



# MIDDLE EASTERN

CULTURAL RESOURCE CENTER  
OPEN HOUSE 2020



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# AGENDA

- ❖ Land acknowledgement and BIPOC
- ❖ MERC Staff Introductions
- ❖ What is community?
- ❖ MERC Mission Statement
- ❖ Academic Support and Cultural Affirmation
- ❖ EOP Resources
- ❖ Affiliated Organizations
- ❖ “MERC” Name Change Form
- ❖ Student Panel and Raffle Winner Reveal



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# OPENING ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND STATEMENTS

- ❖ Land acknowledgement
- ❖ Statement on Anti-blackness and indigenous erasure



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# INTRODUCTIONS



- ❖ **NAME:** Ashkon Molaei
- ❖ **PRONOUNS:** He/Him/His
- ❖ **POSITION:** MERC Coordinator
- ❖ **BACKGROUND:** Iranian
- ❖ **HOMETOWN:** Los Angeles
- ❖ **HOBBIES:** Dancing to Persian and Arabic music, watching Bollywood films and rom coms with my family and going to drag shows
- ❖ **FUN FACT:** I've been to Iran multiple times and one of my favorite sites has been the beautiful desert city of Yazd (complete with their own A/C (or *badgir*))



# INTRODUCTIONS



- ❖ **NAME:** Kiyon Atrian
- ❖ **PRONOUNS:** He/Him/His
- ❖ **POSITION:** MERC Peer Mentor
- ❖ **BACKGROUND:** Iranian/Indian
- ❖ **HOMETOWN:** Reseda, CA
- ❖ **HOBBIES:** Playing with my cats, listening to music, writing
- ❖ **FUN FACT:** I have a female cat named Mac Miller and a male cat named Minerva!



- ❖ **NAME:** Ava Kargosha
- ❖ **PRONOUNS:** She/Her/Hers
- ❖ **POSITION:** MERC Peer Mentor
- ❖ **BACKGROUND:** Iranian
- ❖ **HOMETOWN:** Mission Viejo, CA
- ❖ **HOBBIES:** Baking, reading, basketball
- ❖ **FUN FACT:** My first jobs were at mall Santa and Easter Bunny sets :)

# WHAT IS COMMUNITY TO YOU?



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# MISSION STATEMENT

- ❖ The Middle Eastern Resource Center (MERC) promotes the cultural awareness and academic success of students of Middle Eastern, North African and South Asian (MENASA) heritage. It fosters dialogue, cross-cultural learning, and interaction among the diverse ethnic groups within our MENASA student communities and the campus-at-large. Through its programs, the MERC works to assist students to embrace their cultural identity, integrate into student life, promote an appreciation and celebration of diversity, and reinforce an affirmation of our institutional and educational commitment to leadership, achievement, collaboration, excellence, and community.



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# ACADEMIC SUPPORT

Academic and personal support that is targeted to engage identifying student communities

- ❖ Network with different student orgs, depts and faculty affiliates
- ❖ Facilitating access to these resources to our underrepresented student communities
- ❖ Available by appointment for mentorship and support

Providing support for sociopolitical awareness and identity development at both individual and communal level

- ❖ Offer space for events, meetings, gatherings, lounge & study
- ❖ Provide a physical sanctuary for all students on the first floor of the SRB (under non-COVID circumstances :/)



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# CULTURAL AFFIRMATION

- ❖ Educate and unify the UCSB & Middle Eastern community through the mediums of art, language, people, food, and traditions.
- ❖ Show the diversity that encompasses the Middle Eastern cultural community
- ❖ Develop an understanding & appreciation of Middle Eastern cultural heritage & history.
  
- ❖ We serve students of all backgrounds, with a particular focus in students of Middle Eastern, North African and South Asian heritage (MENASA)
  
- ❖ Help facilitate culturally affirming programming (Diwali, Eid, Nowruz, etc.)



