

Interfaith Cooperation for Our Times

**EDUCATING CITIZENS FOR A
DIVERSE DEMOCRACY**

EDITED BY

Janett I. Cordovés AND Dawn Michele Whitehead

FOREWORD BY Lynn Pasquerella

WELCOME BY Eboo Patel

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*Association
of American
Colleges and
Universities*

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FOREWORD

Speaking Across Differences as Essential to a Liberal Education

BY LYNN PASQUERELLA

Lynn Pasquerella is the president of the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

As someone whose life has been ruled by the academic calendar and whose career has centered on championing the enduring value of liberal education, I am often asked to comment on transformative moments in my own undergraduate studies. One of the most profound experiences I had was the result of taking a comparative religion course through the Five College Consortium, exploring the philosophies of Frederick Douglass, St. Augustine, and the *Bhagavad Gita*. It was team-taught by professors from Mount Holyoke, Hampshire College, and Smith College, with rotating meetings on each of the three campuses. I remember how excited I was to be taking a class with my undergraduate advisor—a religion professor from Mount Holyoke—and eagerly awaited his arrival. That feeling of joyful anticipation soon turned to dread, however, as he announced that no one in the class would be allowed to take notes throughout the semester. He wanted to give us a glimpse of what it was like for enslaved African Americans, who were prevented from learning to read or write, to be forced to recollect and recount their experiences through oral traditions.

That simple but brilliant teaching technique was one example of many that provided me with an education that shaped my life. I came to understand the power of moral imagination—imagining what it is like to be in the shoes of another different from oneself. By comparing the religious principles underlying Douglass’s philosophy with those of Augustine and non-Western metaphysical tenets in the *Bhagavad Gita*, I discovered that the beliefs we adopt around the most fundamental questions of human existence depend, in part, on whose stories are being told and who is empowered to speak.

These lessons were foundational to the type of education that philosopher Martha C. Nussbaum refers to as an “education for human development” (2009, 8), leading to a “world that is worth living in, people who are able to see other human beings as equals, and nations that are able to overcome fear and suspicion in favor of sympathetic and reasoned debate” (2009, 13). Ultimately, an education for human development is inextricably linked to global justice and global citizenship, requiring not only the academic skills but also the practical competence and ethical motivation to address global problems.

Institutions of higher education of all types have both the opportunity and the responsibility to provide curricular and cocurricular learning experiences that offer practice in speaking across religious, political, and social differences, embracing diversity as an essential component of educational excellence. At a time when political polarization in the United States is greater than it has been since the Civil War (Paisley 2016) and when nearly three in ten Americans report that the COVID-19 pandemic has made their faith stronger (Pew Research Center 2021), there is a renewed sense of urgency around the work catalyzed by Interfaith Youth Core in partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities. We are grateful for our ongoing collaboration and look forward to supporting you in achieving our shared objectives.

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Acknowledgments

The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) are grateful for the generous support of The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Lilly Endowment Inc. to make interfaith cooperation an institutional priority throughout the United States and provide opportunities to disseminate research, learnings, and promising practices to the field.

This publication would not be a reality without the dedication of its authors and campus teams. For this reason, we are especially grateful for our campus partners, faculty mentors, and teaching faculty and for the leadership of project team leaders and campus teams. Thank you to Emily Schuster for providing editorial support, Michele Stinson for managing production, and Amy Cevario for designing this publication.

Lastly, we would like to extend a special thank you to the AAC&U and IFYC staff who design, create, and direct the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence (offered in tandem with AAC&U's Institute on Integrative Learning and Signature Work) and who lead the ongoing support of campus teams and initiatives. Thank you, Jack Spector-Bishop, Jasmine Epps, Noa Nakao, Katherine O'Brien, and Rachel Kline, for working collaboratively, strategically, and beautifully alongside the editors of this book to advance this work. This could not have been done without this amazing team.

The findings and conclusions contained within these pages are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations and Lilly Endowment Inc.



Welcome

BY EBOO PATEL

Eboo Patel is the founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core.

In his wonderful book *College: What It Was, Is, and Should Be*, Andrew Delbanco, the Alexander Hamilton Professor of American Studies at Columbia University, remarks that any list of America’s distinctive contributions to human civilization—such as jazz, baseball, and the Constitution—would be incomplete if it did not include our system of colleges and universities (2012).

We Americans ask a lot of our colleges. They define what makes an educated person and do their best to raise a generation of students up to that standard. They advance a knowledge base for the rest of our society, help set the civic priorities of the nation, and serve as mini civil societies.

They are models for a diverse democracy. Our higher education institutions, precisely because they highlight how people can welcome diversity, are in a position to teach, and help young people practice, the art of strengthening the particularity of identity while encouraging building bridges across groups. Consider this: roughly half of the private colleges in the United States were started by religious communities, and remarkably few restrict admission to their own group. This is an astonishing feature of American society. Institutions created to form people within one tradition now commonly serve as platforms that bring together and advance people from a range of traditions. We have found an avenue for the expression of religious identity in a way that doesn’t create balkanization but instead facilitates bridging social capital.

The Catholic philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre says that “a central purpose of higher education [is] to initiate students into conflict.” A diverse democracy will inevitably have countless legitimate conflicts. For this reason, civic spaces that specialize in teaching people how to engage in such conflicts through language and politics rather than violence are essential, and people who learn these skills are well positioned to become a society’s leaders. MacIntyre goes so far as to say that “only from the university can the wider society learn how to conduct its own debates, practical or theoretical, in a rationally defensible way” (1990).

It is precisely because the underlying structure of colleges and universities is so strong and stable that these institutions can bring together such a wide array of identities and such radically divergent views. It is no wonder that John Courtney Murray, the great Jesuit philosopher, viewed universities as a symbol of the kind of political community required to hold together the diverse groups and divergent views that make up a healthy pluralism.

What follows in this book are reflections by the people leading this most essential work at this most sensitive time. Interfaith Youth Core and I are proud to be part of it.

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Introduction

BY JANETT I. CORDOVÉS AND DAWN MICHELE WHITEHEAD

Janett I. Cordovés is the director of higher education partnerships at Interfaith Youth Core, and Dawn Michele Whitehead is the vice president of the Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers at the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

While the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) had collaborated over the years, they formed a partnership in 2018 to advance interfaith cooperation in the broader context of quality liberal education and equity in higher education. This partnership, entitled the Interfaith Leadership in Higher Education initiative, prioritizes the importance of religious identity, worldview diversity, interfaith cooperation, and interfaith leadership in equipping the next generation of leaders and improving campus climate and culture to be more inclusive of religious diversity. It also builds faculty and staff capacity to transform experiences with diversity into engaged and productive pluralism that minimizes polarization and increases engagement across lines of religious, spiritual, and secular differences. It is critically important for educators and leaders to understand the nuances and complexities of the individuals and groups they serve, including how they make meaning of the world around them and the connections between their language and faith, culture and rituals, and values and decisions.

AAC&U and IFYC's joint vision to prepare college and university leaders to transform campuses into environments that prioritize interfaith cooperation was guided by the following considerations:

- Utilize a team-based professional development model focused on religious identity and diversity that works across multiple dimensions.
- Establish a series of team-based institutes of in-depth professional development with time for curricular development related to interfaith engagement in a diverse democracy and the global commons.
- Create and develop a generative learning community with members from colleges and universities across the nation focused on advancing interfaith cooperation and global perspectives.
- Promote a national network with resources to guide more full integration of interfaith understanding and engagement into locally and globally focused curricular and cocurricular experiences.
- Establish interfaith cooperation as a heightened priority across AAC&U's network of colleges and universities as campuses deepen their commitment in a sustainable way across their curricula and cocurricula.
- Develop a cadre of faculty and administrators with in-depth knowledge on curricular and cocurricular integration of interfaith and global perspectives for student development, awareness, and engagement, and dissemination of knowledge gained.

Interfaith Cooperation for Our Times: Educating Citizens for a Diverse Democracy hopes to inspire educators and leaders by providing models that elevate the importance of, power of, and opportunities that lie in engaging religious diversity, advancing civic pluralism, increasing interfaith competency and literacy, and establishing intentional institutional teams that prioritize and pursue interfaith cooperation in sustainable ways. The colleges and universities highlighted in this publication are among the more than forty institutions that participated in the annual summer Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence (IIE), held as part of the Interfaith Leadership in Higher Education initiative and offered in conjunction with AAC&U's

Institute on Integrative Learning and Signature Work. These institutions subsequently implemented action plans on their campuses. All participating institutions have considered the value of engaging religious, spiritual, and philosophically diverse perspectives or identities and have experienced transformations inside and outside the classroom, through strategic initiatives, and in the campus culture. (See the appendix on page 59 for a list of campuses that participated in the IIE.)

Over the course of the IIE, institutional teams work closely with faculty mentors who provide sessions and team-specific feedback and support on their action plans. Faculty with various areas of expertise are chosen each year, depending on campuses' needs, to mentor three to four campuses. These faculty are committed to the field of interfaith cooperation and serve in many capacities, including as religious scholars, provosts, national student affairs leaders, and vice presidents of diversity, equity, and inclusion. (See the appendix on page 59 for a list of IIE faculty mentors.) To support the institutions in their interfaith work following the IIE, we established a network of professionals and campus teams to facilitate informal mentorship, ongoing learning, and resource sharing. With grant support, the institutions were able to advance curricular and cocurricular initiatives to meet their unique campus contexts and needs. The IIE curriculum and supplemental professional development provided sustained support throughout the grant cycle anchored in these four key areas:

1. **Religious diversity and interfaith studies in the curriculum:** pedagogies, content, and methods for teaching interfaith topics, engaging interfaith in the core curriculum, and building interfaith studies programs.
2. **Religious identity and campus diversity priorities:** opportunities, challenges, and strategies for integrating religious identity into campus diversity commitments, programs, and policies.
3. **Interfaith competency and literacy among faculty and staff:** equipping faculty and staff with the knowledge and skills needed to proactively engage and support religious diversity and encourage interfaith cooperation across campus.
4. **Cross-curricular and campus-wide strategic planning for interfaith cooperation:** creating an integrated cross-curricular and campus-wide strategy for prioritizing interfaith cooperation in sustainable ways.

