

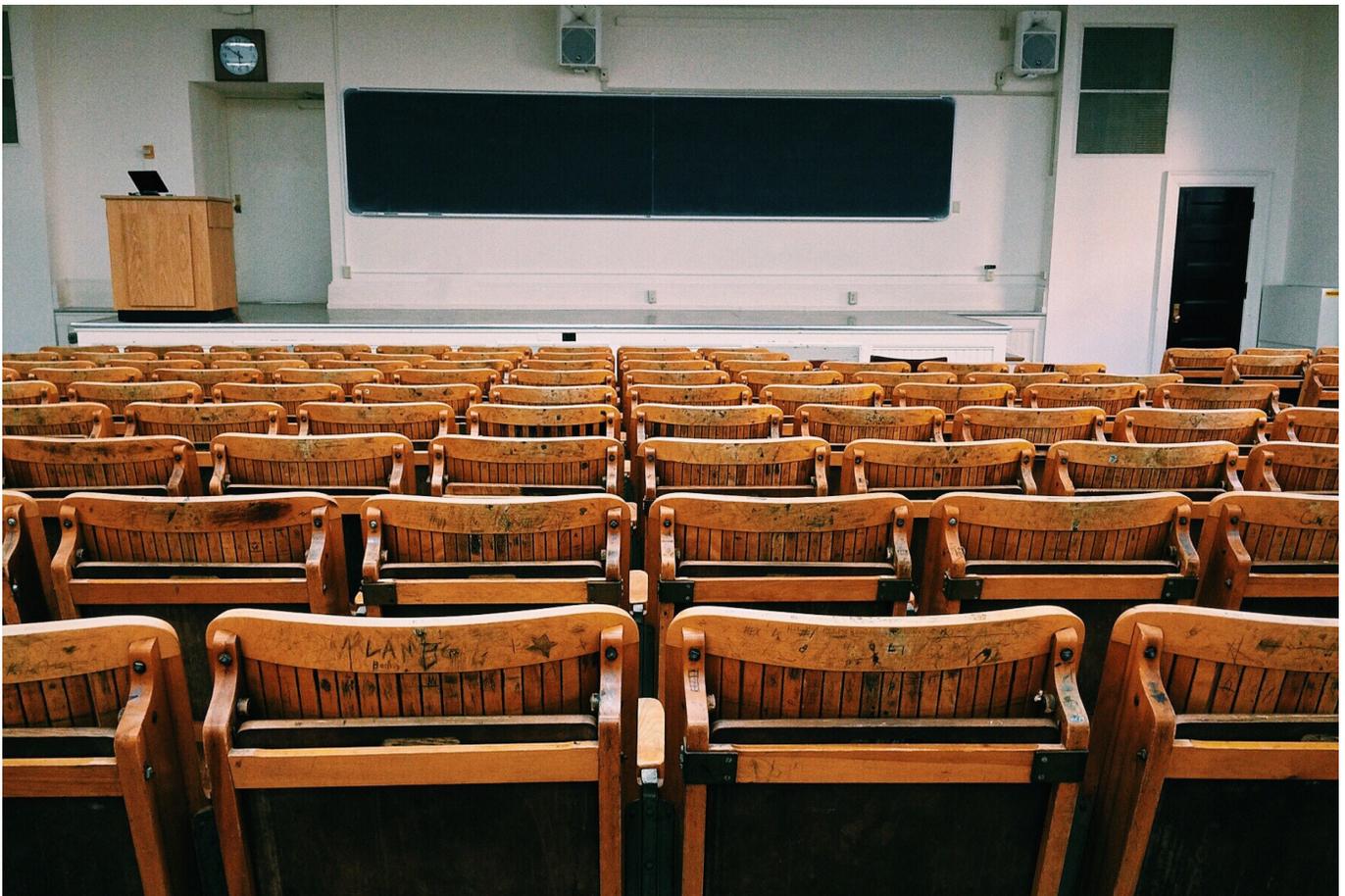
# Muslim Students and COVID-19:

## Understanding the Needs of Muslim Students within Higher Education

AMIR DURIĆ

ERMIN SINANOVIĆ

MIRJAKHON TURDIEV



IN COLLABORATION WITH



Muslim Student Life  
Syracuse University

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## About the Authors

### AMIR DURIĆ



Amir Durić serves as the full-time chaplain with Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University. In this chaplaincy role, Imam Durić oversees

the Muslim Chaplaincy at Syracuse University/The State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) and educational programs supporting Muslim students, faculty and staff. Durić is also a visiting chaplain and lecturer on Islam at Crouse Health, New York State Office of Mental Health and Upstate Medical University. Durić previously served as the Imam, Khatib, and Mu'allim for ten years, three years in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina and seven years in the United States in the Delaware Valley-Philadelphia region. Durić holds a Bachelor's in Islamic sciences from the University of Sarajevo, the Faculty of Islamic Studies. Durić completed a Graduate Certificate in Imam and Muslim Community Leadership Program at Hartford Seminary, and the Islamic Chaplaincy Program, which consists of a Master's in Religious Studies with the focus on Christian-Muslim Encounter and a Graduate Certificate in Islamic Chaplaincy. He also completed Level 1 of CPE (Clinical Pastoral Education) at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Durić is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. in Social Science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University.

### ERMIN SINANOVIĆ



Ermin Sinanović is executive director of the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) at Shenandoah University, where he is

also Scholar in Residence. Before joining CICW, he was director of research and academic programs at the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), and an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He was also a faculty associate in research, Southeast Asian Program at Cornell University. Sinanović studied for a Master of Arts and a Ph.D. in Political Science at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. He obtained two bachelor's degrees (one in the Qur'an and Sunnah studies, the other in political science) from the International Islamic University Malaysia and a master's degree (Islamic civilization) from the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

### MIRJAKHON TURDIEV



Mirjakhon Turdiev is a Ph.D. student at Social Science Department of Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Mirjakhon's

areas of expertise include human rights of and social justice for persons with disabilities, disability inclusive policy and development, civil society institutions and community economic development. His research interests are intersectionality of disability, culture, and decision making and disability discourse in predominantly Muslim communities. He is an experienced international development professional working at the United Nations and several bilateral development organizations and non-government organizations (NGOs.) Since 2018, he is a Vice Chairman on International Relations of the Association of Disabled People of Uzbekistan. Mirjakhon is the Co-Founder and Vice President of American Uzbekistan Association. As an advocate of human rights of persons with disabilities, he has been a publicly active blogger since 2009. He holds BA from Karshi State University, Uzbekistan. In 2016, he has obtained his Master's degree in public administration from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. Currently, Mirjakhon is a President of Central Asian and Caucasus Student Union (CACSU) at Syracuse University.

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## About CICW

The Center for Islam in the Contemporary World (CICW) at Shenandoah University is an academic center engaged in research, teaching, training, and outreach on issues related to Islam and Muslims in contemporary contexts. CICW utilizes interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches from diverse academic specializations. It is involved in education and outreach, connecting Shenandoah University to local, national, and global Muslim communities. CICW is a non-profit, 501(c)(3), tax-exempt private foundation.

### MISSION

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

### VISION

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.

## About MSL @ Syracuse University

The office of Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University (MSL) supports Muslim students, faculty and staff in all religious and spiritual needs for development and growth. It is about accommodation, openness and understanding - not judgment or restriction. It aims at improving the understanding and representation of Muslim cultures and communities around the world through sharing the universal values of faith and humanity. Our mission is to create an inclusive community and to engage in sincere reflections that result in religious, intellectual, and social growth through educational programs and spiritual guidance based on Islamic principles.



# Introduction

There has been a growing number of Muslims in the United States over the last two decades. The institutions of higher education have experienced similar growth, both from domestic and international students, who self-identify as Muslims. Given the diversity of Muslim students and their growing numbers, there seems to be a gap in diversity and inclusion in higher education and understanding the issues and challenges these students face. The goal of this survey is to provide some insights into these challenges, particularly related to the COVID-19 pandemic and offer recommendations to stakeholders, who can address these issues and challenges moving forward.

## ABOUT THE SURVEY

This survey is a collaboration between the Center for Islam in the Contemporary World at Shenandoah University (CICW) and the Muslim Student Life at Syracuse University (MSL). The goal of the survey was to understand the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the Muslim students in higher education in the United States. The survey leveraged and adjusted some of the questions from previous and ongoing data collection efforts conducted by Institute for Social Policy and Understanding, Student Veterans of America, and the Bob Woodruff Foundation. The survey was conducted from March 30 through April 10, 2020, and was completed by 498 survey takers from 32 U.S. states. The team of researchers contacted more than 100 Muslim Student Associations in 42 states to request support in the dissemination effort. The survey was also shared through the Association of Muslim Chaplains (AMC), Hartford Seminary, National Association of Campus and University Chaplains (NACUC) and Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA). This survey report reflects key findings that emerged in the survey, followed by concrete recommendations for practitioners who serve Muslim students.

