



**Wayne State University Student Senate**

March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024

**Resolution 2324-21**

**SPONSORS:** **Gabriel Shamam** (*Director of Public Affairs, Member-At-Large*)

**CO-SPONSORS:** **Robert Alexander-Jordan** (*College of Education*), **Rabika Ali** (*Secretary, Member at Large*), **Alex Gilstorf** (*Member at Large*), **Nelson Glory-Ejoyokah** (*Irvin D. Reid Honors College*), **Rachel John** (*Parliamentarian, Member at Large*), **Hayden Johnson** (*President, Member at Large*), **Charlie Rougny** (*Member at large*)

*A resolution to support the addition of Neo-Aramaic (Sureth/Turoyo) language offerings at Wayne State University within the college of Liberal Arts and Science.*

**WHEREAS**, the Chaldean-Assyrian population, which includes those of the Assyrian Church of the East, Chaldean Catholic Church, and Syriac Orthodox/Catholic Churches has had a long history in the Metro Detroit community since first arriving in the 1910s, as shown by Wayne State’s data metrics from 2004.<sup>1</sup>

**WHEREAS**, Wayne State University has committed in the past to creating meaningful engagement with society, and its mission is to “positively impact local and global community”<sup>2</sup> and,

**WHEREAS**, President Espy is committed to creating a more equitable society, and our academic community at Wayne State aspires to be a national model in this shared work. Wayne State’s Social Justice Action Committee<sup>3</sup> was convened in June 2020 and

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[https://web.archive.org/web/20131109050605/http://www.cus.wayne.edu/content/publications/Arab\\_Factsheet1.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20131109050605/http://www.cus.wayne.edu/content/publications/Arab_Factsheet1.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://wayne.edu/about/mission>

<sup>3</sup> <https://diversity.wayne.edu/social-justice-action-committee>

presented its findings, recommendations, and action steps in March 2021, which are being progressively implemented across campus with the support of the DEI Council.<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS**, The Wayne State University Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion mission “recognizes, acknowledges, and affirms the many ways in which people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences contribute to a rich, vibrant campus community, and creates spaces - physical and virtual - where people see and feel included in and belonging to the Wayne State University community,”<sup>5</sup>

**WHEREAS**, The Neo-Aramaic language (Sureth), which contains influence from Akkadian, Classical Aramaic, and has served as the backbone for modern Semitic languages, is currently classified as “Definitely Endangered” by UNESCO. A language is classified as “Definitely Endangered” when children of native speakers no longer learn the language as their first, which has been a common pattern amongst the Chaldean-Assyrian community here in Metro Detroit.

**WHEREAS**, a petition released among Wayne State students as of the Winter 2024 semester has accrued 300+ signatures as of today, 3/21/2024, with signatories who are all in support of the initiative,<sup>6</sup>

**RESOLVED**, that we ask the Departments of Linguistics, Classical and Modern Languages, and departments with other applicable classes to invest in educational resources establishing the teaching of Neo-Aramaic in both the Sureth/Turoyo dialects and their distinct cultures and changing courses where the topic may be incorporated.

**RESOLVED**, that Wayne State University acknowledges the tremendous impact that the Chaldean-Assyrian population of Metro Detroit has had and will continue to have on their heterogeneous student body.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, the Wayne State University Student Senate will circulate this final resolution to all relevant outlets, including the University President, Provost & Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, Board of Governors, the University Leadership Council, and the South End.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://president.wayne.edu/committees>

<sup>5</sup> <https://diversity.wayne.edu/about/mission>

<sup>6</sup> [SIAUL Wayne Petition \(Responses\)](#)

**MOVED to APPROVE THE BYLAW CHANGES AS PRESENTED by Senator GLORY-EJOYOKAH AND SECONDED by Senator ALI.**

**FINAL ACTION TAKEN**   [X]     19-0-0     21 March 2024  

**PASSED    FAILED    VOTE    DATE**

**VOTED APPROVED BY:**



**PRESIDENT: Hayden Johnson**



**SECRETARY: Rabika Ali**



