



**CENTER FOR ISLAM IN THE
CONTEMPORARY WORLD
AT SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY**

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Center for Islam in the Contemporary World
44160 Scholar Plaza Suite 100
Leesburg, Virginia 20176
contemporaryislam.org
[@CICWatSU](https://twitter.com/CICWatSU)

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Salam alaykum and greetings!

Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) at Shenandoah University (SU) had an eventful first year of existence. From signing the affiliation agreement with Shenandoah University and the official launch of the Center early in 2019, to the whole slew of activities throughout the year, CICW made its mark both at the SU campus and globally.

CICW is a non-profit academic institution with the objective of becoming a globally recognized center of excellence in research and education on issues related to Islam in the contemporary world. We are an independently governed and funded organization, through efforts and contributions by our Board of Trustees.

Our affiliation agreement with Shenandoah University gives us a physical home, including library access and classroom space. We are grateful for this wonderful partnership, especially to Dr. Tracy Fitzsimmons, SU President, and Dr. Adrienne Bloss, SU Provost. Both Tracy and Adrienne have been instrumental in supporting the establishment of the CICW when it was still just an idea, and in backing our efforts and activities on SU campus and beyond. I can't think of two better leaders and allies to work with, and I am looking forward to many years of successful collaborations.

In our first year we supported number of activities at Shenandoah University, nationally, and globally. We started our lecture series which aims to bring greater awareness about Islam and Muslims in the contemporary world to the SU campus. Jordan Denari Duffner and Todd Green spoke on two important issues of the day: inter-faith understanding, and Islamophobia. A half-day Halal Forum in September examined issues related to Islamic finance and global halal business.

We awarded twelve research grants to researchers in the US and Canada. CICW expanded its global reach by offering research grants to individuals and institutions in Malaysia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. With the Barzinji Project at SU, we supported the Barzinji Colloquium in September of 2019, which hosted the discussions among several academic institutions from the US, Malaysia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a nascent institution, we are grateful to have hosted the Fulbright US-ASEAN Initiative Visiting Scholar in our very first year of existence. Mr. Mohd Faridh Hafez Mhd Omar from Malaysia spent the Fall 2019 semester at the CICW. His research looked at governance and leadership in American-Muslim institutions.

We are developing research in faith-based pedagogy. Our education team is working on teacher training modules for teachers in Islamic schools, and on the Imam training program. They are simultaneously developing a new course that will be offered through Shenandoah University's School of Education. CICW supports graduate fellowships in education at George Mason University, with the focus on the reform of education in Muslim-majority societies. We have also offered ten scholarships through School of Education at Shenandoah University for future teachers. Five of these scholarships are reserved for the minorities.

Our signature research program, Islam on the Edges, has already attracted a lot of attention and interest. Unlike many other research and academic centers on Islam that seem to focus most of their attention on the Middle East, CICW shifts our gaze to the edges of Islam: Southeast Asia, edges of Africa, the Balkans, as well as Muslims in the Western countries. We are looking for: (1) formations of orthodoxy along the Edges, with a corollary claim that Islam on the Edges is as orthodox and normative as Islam in any other part of the world, (2) novel, unique, and heterodox approaches to Muslim experiences in Islam on the Edges, (3) social innovation and entrepreneurship along Islam on the Edges, and (4) cultural and material production. CICW's objective is to do away with the "center-periphery" approach to the study of Islam, and to elevate Islam on the Edges to equal footing with other expressions of Islam anywhere in the world.

Looking ahead, we expect to significantly expand events and activities within Islam on the Edges program in 2020. We are looking forward to seeing the seed we planted in 2019 coming to fruition in 2020 and beyond. Finally, CICW will continue expanding its international outreach, connecting Shenandoah University to new and exciting educational activities around the world.



