

# Esohe Irabor Hosts “Science and Salaat” Event At Howard University’s Carnegie Building

By Esohe Irabor

This past summer, Esohe Irabor won the AAAS 2019 Science and Religion Dialogue Public Engagement Contest. With it, she got a prize of \$1000.00. The contest was sponsored by the Dialogue on Science, Ethics, and Religion (DoSER) program within the AAAS. Her entry, entitled “The Links Between Science and Salaat”, was submitted as a slide show presentation that examined the resultant health benefits (the correlated sciences: biology, psychology and physiology) of Salaat (the Muslim form of prayer).



This fall 2019, Esohe teamed up with Nisa Muhammed, the Assistant Dean of Religious Life at Howard University to host the Science & Salaat event at Howard University’s Carnegie Building. The 2-hour evening event was held October 4<sup>th</sup> 2019. The event began with food and transitioned into Esohe’s three-part presentation, in which she spoke first on the practice of Salaat. Next, she spoke about the scientific method and the various fields in STEM. Finally, she spoke about how the positions of Salaat (standing, bowing, prostration and

sitting) yielded positive psychological, emotional, and physiological for believers as they prayed. The presentation was followed by a discussion, in which participants got to speak about parts of the talk that stood out to them. One such moment was when participants considered a quote from Dr. Fatimah Jackson, curator of the CRL: “A hallmark of Islam is that it is in complete harmony with science...Conflict between scientific facts and religion is not possible...since they address different realms. Science reveals the magnificence of Allah’s creation [and] Islam encourages scientific assessment of the Islamic derivatives”. Esohe used this quote to set up a question for participants to get them more engaged in the discussion: “This quote,” she said: “could be said to insinuate that science and religion are two separate things—let’s say, two separate ‘circles’. What do you guys think? Is the relationship between science and religion like two separate circles, a Venn Diagram, or one circle?” Students and staff took turns around the room sharing their sentiments and rationales. Ultimately, everyone in the room saw science and religion as connected somehow. This was encouraging for Esohe, because she saw it as evidence that the much-needed reconciliation between science and religion could happen. We thank the AAAS, the Howard University Muslim Student Association, and program coordinators for this successful event. We hope to do it again soon. \*\*\*