## Summary

Overall, the majority of Muslim students have no confidence in the federal government and the President of United States to effectively respond to Muslim students' needs in response to the outbreak of the coronavirus/COVID-19 pandemic. In contrast, Muslims students have a much higher confidence in state government and their school, while the majority have confidence in their local mosques, national Islamic institutions, Muslim chaplaincy at the school and the Muslim Student Association.

Further, the results show an overall increase in religious practices, and higher level of stress, anxiety and depression. Daily prayers, fasting, dhikr and optional prayers are sometimes approached formally without deep understanding or engagement with its higher and holistic objectives. This approach puts limitations on the effects and benefits these practices might effect on overall well-being. The above findings are consistent with prior research (Durić, 2019) and indicate the daily prayers, fasting, dhikr, and optional prayers are more practiced in challenging times. For instance, an anxiety level of the respondents that pray obligatorily (Fard) prayers regularly increased by 60.41% (20.83% - significantly increased, 39.58% somewhat increased). In contrast, there is an 81.81% increase in anxiety level of the respondents who never prayed obligatory (Fard) prayers. These findings suggest more in-depth qualitative research to better understand the relationships between rituals, coping with trials, and well-being.

Considering COVID's impact on the well-being of the students, only 16 percent of students have health insurance through their institution of higher education, while 7 percent have no health insurance at all. These students could be at risk if the school closes, they graduate or if they can't afford tuition.

Finally, the post-graduation phase or the employment seeking of the students has been impacted as almost half of the respondents (47 percent) feel their ability to apply for jobs or internships has been negatively affected by the change in instruction, while about 68 percent of them are worried about the impact of COVID-19 on their academic goals.

The following sections detail each of the highlighted areas and make the case for immediate interventions and more inclusive accommodations of Muslim student within the institutions of higher education and offers some action items to put into practice today.



Anxiety levels increased by

**60.41%**



**16%** Students have health insurance through their institution of higher education

**7%** Students have no health insurance through their institution of higher education

**47%** Feel their ability negatively affected in applying for jobs and internships



**68%** Worried about the impact of COVID-19 on academic goals



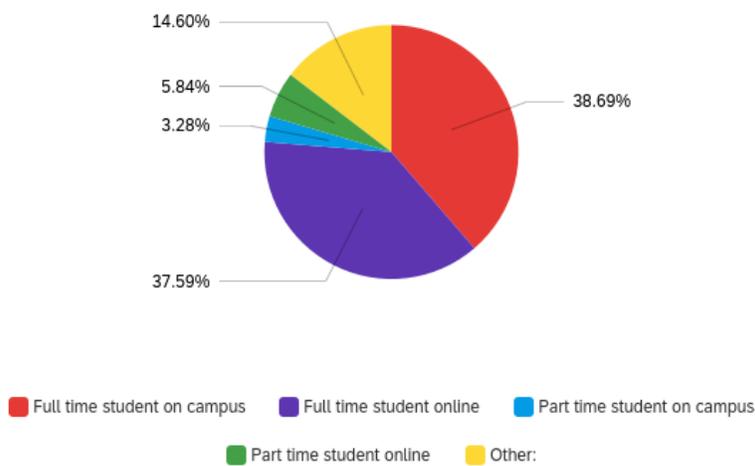


## Demographics



The participation in the survey was voluntary, meaning, they participants were able to choose which questions to answer and which ones to skip. Hence, throughout the report, there is a varying number of answers for different questions with 498 responses marking the highest response rate. Considering that, out of the total 274 respondents of the question on their student status, over one third (38.69%) defined as full-time students on campus, another 37.59% are online full-time students and part-time students account for nearly one-tenth of the total respondents.

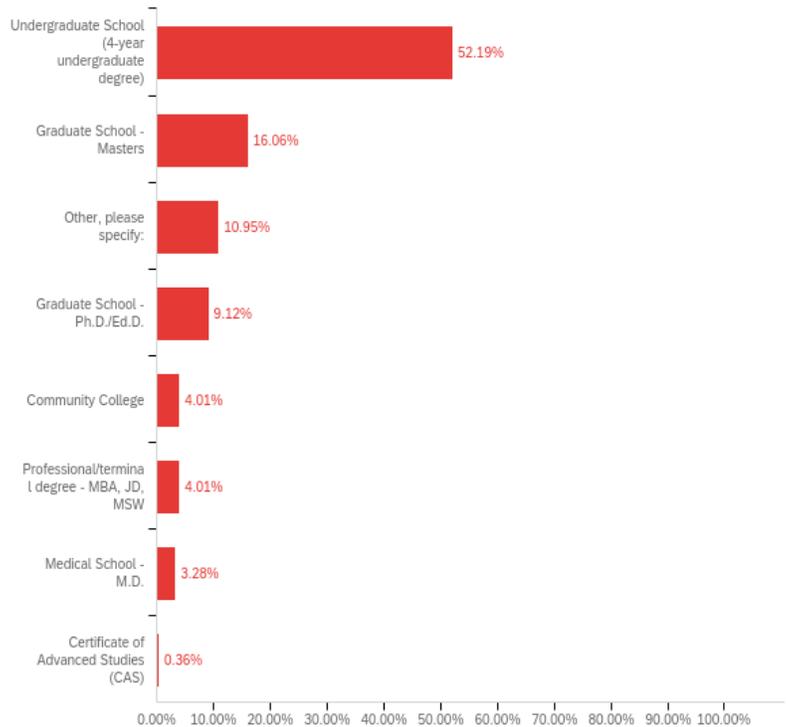
**Figure 1.** Which of the following best describes your current status as a student?



The undergraduate students account for 52.19% of all surveyed participants. Master's, Ph.D./Ed.D., M.D., and MBA, JD, MSW as a combined group of graduate students count for 32.47% of the participants. 4.01% are community college students and 10.95% defined classified as 'Others' which include high school students, alums and faculty.

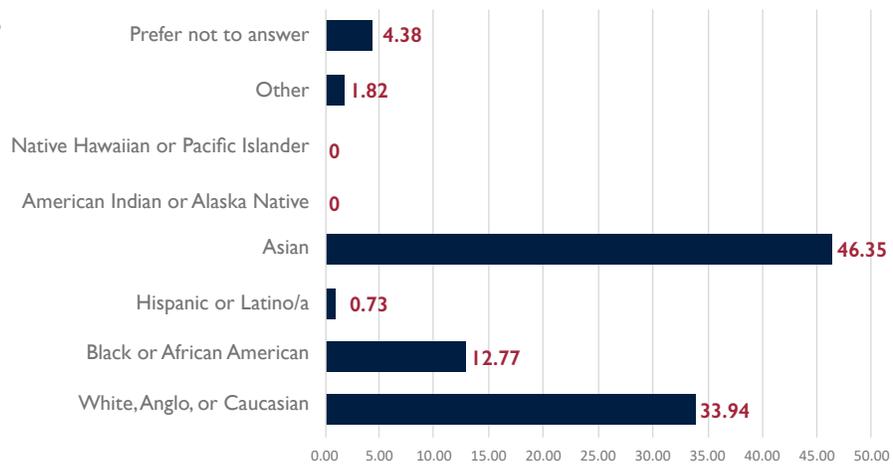
89.05% of the respondents are in the 18-34 age range making this research mostly reflective of Millennial and Generation Z experiences. 1.09% are Baby Boomers. The gender identities of the participants divided into two – female and male genders with a dominance of females, 54%, and 45% of males. The remaining 1% belongs to one respondent who preferred the self-describe gender option.

**Figure 2. What college are you currently enrolled in?**



Asian and White/Anglo/Caucasian are the top two races with 46.35% and 33.94% respectively (Figure 3). The possible uncertainty in determining one's race and/or ethnicity resulted in the conundrum that some participants identified their race or ethnicity by the name of their nationality, country name, or geographic region. During the data analysis, based on common sense and previous knowledge, those mismatches are distributed under appropriate race categories.