With best wishes,

Ermin Sinanović
Executive Director

CICW FINANCES FOR 2019

Revenues:

\$600,500

Expenses:

\$229,122

**Unaudited draft*



ABOUT CICW

The Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) was incorporated with the Commonwealth of Virginia in November of 2018. CICW is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), tax-exempt private operating foundation. In January of 2019, CICW signed an affiliation agreement with Shenandoah University, which outlined the relationship between the Center and the University. The University provides office space, access to library, and use of classrooms. The Center lends its expertise on contemporary Islam, organizes public lectures, facilitates curriculum development, and provides networking and outreach with global Muslim communities.

MISSION & VISION

At the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World, we:

- Engage in rigorous and innovative research, education, and outreach to advance a better understanding of Islam and Muslims in diverse, global, and contemporary contexts
- Facilitate collaborations between Shenandoah University and international universities
- Develop training programs for teachers and religious leaders in multi-faith contexts
- Host seminars and lectures on theological and cultural challenges facing Muslims today

CICW aspires to be known as a globally-recognized center for research and education leading to an enriched understanding of Islamic values and perspectives in a multi-faith world.



CICW LAUNCH

February 2019

On Friday, February 8th, 2019, the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) was officially launched. The launching event, attended by about 150 people, was a resounding success. CICW Board of Trustees was present, including the Chairman, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the President, Dr. Yaqub Mirza, as well as Mr. Firas Barzinji and Mr. Ayman AbuSulayman. Dr. Tracy Fitzsimmons, President, and Dr. Adrienne Bloss, Provost, represented Shenandoah University along with a number of deans, faculty members, and administrative staff.

In his welcoming speech, Dr. Yaqub Mirza outlined the history that led to the creation of the Center. It started in his conversations with the late Dr. Jamal Barzinji, who was keen on the issue of reform of education in Muslim societies. Dr. Mirza believed that the vision of Dr. Jamal Barzinji, Dr. AbdulHamid AbuSulayman, and other scholars would be best honored through creating a center dedicated to contemporary Islam that would incorporate reform of education projects.

The keynote speaker, Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim, highlighted the importance of good governance and democracy in Muslim society as pre-conditions for creating a better education system. He thanked the university and President Fitzsimmons for creating a hospitable environment for CICW and for supporting its mission.

Several local media outlets featured the event including the Winchester Star, Loudoun Now, and the Loudoun Times-Mirror.

Loudoun Times-Herald

FEATURED

Shenandoah University opens Center for Islam in the Contemporary World at its Lansdowne campus

By Veronike Collazo, vcollazo@loudountimes.com Feb 19, 2019



Shenandoah University's Scholar Plaza in Lansdowne. Courtesy Photo

"University officials say the center will fill a hole in exploring Islam in the contemporary world from a global orientation. Sinanović said the center will offer grants to enrich curriculum surrounding Islam and hopes to develop research programs, research grants and host speakers series."

LoudounNow

NEWS ▾ LOCO LIVING ▾ OPINION ▾ OBITUARIES ▾ CLASSIFIEDS ▾ COLUMNS ▾ CONTACT US ▾



Ermin Sinanovic is the executive director of Shenandoah University's new Center for Islam in the Contemporary World. (Contributed)

SU Campus Launches Center for Contemporary Islam

2019-02-13 LoudounNow 2 Comments

Shenandoah University is welcoming a new addition to its Scholar Plaza campus in Lansdowne. As of last week, it officially launched a Center for Islam in the Contemporary World.

The center is operated by a board of trustees separate from SU that also raises and contributes funds, but is housed at the university's satellite campus in Lansdowne to provide easy access to students and staff throughout Northern Virginia.

"The leadership at Shenandoah is really pushing hard this idea of diversity and creating global citizens," said Ermin Sinanović, the center's executive director. "They want students to understand the world more, and that includes Islam, the second largest religion in the world."

The Winchester Star

NEXT UP A sunny stroll on the Loudoun Street Mall

SU opening Center for Islam in the Contemporary World

By ANNA MEROD The Winchester Star Feb 15, 2019



Ermin Sinanovic Provided by Shenandoah University

WINCHESTER — Shenandoah University doesn't currently offer many interdisciplinary classes regarding Islam, but that's about to change.

