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Being Muslim on a Catholic Campus

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Roua Azmeh, a Muslim, said she imagined the University of Dayton to be like the old, strict all-girls or all-boys Catholic schools run by nuns and monks who were very strict and quick to administer corporal punishment to students.

Instead, Azmeh, a UD senior, said she found that all faiths feel welcome at UD and felt an immense outpouring of support for her and UD's Muslim Student Association.

"Many departments and organizations on campus have expressed interest in our events and they are ready and willing to help us in any way. (Being a Muslim at a Catholic university) is not much different from being at a non-affiliated university," said Azmeh, UD Muslim Student Association president.

That is one of the messages Azmeh, a Beavercreek resident, wants to expose during UD's Islam Awareness Week events March 5-8. Islam Awareness Week events are free and open to the public.

The week begins at noon Monday, March 5, in Kennedy Union, room 310, with a panel of UD students discussing "Being Muslim at a Catholic University."

"Muslims have much in common with Christians and Jews," Azmeh said. "The Quran even refers to (Christians and Jews) by a special name - 'people of the book.' Many of the same stories and traditions are found in those three Abrahamic faiths."

Other UD Islam Awareness Week events include:

8 p.m., Tuesday, March 6, Kennedy Union ballroom: Former Wall Street Journal reporter Asra Nomani (url: http://www.asranomani.com) , a Muslim, American woman, will discuss battles against sexism and intolerance in her mosque. She wrote Standing Alone in Mecca: An American Women's Struggle for the Soul of Islam and "99 Precepts for Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors in the Muslim World." Nomani will speak as part of UD's Distinguished Speakers Series.

6-8 p.m., Wednesday, March 7, Art Street Studio D: Local physicians Ramzieh and Wayel Azmeh will present "Islam and America: A Match Made in Heaven?" Reservations are required because the event includes dinner. Call 937-229-3310 for reservations and information.

4:30-7 p.m. Thursday, March 8, Art Street Studio D: "Islam: Empire of Faith (url: http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/)," a PBS documentary about the history of Islam.

For more information on UD's Islam Awareness Week, contact UD's Muslim Students Association at 937-229-3310.

For interviews, contact Shawn Robinson at 937-229-3391.