**Figure 2. What is your race or ethnicity?**



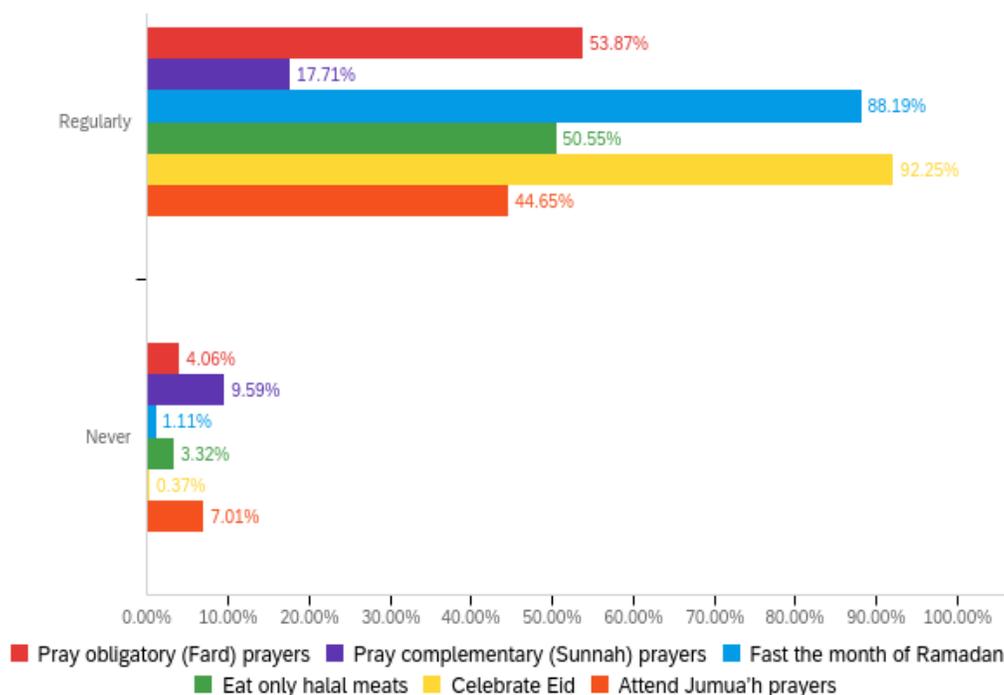
“My graduation plans are uncertain. My family lives in Pakistan. They are very much worried about me and I’m very much worried about them. Things are changing so quickly. My brothers and parents are having big losses in their already small business due to Coronavirus outbreak. I request Allah Almighty to help us all in this time of hardship and trouble.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

The representation of international students is far narrower than U.S. students with 15.85% against 81.51%. Given the restrictions in legal rights and opportunities on top of the already limited social connections as non-U.S. citizens, the type and extent of COVID-19 pandemic impacts on international students can vary. Domestic student experiences vary due to constraints in socialization, housing, and online studies in English as a second language.

The next set of data is on the type and frequency of practicing religious rituals, including praying obligatory (Fard) prayers, praying complementary (Sunnah) prayers, fasting during the month of Ramadan, eating only halal meats, celebrating Eid, and attending Jumua’h prayers. The answer choices for each type of religious practice consist of five frequency rates: regularly, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, and never. Based on these indicators, the most popular religious ritual the respondents practice is a celebration of Eid with 92.25% votes. Cumulative of those who celebrate Eid regularly and most of the time, reach 96.68%. 88.19% of the survey respondents consider themselves as Muslims fasting during the month of Ramadan regularly which makes the fasting in Ramadan the second most widespread religious observance. The participants, who pray obligatory (Fard) prayers regularly (53.87%) or most of the time (16.97%), count 70.84% of the total responses. Praying complementary (Sunnah) prayers is the least common practice among the participants – 9.59% of total participants chose Never option for this section. Over half – 53.88% of the respondents of the question on praying complementary (Sunnah) prayers said that they pray sometimes (30.26%) or rarely (23.62%).

**Figure 4.** How often do you practice the following?





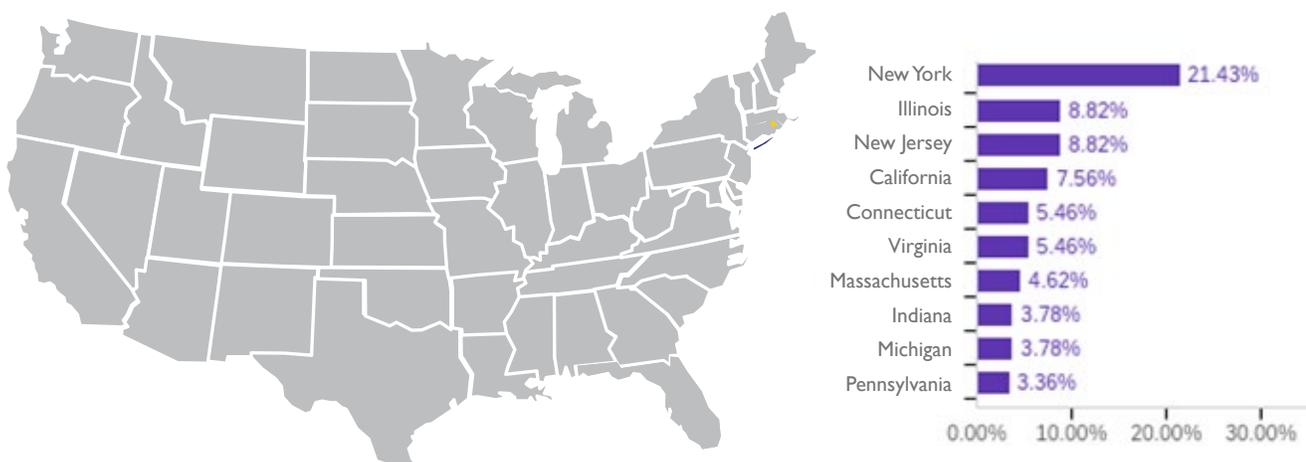
“As a Muslim student in a very white state, it was already hard finding halal meat and such resources but now it’s straight up impossible.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

It is a common perception that most of the people who consider themselves practicing Muslims or at least belonging to Muslim culture, eat only halal meat as the minimum qualification to associate with Islam. However, the results of this survey inform that only half – 50.55% of the respondents eat halal meat regularly, and 23.25% consume halal meat sometimes (15.50%) or rarely (7.75%). As frequent attendants of Jumua’h prayers, 60.52% of the participants attend Jumua’h prayers regularly (44.65%) or most of the time (15.87%).

Out of thirty two states, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, from where the survey responders participated, the top ten states are New York, Illinois, New Jersey, California, Connecticut, Virginia, Massachusetts, Indiana, Michigan and Pennsylvania. New Yorkers led with a 21.43% rate of participation. They largely outnumber Illinois and New Jersey who share the second-highest representation – 8.82% (Figure 5). According to World Population Review’s estimates on Muslim population by state in 2020 , the largest Muslim population in the United States live in Illinois making 2.80% of the total population of the state, New York rounds out the top three with 2.00% following Virginia where 2.70% of the population identify themselves Muslims. In New Jersey, Muslims constitute 1.80% of the state’s population, according to the same source.

**Figure 5.** 50 States, D.C. and Puerto Rico





“I don't think this is something our local branches and groups are able to handle, this is a international scale issue which for us falls on the leadership of the entire United States and I have no faith in them.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

