

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1089

TITLE: Resolution Advocating for a Permanent 24-Hour Prayer Space in Marston Science Library

AUTHOR(S): Senator Isha Khan

SPONSOR(S): Senator Raj Mia, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Daniel Permane, Senator Vivian Phung, Senator Hunter Monson, Senator Simone Liang, Senator Arturo Zárrate, Islam On Campus President Omar Ateyah, Pride Student Union President Jonathan Chance Stephens, VISA Vice President of Internal Affairs Hana Ali, Pakistani Student Association Secretary Taimoor Nawaz

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Student Senate unanimously adopted SSB 2023-1213 '*Resolution Calling on the University of Florida Administration to Establish a Designated Large-Scale Religious Prayer Space on Campus*' which advocated for the establishment of a permanent prayer space in the Reitz Union [1]; and

WHEREAS, the partisan caucuses of Change Party and Vision Party sought to implement a prayer space in their Fall 2023 policy platforms [2][3]; and

WHEREAS, the University of Florida currently has no dedicated prayer space on campus that is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and

WHEREAS, the Reflection/Meditation room located in the Reitz is limited to the hours of the Reitz Union, which closes at 11 p.m. [4]; and

WHEREAS, the Meditation room located in Library West is limited to the hours of Library West, which closes at 1 a.m. [5]; and

WHEREAS, specifically in Islam, the *tahajjud* is a prayer performed past midnight, and is the most important non-obligatory prayer [6]; and

WHEREAS, Muslim students at the University of Florida are unable to perform the *tahajjud* anywhere on campus because of the timing restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the University of Florida is home to numerous other denominations, including but not limited to Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism; and

WHEREAS, students of these denominations that live on or off campus may need a prayer space at night but do not have access because of limited access to transportation and a lack of 24/7 prayer spaces; and

WHEREAS, nine of the Big Ten Conference universities have one or more prayer rooms [7]; and

WHEREAS, Marston Science Library, following the advocacy of Former Student Senator Grace Shoemaker between 2021 and 2022, has recently become open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week [8][9]; and

WHEREAS, many students of all denominations spend late nights in Marston to study and finish classwork at times where they may need to perform prayers; and

WHEREAS, other University buildings, such as Library West and Reitz, that are not open throughout the night already have dedicated prayer spaces; and

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate acknowledges the importance of having a 24/7 prayer space for students; and

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate urges for the creation of a permit for a 24/7 prayer space in Marston Science Library; and

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate commits to the creation of a commission to work on the establishment of a 24/7 space in Marston Science Library that will coordinate with Marston to determine the best course of action and necessary steps to implement the space.

Proviso: A copy of this bill shall be sent to UF President Ben Sasse, Provost Scott Angle, Dean of University Libraries Judith Russell, Makerspace & 3D Manager Sarah Prentice, Chair of Marston and Associate Dean for Academic Support Services Valrie Minson, and Islam On Campus President Omar Ateyah

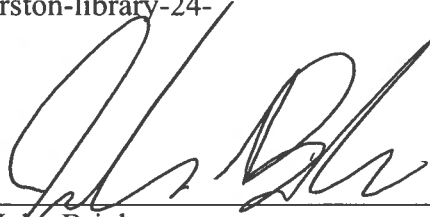
- [1]-<https://sg.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/SSB-2023-1213-Resolution-Calling-on-the-University-of-Florida-Administration-to-Establish-A-Designated-Large-Scale-Religious-Pra.pdf>
- [2]-https://www.instagram.com/p/CxWJgbvRhNX/?img_index=7
- [3]-https://www.instagram.com/p/CxgqC2_rL6D/?img_index=2
- [4]-<https://www.ufmindfulness.org/spaces-for-practice>
- [5]-<https://libcal.uflib.ufl.edu/hours>

[6]-<https://yaqeeninstitute.org/read/paper/tahajjud-fuel-for-the-self-and-society>

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

[8]-https://www.alligator.org/article/2023/01/january-17-senate-meeting?ct=content_open&cv=cbox_latest

[9]-https://www.alligator.org/article/2023/01/marston-library-24-hours?ct=content_open&cv=cbox_latest



John Brinkman
Senate President

2/7/2024
Date