In centering quality and equity in this partnership, AAC&U and IFYC are working with institutions to advance civic skills for

DEFINITIONS

Source: Interfaith Youth Core, Building Regular Interfaith Dialogue through Generous Engagement (BRIDGE).

INTERFAITH: This term is best understood by separating it into “inter” and “faith.” “Inter” refers to the relationships between people who orient around religion differently. “Faith” is defined as the relationship between an individual and what we commonly understand as a religious or philosophical tradition. Put together, “interfaith” is about how our interactions with those who are different affect the way we relate to our religious and ethical traditions, and how our relationships with our traditions influence our interactions with those who are different from us (Patel 2016, 39).

WORLDVIEW: A guiding life philosophy, which may be based on a particular religious tradition, spiritual orientation, nonreligious perspective, or some combination of these. The foundational outlook you have on life that helps you make sense of the world around you (Mayhew et al. 2016, 2).

See the glossary on pages 60–61 for more definitions.

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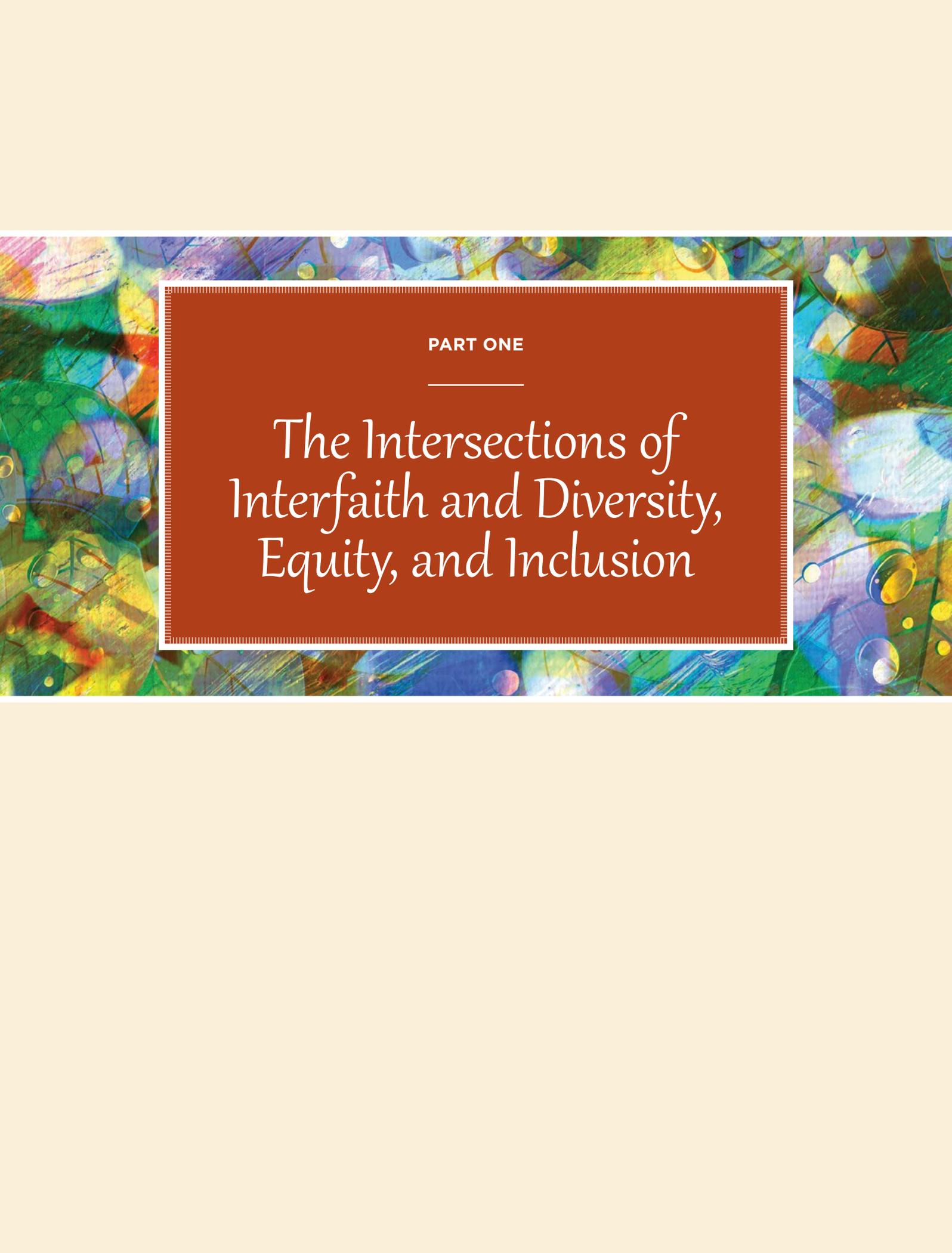
students by increasing understanding of religious differences to reduce prejudice, strengthen social cohesion to minimize opportunities for identity-based conflict, bridge social capital to address social issues, and create opportunities to foster the continuity of identity communities and to reduce isolation. We are also working with institutions to share narratives that highlight how campuses work across lines of religious difference and pursue interfaith cooperation throughout the United States. Our work at AAC&U and IFYC not only increases the religious and interfaith literacy of our campus partners but also prepares faculty, staff, administrators, and students to become knowledgeable, educated professionals and engaged citizens. Such citizens are equipped to interact with individuals who believe vastly different things (interfaith) and—because of and not in spite of this—to work together for the common good (cooperation) in this religiously diverse democracy.

This publication anchors our past three years of work in equity, curricula, and data. You will read about integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion and interfaith cooperation. You will learn about the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) and how this national survey provided guidance and affirmation for engaging religious diversity and found how important it is for students to have interfaith friendships and spaces for spiritual support and expression on campus. You will also read about ways to engage diverse religious and ideological perspectives in the classroom, effective pedagogy and promising practices, and the formal creation of the field of interfaith studies.

We welcome you to browse the publication, ask lots of questions, and join us in this work.

In gratitude,

Janett and Dawn

The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract painting with a mix of colors including blue, green, yellow, and purple. The painting features various textures and shapes, such as circles and lines, creating a complex and layered visual effect. In the center of the page, there is a dark brown rectangular box with a thin white border. Inside this box, the text is centered and reads "PART ONE" in a small, white, sans-serif font. Below this, there is a short horizontal white line. The main title, "The Intersections of Interfaith and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion", is written in a large, white, serif font, spanning across the width of the box.

PART ONE

*The Intersections of
Interfaith and Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion*



Integrating Interfaith Cooperation into Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives

BY DAWN MICHELE WHITEHEAD

Dawn Michele Whitehead is the vice president of the Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers at the Association of American Colleges and Universities.

While the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives of many around the world, it also both affirmed and revealed numerous societal inequities in local and global communities. As scientists and researchers worked across institutional and geographic boundaries to create COVID-19 testing tools, develop vaccines, and explore patient treatment options, global health professionals, educators, and governmental and community leaders drew on globally created knowledge and experiences to mitigate risk and continue offering education and other services to their local communities around the world. While this global interdependence was new to some, it helped push back on the narrative that a single country or community could solve a challenge as large as a global health pandemic.

At the same time, another powerful example of global interdependence emerged as people in more than sixty countries took to the streets to protest racial injustice and move toward a global racial reckoning. The initial outcry over the murder of George Floyd sparked a global movement for greater accountability and justice for all. This multiracial, multinational, multiethnic, and intergenerational movement has inspired many people, and it has affirmed the need for our students to be prepared to have conversations across differences, including religious differences.

This type of preparation is essential for students for their future work and citizenship, and the dual pandemics of global health and racial reckoning encouraged many colleges and universities to reimagine higher education to reflect these realities. From more inclusive practices and pedagogies to greater alignment of curricular and cocurricular experiences that provide students with opportunities to apply and practice critical skills, institutions are making changes. There is also a sense of urgency for some institutions to prepare students to have critical dialogues about potentially difficult topics in the midst of these dual pandemics and threats to democracy in local and international contexts. Institutional leaders and offices of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) have essential roles to play.

Over the course of the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Interfaith Youth Core's Interfaith Leadership in Higher Education project, launched in 2018, there has been an emphasis on greater synthesis of religious diversity into institutional DEI initiatives. As you will read in the chapters in this section, there is a clear case to be made for greater integration that benefits both whole institutions and the experiences of faculty, staff, and students by creating a climate of interfaith cooperation to engage differences productively.

In examining the features of a religiously pluralistic society, IFYC has identified three key dimensions:

- **Respect for Identities**—where people have the right to form their own religious or non-religious worldviews, express them freely, and expect some reasonable accommodations to live out their convictions. To respect someone else's worldview doesn't require you to agree with it or to accept it.
- **Mutually Inspiring Relationships**—where there are conversations, activities, civic association, and friendly contact between people who orient around religion differently.