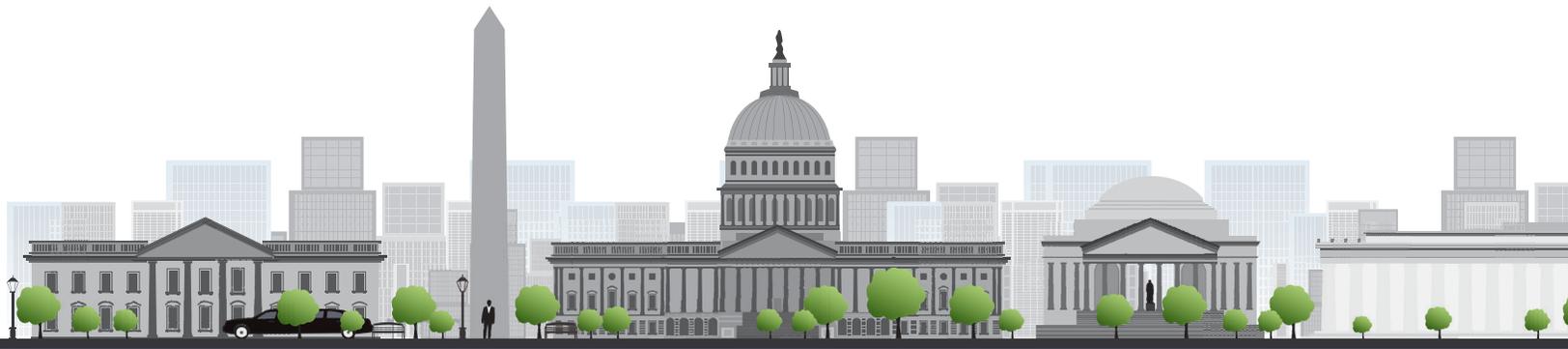
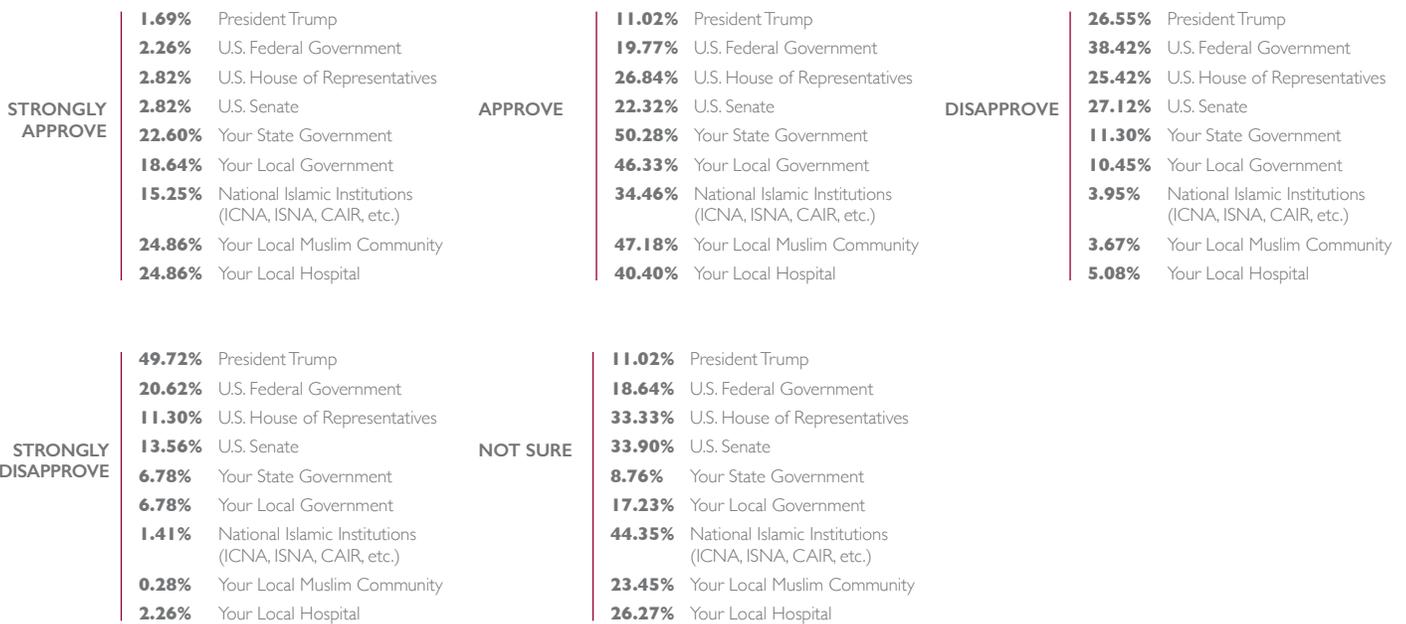
## LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE IN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Respondents on approval or disapproval of individuals or institutions on handling the COVID-19 pandemic with great distinction support the state and local government in contrast to President Donald Trump and the federal government. Specifically, 50.28% of the votes for the state government approve how the state governments handle the pandemic, making it the highest percentage. The other, 49.72% of the votes for President Donald Trump strongly disapprove the President's handling of the pandemic. While these two numbers jointly make 100%, they must not be interpreted that way as they represent just two different categories: approve and strongly disapprove. 44.45% of the voters are not sure if they approve or disapprove National Islamic Institutions in handling the COVID-19 pandemic while one-third of the voters approve these institutions.

According to Table 1 (see appendix), local mosques are the most popular among participants in terms of confidence in responding to Muslim students' needs during the COVID-19 pandemic. Muslim Chaplaincies at schools, National Islamic Institutions and Muslim Student Associations (MSA) are the next most trusted institutions with 26.52%, 24.37%, and 23.10% votes respectively in Great Deal [in confidence] options unlike the confidence in President Donald Trump (1.79%), U.S. House of Representatives (1.08%), and U.S. Senate (1.08%).

The highest rate of confidence absence is 67.38% in President Donald Trump. Interestingly, the top three institutions survey participants remain for whom uncertainly confident are Muslim Chaplaincies at schools (29.03%), National Islamic Institutions (24.37%) and MSA (20.94%). Perhaps, motives behind such uncertainty are connected to the lack of administrative mandates, structures, resources and experience in the aforementioned Muslim institutions.

**Figure 6.** In general, do you approve or disapprove the following individuals or institutions on handling the coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic?



“Overall there’s a lot of good that’s come from being quarantined at home. My job is still paying me. All my classes are now online which is not that difficult considering I’m a computer science student, however some professors are handling it a lot worse than others in terms of organization. I’ve been praying more than I normally do that’s for sure. I’ve been more invested in Islam overall. My mosque responded very quickly and appropriately which was great.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT



# Impact on Academic and Economic Well-being

The survey examined the prospective and real-time impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the academic, economic and health status of respondents. The next set of data reviews and analyzes how the daily lives of Muslim students have changed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## A. ACADEMIC IMPACT

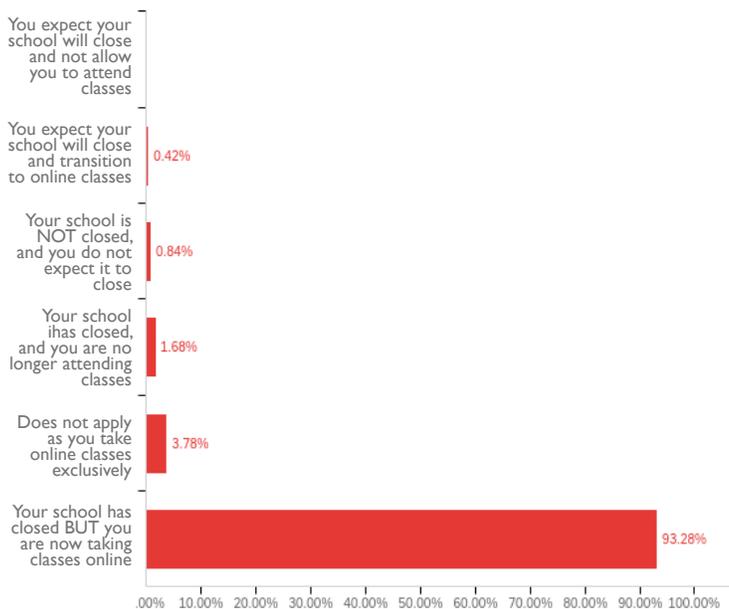
The current college/university students constitute 80% of the total of 300 respondents to the question on their type of enrollment at their colleges/universities. 16.67% are graduates of colleges/universities, and the remaining 4.33% are not students. Over 97% of the respondents study online, including 3.78% of students who have been taking online classes exclusively even before the COVID-19 pandemic. For the other 93.28% of the previously on-campus students, the new form of education is a considerable transformation that includes numerous changes beyond the academic ones.

For instance, the change in the instruction from in-person to virtual affected 52.14% of the respondents in applying or interviewing for jobs or internships. Only 3.42% of participants of that 52.14% experienced a positive change. 47.86% did not notice any change, perhaps due to either absence of exposure to a job or internship application or interview or did not encounter differences in their experience with such activities. Over 78% of the students are worried about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their academic goals. One-fifth of the participants are extremely worried, revealing their psycho-emotional status and experience.

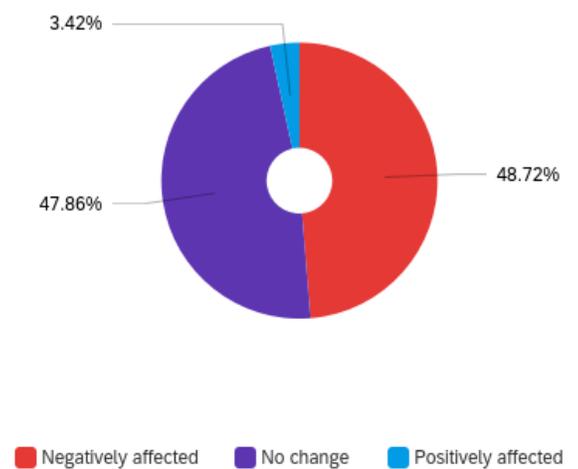
“It has made it a little more stressful to do online work because everything was switched so quickly and it’s just a lot at once.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

**Figure 7.** Which one of the following statements describes the changes to your school due to coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic?