About a month ago, SU and the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) entered into an affiliation. The center now has an office on the university's Leesburg campus and will soon also have an office on the Winchester campus in Goodson Chapel, said Ermin Sinanovic, the center's executive director.

The center, established in late 2018, is funded through its own board of trustees and donations raised by the board.

Sinanovic said he hopes the center will bring expertise on contemporary Islam to the university and the Winchester area, which has a small Muslim population. Eventually, the center will help support professors on Islam-related classes and curriculum.

"Sinanovic said he hopes the center will bring expertise on contemporary Islam to the university and the Winchester area, which has a small Muslim population. Eventually, the center will help support professors on Islam-related classes and curriculum."



"FINDING JESUS AMONG MUSLIMS: HOW LOVING MUSLIMS MAKES ME A BETTER CATHOLIC"
PUBLIC LECTURE BY JORDAN DENARI DUFFNER

March 2019

On Monday, March 25th, 2019, CICW hosted a public lecture at Shenandoah University by Jordan Denari Duffner. Ms. Duffner is a leading Catholic voice on Muslim-Christian relations, interreligious dialogue, and anti-Muslim prejudice. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Theological and Religious Studies at Georgetown University. In her lecture, Duffner talked about her recent book, "Finding Jesus among Muslims: How loving Muslims makes me a better Catholic." Through her personal example and the analysis of both Christian and Muslim theology, Duffner laid a strong foundation for the Christian-Muslim dialogue and cooperation. The lecture was attended by more than 50 SU faculty and students, as well as members of the local Muslim and Christian communities.

CENTER FOR ISLAM IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD
AT SHENANDOAH UNIVERSITY
PUBLIC LECTURE

FINDING JESUS AMONG MUSLIMS
How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Christian

Finding Jesus Among Muslims: How Loving Islam Makes Me a Better Catholic will be available for purchase & signing

WHERE
Stimpson Auditorium
Halpin Harrison Hall

WHEN
Monday, March 25th
3:30-4:45 PM

MEET THE AUTHOR
Jordan Denari Duffner

Jordan is a leading Catholic voice on Muslim-Christian relations, interreligious dialogue, and anti-Muslim prejudice. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Theological and Religious Studies at Georgetown University.

Learn more about CICW & the event at CONTEMPORARYISLAM.ORG
or email us at cicwesu.edu



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH USIM

April 2019

On April 26, 2019, CICW signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the University of Islamic Sciences Malaysia (USIM). The memorandum was signed by Dr. Yaqub Mirza, President and a Trustee of the CICW, during his visit to Malaysia. The MOU provides a framework for collaboration between the two institutions. As a result of this agreement, USIM representatives attended the Barzinji colloquium in September, 2019, at Shenandoah University. The CICW has agreed to provide a research grant to USIM for research on the Prophetic pedagogy in 2020.



GRANTS

June 2019

CICW developed and offered two types of grants in 2019: Curriculum development grants for Shenandoah University faculty and external research grants under the theme of "Islam on the Edges".

Curriculum development grant supports Shenandoah University faculty who would like to develop content or pedagogical practices that integrate teaching on Islam and Muslims into their courses and syllabi. Grants may be used to develop content for a new course or expand or modify an existing course in a relevant subject area. The center accepts applications on a rolling basis.

External research grants are meant to support research and writing by individual scholars and advanced graduate students in the US and Canada. Grants include funding for travel, research support, publication and dissemination of results.

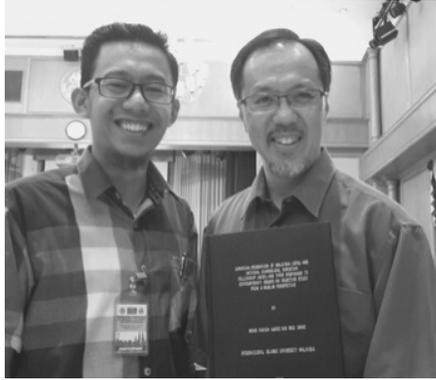
CICW has awarded 12 of these grants in June, 2019.

