

Dear Editors,  
Re: "Muslim club re-ratified, allowed religious exclusivity"  
(*Journal*, September 19, 2006)

I'm writing on behalf of QUMSA.

Our club doesn't exactly restrict membership to Muslims; as our constitution states, non-Muslims are always welcome as honorary members, and many are in fact involved in QUMSA. Our exclusivity relates only to participation in executive elections, though honorary and regular members are entitled to identical privileges in terms of our services, activities, and even worship rituals. Nonetheless we see it more appropriate for our mandate that Muslim executives run QUMSA, ensuring that its defined purpose can be fulfilled.

Upon realizing that our membership clause violated the AMS constitution, we consulted the Queen's Human Rights Office and learned that they had previously contacted the AMS to confirm the special status of organizations like QUMSA; hence our ratification in years past. Article 18 of the Ontario Human Rights Code grants us an exemption, and we consequently fall under article 7.01.07 of the AMS constitution, allowing exemptions in accordance with the OHRC. We were informed by the AMS that we need not attend the Assembly for such a simple vote, as our ratification clearly could not be denied. It wasn't a matter of reluctance or discomfort on our part to appear before the Assembly, rather we were prepared and more than willing to, but were advised that it was unnecessary.

Thus you can only imagine our surprise upon hearing of the lengthy debate that arose. Even more astonishing was that the Assembly was debating something explicitly granted to us by the AMS constitution. Those arguing against our ratification actually risked having the Assembly break the law and possibly be subject to prosecution.

Much of the confusion resulted from concern as to how we define a Muslim, and we do apologize for failing to clarify this earlier, as it would have helped the IAC in arguing our case. Let me assure you that QUMSA does not judge or classify Muslims and non-Muslims. As asserted in the *Journal's* article, whoever claims to be Muslim is a Muslim for our purposes. We just hope that this detail was the only cause of concern to the Assembly, and nothing else.

Mamoun Malkawi  
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QUMSA Publicity Officer