

How Can Dallas Colleges Can Garner More Support During Ramadan Season



Zhiné Torres, Staff Writer
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This year of 2022, Ramadan began Friday April 1st and ended in the evening of Sunday, May 1st. Since Ramadan is based off the Lunar calendar, it moves back 10 to 11 days (about 1 and a half weeks) every year. This time it has taken place during the academic school year. A time for praying and fasting for Muslim college students and staff members across Dallas College have faced several challenges during the holiest month for Muslims.

Mounir Choufi, a student expressed, “In the future, I would love to see Richland and all other colleges to provide some light meals for students and staff members who celebrate Ramadan to break their fast.”

From sunrise to sundown many Muslims across the world celebrate Ramadan with no food and no water for a whole month of fasting. While college students and faculty members are balancing participation in the celebration, they struggle with time management. Such as limited time studying for finals, losing sleep, concentration during teaching lectures, no participation in physical activities, and limited hours during Suhoor and Itar meals.

Ramadan 2023 will begin sundown of Wednesday, March 22nd and ends in the evening of Friday, April 21st in the United States. According to Saudi astronomer Khaled al- Zaqaq, in 2030 Ramadan will be observed twice in the year.

This paradox is because the Islamic Hijri calendar is grounded on lunar cycles, while the Gregorian calendar footprints the Earth's passage around the sun. The astronomer says in a video posted on his twitter account that the disparity between the two calendars which leads the holy month of Ramadan to fall twice in one Gregorian year every 30 years.

This will cause Muslims around the world to have to fast for 36 days (about 1 month 5 and a half days) in total and accommodations for the future should be met now.

Professor Shazia Ali teaches at the Eastfield Campus of Dallas College, shared her feelings on how Dallas College can fully support next time during this challenging time.

“Students have to ask for a meditation room and hopefully they will get something,” she said. “Most students and teachers pray five times a day and the prayer need 2 to 3 minutes for a safe space.”

Richland campus offers a meditation room open during campus hours. However, the Eastfield location does not.

“It would be nice if the professors gave a 5 to 10 minute break, because it allows the student and teacher to break their fast, go for 2 minutes and pray then come back to class.”

At Dallas Colleges, the food facilities are only open during regular business hours. Muslims can drink and eat only once, before sunrise, which is known as Suhoor, and after sunset, which is known as the Iftar.

Student Mounir Choufi and Professor Shazia Ali have expressed it would be extremely helpful if the colleges could provide light nutritious meals for those who break fasting.

Because individuals are fasting all day, it is of the utmost importance to receive healthy and balanced meals such as electrolytes, mixed nuts, dried fruits, vegetables, and healthy fats to keep the body system motivated throughout the day.

“Since eating less you want to make sure your body is getting all the proper nutrients,” Ali states.

“I want the assignments to be reduced during Ramadan because most students won't have enough time to complete assignments because they need to fast during the day and go to the mosque to do Taraweeh,” Mounir explains.

Taraweeh is a special prayer of Ramadan nights; for the entire month. Taraweeh is derived from the Arabic word meaning “to rest and relax.” Taraweeh involves reading long portions of the Quran, as well as performing many rakahs (cycles of movement in Islamic prayer).

Quran, also spelled Koran and Qur'an, the sacred scripture of Islam, is designed to be the primary holy book amongst Muslims. Containing references to the Hebrew Bible, the texts are considered the sacred word of God.

“Taraweeh prayers are performed between 9 p.m. - 12 a.m. every day during Ramadan which makes it extremely hard for students to work on their school assignments,” Mounir says.

I would love to see a place of worship for Muslims, so everyone can pray and provide free Quran books for students in both languages, Arabic and English, so non Arabic speakers can understand and read the Quran as well,” he adds.

Having a sense of community for Ramadan at Dallas College campuses provides members with the chance to raise social awareness and to serve the community.

Understanding the Muslim community during this precious time through central accommodations could also help other religious events for other months during fasting and not just only Ramadan.

“It would be incredibly helpful if schedule arrangements could be accommodated for faculty members during that time, Dallas Colleges can provide a support system,” Ali said.

Suggested solutions to support students and staff during Ramadan would be to offer opening the food facilities earlier, mini class breaks, passing out nutritious food bags, diversity inclusion, accommodating faculty schedules, more places of worship and creating extensions on classwork.