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President Fuchs to offer opening remarks at panel discussion on cultural climate

The tragic incident at Orlando's Pulse nightclub in June has intensified the fear of terror hitting close to home, increasing xenophobic sentiments toward the Muslim community.

On Sept. 13 at 6 p.m. in the Pugh Hall Ocora, the University of Florida's Center for Global Islamic Studies, the Bob Graham Center for Public Service and the Office of LGBT Affairs, will host a panel discussion, titled After Orlando: Managing Fears and Welcoming Diversity. The panel will bring together individuals of diverse backgrounds who have been touched by the tragic events in Orlando and who continue to experience discrimination based on faith, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and/or race. Opening remarks will be made by University of Florida President W. Kent Fuchs.

Students, faculty, and members of the community are encouraged to raise questions, share comments and engage in the discussion about these pressing issues.

Panelists include: Rasha Mubarak, Orlando regional coordinator, Council for American Islamic Relations Florida (CAIR Florida); Terry Fleming, co-president of the Pride Community Center of North Central Florida; and Zoharah Simmons, a University of Florida professor of religion whose research interests include Islamic studies.

Closing remarks will be offered by Paula Roetscher, the executive director of Welcoming Gainesville, a new non-profit that aims to make Gainesville more welcoming to all people.

The event is free and open to the public and will be streamed live on the Bob Graham Center website at bobgrahamcenter.ufl.edu.

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