

Muslim students plan to educate public

The Muslim Student Association hosts a series of discussions and lectures throughout the month to dispel myths

By Moriah Balingit
News Reporter

Being a Muslim on campus has never been too difficult for senior business major Nadia Hasan, especially considering the University's continuing support of Muslim students.

Nonetheless, Hasan said there are still a number of stereotypes and misconceptions associated with Islam.

"Stereotypes dominate people's minds because they don't know any better," she said, adding that this can make things especially hard for the estimated 40 to 50 Muslim students on campus.

The Muslim Student Association hopes to correct some of these myths and misunderstandings through its "Islam in America" series. The event will include a number of lectures, panel discussions and a cultural event and is intended to "educate the community about different issues in Islam," Hasan said.

The event started Friday with a panel discussion titled "Growing up Muslim." The panelists included four students from Iraq, Malaysia, Indonesia and Turkey. The discussion was well-attended, Hasan said.

"I was trying to give people a perspective on what it means to be Muslim and what it entails," Hasan said before the event.

The next event, to be held Tuesday at 7 p.m. at the Wesley Foundation Center, will be a panel

discussion titled "Christ in Islam and Christianity." The panel includes Tamam Adi, director of the Islamic Cultural Center in Eugene; Daniel Bryant, senior minister at First Christian Church; and Timothy Gianotti, a University religious studies professor. Minister Jeremy Hajdu-Paulen of the Wesley Foundation will moderate.

Talal al-Rahbi, a University graduate student from Oman and a MSA member, helped organize the event. He said he was inspired after an organized discussion at Northwest Christian College about the movie "The Passion of the Christ."

"From the discussion I realized that a lot of Christians do not know the importance of Christ in Islam and that Muslims believe in Christ," al-Rahbi said. "The intent is not a debate but more giving understanding to Jesus' message of peace and the importance of his teachings in both religions."

Adi said that the misunderstanding goes even further.

"We often hear in the media something like Muslims consider Christians infidels ... we don't consider them infidels, we consider them believers," he said. "The other misconception is that we worship a different god ... but Allah just means God."

Wednesday's event, a lecture entitled "Women and Human Rights in Islam," will take place at 6 p.m. at 142 Knight Law Center. Nadira Najieb, a community activist from Portland, will lecture along with Anita Weiss, a University international studies professor.

"There is a stereotype that women in Islam are oppressed," Hasan said, adding that this is frequently a cultural tenet. "But Islam the religion does not advocate oppressing women."

The final event in the series is titled "Muslim

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Talal al-Rahbi
University graduate student

Night: A Glimpse of Culture," and will take place April 27 in the Knight Library Browsing Room at 7 p.m.

Mona al-Zubair, a graduate student at the University, helped organize the event. She said the event will include food and music with an Asian and Middle Eastern flair. There will also be a cultural display with a collage of various cultural items from around the Islamic world. Al-Zubair will have small rugs and Arabic calligraphy on display from her native Saudi Arabia.

"Each (member) has something from their home," she said. "It kind of represents their culture."

Al-Zubair added that one of the purposes of the event is to show the diversity of the Islamic world.

"It shows the diversity of our background because we come from different countries," she said. "It's not just for the students. It's for us to learn about each other and how our cultures are different."

Contact the people/culture/faith reporter at moriahbalingit@dailyemerald.com.

NEWS BRIEF

Emerald named best student paper in five-state region

The Oregon Daily Emerald was named the best all-around daily student newspaper in a five-state region by the Society of Professional Journalists. The annual contest is open to all student newspapers in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington.

Emerald staff members also received awards for their published collegiate work from the 2003 calendar year.

Senior News Reporter Jared Paben received a first-place award in the general news reporting category. Columnist Peter Hockaday received a second-place award in the sports column writing category. Editor in Chief Brad Schmidt received a second-place award in the category of in-depth reporting. University graduate Adam Jude received a second-place award in the sports writing category. Photographer Adam Amato received a second-place award for spot news photography and a third-place award in the photo illustration category. University student Mark McCambridge also received a second-place award in the sports photography category.