Areas of both commonality and difference are recognized, but there is always some essential concern for the other's well being.

- **Commitment to the Common Good**—where different people share common values, even despite theological disagreements, [and] support the things people generally agree that we have a collective interest to uphold. Think safe communities, good schools, defeating poverty, access to healthcare, and addressing climate change (Interfaith Youth Core, n.d.).

These dimensions reflect many of the broad goals for institutional DEI work. Students need time and space to form their own worldviews, express themselves and respect others, develop their ability for contact and meaningful conversations across difference, and build an understanding of their collective interests for their shared communities. This is certainly beneficial for students themselves and for the broader campus community. As institutions seek to prepare students to be more civil and trusting of each other and to engage diverse perspectives, the integration of tenets of interfaith cooperation should contribute to students' educational framing and broaden existing conceptions of DEI.

As institutions reimagine higher education, they are also seeking to be more equity minded. This means examining patterns of inequity in student outcomes that have been guided by historical exclusionary practices. Faculty and staff must question assumptions, identify and recognize stereotypes, and reassess their practices to create change to encourage success for all students (Center for Urban Education, n.d.). As they become more equity minded, institutions should also look closely at participation—who participates, how they participate, and how they can work toward full participation (Center for Urban Education 2016). This includes participation

in campus interfaith initiatives.

If interfaith cooperation is embedded into broader institutional DEI initiatives, interfaith cooperation moves from a niche, specialized suite of programs and/or activities that may have an impact on fewer students, to an area that is quite often part of the institutional mission. This empowers those who work in this area in many ways, as their contributions can be seen well beyond the interfaith space, and there are greater possibilities for collaboration and coalition building. As institutions continue to work on racial justice efforts, interfaith leaders will be seen as key collaborators, and students engaged in this work will have greater opportunities to participate and learn about



different types of action. Finally, the relevance of interfaith cooperation in preparation for work and life will also be made clearer and will be part of key conversations as students learn to engage with difference in meaningful and diverse ways.

To demonstrate greater integration of interfaith cooperation within DEI initiatives, this section features institutional models that show diverse ways to embed these practices along with the value of intentional integration. In Chapter 1, in the spirit of equity mindedness, Frances M. Sweeney of Saint Mary's College of California notes a gap when religious diversity is not included within diversity, justice, and inclusion, and makes a case for "empathy, connection, and cooperation" when doing this integrative interfaith DEI work. In Chapter 2, David Keck of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University argues for the value of interfaith preparation for the future workforce for employees, customers, and/or clients. The importance of cooperation and an ability

to work with people from around the world includes people of different and no faith traditions. In Chapter 3, Shauna Morin and Janett I. Cordovés of Interfaith Youth Core make a strong case for supporting religious and worldview diversity for promoting student belonging, creating favorable conditions for interaction among students, and skill building. In Chapter 4, Deanna A. Thompson of St. Olaf College offers a perspective on interfaith cooperation's commitment to "liv[ing] in solidarity" with those of all backgrounds, which is also a key tenant of DEI initiatives. In Chapter 5, Kathleen F. Weaver and John T. Sebastian of Loyola Marymount University focus on the commitment of respect and human dignity, which is essential for belonging, inclusion, and an equity-minded institution. All of this work contributes to the argument that interfaith cooperation should be integrated into institutional DEI initiatives.

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CHAPTER 1

Sewing a Sturdy Diversity Quilt: Interfaith Excellence as a Critical Thread for Saint Mary's College of California

BY FRANCES M. SWEENEY

Frances M. Sweeney is the vice president for mission and a professor of Spanish at Saint Mary's College of California.

In April 2021, students enrolled in the Interfaith Leadership in Business and the Professions course at Saint Mary's College of California asked me in an interview what the connection was between our new initiatives promoting religious diversity and interfaith excellence and “all the other” campus diversity efforts. Great question, isn't it? The question itself brings to light that our institutional commitment to inclusive excellence, solidly built for the past fifteen years, has seldom included attention to religious diversity and interfaith understanding. Having a team from Saint Mary's attend and develop an action plan at the 2019 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence has allowed us to greatly address this gap. When we first presented the proposed action plan, our College Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) responded with a highly positive, strong reaction of “But of course we should be doing this!”

For Saint Mary's—as a liberal arts, Lasallian Catholic institution where education is premised on principles of respect, inclusion, relationships, and social justice—having intentional attention on interfaith cannot be merely an additional form of diversity but rather a *sine qua non* for the holistic and transformative education we espouse. We are called to recognize and affirm the full dignity of all members of our community, students and staff alike. Like stitching a strong quilt crafted from multiple fabrics, understanding our respective worldviews and naming and claiming our support for religious diversity are critical elements of our wholeness.

Our action plan is ambitious. It addresses changes at the institutional, curricular, and cocurricular/experiential levels. It exhorts us to rightly connect interfaith understanding to the regular dialogues that occur about our Catholic religious heritage and to include interfaith as a key component of all diversity initiatives.

Our first goal is for interfaith cooperation to be part of how we live, work, engage, and understand ourselves as a liberal arts and Lasallian Catholic University of the twenty-first century. At the institutional level, we have established a campus-wide group, Committee for Interfaith and Religious Cooperation, Learning, and Engagement (CIRCLE) as a formal subcommittee of the CCIE. With members from across campus, CIRCLE works in close collaboration with the Office of Mission, Mission and Ministry Center, Student Life Departments, and Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism. Thus far, CIRCLE has been engaged in raising awareness of the importance of having policies that enable faculty, staff, and students from diverse faith traditions to observe their religious holidays and practices; developing a calendar of religious holidays; helping to add religious diversity to other diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings on campus; partnering with the campus Bias Incident Response Team to understand religious-driven incidents of bias; and working with other offices across campus such as Undergraduate Admissions and College Communications to consider language about religious diversity in institutional promotions.

CIRCLE is also working at the curricular level to develop a learning module for diversity and interfaith to be added to the first-year experience and advising curriculum. CIRCLE's other plans include collaborating

with key programs such as the Collegiate Seminar Great Books Program, which oversees the shared four-course sequence all students take, and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, to review and potentially revise how interfaith and religious diversity are represented in the curriculum.

At the cocurricular/experiential level, the Mission and Ministry Center has adopted interfaith excellence as a key emphasis. It supports the Interfaith Sacred Space on campus and has established a student leader coalition, Interfaith Student Leaders for Education and Engagement, to connect with Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) nationally and work with campus student clubs dedicated to different faith traditions. The students attended IFYC's Interfaith Leadership Institute for training. They launched a monthly Interfaith Circle for Solidarity, held in virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020–21, with plans to expand to in-person and invite community partners from different faith organizations throughout each academic year. They hosted virtual panels related to interfaith, such as an interinstitutional panel with students from Saint Mary's and Dominican University in Illinois. In addition, they hosted a postelection panel in November 2020 and a panel entitled Decolonizing Religion in April 2021 to address how colonialism has shaped different world religions.

The overarching goal for these efforts is to promote greater empathy and engagement for all members of our community. What has been particularly gratifying is that the initiatives build on themselves. Not only has the thread held but it also continues to create new patches for the quilt. Having a visible presence for interfaith excellence on campus has encouraged others to approach us with ideas. One faculty member reached out with an idea for a workshop for faculty from three Bay Area schools representing Catholic (Saint Mary's), Buddhist (Dharma College), and Muslim (Zaytuna College) traditions, scheduled for summer 2020 but postponed due to COVID-19. A staff member suggested that CIRCLE sponsor an event in allyship with our Asian American community. The resulting online event, held in May 2021, was a screening of Sikh author and civil rights leader Valarie Kaur's TED Talk "3 Lessons of Revolutionary Love in a Time of Rage," followed by a discussion with Kaur about revolutionary love as a force for justice and social change.

Even as this quilt spreads on campus, it is also growing beyond Saint Mary's in beautiful fashion. The Lasallian network of universities in the United States is forming a group dedicated to collaboration on initiatives related to religious diversity, justice, and inclusion across the six schools. Never before have the six institutions been linked on a common initiative. Finally, a neighboring university, the University of San Francisco, invited Saint Mary's to participate in a cross-institutional educational cohort as part of IFYC's "We Are Each Other's" campaign (named for words from the poem "Paul Robeson" by Gwendolyn Brooks, the first Black Pulitzer Prize winner) to activate and support interfaith leaders as they respond to current national crises. Eighteen participants across the two schools met monthly via virtual platforms to discuss each module in the campaign's curriculum, which focuses on engaging in acts of interfaith cooperation, anti-racism, and service with communities. The participants are now hosting an interfaith prayer service for community members across the two schools.

Indeed, we are each other's. Perhaps that is the best answer for the initial question: what does the promotion of interfaith dialogue and engagement have to do with all the other diversity initiatives related to race, ethnicity, class, and gender identity? Understanding our own and each other's worldviews, including our religious and spiritual leanings and yearnings, is a critical tool for increased empathy, connection, and cooperation. We recognize that we are all created with vast intersecting identities and cultures. A diversity quilt that includes religious diversity is one that allows us to honor the individual patches and also to appreciate and benefit from the quilt as a whole. Interfaith excellence is essential to realize our fullness and our oneness. (For more on interfaith work at Saint Mary's, see Chapter 13.)



CHAPTER 2

The Importance of Interfaith Training to Employers: A Case Study from an Aviation and Aerospace University

BY DAVID KECK

David Keck is a chaplain at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University.