The projects cover a range of topics concerning Islamic thought and practice in the contemporary world. The projects engage with Islamic history, traditions, and contemporary religious and secular developments in Senegal, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Brazil, Europe, Canada and the United States. The recipients utilize a diversity of methods to approach these topics including ethnography, photography and film, digital archival research, and manuscript surveys,

More information about the recipients and their projects are listed at:

<https://www.contemporaryislam.org/grant-recipients.html>

OTHER PROGRAM DEVELOPMENTS AT CICW



FULBRIGHT FELLOW

CICW scored a major achievement by hosting a Fulbright Fellow from Malaysia, Mr. Mohd Faridh Hafez Mhd Omar. Mr. Omar is a PhD student at the Academy of Islamic Studies, University Malaya in Malaysia. He researched governance and leadership framework for Islamic institutions in the United States, under the supervision of Dr. Ermin Sinanović, CICW's Executive Director and Scholar-in-Residence at Shenandoah University. Mr. Omar stayed with CICW in the period of September-December, 2019.



BARZINJI PROJECT

CICW continues to support the Barzinji Project which is led by Dr. Younus Mirza. The Barzinji Project facilitates exchange, conversations, and dialogue among Shenandoah University, Bridgewater College, the University of Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the International Islamic University Malaysia. Shenandoah University hosted the Barzinji Project colloquium on September 15-17, 2019, at its campus in Winchester.



PROPHETIC PEDAGOGY

We are developing research in faith-based pedagogy. Our education team is working on teacher training modules for Islamic schools' teachers, and on the Imam training program. They are simultaneously developing a new course that will be offered through Shenandoah University's School of Education. CICW supports graduate fellowships in education at George Mason University, with the focus on the reform of education in Muslim-majority societies. We have also offered ten scholarships through School of Education at Shenandoah University for future teachers. Five of these scholarships are reserved for the minorities.



SOEL & SCHOLARSHIPS

Together with Dr. Jill Lindsey, Director of the School of Education & Leadership (SOEL), CICW is developing new exciting programs and courses to be offered at SOEL in future. CICW has also agreed to provide a number of scholarships for minority and other deserving students, as their entryway into a teaching profession.

