



Resolution to Accommodate Sikh-identified Students to Wear their “Kirpan”

Resolution 22-23-01

Whereas: stated in the values of the University of San Francisco, “inclusive excellence means finding common ground among diverse communities, and then moving to higher ground. At USF, we celebrate an environment where every individual steps into new understanding respectfully and with delight, and where all are better off by being part of our diverse community.”¹

Whereas: For an Amritdhari Sikh, a Sikh initiated into the Khalsa², “the five articles of faith signify an individual’s commitment to the Sikh faith and to the highest ideals of love and service to humanity. They are an external uniform that unifies and binds Sikhs to the beliefs of the religion, and are a daily reminder that Sikhs must live an honest, moral, kind, brave, and loving life.”³

Whereas: “A Kirpan is a mandatory Sikh article of faith. It is carried by Amritdhari (initiated) Sikhs at all times. The word “Kirpan” comes from two Punjabi words: ‘Kirpa’ means an act of kindness, a favor; and ‘Aan’ means honor and self- respect.”⁴

Whereas: The Kirpan is not used as a weapon, but holds great significance as it is a ceremonial item; “There is no prescribed length or sharpness for a Kirpan in Sikhi; they are determined by the individual religious convictions of the wearer. Kirpans are sheathed and worn with a gatra (a strap) underneath clothing.”⁵

Whereas: “The Kirpan obligates a Sikh to the ideals of generosity, compassion and service to humanity. It acts as a reminder to its bearer of a Sikh’s solemn duty to protect the weak and promote justice for all.”⁶

Whereas: there is no accommodation for Amritdhari Sikhs to wear their required articles at the University of San Francisco.

¹ <https://www.usfca.edu/about-usf/who-we-are/our-values/commitment-to-diversity>

² https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-94-024-0846-1_445

³ <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/kirpan-factsheet-aug2018.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/kirpan-factsheet-aug2018.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/kirpan-factsheet-aug2018.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.sikhcoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/kirpan-factsheet-aug2018.pdf>



Whereas: Stated by the Vice President of the Sikh Student Association, Mani Kaur:

“This kirpan resolution is important to me, as it ensures the safety of Amritdhari Sikhs from microaggressions or prejudices from the public. As someone who wears a turban, I often receive many stares and visible rudeness on campus, and oftentimes it leads me to wonder whether something further might occur to harm my own safety. Although USF is a diverse campus, it certainly has its fair share of microaggressions for students of openly visible faith or students of color in general. These microaggressions often lead to hasty decisions of judgment by those who are simply uneducated of their biases, and that hasty judgment often has the potential to harm. For example, if someone is prone to prejudiced views of a Sikh man or woman with a turban as well as a kirpan (as those two are often worn together), they might call the cops which has the potential to physically and mentally harm the Sikh student. That is the last thing we need on this campus, as all Sikh students, whether Amritdhari or not, deserve to feel safe while openly practicing their faith. This resolution allows for Sikh students to be protected against racial biases and microaggressions that have the potential to occur on this campus, and I encourage this university to take this step forward in supporting our Sikh community.”

Be it resolved by the Associated Students of the University of San Francisco Senate, representing all the undergraduate students of the University, that the following be enacted:

Resolved: Students who identify as “Sikh” have the option to wear the Kirpan without penalty, as students wear it with the pure intention of responsibility and Sikh representation,

Resolved: There will be no required registration or documentation to wear the Kirpan at the University;

Resolved: The Department of Public Safety and the University Ministry will communicate collaboratively to the University of San Francisco attending students via email once every academic year. The significance and importance of the Kirpan will be explained, and resource number will be provided (BERT phone number and extension) to the members of the Sikh community wearing the Kirpan, as well as the rest of the USFCA community.



Resolved: if the Sikh wearing the Kirpan experiences any form of discrimination and bias, they have the support of reporting the incident to *Bias Education and Resource Team (BERT)* or contacting public safety, if needed.

- Phone: (415) 422-2911
- Extension: 2911 from any on-campus phone

Submitted By:

Jasleen Dhillon, *ASUSF Vice President of Marketing and Communications & former Sikh Student Representative & Co- President of Sikh Student Association*

Avneet Johal, *ASUSF Senior Class Representative and former Student of Color Representative & Co- President of Sikh Student Association*

Supported By:

Fr. Paul Fitzgerald, President

Julie Orio, Vice President of Student Life

Opinder Bawa, Vice President & Chief Information Officer

Dan Lawson, Senior Director of the Department of Public Safety

Shannon Gary, Associate Vice President/Dean of Students

Angélica Quiñónez, University Ministry Director

USFCA Sikh Student Association

Presented to the Senate on:

October 5, 2022

Passed by the Senate on:

October 12, 2022

Signed by:

Ethan Lee-Bellows
ASUSF President