How can those committed to interfaith “make the case” to broader constituencies on their campuses? Universities recognize that their students pay tuition to attend their institutions to prepare for their careers (among other goals). Therefore, our efforts at Florida’s Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University—an independent, nonsectarian, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) university and an internationally recognized leader in aviation and aerospace education—have focused on connecting interfaith education to career readiness. By exploring and documenting the ways in which our students’ future employers value interfaith formation (a process that includes developing both the knowledge of other traditions and the capacities needed for respectful cooperation amid complex differences), we are able to work with faculty, staff, and administrators more effectively as we seek to develop interfaith programs and educational initiatives. Campus leaders may or may not care for interfaith work as a matter of personal belief or civic responsibility, but they all can respect the underlying economic logic we present.

As its name suggests, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University prepares students primarily for the aviation and aerospace sectors. We pride ourselves on training the best pilots, aerospace engineers, meteorologists, and airline management professionals. At one point, roughly 20 percent of pilots at America’s major airlines graduated from our university; as our president liked to quip, this meant that you had a one-in-five chance of a good flight. Although our students do pursue careers outside of these businesses, our identity remains focused on aviation and its related fields.

One of the goals of our team that attended the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence in summer 2019 was to engage our faculty through researching and documenting how our students’ future employers value interfaith education. In addition to conducting standard literature reviews, our efforts since that summer have included dozens of interviews and surveys with recruiters coming to campus for our Career Expo as well as conversations with executives and alumni. We ask questions both about what they are looking for in employees as well as how attention to religious diversity might be important for their customers or clients. We are also exploring the larger world of businesses increasing investment in religious diversity. For example, the Religious Freedom and Business Foundation recognized American Airlines (AA) as the second-best company among Fortune 100 companies on its 2021 Corporate Religious Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI) Index because AA promotes affinity groups for employees and provides chaplaincy services (2021). As this example suggests, aviation inherently creates opportunities for interfaith education. We came to frame these opportunities in four main areas: meeting the religious needs of customers, recruiting the best employees possible from around the world, addressing enduring concerns about religiously justified terrorism, and upholding the essential value of safety for each and every flight.

Airlines recognize that religious identity can determine diet, and since airlines want to maximize profit, they attend to the religious needs of their customers. When passengers book international flights on major

airlines, they have the opportunity to choose one of several different kinds of meals—kosher, halal, vegetarian, etc. Sometimes there is a meal choice explicitly for Hindu flyers. Some airlines, particularly those from Muslim-majority countries, also set aside a section of their airplane cabins so that passengers can observe their daily prayer practices in flight. Removing seats for such a space means potentially losing revenue, but supporting religious practice is a priority for these airlines. Many larger airports in the United States and elsewhere have interfaith airport chapels, small or large spaces equipped with Bibles or signs indicating the direction of Mecca.

Most of the airlines or aerospace firms our students want to work for are large, transnational corporations. Just as they serve clients around the globe, they need to draw their talent pool from across the planet as well. As one Boeing executive we interviewed about the corporate benefits of religious diversity put it, “Boeing wants to be the best in the world, so we need the best engineers and businesspeople from all over the world. And we need people who can work with people from all over the world.” Thus, while many will also note that aviation has also historically demonstrated discriminatory practices, there is also a recognition within the industry of the importance of diversity in today’s highly competitive, high-stakes environment.

Aviation also remains sensitive to religion because of connections between religious extremism and terrorism. The attacks of September 11, 2001, remain the most striking example of terrorists using religious beliefs to justify their crimes, but anyone traveling through major airports in the United Kingdom during the Troubles, also known as the Northern Ireland conflict, during the last decades of the twentieth century would have noted the heightened security designed to prevent attacks by the Irish Republican Army. Religion per se may or may not be a determinative factor in particular conflicts, but the aviation industry remains alert to the dangerous capacity of religious extremism to justify violence. Because our students share a passion for how flying a plane can literally bring people together, they are able to have candid conversations about the manipulation of religious ideals for terrorism. As one Muslim student said in class, “We hate ISIS more than you do.”

One of the most important inherent opportunities for interfaith work in the aviation and aerospace sectors is in the area of safety, not just because of threats of terrorism but also because of the larger safety culture required for success. Airlines succeed as multi-billion-dollar enterprises because over decades they have demonstrated that getting on a plane is safer than traveling in a car. Through our experiences, such as participating in dialogues at the National Gay Pilots Association’s Aviation Inclusion Summit in fall 2019, it became clear to us that the complex realities of a diverse workforce can present challenges for airlines. Everyone who trains to be a pilot understands that the free flow of accurate information is critical, and crashes have happened because of communication breakdowns between pilot and copilot. If those in the cockpit let bias and discriminatory viewpoints interfere, they pose a risk to the entire plane. Hence, faculty in our College of Aviation understand the importance of training crew members to navigate religious and other forms of difference effectively. Such training begins with an emphasis on the shared responsibility crews have for the lives of everyone on the plane. This focus on the team’s greater mission leads to a heightened professionalism requiring the bracketing of biases and a willingness to respect others and their contributions.

What is all this telling us, and how can we utilize this research and these experiences on campus? We can now start to make the case that interfaith education needs to be an explicit part of our identity as a university.

Everyone who trains to be a pilot understands that the free flow of accurate information is critical, and crashes have happened because of communication breakdowns between pilot and copilot. If those in the cockpit let bias and discriminatory viewpoints interfere, they pose a risk to the entire plane.

We have always been able to create partnerships with others interested in diversity, equity, and inclusion on campus, but now, through documenting specific examples of how religious diversity is important both for our campus and for our students' future careers, we are able to partner more productively with those who are generally less interested in these issues. By working backward, with the end in mind, we can use evidence that shows what our students will need after they leave to help establish what we need to offer students when they first arrive. In a limited but significant sense, we are able to factor out the ideological and political concerns that hinder interfaith and diversity training and focus on our common goal of preparing students for fields they love. We are able to conduct this research and apply it on our campus because we serve students who will enter a few specific sectors. Nevertheless, although there may be fewer inherent reasons for other businesses to be as engaged with the benefits and challenges of religious diversity, we recommend these inquiries for others interested in promoting interfaith formation on their campuses.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University very much appreciates the ongoing contributions of our student interfaith researchers. In particular, Joelle Bobinsky and Lucy Ambrose contributed to this essay.

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CHAPTER 3

IDEALS: How Data Can Inform Interfaith Planning and Decision-Making

BY SHAUNA MORIN AND JANETT I. CORDOVÉS

Shauna Morin serves as a strategic initiatives consultant, and Janett I. Cordovés is the director of higher education partnerships, both at Interfaith Youth Core.

Supporting and affirming religious diversity on campus has become an important function of today's higher education leaders. Faculty, staff, and administrators in academia have long felt this reality, and it was the impetus for the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) to launch the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence (IIE) in 2018. Through this initiative, AAC&U and IFYC invited institutional stakeholders to embark on a strategic planning process to deepen their understanding of the religious, spiritual, and secular landscape in US higher education and develop sustainable models of interfaith cooperation for their campuses. In doing so, we quickly recognized the need for compelling research to guide efforts. Fortunately, a landmark study of students' interfaith learning and development in college was already in progress, and it offered IIE participants robust findings and recommendations to inform their work.

History of IDEALS

The Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) was born of a partnership among Alyssa N. Rockenbach at North Carolina State University, Matthew J. Mayhew at The Ohio State University, and IFYC. The IDEALS team surveyed more than twenty thousand undergraduates at 122 colleges and universities across the country (including liberal arts colleges, religiously affiliated institutions, and public universities) at three points in their college careers: when they entered college in 2015, after their first year in 2016, and in the spring semester of their senior year in 2019. Findings were published between 2016 and 2020 in a series of reports. The team carefully designed the research to investigate four central questions:

1. What is the interfaith potential of this generation of college students?
2. How do students' interfaith attitudes and behaviors change during college?
3. How do college students perceive and experience religious and worldview diversity on campus?
4. What campus experiences and educational practices foster behaviors and attitudes that are essential for interfaith cooperation in a pluralistic society?

Answers to these questions unfolded over the course of the study and provided IIE participants with valuable insights into characteristics and experiences of students they serve. IDEALS data were presented at the past three IIE gatherings (in 2019, 2020, and 2021), with more depth and nuance provided each year. In one-on-one consultations between IIE faculty mentors and participants, findings were put into conversation with campus-specific goals and action plans and institutional leaders were encouraged to formulate responses to the data that would be effective within their unique environmental contexts.

What IDEALS Revealed

In the early years of the study (Mayhew et al. 2016; Rockenbach et al. 2017), IIE participants learned that incoming college students had high expectations for their institutions—fully 85 percent agreed it was important for their colleges to provide a welcoming environment for people of diverse religious and nonreligious perspectives. However, their actual experiences of welcome fell short of expectations, indicating an opportunity for institutional leaders to improve worldview diversity and inclusion efforts on campus.

The study also lifted up interfaith friendships and informal interfaith engagement as experiences with tremendous potential for learning and development. In the 2019 IDEALS report *Friendships Matter: The Role of Peer Relationships in Interfaith Learning and Development*, data confirmed campus conditions—including climate, religious affiliation, and available opportunities to engage meaningfully across faiths—can either facilitate or thwart interfaith friendships. Importantly for IIE participants, the report emphasized “the good news . . . that many of these conditions are factors institutions can influence directly . . . or indirectly” (Rockenbach et al. 2019, 7), thus sparking reflection on how to create favorable conditions for peer-to-peer interactions among religiously diverse students.