**Figure 8.** How has the change in instruction affected your ability to apply or interview for jobs or internship?





“Not being able to attend the masjid has really affected my imaan (belief) during this time. I wish I was able to work right now, but alhamdulillah (Praise God) I have money saved that will hopefully get me through the rest of quarantine.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT



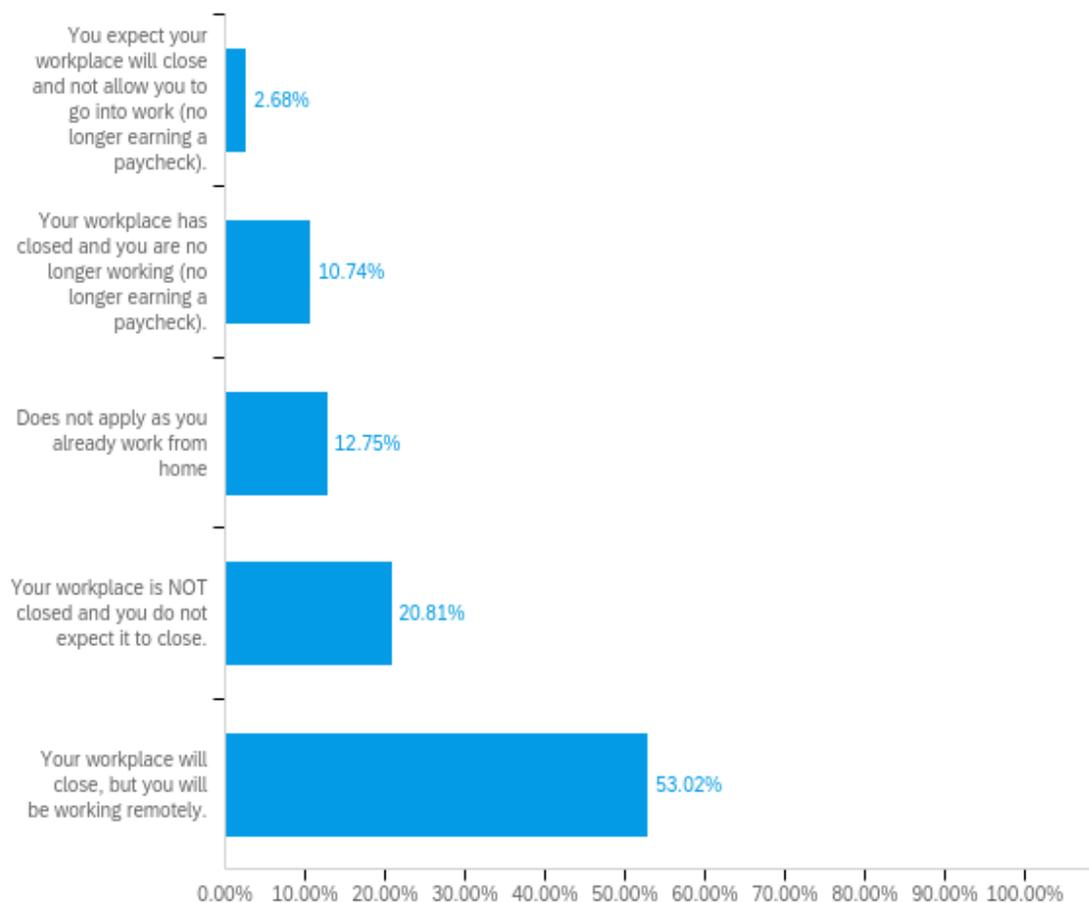
“I recently graduated college, working at a consulting firm, just transitioned to working remote. Working on fairly important projects that can not stop. But as the only wage earner in the house, feel a burden paying mortgage and living expenses. But alhamdulillah family is safe.”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT

## B. ECONOMIC IMPACT

Concerning the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, at the time of the survey, 52% of the respondents identified as unemployed, and 48% receive an income from their jobs. 14.09% have more than one job versus 83.89% who do not have more than one job. This 83.89% does not necessarily mean that all these people have one job. Possibly some of them may not have even one job. 53.02% of the employed respondents expected the closure of their workplaces which would switch their work environment from in-person to remote. Those who lost their jobs and income due to closure of their workplaces account for 10.74% of all the

**Figure 10.** Have your number of work hours been affected?

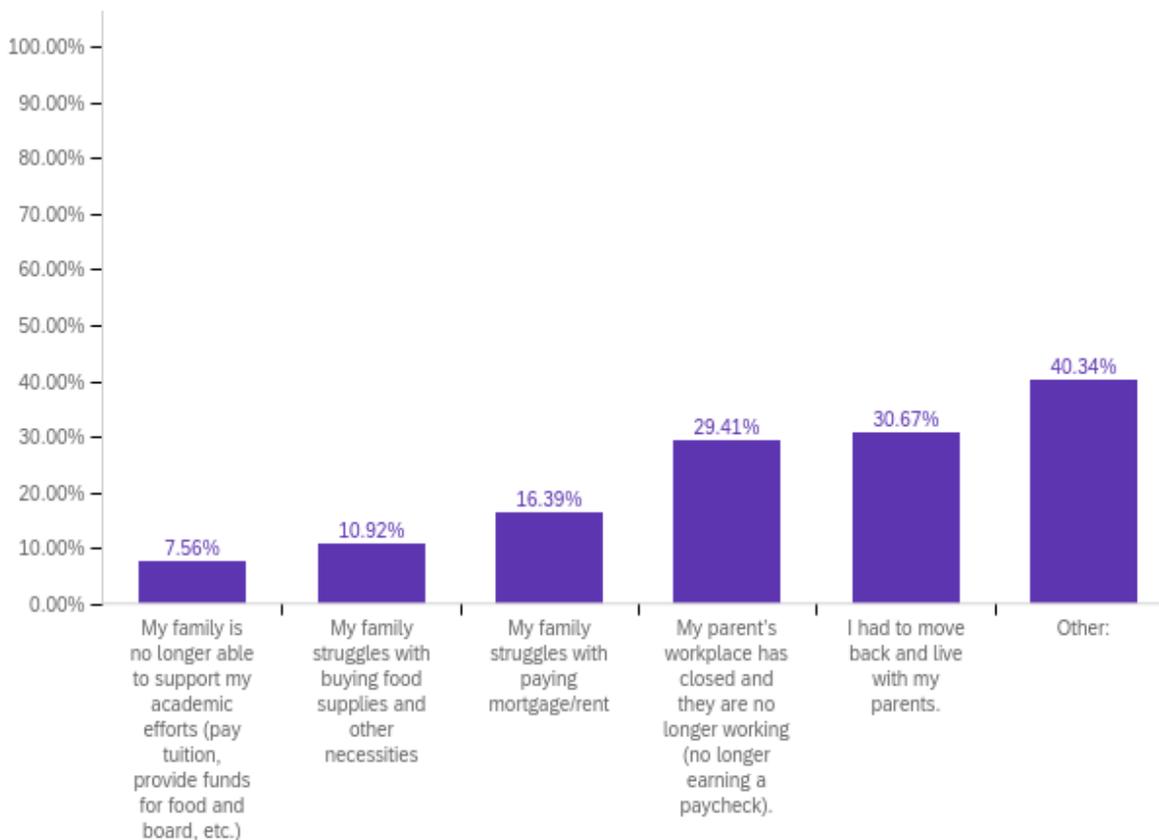


respondents. The closure of the workplaces would last more than a month according to 64.41% of respondents. As detailed in Table 3 (see appendix), job security and tuition payments are of extreme concern 11.96% and 10.93% of respectively, in contrast to paying utility bills (2.96%), rent/mortgage payments (4.28%), and medical bills (4.93%).

The situation of the families with direct impacts to their academic, mental, physical, and social well-being, it is more significant as many students are financially and morally depend on their family members given the social disconnect with their peers and college/university community.

Thus, several students, specifically, 30.67% of 322 respondents had to move back and live with their parents. Additionally to unpredicted loss of jobs and income of parents due to the COVID-19 pandemic effected 29.41% of participants, as the expenses of their parents would raise as the students have to rely on their parents' supply for their regular and occasional needs, including for food, living, healthcare, etc. 7.56% of students report that their families are no longer able to support their academic efforts, including tuition and boarding fees. One-tenth of the students' families struggle with buying food supplies and other necessities.

**Figure II.** Which one of the following statements describes the changes to your family's circumstances due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic?





