

A Resolution to Support the Creation of More Accommodating and Inclusive Interfaith, Prayer, and Reflection Spaces Throughout Campus and to Have Campus-wide Standards for Existing Spaces

Farhan Quadri (for himself, Savannah Sockwell, Jordan Malpass, Shukri Ahmed, Rebecca Slavik, Halima Mohamed, Safiyo Mohamud, Salma Shire, Erin Donnelly, Chase Barnett, Maria Vargo, Em Meersman, Nate Smith, Michaela Murphy, and Kinza Sami) introduced the following resolution to the Steering Committee, where it passed.

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Whereas the Undergraduate Student Government represents all undergraduate students at The Ohio State University, and

Whereas the University has made efforts to foster an atmosphere of diversity and inclusion on campus, and

Whereas the mission of the Diversity and Inclusion Committee within the Undergraduate Student Government is to support, protect, and advocate for the safety and success of all students and to ensure that The Ohio State University promotes these same principles through policy and programming,¹ and

Whereas one vital area of President Drake’s 2020 vision is “the recognition of diversity and inclusion as core principles in everything we do, from academic programming and resources to the hiring and promotion of faculty and staff,”² and

Whereas the expanding student body has major diversity of religious, spiritual, and mindfulness groups, and

Whereas over 500 students were surveyed from practices including Christian, Catholic, Taoist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Buddhist, Deist, Spiritualism, Atheist, and Agnostic, and

Whereas 92.3 percent of surveyed students favor having additional interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces on campus, and

Whereas 80.3 percent of surveyed students feel that they’re not enough interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces on campus, and

¹ https://usg.osu.edu/commit/issues_committees/diversity_inclusion.

² <https://president.osu.edu/strategicplan/>.

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40 **Whereas** 76.6 percent of surveyed students prefer having more interfaith, prayer, and reflection
41 spaces in the north area of campus, such as 18th Avenue Library, and
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43 **Whereas** 66.7 percent of surveyed students prefer having more interfaith, prayer, and reflection
44 spaces in the central area of campus, such as Thompson Library, and
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46 **Whereas** 51.1 percent of surveyed students specified they would utilize an interfaith, prayer,
47 reflection space at least four times per week, and
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49 **Whereas** 69 percent of surveyed students would utilize an interfaith, prayer, reflection space
50 during the evening, and
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52 **Whereas** 64.8 percent of surveyed students would utilize an interfaith, prayer, reflection space
53 during the afternoon, and
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55 **Whereas** 41 percent of surveyed students would utilize an interfaith, prayer, reflection space
56 during the morning, and
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58 **Whereas** many religious, spiritual, and mindfulness groups on campus utilize the Interfaith
59 Prayer and Reflection Room on the 3rd floor of the Ohio Union to sit, prostrate, kneel, and other
60 physical expressions for prayer and other reflection based activities, and
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62 **Whereas** this designated space is reservable through the Ohio Union and not consistently
63 available for students to utilize for interfaith, prayer, and reflection purposes, and
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65 **Whereas** carpet in the room was taken out in the summer of 2016, which was replaced with hard
66 wooden floors, and
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68 **Whereas** students have a serious need for more comfortable flooring in the Interfaith Prayer and
69 Reflection Room, and
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71 **Whereas** students have a serious need for reasonable accommodations including but not limited
72 to prayer mats, floor cushions, and lockers reserved for religious, spiritual, and mindfulness
73 organizations, and
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75 **Whereas** undergraduate students pay a “Student Union Facility Fee” as part of their tuition³, and
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³ <http://registrar.osu.edu/policies/feesexplanation.asp>

77 **Whereas** this facility fee helps fund the Ohio Union facility, student organization and student
78 meeting space, and cutting-edge venues that support student programming, and

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80 **Whereas** Phil Foell, director of strategic events at International Friendships, a Christian group
81 with 400 student members, stated “Every time we try to book the Interfaith room, it’s not
82 available. In general, it’s very difficult to find spaces on campus, now 80 percent of our activities
83 are off campus because of the lack of space. It doesn’t seem like a priority of Ohio State
84 University to provide more space for association,”⁴ and

85

86 **Whereas** The University of Michigan has six designated interfaith and prayer spaces on
87 campus,⁵ and

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89 **Whereas** Michigan State University has six Reflection rooms placed throughout campus and in
90 some residence halls,⁶ and

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92 **Whereas** Pennsylvania State University’s Center for Spiritual & Ethical Development is utilized
93 by 50 out of 60 of the religious and spiritual related student organizations on campus,⁷ and

94

95 **Whereas** in addition to the aforementioned Big Ten schools, universities and colleges across the
96 nation have provided permanent solutions to students’ need for reflection, prayer, and reflection
97 purposes,⁸ and

98

99 **Whereas** interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces are beneficial for mental health, academic
100 success, and foster inclusivity, and

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102 **Whereas** the 49th General Assembly passed resolution 49-R-46, a resolution calling for proper
103 accommodations and exclusive use of the Interfaith Prayer and Reflection Room for interfaith
104 purposes,⁹ and

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106 **Whereas** interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces are not three separate spaces but one space
107 where the three mentioned activities occur;

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109 **Therefore, Let it Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government supports expanding
110 interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces on campus, and

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⁴ <https://www.thelantern.com/2017/04/analysis-prayer-spaces-vary-across-big-ten-universities/>.

⁵ (<http://muslims.studentorgs.umich.edu/resources/prayer-information/>).

⁶ <https://msu.edu/~msa/prayerrooms.html>.

⁷ <http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/spiritual/services.shtml>.

⁸ <http://web.mit.edu/eventguide/cacfacilities/religious.html>.

⁹ https://usg.osu.edu/gen_assembly/legislation/archived_legislation/

112 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that these spaces should have uniform campus-wide standards and
113 be outfitted with proper accommodations so all students can access and use the spaces
114 appropriately, and

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116 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that these spaces should be welcome/open to all students and no
117 student should be denied entry, and

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119 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that these spaces should be used exclusively for interfaith, prayer,
120 and reflection activities and are to be unreservable by groups unaffiliated with interfaith, prayer,
121 and reflection and should not have preference for any specific faith, belief, or reflection practice,
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124 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government encourages the
125 university to consult students, student organizations, faculty, and staff when formulating a space,
126 deciding the location, and deciding accommodations, and

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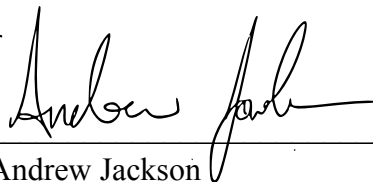
128 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government supports adding
129 appropriate accommodations, increasing accessibility, and the exclusive use of existing
130 interfaith, prayer, and reflection spaces, or spaces with similar function, for interfaith, prayer,
131 and reflection activities, and

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133 **Let it Further Be Resolved** that the Undergraduate Student Government supports the university
134 in gathering resources for these spaces through all means accessible.

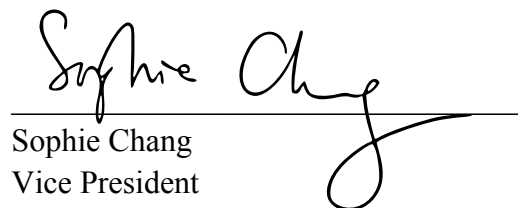
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138 Floor Vote: Passed with unanimous consent

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146 Andrew Jackson
147 President

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Sophie Chang
Vice President

150 Date Adopted: March 7, 2018

Date Terminated: _____