**Notes from Faith Track: Muslim Women in Transitional Feminism: Dismantling Stereotypes and Building New Realities (**2:30-3:25 p.m.)

Showcase Oregon 2016 – March 7th, 2016

**Chair:** Andrew Riley, Ph.D., Visiting Professor, Religious Studies

**Presenters:** Irum Shiekh: Visiting Professor, Etnic Studies, Hadeel Abu Hmeid: M.A. Student. Nonprofit Management Program, Selam Wako: M.A. Student. Prevention Science Program. College of Education. Hanan Elsherif, PhD, Arabic Coordinator.

**Introduction:** Professor Shiekh started by thanking Vice President for Equity and Inclusion, Yvette Alex-Assensoh and The Division of Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

Professor Shiekh talked about stereotypes versus realities. Western’s society depiction of Muslim women is problematic. Shiekh said Muslim women are leaders.

Professor Elsherif explained that Muslim female have leadership positions and it started many years ago. Moreover, she said Islam empowers women. She quoted the Quran An-Nisa4:124-And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer-those will enter Paradise and will not be wronged, (even as much as) the speck on a date seed.

Professor Elsherif shared Islam believes:

* 1. When she is born she opens the gates to Paradise.
  2. When she’s a mother Paradise lie under her feet.
  3. When she’s married she has completed ½ her religion.

Professor Elsherif shared how Muslim women are entrepreneurs. Khadijah bint Khuwaylid she is known in Arabia as a powerful and business oriented. AL-Badi al-Astrulabi, inventor of an Astrolabe was also a female. The astrolabe was used like a GPS. The astrolabe was inherently valuable in Islam because of its ability to determine the astronomically defined prayer times and as aid in finding the direction to Mecca. Another strong female was Djmila Bouhired. She was known as the Algerian Freedom Fighter.

Hmeid talked that we are all guilty of stereotyping people. Hmeid mentioned that she went shopping with her friends in the US. The sales clerk and Hmeid started to have a casual conversation. The sales clerk told Hmeid that she couldn’t believe she was Muslim because she didn’t look like it (Hmeid does not wear a hijab). Hmeid did not respond to the sales clerk, but she struggled with her response. She also talked about her experience at the airport. Hmeid gets double security when they learn that she is Palestinian.

Wako talked about the reason she is getting an education. Her reason is Ayo, her grandmother. Even if she is not her biological grandmother, she helped Wako. Wako’s grandmother adopted children so she can help them get an education. Wako’s grandmother empowered other women. Wako said her grandmother helps because of her faith.

**Conclusion:** Questions & Answers