### C. CHANGES IN MENTAL, SPIRITUAL, AND PHYSICAL BEHAVIOR

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, social institutions, including federal, state and local governments in the United States took various political, economic and social measures to mitigate and address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. The measures influenced the change in the operation of existing social structures, systems, and institutions, mainly shifting physical reality to virtual reality in all sectors and segments of the society. Consequently, such a chain of alteration dictated the changes in the behavior of individual persons. The students are largely impacted by the emerged conversion of social institutions and their form of operations given the nationwide quarantine and social distancing orders. The finding revealed how the behavior of Muslim students changed during COVID-19 pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted day-to-day life for over 96% of respondents of the survey. 31.52% think their life changed extremely and 56.15% expect major changes within the next one month.

**96%** Participants felt that their day-to-day life has been impacted

**31.52%** Participants felt that their life has been extremely changed

**56.15%** Participants expect major changes within the next month

Tables 4 and 5 (see appendix) show how the behaviors of people in one week changed during COVID-19 pandemic. None of these twelve daily activities left without a change in the behaviors. For instance, Table 4 shows the least behavioral change is observed performing ablution/wudu – 43.33% (100% - 56.67%). The greatest behavioral change is social distancing as 98.18% of the respondents practiced. Over half of the participants decreased use of public transportation either due to either a decline in the availability of public transportation services and/or precautions in using public transportation. Volunteering in the community is the third-largest reduction – 36.67%. The students' screen time drastically heightened by 64.55%. Additionally, 46.97% increased their social media time, online studies, and remote works, with a 12.12% increase in attending online Islamic events/lectures/sessions contribute.

From the perspective of dedication to Islam and its rituals, Table 5 (see appendix), the respondents spent or expect to spend more time on self-educating reading Islamic literature (32.65% more), conducting Dhikr to extend tributes to God and salutations to the prophet Muhammad (61.90% more), increasing the frequency of regular prays by 43.04% and optional prays by 34.49%, and increasing the regularity of voluntary fasting by 29.11%. Surprisingly, the amount of quality sleep almost equally changed between increases and decreases ranging from 14.29% for a significant increase and 22.54% somewhat increase to 9.21% for significant decrease and 23.81% somewhat decrease. Bonding with family increased by 81.58% cumulatively.

More time with family members catalyzes more behavioral changes within the family and between the family members in both positive and negative regards as the social environment changes due to increased intensity of the verbal and non-verbal relationship as a new pattern of cohabitation. A decrease in the level of physical exercise went down by 52.70% overriding the 27.62% increase. The level of stress, anxiety, and depression substantively ascended at 67.62%, 64.76%, and 32.06% respectively. All these feelings both the cause, and effect of decreased physical activities as well as the confrontation of more intensified bonding with family on top of the precarity caused by unemployment and loss of income sources. The correlation between various changes can be made by analyzing Table 5 below. For instance, the rate of doing Dikhr (remembrance of God and salutations to the prophet Muhammad) and Taqwa (God consciousness) increased by nearly 62% and over 65% respectively. These correlate with over 64% and 67% increases in stress and anxiety, respectively.

Analysis of correlations between religiosity and behavioral change of the respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic also revealed outstanding findings. Among the regular participants of Jumua'h prayers, a 45.84% increase in regular (Fard) prayers is observed. Those who never attended Jumua's prayers, increased their regular (Fard) prayers by 47.37%, of out 15.79% increased significantly.

An anxiety level of the respondents that pray obligatorily (Fard) prayers regularly increased collectively by 60.41% (20.83% - significantly increased, 39.58% somewhat increased). In contrast, an 81.81% increase in anxiety level was reported by respondents who never prayed obligatory (Fard) prayers. Of that, 45.45% experienced a significant increase in anxiety. Quite a high jump in an anxiety rate of the participants, who fast in the month of Ramadan regularly and most of the time, is indicated. 64.56% people, who regularly fast during Ramadan, felt an increase in anxiety, and 80.00% of the participants fasting in Ramadan experienced an increase in anxiety. Such a high jump in anxiety explains the significance of the timing in conducting the survey immediately prior to the start of the month of Ramadan. Understandably, the COVID-19 Pandemic quarantine changed the tradition and plans of many Muslims, who practice fasting with their peer Muslims in communities, which may have escalated the anxiety level.

“It’s been pretty tough as my social life has significantly decreased and I am a very social person. My anxiety and depression has increased significantly (I am diagnosed with anxiety and depression) so this situation hasn’t helped. I appreciate what MSL has done in offering different opportunities for students to engage in at this time. I hope more people take advantage of the services offered by msl and msa. Thank you for everything!”

—SURVEY RESPONDENT



An eye-catching increase in Dhikr (remembrance of God and salutations to prophet Muhammad) is observed among the participants who have either never or rarely attended Jumua’h prayers. Of the participants, who never attended Jumua’h prayers, 42.11% increased their Dhikr and 54.55% increase in Dhikr among the rare attendants of Jumua’h prayers was reported. Females’ Dhikr rate increased according to 64.63% of the participants comparing the 57.26% increase of males. And a significant increase in the anxiety rate of females doubled the same indicator of the males. The anxiety of 39.46% of females significantly increased in contrast to a 19.35% increase for the males. A higher rate of Dhikr in females compared to males can be explained as a potential effect of the higher anxiety rate in females compared to males. In-depth qualitative research can help with this hypothesis.

Among the three major races represented in the survey, the anxiety rate has increased almost equally for Black/African Americans (72.00%) and Asians (72.34%), and 58.62% increase for White/Anglo or Caucasian participants. The differences in the possession of necessary resources during the COVID-19 pandemic among these three races are vivid according to the following comparative table (Figure 12) indicating their level of concern. This comparative analysis of access to basic resources during the COVID-19 pandemic by three major race groups among the Muslims demonstrates the more advantageous situation of White/Anglo/Caucasian people comparing to the other two racial groups.

**Figure 12.** Access to Resources Among Three Major Race Groups in the Survey

		Black or African American	Asian	White or Anglo or Caucasian
Having enough money for gas and food	Not at all concerned	48.00%	44.68%	62.07%
	Extremely concerned	12.00%	12.77%	2.30%
Buying groceries	Not at all concerned	37.50%	27.66%	58.62%
	Extremely concerned	4.17%	9.57%	0.00%
Job security	Not at all concerned	44.00%	34.04%	52.87%
	Extremely concerned	16.00%	14.89%	6.90%

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### CONNECT WITH MUSLIM INSTITUTIONS AND HIRE A MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

Given that Muslim students trust their local Islamic institutions, i.e., mosque, and their Muslim Chaplain, make sure to

- ① connect with your local Islamic institutions and seek advice and assistance on how to serve your Muslim students better,
- ② if you don't have a Muslim Chaplain, now is an excellent time to hire one within your institution,
- ③ if you have a Muslim Chaplain, reach out and come up with a plan on how to properly serve and assist Muslim students during this Pandemic.

### INVEST IN MENTAL HEALTH FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS

- Given the increase in anxiety, stress, and depression levels, work with your local Islamic institution and Muslim Chaplain and your Health/Wellness Center. It is not enough to let students know counseling is available; counselors and the chaplains should be proactively reaching out. Muslim students may have specific needs and use additional coping strategies. School counselors and wellness centers must familiarize themselves accordingly.

### ADDRESS HEALTH INSURANCE NEEDS OF MUSLIM STUDENTS

- Lack of health insurance could be another cause of anxiety. Consider providing health insurance for those without and provide up to 12 months of health insurance past graduation.

### HAVE ACCURATE DATA ABOUT MUSLIM STUDENTS

- Ensure your institution is tracking the number of Muslim students. Encourage Muslim students to self-identify and inquire about their needs both during the pandemic and post-pandemic, i.e., need for Muslim chaplain, a place to pray, access to halal food, and other needs.

### ALLEVIATE WORRIES ABOUT ACADEMIC GOALS AND JOB MARKET

- Take concrete steps to ensure students are able to achieve their academic goals and have meaningful internship and job opportunities.

## (MUSLIM) CHAPLAINCIES

### BE PROACTIVE IN REACHING OUT TO MUSLIM STUDENTS AND HEALTH/WELLNESS CENTERS

- Given the increase in anxiety, stress and depression levels, work with your institution of higher education and its health/wellness Center. Communicate with at least one email per week. Offer video chats, live discussion and counseling sessions. Provide support and encouragement.

