

Gradually, you find that you've become a part of the community that is Hill House, and the design of the building itself has shaped and altered your interactions with other students."

For an opposing view, see the first online comment following *The Daily Pennsylvanian* story on the Hill renovation last fall, which began, "What an insane waste of money slapping lipstick on a pig. Hill was an ugly scar on campus the day it opened." The commenter proposed knocking it down instead.

But the building—which cost a reported \$4 million in 1960—could never be replaced for \$80 million today. The University's commitment to sustainability also favors renovation and reuse of structures. Besides: "We think it's a great building," says Hollenberg. "Both socially and architecturally, it deserves much more attention than it gets. It's actually a really rich design, and socially it's an incredibly rich design."

The renovation honors the building's retro appeal. "We're not trying to make it look like the Quad or some Harry Potter thing. It's definitely a Sixties aesthetic," says Hollenberg. "It's not a restoration by any means, but it honors the Saarinen spirit, with many of his colors and many of his furnishings. And I think there'll be a lot of affection for it."

While older alumni may look to the Quad for "what Penn is supposed to be," he adds, "I think this generation's going to maybe have a different feeling, between this and the New College House."

Work will begin as soon as possible after Commencement in May, Hollenberg says. "When the last diploma gets handed out, the first hammer falls." ♦

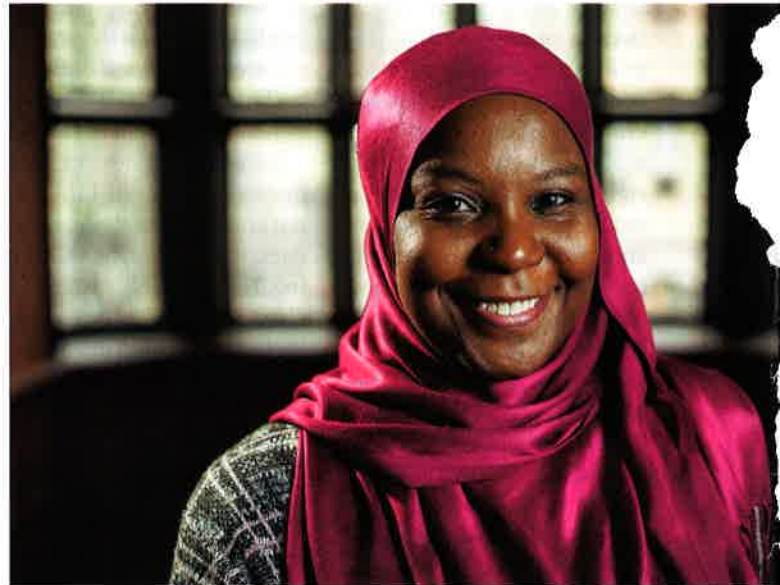
—J.P.

## Islamic Chaplain: Fight Hatred With New Narratives

**Coping with terrorism and racism is tough for adults.** For college students, it's tougher. And for Muslim students, it's almost impossible, says Kameelah Rashad C'00 GED '01, Penn's Islamic chaplain and an advisor to the Muslim Student Association (MSA). Though college is an opportunity for many young adults to figure out who they are and what they might become, Muslim students are being told, by some politicians and segments of the media, that they are violent, misogynistic, and not American.

The recent uptick in attacks planned or inspired by ISIS has converged with the ongoing presidential primary campaign to amplify Islamophobia, Rashad says, but the message is not new. Penn's current undergraduates belong to the 9/11 generation; they have grown up with terrorism and Islamophobia. "Suspicion from the outside world is what Muslim students have internalized," she points out. "This has been the environment for their entire lives. Every day, we're being scrutinized because of our religious, racial, and cultural identities."

Due to their visibility, women who wear hijab often bear the brunt of that scrutiny. Du'aa Moharram, a freshman in the Nursing School, is one of them. "Some days, I pray to God to get me to my dorm safely," she says, confiding that people on the street stare at her with suspicion that sometimes deepens into open contempt. Two young men shouted "ISIS" at her on campus. And on the train to Penn after winter break, Moharram



**"You can't tell me that I don't belong in America," she says. "I am America!"**

says, a man stared at her with such hatred that she feared for her safety.

These are examples of what Rashad calls "micro-aggressions" that constitute a pervasive discrimination against Muslims. Lamis Elsayah, a freshman engineering student, agrees. "Many parents are telling their daughters that's its okay not to wear hijab, especially after terrorist attacks, because they fear for our safety," she says. "Girls all around this country are taking off their hijab because they are afraid."

But isn't everyone afraid of random acts of violence? Perhaps, Rashad responds, but Muslims have a double-edged fear of terrorism. "You could potentially be a victim, but also be seen as the perpe-

trator," she explains. "That's different than preparing for an active shooter at a public school. It's thinking that people are going to be afraid ... but afraid of *me*."

Being the object of fear can be a new experience for international students who come to Penn from Muslim-majority countries where Islamophobia doesn't exist. "One student from Afghanistan told me that he didn't know that in the US, you'd be looked at with suspicion just because you are brown, have a certain name, or wear a beard," Rashad says.

