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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MUSLIM-JEWISH INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Internationally renowned scholars and religious leaders to speak at UF

GAINESVILLE, Fla. -- The University of Florida will host internationally renowned religious leaders and scholars to engage in interfaith dialogue and share their experiences working with Muslims and Jews throughout North America and globally as well. The event entitled "Interfaith Dialogue: Jews and Muslims Envisioning the Future Together" will be held on Monday, April 7, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Reitz Union Auditorium.

In a period in which headlines can sometimes make it seem like conflict marks the relationships between Muslims and Jews, the Division of Student Affairs at University of Florida decided to instead shed light on areas of cooperation between these two faith traditions and their adherents. The event is being sponsored as part of the Global Initiatives Series of the Division of Student Affairs and is also the final event of the Dean of Students Office's 3rd Annual Religious and Spiritual Diversity Week, which is co-sponsored by the Campus Ministry Cooperative. The event will feature four speakers who work on interfaith issues in addition to serving their own faith adherents. The speakers are Imam Senad Agic, Mr. Mohamed Elsanousi, Rabbi Daniel Sherbill, and Rabbi Burton Visotzky.

Two of the speakers, Imam Senad Agic and Rabbi Daniel Sherbill, hail from Chicago and have worked together since after 9/11 through the Chicago Coalition for InterReligious Learning (CCIRL) which promotes greater respect through greater understanding among students, teachers and principals of Catholic, Jewish and Muslim schools. Imam Senad Agic, who also holds a doctorate in Islamic Studies, serves as the religious leader of the Islamic Cultural Center of Greater Chicago and as the chief representative of The Islamic Association of Bosniaks in North America. He thus brings an international perspective to the issues at hand. Agic and Sherbill will be joined on the panel by Muhammed Elsanousi and Rabbi Burton Visotzky, each of whom have also been involved in Muslim/Jewish dialogue.

Mohamed Elsanousi is the Director of Communications and Community Outreach for the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) which is based in Washington, D.C.. He also serves on the board of directors for several interfaith organizations, including the board of governors of the Religious Communicators

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Council (RCC), the Interfaith Broadcasting Commission, and the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). Among other things, he will be speaking about a new initiative between ISNA and the Union of Reform Judaism. Mr. Alsanousi also has a global perspective as he has served as a public relations officer for the Islamic Outreach organization in Doha, Qatar (1997-1999), and was elected president of the General Sudanese Student Union in Pakistan. He also coordinated the International Summer Retreat in Khartoum Sudan, for the Muslim Student Association of the United States and Canada. Finally, Rabbi Burton Visotzky who has participated

Rabbi Burton L. Visotzky serves as the Nathan and Janet Appleman Professor of Midrash and Interreligious Studies at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City. Among his international interfaith and scholarly experiences, Rabbi Visotzky taught at the Russian State University of the Humanities in Moscow and recently served as the Master Visiting Professor of Jewish Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. He has been involved in projects including developing a television series on the Book of Genesis with Bill Moyers, and served as a consultant on the Dreamworks film Prince of Egypt. He is the author of nine books. He has been active in Jewish-Christian-Muslim dialogue internationally, in capitals such as Washington DC, Warsaw, Rome, Cairo, and Doha, Qatar.

The panel will be held from 6:30-8:30 p.m. in the Reitz Union Auditorium. An extensive question and answer period will follow the formal presentation.

Refreshments will be served following the event. The event is sponsored by the Division of Student Affairs and co-sponsored by the Campus Ministry Cooperative, Hillel, Islam on Campus and the Jewish Student Union.

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