In summer 2020, IIE participants were introduced to high-level takeaways from the IDEALS study that offered insights into students’ interfaith experiences after four years of college (Rockenbach et al. 2020). These findings revealed persistent trends related both to student *perceptions* of the religious and spiritual climate on campus and their *behaviors* in the form of formal interfaith learning and skill building. For example, members of minoritized religious groups including Jews, Buddhists, and Hindus were less likely than many of their peers to agree when asked if their campus was welcoming of religious diversity. (See figure 1.) Fewer than 15 percent of students overall participated in formal activities like interfaith dialogues or religious diversity training while in college, and less than half dedicated time to learning about people with different religious and nonreligious identities.

IIE participants were also invited to consider nine data-driven recommendations for practice that grew out of IDEALS research. (See the box on page 15.) Several of these recommended steps involve institution-wide

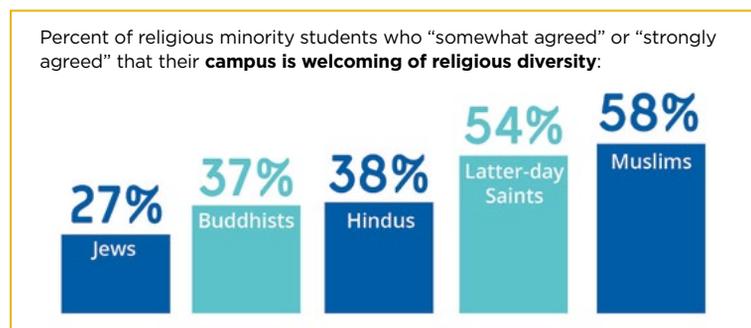


Figure 1. Source: Rockenbach et al. (2020).

investments by senior leaders, while others are ideally suited for faculty and staff to implement within their departments or functional areas. The recommendations were particularly useful in the IIE context because they pinpoint *specific* interfaith practices and dimensions of the campus environment institutional leaders could implement or refine to increase students’ interfaith knowledge and skills and prompt growth in civic pluralism.

IDEALS findings and recommendations are clearly reflected in emerging interfaith efforts on several of the IIE campuses. Below we highlight three such institutions—St. Olaf College, Loyola Marymount University (LMU), and Ursinus College—where interfaith initiatives are unfolding that respond to challenges and reflect opportunities unearthed by IDEALS. All three institutions have contributed chapters to this book. (See Chapters 4 and 13 for more about St. Olaf, Chapter 5 for more about LMU, and Chapter 9 for more about Ursinus.)

St. Olaf College: Sending a Message of Inclusion for All

In 2019, the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community at St. Olaf College in Minnesota opened its doors for the first time, offering a space to convene “people of different faiths and worldviews to enrich spiritual inquiry, foster love of neighbor, and deepen a sense of vocation in all” (St. Olaf College, n.d.). The center

communicates an institutional understanding of—and responsiveness to—changing student demographics at an institution that is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and continues to be, in the words of the college’s mission statement, “nourished by Lutheran tradition” (St. Olaf College 2016).

In fall 2020, just over one-fifth of St. Olaf students identified as Lutheran, while a full quarter claimed no religious affiliation and 6 percent identified with non-Christian religious traditions. We know from IDEALS that students from religious minority backgrounds often have a more acute negative outlook on the campus climate. Many perceive divisiveness and insensitivity at higher rates than their peers and in some cases, they also feel a lack of space and support for expressing their worldviews. To improve experiences of the religious and spiritual climate among a diversifying student body, it is critical for institutional leaders to **send unequivocal messages that all worldview identities are valued on campus**. This can be accomplished by dedicating space for all students to practice their beliefs, supporting a variety of worldview-based student organizations, or hiring staff who are responsible for attending to students’ religious, spiritual, and secular needs.

St. Olaf’s Lutheran Center is a powerful symbol of interfaith engagement and inclusion. It not only offers space for students to express their faith or worldview in conversation with others but also supports students’ religious and spiritual development by funding a truly multifaith College Ministry team. As the Lutheran Center’s director, Deanna A. Thompson, shared, “We now have staff whose role it is to focus on our students from traditions beyond Christianity and help nurture and support their religious commitments and practices.”

The Lutheran Center advances IDEALS recommendations in two other noteworthy ways. First, it uplifts and embodies a joint statement of twenty-six ELCA colleges and universities affirming their commitment to a “common calling that is deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions” (Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities 2018, 2). In many ways, this statement constitutes a **religious, spiritual, or interfaith diversity policy**, and IDEALS data suggest the mere presence of such policies can improve students’ interfaith experiences and outcomes. Second, the center makes possible **expanded interfaith programming** designed to explore “insights from other religious and secular traditions.” Similarly, simply offering such programs is said to positively influence students, regardless of their participation rates. In 2021, the Lutheran Center instituted its latest interfaith offering, an innovative Fellow program featuring IFYC Founder and President Eboo Patel as the inaugural Fellow and featuring a series of discussions on Interfaith Leadership for the 21st-Century Workplace.

Loyola Marymount University: Setting the Stage for Provocative Encounters

An inclusive worldview climate and myriad opportunities for interfaith engagement are critical building blocks for fostering interfaith learning and development. However, upon taking an inventory of all of the university’s religious and worldview diversity programs, a task force at LMU, a Jesuit university in California, concluded the impact of such programs is limited if they aren’t well coordinated and promoted across academic departments and cocurricular

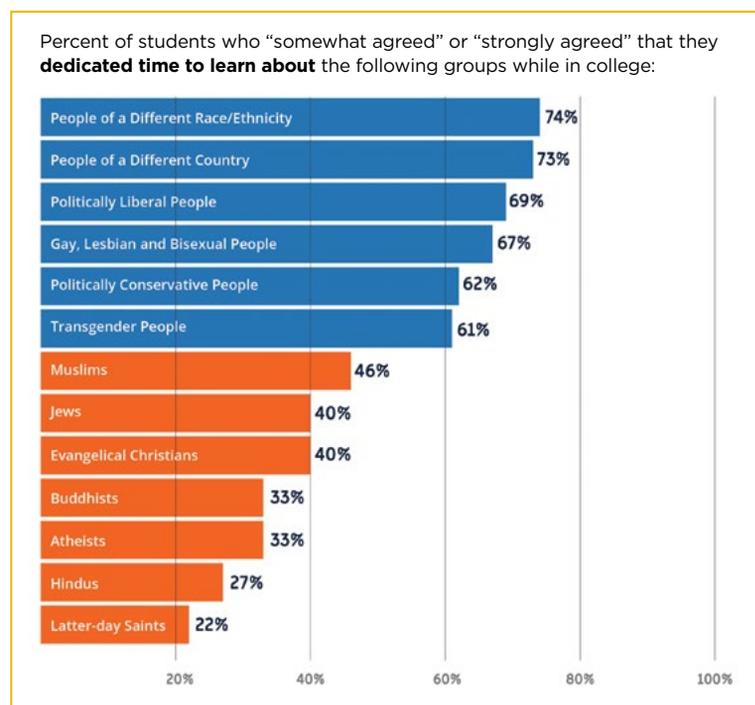


Figure 2. Source: Rockenbach et al. (2020).

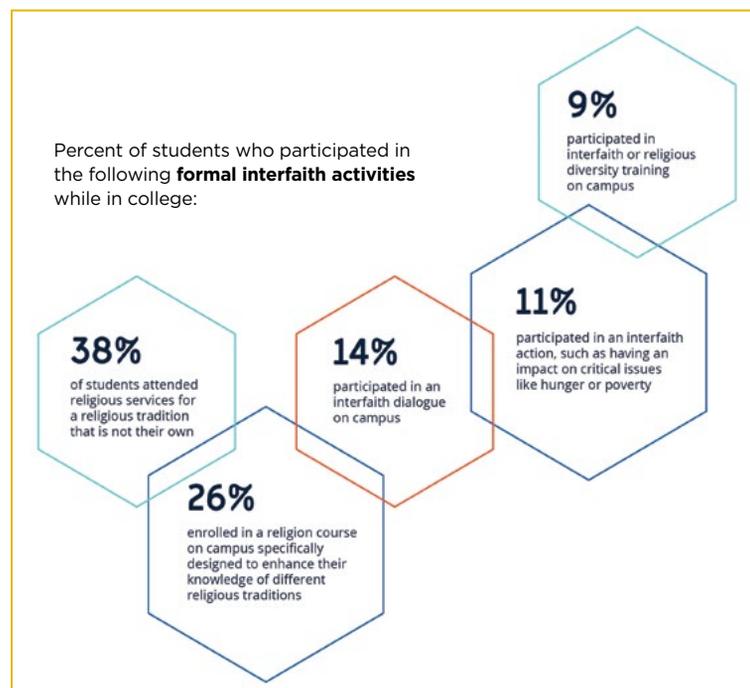
functional areas. Accordingly, institutional leaders set out to strengthen cross-divisional programming grounded in common constructs, using common language, and working toward common outcomes. At LMU, this effort was part of a larger strategic commitment to implement “a robust program of faith formation and spiritual dialogue,” as Kathleen F. Weaver and John T. Sebastian write in Chapter 5 of this book.