That's doubly true for black Muslims, Rashad says, who as members of two marginalized communities face "many assaults to both of our identities." Further complicating matters is what Rashad calls

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inter-Muslim racism. She says that it's not uncommon for Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian Muslims to look down on black Muslims from sub-Saharan Africa and the United States. "The reality is that there is still so much anti-black sentiment," Rashad says. "If you are black, you are considered *less than*. Many people assume I don't pray enough, or that I'm not Muslim enough. Or they will use the N-word. It's heartbreaking."

For students who feel isolated by the hatred and intolerance around them, the MSA is one shelter in the storm; Elsawah and Moharram say that they have family-like bonds with their MSA friends. Rashad says that other religious leaders on campus, including Penn Hillel president Katie Hartman, a College junior, have voiced support for Penn's Muslim community, as have President Amy Gutmann and Provost Vincent Price.

Yet even such supportive sentiments present a sort of Catch-22 for Penn's Muslim students, because regular articulations of concern can be exhausting to some of its recipients. "After a terrorist attack, people say, 'How are you feeling?'" Elsawah remarks. "What do they expect me to say? [I wish they'd] ask me in a way that doesn't imply that I'm the person at fault, or that my religion is to blame for the actions of an insane person."

Of course, "How are you feeling?" is typically a well-intentioned question. So is "Where are you from?"—a query that nonetheless impels Moharram to go into a detailed, defensive explanation of her ancestry, when the simple answer is: New Jersey.

Rashad understands all of this perfectly, and she has a

way to change it. "Don't isolate," she says. "Engage."

Rashad wants the Muslim students she counsels to combat Islamophobia by creating new narratives for themselves. "Every successful minority in America has done that," Rashad says. "How do people tell the stories of who they are? How do you have conversations with young people so they see their stories as valuable? Talk about yourself in the affirmative, in the positive." It goes to self-respect, Rashad says, and that leads to inclusion—eventually. American history features a long procession of communities that have faced discrimination, including Jews, Italians, Irish, Vietnamese, and LGBT people. "How have they dealt with marginalization?" Rashad asks. "Are they problem-saturated stories or are they stories of resiliency? How do people thrive in spite of the problems that they hone in on?"

If this seems like a Herculean task, Rashad is well placed to tackle it. Raised in a close-knit, civically active Muslim community, she is proud of her race and religion—and her identity as Brooklyn-born New Yorker. "You can't tell me that I don't belong in America," she says. "I am America!"

She also has two master's degrees, in psychology and counseling. "In terms of understanding who I am, where I grew up, and how I see the world, I felt that psychology was a great complement to religion," she says. "It grounded me in an understanding of how to approach people who are different from me."

She's taken that approach throughout her career, working at the City of Philadelphia's department of behavioral health and Penn's Institute for Urban Research. Along the

## Class of 2016 Gets Broadway Star



**L**in-Manuel Miranda is no stranger to the stage, but this May he'll be detouring to one far from his usual Broadway stomping ground. The composer, lyricist, and lead actor of the hit musical *Hamilton* has been selected to give the keynote address at Penn's 260th Commencement.

Miranda's award-winning play, which fuses the energy of hip-hop with the dramatic biography of the nation's first Secretary of the Treasury, makes its cre-

ator a fitting choice for a university that prides itself on bringing the passion and history of a founding father into the present day.

A 2015 MacArthur Foundation Award recipient, Miranda's accomplishments in the arts are numerous. His first musical, *In The Heights*, won a Grammy for Best Musical Show Album and a Pulitzer Prize for Drama in 2009. *Hamilton* has been nominated for a 2016 Grammy Award—after racking up 10 Lortel Awards, three Outer Critics Circle Awards, eight Drama Desk Awards, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best New Musical, and an Obie for Best New American Play.

"Miranda is one of the most innovative and stunningly brilliant artistic voices of and for our time," said Penn President Amy Gutmann. "He has accomplished nothing short of remaking the great American artistic form of musical theater and telling the history of our founding through the most creative, evocative, and thought-provoking contemporary lens."

Miranda will receive an honorary doctorate of the arts at the ceremony, along with Hawa Abdi, Elizabeth Bailey, David Brooks, Renee Fleming, Sylvester James Gates Jr., Asma Jahangir, and Eric Kandel.

way, Rashad identified a lack of mental-health resources within the Muslim community; to combat that, she established the Muslim Wellness Foundation in 2011. She brings that psychological emphasis to her chaplaincy at Penn, which she began in 2013. "These students are the next generation of leaders, both of America and Islam," she says. "They have to be equipped with the skills to be able to talk about who they are in confident ways. My goal is for

them to graduate from Penn empowered to do that."

Moharram and Elsawah share that desire.

"Silence is too often seen as acceptance," Moharram says. "So if I want things to be different, I have to be part of that change."

Elsawah points out that one change will come in November: "This is the first Presidential election in which many of us can vote." Then she laughs. "Yes, we can." ♦

—Melissa Jacobs C'92