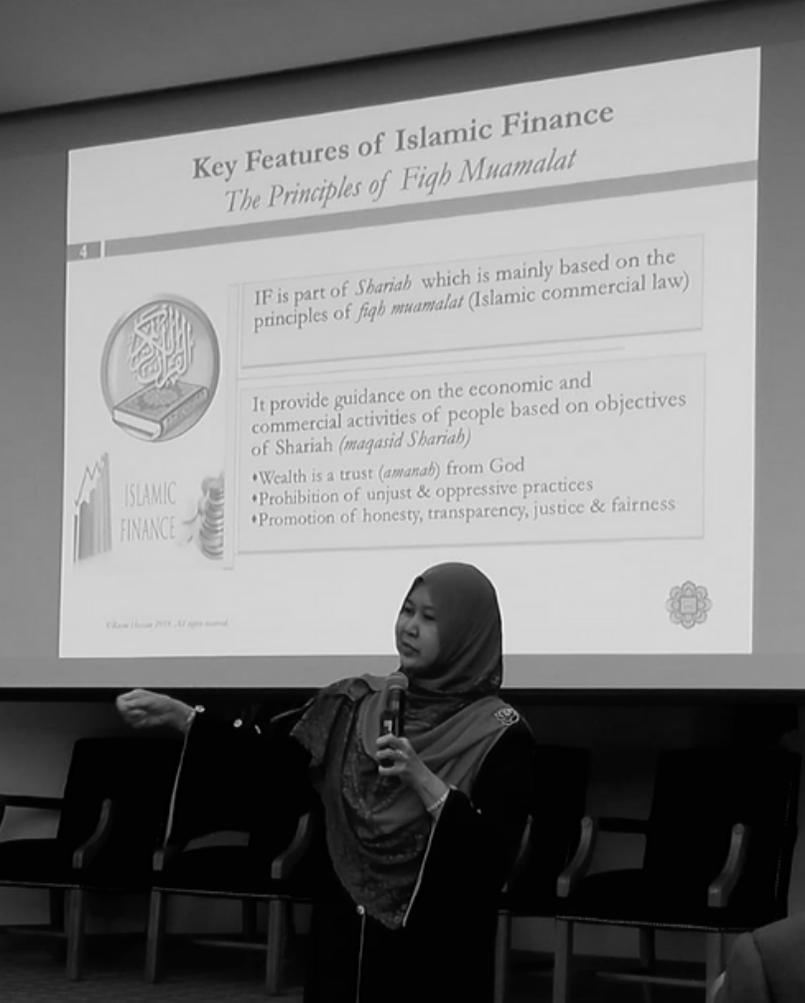


BARZINJI COLLOQUIUM

September 2019

CICW contributed to the Barzinji Colloquium, which was held at Shenandoah University, on September 16th and 17th, 2019. The colloquium hosted faculty, staff, and students from Bridgewater College, the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM), and the University of Sarajevo. The two-day discussions centered around various important issues in higher education, including: race and religion, ethnicity, interfaith dialogue, civil discourse, health care, and international exchange. The late Dr. Jamal Barzinji, after whom the Barzinji Project is named, was honored during the colloquium. Dr. Adrienne Bloss, Shenandoah University Provost, announced that the University would honor Dr. Barzinji by offering a special scholarship in his name. Ermin Sinanović, CICW Executive Director, delivered a keynote address at the colloquium.

In his address, he highlighted Dr. Barzinji's contributions to international higher education. Sinanović identified core values on which Dr. Barzinji based his vision for reform of education: search for truth, deep understanding of our similarities and differences, love, and beauty. "How do we create a community where we can communicate based both on our shared values and our differences?" Sinanović asked. "It is by being invited into discomfort that we acquire deeper understanding about who we are and about our fellow humans." The colloquium was attended by several hundred students, faculty, staff, and community members.



HALAL FORUM AT THE HARRY F. BYRD, JR. SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

September 2019

On September 18, 2019, CICW sponsored the Halal Forum at the Byrd School of Business at Shenandoah University. The Forum featured two speakers from the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM): Dr. Rusni Hassan and Dr. Hamzah Mohd. Salleh.

Dr. Hassan, a professor at IIUM Institute of Islamic Banking and Finance, provided a primer on Islamic finance. She gave the overview of special features of Islamic Finance (as compared to conventional finance); the growth and potential it offers; and different country approaches in adopting Islamic Finance. Dr. Hassan also covered the pertinent issues and challenges that the Islamic Finance industry is facing and possible ways to solve those issues.

Dr. Salleh, who is the Director of the International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) at IIUM, spoke about economic opportunities in global halal business, and about the issues related to supply chain in halal businesses.

More than 100 students and faculty members attended these presentations at SU.



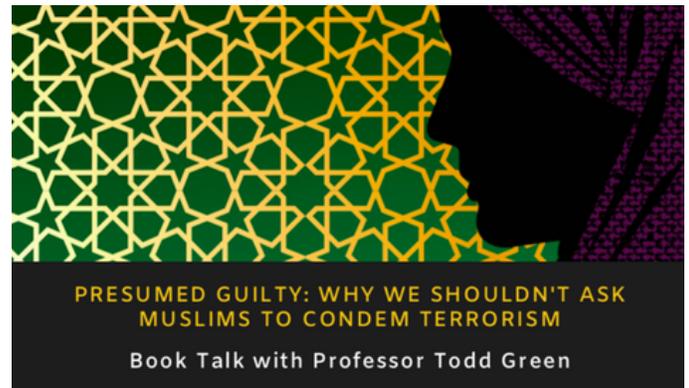
TODD GREEN LECTURE

October 2019

On October 21, Professor Todd Green, Associate Professor at Luther College and a former advisor on Islamophobia at the State Department, delivered a Freshman Forum Lecture, co-sponsored with CICW, on “Presumed Guilty: Why We Shouldn’t Ask Muslims to Condemn Terrorism”. The talk is based on Professor Green’s book that carries the same title.