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# EOP RESOURCES

- ❖ EOP Counseling & Peer Mentoring Approach
    - Academics
    - Retention & Beyond
    - Financial Literacy – AS/EOP Grants
    - Psychological Emotional Health & Personal Support
    - Overall wellness
  - ❖ Cultural Resource Centers
  - ❖ Programming
- <http://eop.sa.ucsb.edu/about-us/staff>



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# AFFILIATED ORGS

- ❖ Arab Student Group (@ucsbasg)
- ❖ Armenian Student Association (@ucsb.asa)
- ❖ Indian Association of Santa Barbara (@iasbucsb)
- ❖ Indus (@ucsb\_indus)
- ❖ Iranian Graduate Student Association (@igsa.ucsb)
- ❖ Iranian Jewish Student Association (@ucsb.ijsa)
- ❖ Lebanese Social Club (@ucsb\_lsc)
- ❖ Muslim Student Association (@ucsbmsa)
- ❖ Persian Student Group (@ucsbpsg)
- ❖ Salaam (InterVarsity Christian Fellowship) (@salaam.iv)
- ❖ Santa Barbara Hillel (@sbhillel)
- ❖ Students for Justice in Palestine (@ucsbstp)
- ❖ Students Supporting Israel (@ucsb\_ssi)



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# CAMPUS AFFILIATES



**College of Engineering**  
Shariq Hashmi



**Islamic Studies at CMES**  
Adam Sabra



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# CAMPUS AFFILIATES



**Department of Religious  
Studies**  
Juan Campo



**Department of Religious  
Studies**  
Magda Campo



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# CAMPUS AFFILIATES



**UCSB Alumni Affairs**  
Dr. Karen Ravago-Ballaret  
(she/her/hers)



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# CAMPUS AFFILIATES



**Multicultural Center Student  
Liaison**  
Ronaldo Noche



**Center for Middle Eastern  
Studies**  
Walid Afifi



**CAPS Peer Mentor**  
Olivia Belknap



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(805) 893-4411

Visit our website: [caps.sa.ucsb.edu](https://caps.sa.ucsb.edu)

Visit MHP website: [UCSBmhp.com](https://UCSBmhp.com)

# Who can come see us?

- All registered undergraduate & graduate students, regardless of the insurance you have.
- No extra fees!



# What kinds of services do we offer?

- 24-hour/day phone service (805) 893-4411
- Group Counseling
- Short term therapy and referrals
- Help with a variety of student concerns



**caps**

UCSB | Counseling &  
Psychological Services

# Mental Health Peers



- 10 undergraduate peers
- School Anxiety Program
- Workshops
- Outreach to student groups



Follow us on our NEW Instagram!  
@UCSBMentalHealthPeers





**Department of Religious Studies**  
Janet Afary



**Department of Religious Studies**  
Aazam Feiz



**Department of Religious Studies**  
Dwight Reynolds



**Middle East Ensemble**  
Scott Marcus

# PAST AND RECURRING EVENTS

- ❖ MENASA Dance Night
- ❖ Bazaar as a part of Middle Eastern Culture/Awareness Week
- ❖ CAPS - Spill the T and CommuniTEA
- ❖ RCSGD - IdentiTEAS for MENASA students
- ❖ *And much more...*



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# “MERC” NAME CHANGE FORM



❖ <http://tinyurl.com/MERCname>



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# WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

- ❖ **Noun** “A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.”
- ❖ **Your answers:**
  - “Community means ‘I’ll always have your back’”
  - “An unwavering support system that follows you wherever you go”
  - “Supporting and encouraging the best from each other”
  - “People that I’m comfortable and happy to be around”
- ❖ **What is community to YOU?**



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# STUDENT PANEL AND RAFFLE WINNER! 🏆



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# CONTACT INFO & FUTURE EVENTS

## CONTACT INFO

Ashkon Molaei

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Ava Kargosha

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Kiyan Atrian

[kiyan.atrian@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:kiyan.atrian@sa.ucsb.edu)

## MEETING HOURS

Tues. 3-5

Wed. 2-5

<https://MeetWithCoordinatorAshkon>

Thurs. 1-3

Fri. 2-4

<https://bit.ly/MeetWithAva>

Thurs. 10:30-12:30

Fri. 11-1

<https://bit.ly/MeetWithKiyan>

## FUTURE EVENTS

Diwali

IdentiTEAS w/ RCSGD

Student Mixers

Jum'ah Jam

...

**Insta: @ucsbmerc**



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