Throughout the IDEALS study, provocative encounters emerged time and again as integral to the process of developing interfaith competencies. Faith formation and spiritual dialogue often include wrestling with “provocative” questions—those that **challenge assumptions and prompt perspective taking**—and this can occur in many ways inside and outside the classroom. Provocative encounters also involve learning about and engaging people with different beliefs, as well as deepening one’s knowledge about one’s own worldview. Less than half of students who participated in IDEALS dedicated time to learning about people of other religions during college (see figure 2 on page 13), but programs like LMU’s Reimagining the World with Revolutionary Love: Election 2020 and Beyond, and Faith that Does Justice: An Interfaith Forum (part of an institution-wide anti-racism initiative) are poised to turn that tide. By pooling resources and spanning boundaries, leaders across campus are making it possible for more students to experience transformative encounters with worldview diversity.

Ursinus College: Expanding the Reach of Interfaith Efforts

Conveying a commitment to welcome and inclusion is a critical dimension of interfaith work on any campus. Ursinus College—a private, nonsectarian college in Pennsylvania—has doubled down on efforts to improve its religious and spiritual climate in recent years. A chaplain dedicated to fostering religious diversity has ramped up programming with events like the Martin Luther King, Jr. Beloved Community Interfaith Service, and the college has formalized religious accommodation policies in curricular spaces, dining halls, residence life, and athletics.

Though cultivating an inclusive climate for people of all faiths is an important first step, colleges that aim to maximize interfaith learning and development must also create opportunities to step outside one’s comfort zone and explore how other people understand and make meaning of the world. When IDEALS respondents were asked about their participation in interfaith activities during college, they reported low



levels of engagement in formal programs that can facilitate knowledge and skill building. For example, only 26 percent enrolled in a course with an explicit focus on different religious traditions. Even fewer (11 percent) joined forces with people of other faiths to address critical issues like hunger or poverty. (See figure 3.) These low levels of participation were surprising given that a majority of students (70 percent) placed a high value on bridging religious divides. IDEALS data pointed clearly to one strategy for closing this engagement gap: **making interfaith experiences mandatory for all students.** IDEALS researchers found that participating in at least one religious diversity experience in the classroom, or at least two structured activities outside of class, was instrumental

Figure 3. Source: Rockenbach et al. (2020).

in building interfaith competencies. At minimum, creating avenues for a broader array of students to encounter diverse worldview perspectives should be a priority.

Campus leaders at Ursinus are doing just that by encouraging deeper interfaith engagement in curricular spaces. In 2019, they began highlighting the importance of interfaith learning and development in faculty orientation programs. They also highlight religious diversity in the Common Intellectual Experience—an interdisciplinary, two-semester course for all students that encourages “thoughtful examination” of “diverse historical contexts, cultures, and beliefs” (Ursinus College, n.d.). A faculty and staff working group has begun exploring the possibility of adding an interfaith studies minor. Additionally, the college’s Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, the Institute for Inclusion and Equity, and the philosophy and religious studies department have joined forces to offer a course entitled Interfaith Cooperation from Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter. Serena Rose Gaskin ’23, a psychology and religious studies double major at Ursinus, had this to say about the course: “The interfaith course gave me a new perspective on not only various faiths, specifically Judaism, but also how faith as a whole has been a prominent aspect in social justice movements and initiatives throughout the history of the United States.”

Academic initiatives like the ones taking place at Ursinus are essential if we want to ensure students are gaining the necessary knowledge to navigate a religiously diverse society. Furthermore, they pave the way for implementing another IDEALS recommendation to **appeal to students whose interfaith learning and development warrants special attention**. IDEALS data indicate that atheists, evangelical Christians, political conservatives, men, and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) majors are somewhat less inclined toward civic pluralism. Educators should therefore prioritize eliciting their participation in interfaith activities, and the classroom offers an ideal context for doing so in a sustained manner.

These examples illustrate how valuable research can be when designing effective interfaith programs. The size and scope of IDEALS made it possible for all institutions—whether or not they participated directly in the study—to benefit from insights gleaned about student experiences and outcomes related to religious diversity and civic pluralism. But ultimately, the impact of any research is only as strong as its translation into practice. We therefore hope that sharing these real-world scenarios inspires other campus leaders to engage IDEALS findings and think creatively about how they can inform excellent models for interfaith cooperation at their institutions.

If you are interested in learning more about IDEALS, please visit <http://ifyc.org/navigating-religious-diversity>.



Nine Recommendations for Enhancing Students’ Interfaith Learning and Development

Institutional Investment

1. Send the message that your institution values all religious and worldview identities.
2. Focus on teaching positive regard for all.
3. Expand religious, spiritual, or interfaith diversity policies.
4. Make interfaith experiences mandatory for all students.
5. Expand interfaith programming.

Educational Interventions

6. Challenge assumptions and prompt perspective taking.
7. Create occasions for interfaith friendships to flourish.
8. Provide opportunities for informal interaction between religiously diverse students.
9. Appeal to students whose interfaith competencies warrant special attention.

For more details, see Rockenbach et al. (2020).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) was made possible by funders including the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Fetzer Institute, and the Julian Grace Foundation. The research team also owes a debt of gratitude to colleagues who were instrumental in recruiting study participants, administering IDEALS, making meaning of the data, supporting campus partners, and disseminating findings to initiate real and lasting change.

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CHAPTER 4

Lutheran and Interfaith: St. Olaf College's New Chapter of What It Means to Be “Nourished by Lutheran Tradition”

BY DEANNA A. THOMPSON

Deanna A. Thompson is the director of the Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community, and the Martin E. Marty Regents Chair in Religion and the Academy, at St. Olaf College.

Founded in 1874 by Norwegian Lutheran immigrants, St. Olaf College, a nationally ranked liberal arts institution in Minnesota, has a long and rich history of liberal arts education grounded in a Lutheran vision of higher education. Just as understandings of what constitutes a liberal education have evolved, so has our understanding of what it means to be a Lutheran-affiliated institution.

In 2018, the twenty-six colleges and universities affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) collaborated on a joint statement of what it means to be a college of the church in the twenty-first century. *Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities* names a “common calling that is deeply rooted in the Lutheran intellectual tradition and boldly open to insights from other religious and secular traditions” (Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities 2018, 2). At St. Olaf, our calling includes addressing the reality that the contemporary landscape of religious affiliation and our college demographics differ markedly from the St. Olaf of the twentieth century. Among all St. Olaf students in fall 2020, 21 percent indicated a Lutheran religious affiliation, while 25 percent claimed no religious affiliation, and 6 percent claimed affiliation with other religious traditions such as Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. While the number of Lutherans continues to grow globally, especially in Asia and Africa, the fact that Lutheranism is declining in the United States means fewer Lutherans are enrolled at US Lutheran colleges like St. Olaf. Being a Lutheran-affiliated institution no longer means, as it did when my grandparents attended St. Olaf in the 1930s, that the college is a college primarily for Lutherans.

The Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community opened in 2019 to advance a twenty-first-century vision for Lutheran higher education at St. Olaf. As its inaugural director, I am charged in part with helping the college articulate and live into what a key aspect of its mission statement—“nourished by Lutheran tradition”—looks like today (St. Olaf College 2016). A rootedness in Lutheran tradition shapes the college’s commitment to engaging all traditions in order to bring together people of different faiths and worldviews to enrich spiritual inquiry, foster love of neighbor, and deepen a sense of vocation in all.

For many, St. Olaf’s Lutheran identity is most clearly visible in the two religion courses required for all students, the offering of daily chapel on campus, and the well-known St. Olaf Christmas festival that occurs each December. The mission of the Lutheran Center is to bring a more expansive vision of how Lutheran tradition nourishes life together on campus and beyond.

The Lutheran Center hosts symposia each fall and spring dedicated to exploring how our Lutheran affiliation relates to the commitment to engaging people of all religious, spiritual, and nonreligious backgrounds. The center’s very first symposium explored the ELCA’s *A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America* (2019) that links core Lutheran theological commitments—such as

belief in a God who creates a good and diverse creation and calls us into loving relationship with our neighbors—to striving to live in solidarity with those of all backgrounds.

The growing commitment at St. Olaf to our Lutheran and interreligious identity is also evidenced by the expansion of the College Ministry staff. For the first time in St. Olaf's history, our two Lutheran pastors have been joined by an associate chaplain for Jewish life and an associate chaplain for Muslim life, both positions supported by funding through the Lutheran Center. The associate chaplains provide support and spiritual care for St. Olaf's Jewish and Muslim students. They have increased the college's capacity to serve our students' diverse religious and spiritual needs, and they also model and equip St. Olaf students for more engagement across religious traditions.

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) has greatly supported our work, as is the case with many colleges and universities who are increasing their commitment to the diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds of their campus communities. The skills we gained during the 2019 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence set the stage for our selection of IFYC Founder and President Eboo Patel's book *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation* as the fall 2020 Common Read for incoming first-year students. After the COVID-19 pandemic hit in spring 2020 and many St. Olaf students were feeling disconnected from the college as a result of the pivot to entirely remote learning, the Lutheran Center decided to create an All-Community Read program with Patel's *Acts of Faith* so that any student who wanted to read Patel's book over the summer and talk about it with their peers could do so. All told, more than one thousand people read and talked about *Acts of Faith* over the summer and fall. In reflecting on the conversations, one student remarked,

I really enjoyed this discussion and reading this book definitely inspired me to be more involved in interfaith discussions even as a nonreligious person. . . . I think after this experience I am much more likely to participate/want to be involved with Lutheran Center events and other movements that promote inclusivity and these types of discussions.

