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STUDENT VOICES

Finding a Place on Campus

By Samir Aslane

I have found that when it comes to the question of finding a comfortable space to call your own, people have plenty to say about how they found theirs. “Go join a bunch of clubs that interest you,” “Talk to everyone you can,” “Just be yourself,” they say.

However, my experiences are not like theirs, just as your experiences are not like mine. We all have our own story. My story is not one about finding an existing space to fit in; it is about carving out a new space that I can call my own.

I have often struggled with finding a space where I feel comfortable. My life is constantly lived somewhere in the middle, never fully immersing or being accepted into a single circle or

community: being half-Moroccan and half-Irish; being a person of color at a predominately white institution; and being a Muslim at a Catholic, Jesuit institution.

It is not that I have felt uncomfortable or unwelcome in my life or in my communities, but spaces for biracial students are often paradoxical: welcoming, but hard to fully assimilate and feel totally connected. Nonetheless, I entered Boston College fully committed to be my most authentic self and to shed the mask that I often wore in high school.

I applied for the “Multicultural Living Experience,” a unique opportunity to live on a floor that emphasizes conversation on the intersections of race,

religion, and culture. I have been immersed in those contrasting Moroccan and Irish cultures my whole life and saw this as an opportunity to continue to learn about myself and from others. As a community, we grew closer than just floor mates; we became brothers in experience and expectations. This brotherhood was pivotal in helping me find my footing my first year at BC.

In addition, I became involved in the “FACES Council,” an antiracist organization committed to promoting dialogue on issues of race and systems of power and privilege. Through the group, I committed myself to helping others find their voices in this ongoing discussion of racial justice just as I found my own voice as a biracial man.

Finally, last spring, I accompanied 20 other students to Kingston, Jamaica, as part of the Jamaica Magis Service Immersion Trip. In Kingston, we worked at the Holy Family Primary School with the students and others in the community. Through our commitment to justice and providing a voice for the voiceless in Kingston and beyond, I connected with a true community.

Overall, finding a comfort zone here at Boston College is not a linear or finite process: I am still searching for comfortable spaces. But I have found that it is much more liberating and meaningful to *carve* out those spaces for yourself.

Samir Aslane is a member of Boston College's class of 2019.