In the lecture, Professor Green argued that asking Muslims to condemn terrorism was a distraction that prevented majority populations in Western nations from facing their own violent histories and from asking critical questions of how their countries’ national security initiatives and foreign policies contribute to a violent world order.

The lecture was attended by about 250 Shenandoah university freshmen, faculty, and staff.



MONDAY, OCTOBER 21ST
2-2:50 PM
STIMPSON AUDITORIUM IN HALPIN-HARRISON HALL



Journalists and politicians have demanded that Muslims should do more to speak out against terrorism. Todd Green, associate professor of Luther College and former advisor on Islamophobia at the US State Department, will argue that asking Muslims to condemn terrorism is a distraction that prevents majority populations in Western nations from facing their own violent histories and from asking critical questions of how their countries’ national security initiatives and foreign policies contribute to a violent world order.

Members of the general public are welcome to attend.



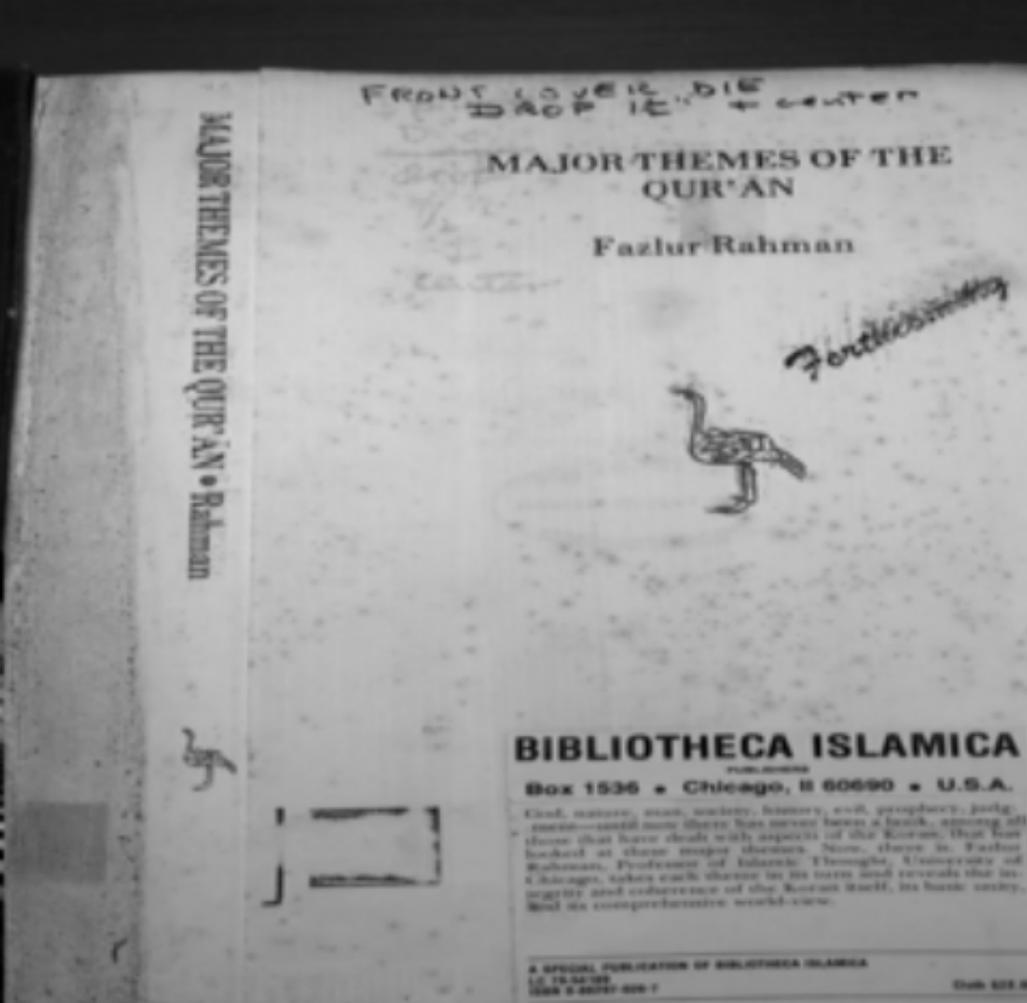
Contact Dr. Ermin Sinanović with any questions at cicw@su.edu