### PROVIDE MUSLIM SENSITIVITY TRAINING AT YOUR INSTITUTIONS

- Ask your institution to train their wellness and mental health counselors on proper interactions, competencies, coping strategies and needs related to Muslim students, their beliefs and practices. A Muslim Chaplain at your institution or other institutions of higher education can provide cultural competency training for various departments and those who work directly with Muslim students, including counselors.

## ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS

### CATER TO MUSLIM COLLEGE STUDENTS' NEEDS

- There is an increase in attendance of online lectures among Muslim students. Cater to them and create specific lectures for Muslim students in higher education.

### HELP YOUR LOCAL COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY HIRE A MUSLIM CHAPLAIN

If your local institution of higher education does not have a Muslim chaplain:

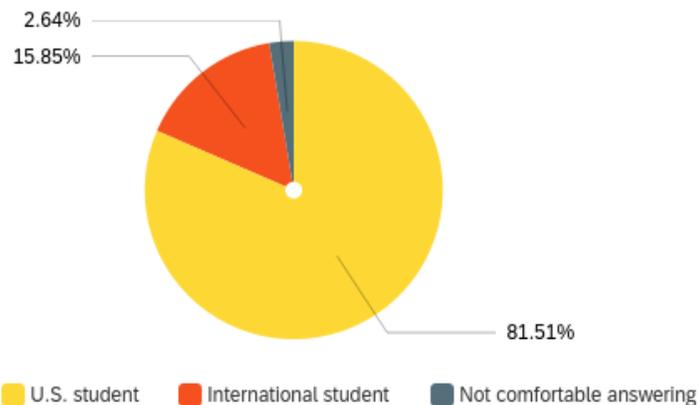
- ① Offer assistance and support for their counselors and wellness workers,
- ② Offer assistance and support to their Muslim students,
- ③ Advocate for Muslim students and ask the institution to bring a Muslim chaplain on board.

## Limitations of the Survey

The survey questions reached diverse groups of participants representing different races, cultures, countries, genders, academic roles, immigration status, colleges/universities as well as geographic locations within the United States. The timing of the survey necessitated the immediate roll-out without preliminary piloting of the questionnaire due to a rapid unanticipated impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the target audience of the survey. As a result, limitations of the survey surfaced during the review and analysis of the collected data. The following are some of the major limitations revealed.

- In connection with the data described in figure 1, it is likely that the part of the students, who defined themselves as online full-time students, in fact, could be full-time students on campus. Because, they might have interpreted the online study due to COVID-19 quarantine as the online full-time student. The 1:1 ratio of on-campus and online students is unlikely.
- The data on race or ethnicity might be obscured because the meaning and interpretation of race and ethnicity could vary by different respondents since race and ethnicity are not synonymous. Moreover, many immigrants living in the U.S. often confuse which race they belong to as in many countries the population is not racially categorized due to various factors including the racial homogeneity of the population. This factor could have led the Other category in the survey to be among the top three with 19.71%, overtaking the Black or African American racial group to which 9.12% of people affiliated themselves.
- It is possible that students of the Middle Eastern and/or North African background identified themselves as white due to the US Census and US federal agency definitions. This could explain why the percentage of the students who identified themselves as white is unexpectedly high.
- The question on the status of participants as either international or domestic students limits the options allowing them only to answer this question, although the data on previous questions demonstrate the participation of non-students in the survey. 2.64% of respondents, who chose the “Not comfortable answering” option, might include those who do not identify themselves as current students. But the division of the respondents into undergraduate, graduate, and other categories according to figure 2 illustrates that non-students (defined as Others) are not 2.64%, but 10.95%.

**Figure 13.** Which of the following would describe you the best?



# Appendix

**Table 1 – How much confidence do you have in the following individuals or institutions to effectively respond to Muslim student needs in response to the outbreak of the coronavirus / COVID-19 Pandemic?**

#	Question	A Great Deal	A Fair Amount	Not Very Much	No Confidence at All	Not Sure	Total
1	President Donald Trump	1.79%	5.73%	16.13%	67.38%	8.96%	279
2	U.S. House of Representatives	1.08%	15.41%	32.62%	31.18%	19.71%	279
3	U.S. Senate	1.08%	10.04%	35.84%	34.05%	19.00%	279
4	Your State Government	8.99%	32.01%	24.10%	21.22%	13.67%	278
5	Your School	14.34%	40.86%	21.51%	13.62%	9.68%	279
6	Your Local Mosque	30.82%	37.63%	13.62%	5.02%	12.90%	279
7	National Islamic Institutions (i.e. ISNA, ICNA, CAIR, etc.)	24.37%	31.18%	16.13%	3.94%	24.37%	279
8	Muslim Chaplaincy at Your School	26.52%	26.16%	13.26%	5.02%	29.03%	279
9	Muslim Student Association (MSA)	23.10%	32.85%	18.05%	5.05%	20.94%	277

**Table 2 – How concerned are you with the following over the next two weeks?**

#	Question	Not at All Concerned	Slightly Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Extremely Concerned	Total
1	Changes to Instruction (in-person vs online)	19.74%	22.75%	22.32%	16.31%	18.88%	233
2	Limited Access to Campus Resources	21.03%	19.74%	21.89%	20.60%	16.74%	233
3	Reduced Contact with Other Students	21.03%	18.88%	22.75%	20.17%	17.17%	233
4	Reduced Contact with Other Muslims	18.45%	12.02%	23.61%	30.90%	15.02%	233
5	Limited access to places of worship	18.45%	11.59%	20.17%	19.74%	30.04%	233
6	Inability to attend Jumua'h (Friday service)	15.45%	10.73%	14.59%	24.89%	34.33%	233

**Table 3 – How concerned are you with the following over the next two weeks?**

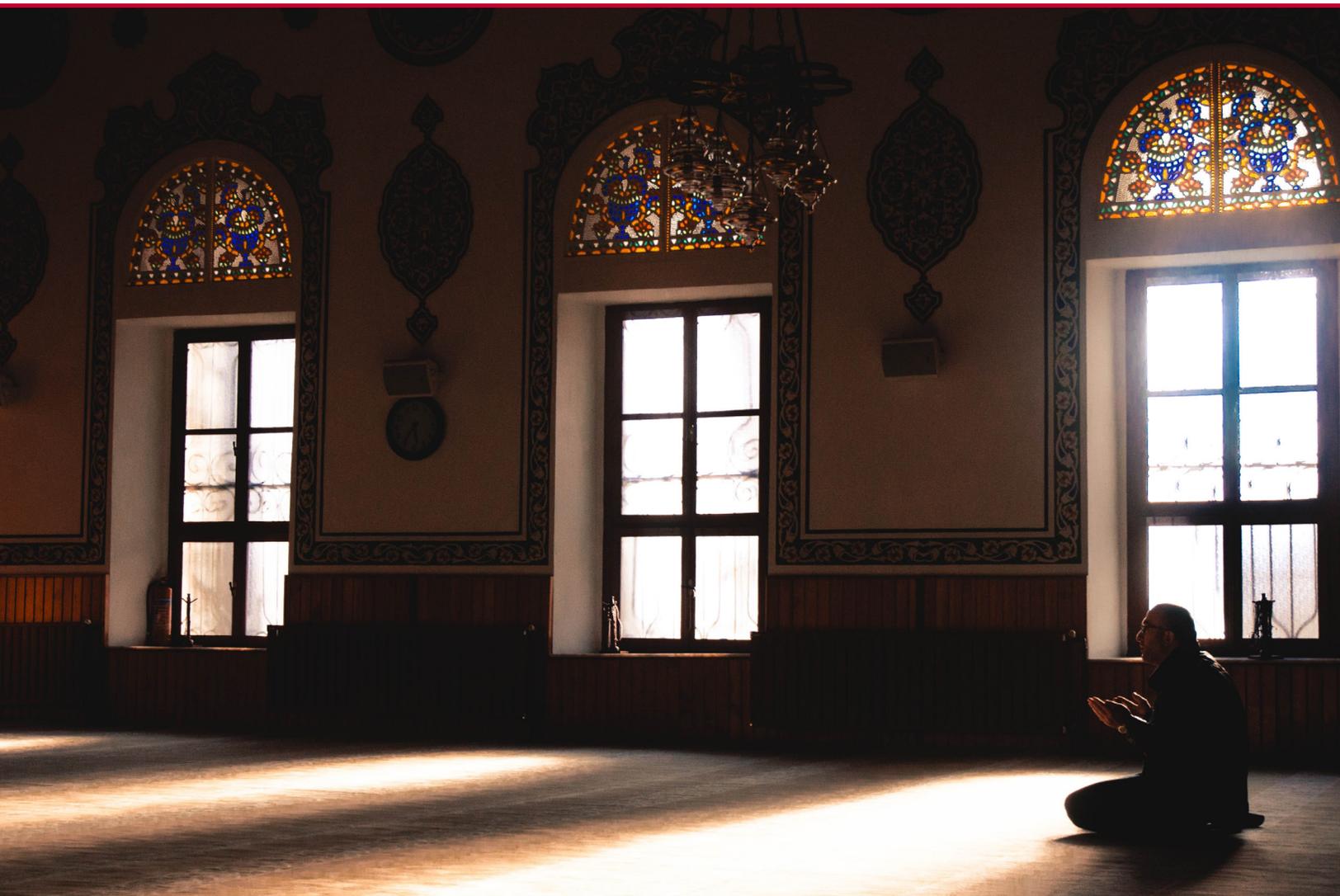
#	Question	Not at All Concerned	Slightly Concerned	Somewhat Concerned	Moderately Concerned	Extremely Concerned	Total
1	Changes to Instruction (in-person vs online)	19.74%	22.75%	22.32%	16.31%	18.88%	233
2	Limited Access to Campus Resources	21.03%	19.74%	21.89%	20.60%	16.74%	233
3	Reduced Contact with Other Students	21.03%	18.88%	22.75%	20.17%	17.17%	233
4	Reduced Contact with Other Muslims	18.45%	12.02%	23.61%	30.90%	15.02%	233
5	Limited access to places of worship	18.45%	11.59%	20.17%	19.74%	30.04%	233
6	Inability to attend Jumua'h (Friday service)	15.45%	10.73%	14.59%	24.89%	34.33%	233