Similar to institutions across the country, summer and fall 2020 conversations within and beyond St. Olaf focused on racial injustice and the ways systemic racism lives in our structures and communities. Patel visited St. Olaf virtually in October 2020 in a series of events with faculty, staff, and students that culminated in an evening address open to the wider community on Racial Justice, Interfaith Cooperation, and the Common Good on Campus and Beyond. After working with Patel throughout the fall, St. Olaf invited him to be the inaugural Fellow with the Lutheran Center and continue working with St. Olaf throughout spring and summer 2021.

We look forward to continuing to live into this next chapter of St. Olaf's commitment to its Lutheran heritage, particularly in terms of the way that this heritage opens into an active engagement and acceptance of people of all religious, spiritual, and nonreligious backgrounds. (For more on interfaith work at St. Olaf, see Chapters 3 and 13.)

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CHAPTER 5

Connections across Silos: How Loyola Marymount University Is Strengthening Its Interfaith Work across Campus

BY KATHLEEN F. WEAVER AND JOHN T. SEBASTIAN

Kathleen F. Weaver is the associate provost for research, professional development, and online learning and a professor of biology, and John T. Sebastian is the vice president for mission and ministry and a professor of English, both at Loyola Marymount University.

In 2018, the US provincials (regional leaders of the Jesuits) and the presidents of the schools that belong to the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities underwent a Mission Priority Examen, an annual process that helps Jesuit universities reevaluate mission priorities. The Examen inspired an institution-wide reflection at Loyola Marymount University (LMU) in California, a nationally ranked Catholic university rooted in the Jesuit and Marymount traditions. The Examen helped us identify a need to explore and integrate interfaith and vocation more intentionally into the undergraduate student experience to support all students in finding their purpose or calling.

In response to this realization, LMU's president, Timothy Law Snyder, appointed an Interfaith Task Force to explore ways to deepen our institutional commitment to faith in keeping with our Catholic identity, while honoring the spiritual commitments of all members of our community. Specifically, this task force was charged with

- investigating best practices around interfaith dialogue, collaboration, and programming on university campuses by researching other institutions and engaging appropriate consultants;
- engaging a wide range of LMU stakeholders in identifying potential opportunities for and obstacles to implementing a robust program of faith formation and spiritual dialogue at LMU; and
- recommending to the university several concrete action steps and a timeline for implementation.

The task force, cochaired by John T. Sebastian (coauthor of this article and vice president for mission and ministry) and Jade Smith (associate dean of student affairs), included faculty from several departments across multiple colleges; staff from the divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Mission and Ministry, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and members of LMU's Jesuit community. The task force spent significant time taking inventory of the many interfaith activities already happening on campus, whether in the university's curriculum, cocurriculum, or religious programming, and conducted a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis as part of an environmental scan. Eventually, the task force formed the conclusion that while an impressive amount of interfaith activity took place on campus, most of it was disconnected: programming happened in silos, there was no common construct or set of outcomes guiding the work across divisions and departments, and the overall impact of such programming was invisible to many in the community.

The summer 2019 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence came at an ideal time. It allowed us to utilize the information from the Interfaith Task Force, put together a plan to coordinate our work across campus, and fill in the gaps the task force had identified. We put together a small

leadership team to work on a series of activities following the institute, including a retreat in early 2020 and a virtual reading group in summer 2020 following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The retreat brought together thirty stakeholders, including faculty as well as administrators and staff from Academic Affairs, Mission and Ministry, and Student Affairs. We provided the group with a series of prereadings, including two chapters from *Hearing Vocation Differently: Meaning, Purpose, and Identity in the Multi-Faith Academy*, edited by David S. Cunningham; *Emerging Interfaith Trends: What College Students Are Saying about Religion in 2016*, an Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) report by Matthew J. Mayhew et al.; and “Leadership Practices for Interfaith Excellence in Higher Education” by Eboo Patel, Katie Bringman Baxter, and Noah Silverman, published in *Liberal Education* in 2015. We also invited Zandra Wagoner, the interfaith chaplain at the University of La Verne, to serve as a facilitator for the

The Anti-racism Project is rooted in our Jesuit and Marymount traditions and our university mission, which call upon all members of our community to regard and treat each other with respect and to recognize the inherent dignity and immutable humanity of all peoples as made in the image and likeness of God.

retreat. Wagoner shared the national context for the work, including recent studies on vocation in undergraduate education and the IDEALS study from Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) in partnership with Alyssa N. Rockenbach at North Carolina State University and Matthew J. Mayhew at The Ohio State University. She also worked with our group to develop a common language that worked for all of our areas. We then took a deep dive into our own student identity, engagement, and outcome data and broke the participants into subgroups to discuss the data and some ways to partner across campus. At the end of the retreat, participants talked about feeling rejuvenated and excited. In addition, the feeling of community and support across units was strong.

During summer 2020, LMU faculty, staff, and administrators from across the university met via Zoom biweekly as a reading group to discuss *Educating about Religious Diversity and Interfaith Engagement: A Handbook*

for Student Affairs, edited by Kathleen M. Goodman, Mary Ellen Giess, and Eboo Patel. The goal of the group was to provide an opportunity for colleagues from around the institution to engage in mutual learning about, and share their own experiences around, student development. The reading group built on readings from the retreat and continued the discussion of how religious affiliation—or disaffiliation in the case of the increasing number of “nones” (those with no religious affiliation) among the traditional college-aged population— influences students’ vocational exploration. Among the topics we explored in discussion were: How do we cultivate mindsets that dispose students toward interfaith engagement as part of their development? How do we encourage greater awareness of religious forms of privilege on a faith-based campus? How do we bring engagement with worldview diversity into conversations about vocation?

Since our institution began this work, we have implemented two major changes: cross-divisional programming and LMU’s Anti-racism Project.

Cross-divisional programming: The work initiated by the task force and advanced by the team that participated in the summer institute resulted in stronger bonds across divisions where silos had previously inhibited our ability to collaborate, even on areas of mutual interest. After our retreat, the stakeholder group began to host cross-divisional programming. For example, in October 2020, a faculty member in theological studies invited Campus Ministry to join with the newly formed Sikh Student Association to host author and civil rights leader Valarie Kaur for a virtual talk entitled *Reimagining the World with Revolutionary Love: Election 2020 and Beyond*. In addition, we worked together to reimagine our faculty and student orientation

events in the fall and student orientation course curriculum. These pieces provided new faculty and students an early view of the institution, which we hope will have a positive impact on their sense of belonging and connection with the institution in the long run. In addition, LMU signed a memorandum of understanding with the Academy for Jewish Religion (AJR), which will result in AJR physically moving its operation onto LMU's Westchester campus. To celebrate this new partnership, AJR and LMU cohosted a virtual event, an interfaith reflection on the global climate crisis and what Judaism and Catholicism have to say about safeguarding creation. Internally, our LMU partners included staff from Mission and Ministry and Marketing and Communications as well as Dean Bryant Alexander of the College of Communication and Fine Arts and faculty from the Department of Music. We also built a web portal to host information about upcoming interfaith programming.

The Anti-racism Project: Like many institutions of higher education across the country, LMU has been profoundly influenced by the national reckoning around racial justice precipitated by the killing of George Floyd in May 2020 and the movement for Black lives. At LMU, we have articulated our efforts to create an inclusive community through our Anti-racism Project, inaugurated by our president in fall 2020 and stewarded by our Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Mission and Ministry and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have partnered for more than twenty years in leading trainings on campus around hiring for mission and inclusive excellence. In the wake of the summer 2020 uprising, however, it became clear that we needed to broaden our work to address not only how we can diversify our faculty and staff through intentional hiring practices but also how we inculcate a university culture and climate that manifest a commitment to inclusion informed by religious values. Thus, the Anti-racism Project is rooted in our Jesuit and Marymount traditions and our university mission, which call upon all members of our community to regard and treat each other with respect and to recognize the inherent dignity and immutable humanity of all peoples as made in the image and likeness of God. We also recognize that we are summoned to be, in the words of a well-known Jesuit phrase, “persons for and with others, acting out of our faith—inclusive of our varied religious traditions and worldviews—toward social justice for all” (Loyola Marymount University, n.d.). With this latter point in mind, Mission and Ministry and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion partnered together and with others to present a virtual forum entitled Faith that Does Justice: An Interfaith Forum that was generously underwritten by a Racial Equity and Interfaith Cooperation Award from IFYC. The program featured music, scripture readings, and reflections from students representing many faith traditions and was anchored by a keynote talk delivered by Marla Frederick, Asa Griggs Candler Professor of Religion and Culture at Emory University. This program, part of a series launched in 2020 and focused on anti-racism, helped convey to a large audience of administrators, faculty, staff, students, and community members that the many faith traditions that find a home at LMU have much to contribute to our vision for an anti-racist and inclusive university. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and Mission and Ministry continue to explore ways to enrich our campus dialogue about inclusion by drawing on the wisdom of different faith traditions and worldviews. The same desire to enhance dialogue across difference in light of the university's commitment to inclusion has prompted the development of new interfaith modules to be incorporated into LMU's Orientation 1000 and 2000, mandatory courses for new first-year and transfer students, respectively. These courses are offered through Student Affairs and will now give attention to religion and worldview within broader conversations about diversity.

