



The State University of New York  
Student Assembly

**Resolution 1516-53  
Bauduy**

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**RESOLUTION 1516-53**

**TO: Members of the General Assembly**

**FROM: Michael Bauduy, Director of Advocacy, Brockport Student  
Government at SUNY The College at Brockport**

**DATE: October 23, 2015**

**TITLE: Resolution in support of an Interfaith Initiative throughout SUNY**

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**Action Requested**

There exists a need to protect religious diversity within our student body while also teaching religious tolerance and inclusion. SUNY campuses are not compelled to address such a need, nor are they required to accommodate religious minorities in providing, at the minimum, a space for them to worship.

We should take a stand as representatives of these students to address this concern at the SUNY-level in the form of an interfaith initiative.

**Resolution**

**Whereas:** The several campuses from the State University of New York (herein 'SUNY') are home to students, faculty, and staff members from diverse faiths and religious backgrounds; and

**Whereas:** SUNY educates over 460,000 diverse students from around the world with the mission of exercising care to develop and maintain a balance of its human and physical resources that recognizes the fundamental role of its

responsibilities in undergraduate education and provides a full range of graduate and professional education that reflects the opportunity for individual choice and the needs of society; and

**Whereas:** While there are students from these campuses of the Christian/Catholic faith that have the option and privilege of practicing their faith at the Newman Center or its equivalent, many other well-represented faiths in the college have no adequate space or area to properly practice; and

**Whereas:** Some religions call for followers to worship in areas with certain accommodations, requirements, and restrictions that cannot be met with usual college-provided amenities and/or spaces, thus hindering their ability to freely practice their religion; and

**Whereas:** Other requirements for worship from specific religions include practicing at specific times of the day, which also may not be accommodated by an agent at that campus; and

**Whereas:** SUNY, through the implementation of the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, recognizes the need for institutional review and improvement of diversity efforts in inclusion, awareness, and tolerance; and

**Whereas:** The mission of the Student Assembly of the State University of New York is to ensure representation throughout the SUNY system; and

**Whereas:** SUNY, in seeking to provide an inclusive community to all students, faculty, and staff members while protecting and celebrating human diversity, should consider promoting and protecting religious diversity and tolerance; therefore, let it be

**Resolved:** That the Student Assembly of the State University of New York hereby recognizes the urgency of an Interfaith Initiative for SUNY that would:

- 1) make steps toward demonstrating a tolerance and acceptance for religious diversity
- 2) accommodate all clearly present religious and/or faith organizations observed by the SUNY student body
- 3) collect and report data reflective of religious diversity among students;
- 4) educate students on the topic of religious tolerance and keep them aware of religious diversity; and let it be

**Resolved:** That this Interfaith Initiative call for the creation of non-denominational prayer rooms that will be accessible to students while under the supervision of an agent that will arrange programs and celebrations to encourage religious tolerance among the student population in all SUNY campuses; and let it be

**Resolved:** That the Student Assembly of the State University of New York shall forward copies of this Resolution to the SUNY Board of Trustees, SUNY Chancellor Zimpher, SUNY Diversity Task Force, University Faculty Senate, Faculty Council of Community Colleges, SUNY Campus Presidents, SUNY student governing bodies, and all other parties deemed necessary and proper.

### **Background**

The Brockport Muslim Student Association wrote a letter attached with the signatures of over 600 students to address their concern for the privacy and safety of students seeking to worship on our campus of SUNY Brockport.

The letter expressed, in detail, their disdain and frustration in that students, particularly of the Islamic faith, are unable to find a suitable location to worship as well as some insight as to what their worship requirements are.

I met with SUNY Brockport's diversity committee and, joined with some members from the Brockport Muslim Student Association, we were able to make steps toward the reality of an Interfaith Center for students at our campus that would be inclusive of all religious organizations represented by the student body.

While it is easy to merely say that SUNY is accommodating of all types of diversity, SUNY should put into place welcoming practices and actions in making a statement to prospective, current, and past students that we are an educational institution that is tolerant and celebrative of religious minorities.