demonstrated, the arrival of a mosque in a run-down neighborhood oftentimes coincides with a lowered crime rate and increased economic development through immigrant businesses.

Muslims have also served America through careers in public office. Omar Ahmad was Mayor of San Carlos, California before he passed away at the age of 46 in 2011. As Mayor, Ahmad resolved the “darkest financial time” in the city’s recent history by helping close a \$3.5 million deficit in 2010 and leaving \$400,000 in surplus.

Representatives Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), André Carson (D-Ind.), and Senior Advisor to former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, Huma Abedin, are three American Muslims who also continue to serve America through their exemplary public service.

Muslim civic engagement stems from the Prophetic

example. On one level, Islam requires Muslims to be loyal to and adhere to the laws of the land that they inhabit, as a corollary of the laws on contracts: a Prophetic injunction states, “It is necessary upon a Muslim to listen to and obey the ruler, as long as one is not ordered to carry out a sin.” More relevantly, though, the Prophet Muhammad (peace upon him) exhorted that, “None of you believes until you wish for your brother what you wish for yourself,” irrespective of the religious or cultural background of the neighbor.

The contribution that American Muslims continue to make is unique especially

All of us probably think that our framework is correct, but none of us are guaranteed that we will get it right. ...Improving that framework requires the effort of the heart, mind, and body and requires study, beneficial company, and asking God for guidance and insight.

because it is inspired by Islam—not in spite of it. American Muslims have helped shape American civil society. And who knows? We may have the honor to see an American Muslim President or Supreme Court Justice in our lifetimes.



Alumni Spotlight

Umair Khan

Umair Khan is a 2010 graduate of the Harvard Business School. In his professional life he has focused on the healthcare industry, working as a consultant for Monitor, a manager for GE Healthcare, and an early employee of Accolade, a provider of health assistant services. He is also a co-founder of Muppies, a professional networking group for Muslim Urban Professionals.

Tell us a little about yourself, give us your self-introduction.

Bismillah. I'm blessed with an amazing wife, Nyima Ali. Our daughter, Isra, recently turned two. In a few short weeks, we hope to welcome Isra's

baby sister into our lives. Prayers for Nyima are appreciated!

Can you talk about your work in starting MUPPIES? Why did you feel that was something you wanted to work on?

In 2003, I took part in a Wall Street internship program that connected students with leaders at every major Wall Street firm. Despite this access, my summer was defined by a group of fellow Muslim students in the program. This group included Yasser Salem (HBS 2010), Ajmal Sheikh (HBS 2014), and Hassan Jaffar, a Muppies co-founder. Our instant camaraderie and rich conversations about faith

and career gave me a firm belief that Muslims needed a tailor-made network to succeed in highly competitive careers.

From your experience with MUPPIES, what are some of the biggest challenges you think Muslim professionals face in their careers?

Many Muslims are still struggling to find meaningful employment. For the employed (especially younger professionals), I worry that our careers disconnect us from the Muslim community. I notice this most when I visit local masjids and infrequently come across someone under the age of 35. Professionals are always seeking further success. We are taught by Allah SWT that if we increase in our gratitude to Him, His favors will continue to shower upon us.

MUPPIES is now a global organization with over 1,400 members located around the globe. How were you able to develop such a strong network?

The early years of Muppies were

"I worry that our careers disconnect us from the Muslim community. I notice this most when I visit local masjids and infrequently come across someone under the age of 35."

slow in growth, mainly by design. By focusing on very specific professions, we hoped to serve those members well and grow larger in the future. The result of that early focus has been larger growth in recent years.

What recommendations do you have for Muslim students looking to go into business? What challenges should they be prepared for?

The teachers I have learned from have imparted upon me the importance of a holistically halal source of income. The “business” world is lucrative and competitive, both of which can cloud our judgment as we seek a pure income. My other advice comes from Aamir Rehman, a mentor to many HUMA members. Shortly after I left HBS, he reminded me that a Harvard graduate should give charity regularly and pursue knowledge endlessly. Both of those reminders were preceded by example as Aamir took out both his checkbook and his notebook at an Islamic conference.



“The ‘business’ world is lucrative and competitive, both of which can cloud our judgment as we seek a pure income.”

Please tell us about one of your favorite Harvard memories, whether it be a specific class, project or event.

The list is long! One that stands out is a healthcare breakfast club that we created at HBS. Our rambling discussions helped cement my career interest in healthcare.

What is one thing you think the Muslim community is doing well and one thing you wish you could improve about it?

I think it’s unfair for me to comment on the community overall. I do believe that we are blessed with knowledgeable scholars and sincere workers who uphold our fledgling institutions. They are a gift from which we take endless dividends.



Khalid Yasin, President



Khalid is a Harvard Class of 2007 graduate, having studied Applied Math Economics. He is currently in his final year of a joint MPA-ID/MBA at HKS and HBS after a number of years in strategy consulting. A local Bostonian, he is never far from a Dunkin Donuts and finds snow in April to be a completely normal phenomenon.

Dilshoda Yergasheva, VP of Internal Affairs



Dilshoda studied Applied Mathematics and Economics at Harvard. In 2013 she graduated from Harvard Business School, where she served as a Co-President of the HBS Islamic Society. She is from Uzbekistan and enjoys traveling in Central Asia and other exciting corners of the world.

Ana Nast, VP of Communications



Ana studied biology and computer science at Harvard, and graduated in December. She is planning on spending some time traveling and volunteering before going to medical school. In her now-ample spare time, she likes to play sports, do family history research, play computer games, and sew.

Hisham Mabrook, VP of External Affairs



Hisham is a Harvard College Class of 2008 graduate, having studied Electrical Engineering & Computer Science. After a number of years of strategy consulting he recently moved into a corporate strategy role at EMC, a provider of enterprise storage and cloud enabling hardware and software. Hisham likes social entrepreneurship, Islamic finance, and food.

Ryan Starks, Treasurer



Ryan is 2012 graduate of the MBA program at Harvard Business School, where he served as Co-President of the HBS Islamic Society. Prior to business school, he worked in management consulting in the Middle East. He is currently based in Boston and is an Associate at the innovation strategy consulting firm, Innosight. When not strategizing how to tap into the wallets of HUMA members for donations, he can be found hiking or carving up the ski slopes.