First-place award winners from each of the 12 regions will move on to compete in the national contest, which will be held Sept. 9 through 11 in New York City.

GIFTS

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president of the University Foundation, which manages private gifts given to the University.

According to the release, graduates of Oregon high schools in areas where former building materials and paper products company Willamette Industries operated will receive preference for those scholarships.

"Oregon's past includes a heritage in natural resources, but its future is in the knowledge economy, so we need educated citizens," Swindells said in

the release.

Freshman Babak Ghafarzade received a Presidential Scholarship from the Swindells trust, which he said gives him the time to explore various subjects and classes because he doesn't have to work to put himself through school.

"I'm trying to kind of get my feet wet wherever I can," he said, adding that he can also continue to participate in extracurricular activities as he did in high school. "It just gives you time and freedom to do other things."

He added that with one brother in college and another on the way, the

money will help take the financial burden off his family.

In addition to the gift from the Swindells trust, five donors gave \$8.45 million toward Presidential Scholarships, and three donors contributed \$925,000 toward Dean's Scholarships. Eight donors also gave \$2.6 million to support specific University schools and college scholarships, according to the release.

Freshman Dana Harlan, who also received a Presidential Scholarship, said the money her parents had saved for her college fund can now go toward graduate school.

Harlan, who achieved junior status by taking college credit courses in high school, said the funds have given her the time to develop more meaningful relationships with other students now that she doesn't need to keep a job throughout college.

"I've been able to make a lot more friends," she said. "I just feel like I have more time to do more self-growth type of things."

The University currently awards about 200 Presidential Scholarships a year at about \$5,400 each, and about 3,400 students receive the Dean's Scholarships, which vary from \$500

to \$5,000, Director of Admissions Martha Pitts said. Scholarship money comes either directly from actual funds or from fee remissions, she added.

The \$12 million will be placed in endowments where it will accrue interest that will continuously fund scholarships, she said.

"This will affect students for many, many years," she said, adding that it is important to maintain and protect the endowments to ensure students always have access to scholarship funds.

The donations count toward the University's Campaign Oregon: Transforming Lives initiative, which has an overall goal of raising \$600 million to support students, faculty, programs and facilities, according to the release. The campaign will formally kick off next year when directors will announce its progress.

Campaign Oregon Vice Chairman Tim Boyle, who is also chief executive officer of Columbia Sportswear Co., noted the importance of college graduates to Oregon's economic health.

"In the next few decades, new and existing businesses will need thousands of college-educated employees," Boyle said in the release, adding that it is up to universities to provide graduates to support and draw in businesses. "This is critical for Oregon's future prosperity."

Contact the higher education/student life/student affairs reporter at chelseaduncan@dailyemerald.com.

CAMPUS BUZZ

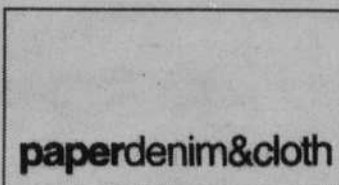
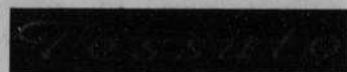
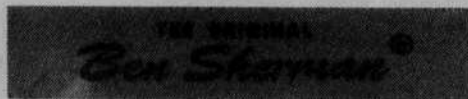
Monday

Art exhibit featuring work by Percy Appau, Steve Baggs, Eric Layton and Morgen Masciana, Bachelor of Fine Arts multimedia; Karen Larsen, BFA metals; and Michael Tolar, BFA painting, LaVerne Krause Gallery, Lawrence Hall, Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Opening reception 6-8 p.m. Jeremiah Lecture entitled "Ethnicity, Violence and the State in Pakistan," Browsing Room, Knight Library, 4 p.m.

Student Groups

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