ASEAN FULBRIGHT FELLOW COMPLETED HIS FELLOWSHIP TENURE

Fall 2019

Mr. Mohd Faridh Hafez Mhd Omar completed his Fulbright US-ASEAN Initiative Visiting Scholar tenure at CICW during the Fall semester of 2019. During his four months long stay, Faridh completed research on “Governance and Leadership Framework in the U.S Islamic Institutions/Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs): A Guideline for ASEAN.” During the course of his research, Faridh interviewed a number of prominent American Muslim leaders. Faridh was particularly impressed with the spirit of volunteerism that permeates American society as a whole, and American-Muslim institutions in particular. He also presented a paper, “Malaysian Islamic Humanitarian Actor: A Case of Global Peace Mission Malaysia (GPM)” at the International Conference on Islam and Humanitarianism: Interdisciplinary Inquiries on Islamic Forms and Aid, organized by George Mason University and Ali Vural AK Center for Global Islamic Studies on November 1st and 2nd, 2019. Faridh contributed to Dr. Younus Mirza’s class on “Marriage and Sexuality in Islam,” at Shenandoah University by guest lecturing on the Malaysian Muslim customs and practices in marriage. Finally, he attended a number of academic conferences and met some prominent American scholars in Islamic studies. CICW was honored to host Faridh and to contribute to his scholarly development.



OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019

Executive Board Members' Public Engagement

Younus Mirza and Ermin Sinanović contributed blogs and writings in public domain, and presented papers at the annual conference of the American Academy of Religion (AAR).

Dr. Younus Mirza wrote about his research visit to the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Malaysia in July of 2019. He highlighted Fazlur Rahman's collection at ISTAC and wrote about Rahman's contribution to the Qur'anic studies. He also authored a piece on Maryam/Mary as the common heritage for both Christians and Muslims.

Dr. Sinanović wrote a blog post on the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina's response to the gay parade in Sarajevo.

Dr. Rehenuma Asmi visited the Centre for Islamic Thought and Education (CITE) at the University of South Australia, where she met with Dr. Nadeem Memon, CITE's Director at the time.

Special Grants

CICW has awarded several special research grants to further bolster its research agenda. Prof. Imtiyaz Yusuf of the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Malaysia was awarded a research grant to produce a book on the unpublished papers and academic materials of the late Ismail al-Faruqi (d.1986). Prof. Muhammad Mustaqim, Dean of the Faculty of the Qur'anic and Sunnah Studies at the University Islam Sains Malaysia (USIM), was awarded a grant for his research on "Political Interpretations of the Qur'an in Contemporary Malaysia." Finally, CICW entered into a collaborative research project with the Institute for the Islamic Tradition of the Bosniaks in Sarajevo to publish a book of Bosnian Muslim declarations against the Nazi occupation during the World War II.



CICW'S BOARD OF TRUSTEES & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The board of trustees is responsible for governing and overseeing the Center's strategic direction, as well as oversight of its financial resources. Trustees raise and contribute funds to the Center.

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Chairman
Member of Parliament, Port Dickson, Malaysia
President, People's Justice Party, Malaysia

M. Yaqub Mirza, Ph.D., President
CEO, Sterling Management Group, Inc.
Trustee & Chairman, Amana Mutual Funds Trust

Firas Barzinji, Esq., Secretary
General Counsel, Sterling Management Group, Inc.

Ayman AbuSulayman, Treasurer
Sterling Management Group, Inc.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

M. Yaqub Mirza, Ph.D., President

Ermin Sinanović, Executive Director

Rehenuma Asmi, Ph.D.

Amaarah DeCuir, Ed.D.

Younus Mirza, Ph.D.