**Table 4 – In general, have your following behaviors increased or decreased over the last week?**

Question	Increased a Lot	Increased Slightly	No Change	Decreased Slightly	Decreased a Lot	Total
Hand Washing	46.36%	40.91%	11.82%	0.61%	0.30%	330
Performing ablution/wudu	17.27%	24.85%	56.67%	0.61%	0.61%	330
Use of Hand Sanitizer	26.36%	40.61%	31.82%	0.91%	0.30%	330
Shaking Hands	3.03%	1.52%	13.64%	16.36%	65.45%	330
Coughing into your Arm	23.03%	22.73%	50.91%	1.82%	1.52%	330
Sneezing into your Arm	24.24%	21.52%	51.52%	1.52%	1.21%	330
Social Distancing	81.82%	12.73%	1.82%	1.82%	1.82%	330
Attending online Islamic events/lectures/sessions	12.12%	22.42%	53.64%	2.73%	9.09%	330
Use of Public Transportation	1.21%	1.21%	37.88%	8.79%	50.91%	330
Volunteering in the community	1.52%	6.97%	38.48%	16.36%	36.67%	330
Using Social Media	46.97%	30.61%	16.97%	3.03%	2.42%	330
Screen Time	64.55%	21.21%	11.21%	1.82%	1.21%	330

**Table 5 – Which of the following have you experienced or believe you will experience due to the coronavirus/COVID-19 Pandemic?**

Question	Significantly increased	Somewhat increased	Same (have not increased or decreased)	Somewhat decreased	Significantly decreased	Total
Regular prayers (Fard prayers)	16.46%	26.58%	53.48%	2.22%	1.27%	316
Optional Prayers (Nawafil)	7.59%	26.90%	62.97%	1.27%	1.27%	316
Fasting voluntary fast	8.54%	20.57%	68.35%	1.58%	0.95%	316
Reading and contemplating over the Qur'anic verses	16.19%	36.83%	45.40%	1.27%	0.32%	315
Reading and contemplating over Hadiths (the Prophet sayings)	7.62%	32.38%	58.73%	0.63%	0.63%	315
Dhikr (remembrance of God and salutations to the prophet Muhammad)	19.68%	42.22%	36.51%	1.27%	0.32%	315
Reading Islamic literature	8.57%	25.08%	65.71%	0.32%	0.32%	315
Volunteering activities, i.e. Helping others	5.40%	16.19%	51.43%	17.46%	9.52%	315
Bonding with my family	40.95%	40.63%	16.83%	0.95%	0.63%	315
Taqwa (God consciousness)	27.07%	38.22%	33.76%	0.64%	0.32%	314
Feeling of stress	30.48%	37.14%	23.49%	6.35%	2.54%	315
Feeling of anxiety	28.57%	36.19%	27.62%	5.40%	2.22%	315
Amount of quality sleep	14.29%	22.54%	30.16%	23.81%	9.21%	315
Depression	8.89%	23.17%	57.46%	7.30%	3.17%	315
Level of physical exercise	7.62%	20.00%	19.68%	22.86%	29.84%	315



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## Contact Information

Any questions, please email us at [msl@syr.edu](mailto:msl@syr.edu) and/or [cicw@su.edu](mailto:cicw@su.edu).

# Glossary of Terms

**Alhamdulillah** – Praise be to God

**Allah** – God (in Arabic)

**Dhikr** – literally, mentioning or remembrance of God in general; sometimes it refers to the utterance of specific words and phrases which are repeated as a means of praising God and holding Him in remembrance

**Dua'** – supplication, prayer, petition

**Eid** – refers to the two main holidays in Islam, Eid al-Fitr (the Feast of Breaking the Fast after Ramadan), and Eid al-Adha (the Feast of the Sacrifice)

**Fard** – religious obligation

**Fard prayers** – refers to the obligatory five daily prayers

**Halal** – food or items that are permitted to be consumed or used as per Islamic law

**Imam** – the leader; leader of the prayer

**Iman** – faith; it is defined by the prophet Muhammad as belief in God, His angels, His books, His messengers, the Last Day, and the Divine destiny (both the good and evil)

**Islam** – linguistically means “submission or surrender to God” and “peace”; the Prophet Muhammad defined it through five pillars, including the declaration of faith, prayer, fasting, Zakat (almsgiving), and the pilgrimage to Mecca

**Jumu'ah** – Friday

**Jumu'ah Prayer** – Friday prayer; Congregational prayer or Friday gathering that consists of gathering, khutbah (the sermon), and congregational prayer; it is a weekly congregational prayer for the Muslims

**Masjid** – literally means “the place of prostration”; refers to a mosque or place of worship for Muslims

**Muslim Chaplain** – we recognized that many Muslim students struggle to comprehend the term “Muslim chaplain.” This could be due to the original meaning of the term chaplain, and its connotations with Christianity. Although it has much deeper meaning, Muslim Chaplain in the context of a university is a person chosen to represent Islam and Muslims, support Muslim students and advocate for their needs, and conduct and organize religious life for Muslim students, faculty, and staff. They can be males and females, and “thus Muslim chaplain is not necessary an “Imam,” although an Imam may work as a chaplain.” According to the Association of Muslim Chaplains resources, “it has been said that Muslim chaplains are “the face of Islam” in American institutions. At a time when Islam and Muslims are often demonized through negative stereotypes and pervasive images in the media, Muslim chaplains play significant roles as public spokespersons, religious service facilitators, advisers, counselors, advocates, teachers, and administrators.” Visit <https://associationofmuslimchaplains.org/what-is-islamic-chaplaincy/> for better understanding of what is Islamic Chaplaincy and who are Muslim Chaplains.

**Muslims** – the ones who submit to God; refers to those who follow the teachings of Islam as taught by Prophet Muhammad; according to the Qur'an, in every society throughout the ages there have been those who demonstrate their surrender to God, including Abraham and many others who came before Muhammad

**Nawafil** – it is a plural of nafl, which refers to optional or supererogatory prayers

**Qur'an** – literally the “reading,” the “recitation”; it is the main text of Islam and the name of the final Book sent by God to humanity

**Ramadan** – the ninth month of the Islamic Hijri Calendar, also known as the month of the Qur'an and fasting

**Salah** – prayer that occurs five times a day; supplication to God; one of the root meanings of this word is connectedness, which refers to the connectedness of a servant to his Creator

**Sawm** – refers to the fasting during Ramadan

**Shahadah** – the profession of faith stating that there is no god but (One and Only) God and that Muhammad is His messenger

**Sunnah** – tradition as practiced by the Prophet Muhammad, exemplifying the complete way of life

**Sunnah prayers** – the optional prayers practiced by the Prophet Muhammad that are not Fard, or obligatory

**Taqwa** – God-consciousness

**Wudu'** – minor ablution prior to daily prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, sleeping, or any religious activity. At minimum, it consists of washing the face, the arms including elbows, passing a wet hand over the top of the head, and washing the feet. Besides, washing the hands, rinsing out the mouth and nose, and washing ears (and sometimes neck) are usually part of wudu' as well.

