

MSA-MUN NEWSLETTER

2007-2008



MSA EXECUTIVES

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I. INTRODUCTION

This annual newsletter highlights the main activities that the MSA organized during the 2007-2008 academic year. The MSA strives to provide Muslim students with activities that will enhance their quality of life at MUN and encourage socialization between Muslims, as well as raising general awareness about Islam on campus and to the public. The MSA executives hope that this newsletter is informative and that these objectives were met.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any concerns.

II. PRESIDENT 'S MESSAGE

Dear brothers, sisters and all readers, Assalamo Alaikom (Peace be upon all of you), All praise is due to the Almighty Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful.

First, I am glad to have been given the opportunity to have been a servant of Allah for my brothers and sisters for one year as a president of their organization "MSA-MUN" working with a great team of colleagues. I am very glad of what has been achieved this year. Our activities included organizing parties, orientations, celebrations, and information booths. This wouldn't have been possible without your sincere help; physically, financially and spiritually through your Douaa. I would like to thank MUNSU, the Earth Sciences Dept. general office, facilities management, and the office of the Dean of Student Affairs for their support and encouragement. I ask Allah to make MSA a reliable source of information of Islam so all can get a non-biased image of Islam. Finally, I wish our brothers and sisters a good academic year and a better future for the MSA-MUN... Amen.

III. MSA-MUN HISTORY

Dr. Mohammed Irfan, a retired faculty member in the department of Physics since 1964, was one of the first Muslims in Newfoundland. Dr. Aziz Rahman, a professor of Engineering had previously helped in the building of a mosque in Ottawa in 1966 and the establishment of an MSA at Carleton University in Ottawa while doing his graduate studies. Inspired by the building of Muslim communities in Ontario, Dr. Rahman along with Dr. Irfan helped to establish the MSA-MUN in 1976 as faculty advisors. The first MSA Executive members consisted of Br. Husein El-tahan and Ahmed. The MSA was able to obtain a permanent prayer room only recently. Before this, Muslim students at MUN struggled in performing daily and Friday prayers and celebrations as they used different classrooms in various places of the university until the mosque's establishment in 1990. The MSA deeply appreciates those who sincerely contributed to the well being of Muslims and Islam at MUN for the sake of Allah. The MSA-MUN appreciates the generous help of MUN over the years. Without Allah's will first as well as these continued contributions, the Muslim community would not be what it is today.

IV. 2007-2008 ACTIVITIES

a. *BEGINNING OF TERM PARTIES*



The MSA was able to organize four parties throughout the year; they were held at the Earth Sciences building on September 8, December 18 and 19, January 17 and 18 and April 19. Pizza was usually the main dish with rice, meat and vegetables served occasionally. These parties aimed at allowing Muslim students to socialize as well as greet new Muslim students.

b. *RAMDAN IFTARS*

Throughout the holy month, the MSA organized Iftars during the weekdays from September 13 to October 12 at the Earth Sciences building and occasionally at the University Centre. These aimed at providing Muslim students with a sense of spirituality that would normally be abundant in their native countries as well as providing a chance to socialize with their friends. After a long day of fasting, Muslim students were greeted by one another and complete meals including dates, juice, meats, salad, pizza, and soups in addition to deserts and hot beverages. Maghrib, Isha and Taraweeh prayers were also held during the Iftars.





c. *EID PARTIES*

The MSA held two Eid parties, Eid Ul-Fitr on October 13 and Eid Ul-Adha on Dec. 19, the first being at the Alnoor mosque and the second being at the Earth Sciences building. Food ranged from rice and meat to pizza and barbequed chicken as well as desserts. These parties provided an opportunity for students to celebrate the two Islamic festivities with their fellow Muslims.

d. *WINTER ORIENTATION BOOTH*

The MSA organized an information booth at the University Centre on January 6 During MUN's winter semester orientation. A presentation and board were made highlighting some of MSA's activities to new students. New students were also given an additional tour after a week where places such as the MSA office, prayer room and the bus stop for Friday prayers were shown. In this orientation, a group of highly energetic and dedicated sisters constructed the MSA activities board and helped with presenting the booth. Worthy to mention, that the ISA advisor, Sonja Knutson also dropped by to learn more about the MSA activities.



e. *CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM BOOTH*

The MSA organized an information booth on January 29 at the University Centre; the theme was “**The Concept of God in Islam**”. This provided MUN students and staff with the first opportunity of the year to converse with Muslims regarding their beliefs and obtain a clearer picture of Islam. MSA executives and Muslim student volunteers distributed pamphlets, booklets and DVDs to those who were interested in additional information about Islam.

f. ISLAM AWARENESS WEEK

In order to increase general awareness of Islam at MUN, the MSA held booths from March 3 to 6 at the University Centre and the Arts Atrium. General topics such as the oneness of God, the status of the prophets and Jesus in Islam were discussed, in addition to more controversial topics such as terrorism



and human rights. Informative boards and posters were displayed, while volunteers answered inquiries and distributed pamphlets, booklets and DVDs containing general information to those who were interested. CBC radio also held an interview with the current MSA president, Br. Abdelsalam, in which the purposes of the booth and the week in general were clarified. The human rights topic was entirely covered and organized by a group of active sisters who not only did the informative boards, but also answered questions and gave out pamphlets related to the topic. Aside from the booths, a lecture was held discussing misconceptions about Islam.

g. SATURDAYS AT THE MOSQUE

Starting the week following Islam Awareness Week, the MSA, along with the administration of the Alnoor mosque, MANAL, organized a social gathering at the mosque. Students were given an opportunity to relieve their exam stress in the company of their fellow Muslims while enjoying a game of table tennis or table soccer and some refreshments. Asr, Maghrib and Isha prayers were performed at the mosque while Quran recitation halaqas were occasionally held. The students had the chance to read at the mosque's library, play foosball (table football) or table tennis, sit in a gathering and chat, or even use the kitchen facility to cook and enjoy their time. This activity strengthens the friendships between Muslim students and creates a joyful atmosphere.

h. LECTURES

Dr. Haddara held a Lecture on December 19 in the Engineering Lecture theatre titled “**Muslim Students’ Life in the West, Balance between Challenges and Requirements**”.

Appreciation certificates were distributed afterwards to those who helped organize the Ramadan Iftars and Eid parties and to those who supported the MSA such as the Earth Sciences department who provided rooms for many of the year’s events. The Arafat day/end of term party was held afterwards in the Earth Science building.



To conclude Islam Awareness week, Sheikh Ziaullah Khan gave a lecture in the Engineering Lecture theatre on March 8 titled “**Misconceptions about Islam**” in which many common misunderstandings of Islam were discussed. The materials used in all of the week’s booths were displayed outside the theatre after the lecture while Sheikh Ziaullah and others answered additional inquiries.

i. FRIDAY, DAILY PRAYERS

Due to the relatively large distance between MUN’s St. John’s campus and the Alnoor mosque, the MSA provides two buses to transport Muslim students; the buses leave at around 1:00 pm from the Chemistry and Physics building. Daily prayers were held throughout the year in the prayer room in the Earth Science building (ER 4070).

j. IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Alnoor Mosque
430 Logy Bay Rd.

Prayer room
Earth Sciences ER-4070

MSA office room
UC-6004

Trip to Mosque on Fridays:
Buses wait in front of Physics-Chemistry
Building at around 1:00 pm.