As with all other aspects of university life, our interfaith work at LMU was significantly disrupted by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. While in some cases we were able to pivot—summer 2020's Zoom-based reading group is an example—the pandemic clearly affected our progress toward achieving the goals we established during the summer institute. Yet we also came to discover a means of maintaining community through our collective commitment to promoting interfaith understanding and engagement, during a period when our campus was physically shuttered, and all teaching and work shifted online. The momentum around interfaith that we had been developing—our retreat took place mere weeks before the university shut down—propelled us through the disruption and enabled us to continue to engage with colleagues across the institution

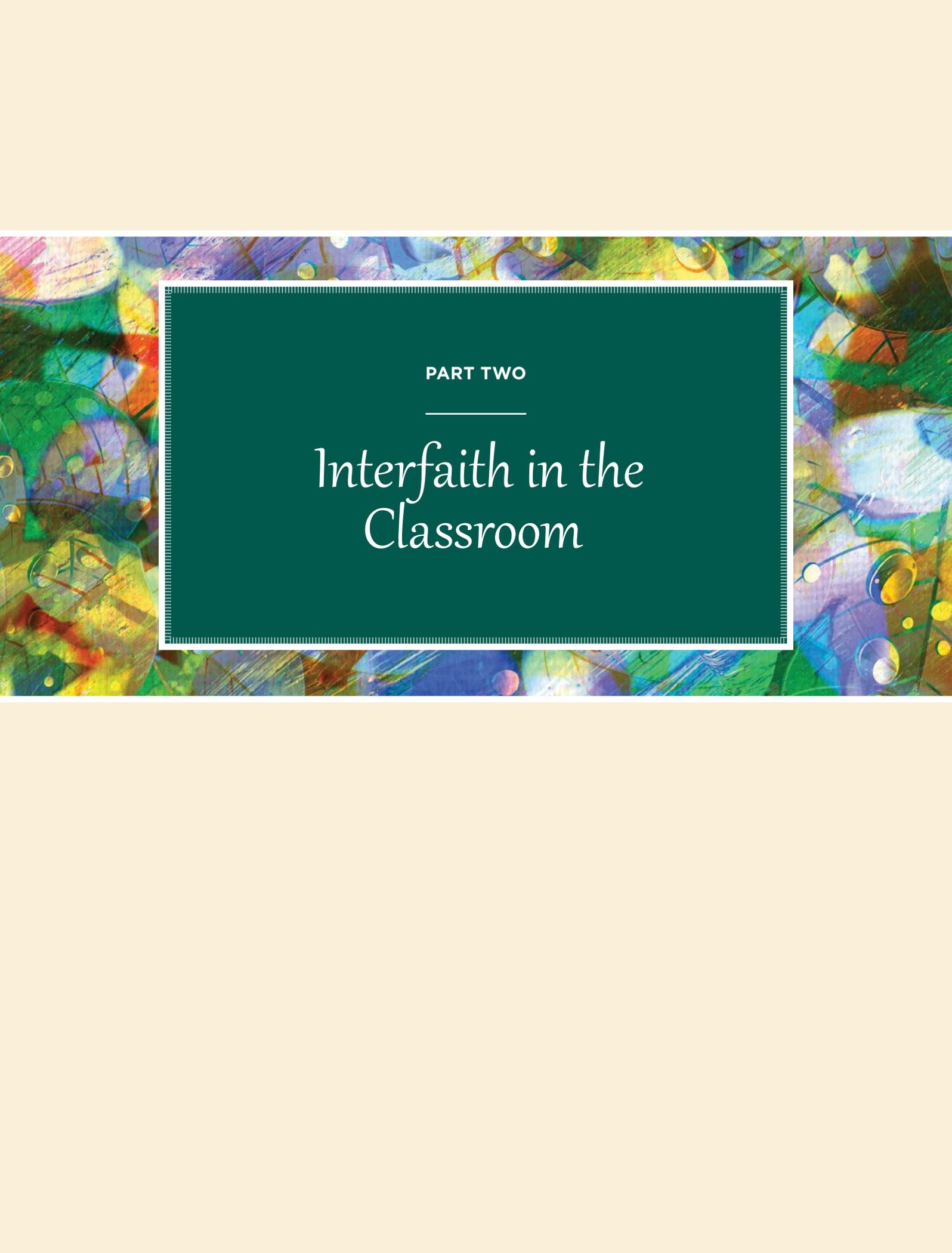
from whom we might otherwise have been isolated as we redirected our attention to crisis operations within our respective departments. In the midst of uncertainty, we persevered in finding occasions for reading, dialoguing, and praying together. We are eager to leverage the experiences of 2020 and 2021 in strengthening our community still further. (For more on interfaith work at LMU, see Chapter 3.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the Association of American Colleges and Universities and Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) for sponsoring the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence and providing continual support and encouragement of our work. We would also like to thank IFYC for their support through the Racial Equity and Interfaith Cooperation Award. Funding for the retreat and reading groups was provided by a grant from the Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE). Finally, we would like to thank the faculty and staff who participate in LMU's campus-wide interfaith work for their partnership, collaboration, and hard work.

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The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract collage of colors including purple, blue, green, yellow, and red. It features various textures and shapes, such as brushstrokes, circles, and lines, creating a dynamic and artistic feel. A central green rectangular box with a white border contains the text.

PART TWO

Interfaith in the
Classroom



How to Use Curriculum to Prepare All Students for the Religiously Diverse World

BY CAROLYN RONCOLATO

Carolyn Roncolato is the director of academic initiatives at Interfaith Youth Core.

Over the past ten years of working with higher education, Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) has learned that if a campus is going to implement and sustain a long-term commitment to interfaith cooperation, this subject must be a part of the curriculum. While cocurricular and institutional programs and policies are certainly important, engaging interfaith topics in the classroom is critical.

Why is this? First, as the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated, if a college or university is to remain an institution of higher learning, the one thing that must continue is classes, even if they all become virtual. Without curriculum, higher education is not higher education. Second, coursework is the only thing students must do to graduate. If it's in the curriculum, students have to engage it. Lastly, alongside valuable cocurricular elements, courses prepare students for future careers, community engagement, and civic leadership. As such, the curriculum is an opportunity to give all students the skills to responsibly engage across lines of difference and the knowledge to build interfaith cooperation in their communities.

As more and more faculty recognized the value of and interest in engaging interfaith topics in the classroom, a formal field of interfaith studies emerged, beginning around 2010 (Gustafson 2020; Patel, Howe Peace, and Silverman 2018). While it began as a niche interest of a small cohort of religious studies scholars, interfaith studies has grown into a robust field with faculty from myriad areas of study. IFYC has had the privilege of supporting and learning from these faculty as they teach, publish, and research interfaith topics.

While the field continues to grow and change, certain defining qualities have been established. As a launch point, IFYC Founder and President Eboo Patel defines interfaith studies as an “interdisciplinary” academic field that examines “the multiple dimensions of how individuals and groups who orient around religion differently interact with one another, along with the implications of these interactions for communities, civil society, and global politics” (2013, 38). There are four parts of this definition that I want to draw attention to. First, interfaith studies is an interdisciplinary field. Though it arose out of religious studies and theology departments, it is very much shaped by and inclusive of scholars from a range of disciplines. This interdisciplinarity is a strength that IFYC strives to cultivate. The challenges of living in a religiously diverse democracy require not only creativity but also all voices at the table—from public health to philosophy. Second, the field of interfaith studies is about the interaction of religious and nonreligious people and communities. Distinct from other areas of religious studies, this field is particularly interested in the “inter,” in how religions and more importantly religious and nonreligious people relate to and inform each other. Third, because individuals and communities are shaped by concrete places and times, practitioners of this field pay a great deal of attention to context. Scholars and teachers are interested in particular groups in particular places and how they interact with others (e.g., Orthodox Jews in Brooklyn, Somali Muslims in Minneapolis, evangelical Latin American communities in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania). Lastly, interfaith studies asks how these interactions influence our shared community, society, and politics and how shared civic life influences our religious identities. For a fuller examination of the history and contours of the field, see Gustafson (2020) and Patel, Howe Peace, and Silverman (2018).

Interfaith studies is defined not only by its content but as much by the way that content is taught and engaged in the classroom. Thanks to a generous grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, IFYC partnered with the Wabash Center for Teaching and Learning in Theology and Religion to study the interfaith pedagogy. After studying interfaith studies classrooms across the country, the primary researchers, Cassie Meyer and Trina Jones, identified the following eight themes, activities, and practices as central to effective teaching of interfaith studies.

1. Experiential learning: Interfaith studies seeks to create space for students to learn *from* people who practice a tradition rather than exclusively *about* them. To that end, activities like site visits, guest speakers, internships, and civic projects with community partners are important components of interfaith courses. Additionally, one of the goals of interfaith studies is to teach students not only religious literacy but also skills to learn about and build relationships with people from other traditions. Experiential learning teaches not just content but also method, giving students the opportunity to practice learning from and engaging people across lines of difference.

2. Case studies: Due in large part to the work of Diana Eck at Harvard University's Pluralism Project, case studies have become a hallmark pedagogy of interfaith studies (n.d.). While there is an array of ways to develop and use case studies, the core idea is to take a real scenario that has to do with religious identity in the civic context and ask students to consider how they would respond. Case studies are one of the most effective ways to communicate the civic relevance of religious identity, demonstrating that students will inevitably have to deal with religious diversity in future careers and communities. It is impossible, and not desirable, to teach students everything about all religions, or even the most common traditions. Rather than trying to teach everything about every religious tradition, case studies focus on particular people, places, and traditions and require students to learn about the religion(s) involved in each story. In the process of teaching literacy about one tradition, case studies demonstrate the complexity of religious identity and give students practice learning about traditions they are unfamiliar with.

3. Interfaith dialogue: While it may seem like a somewhat obvious theme of interfaith studies, intentional dialogue within the classroom is a valuable addition to the curricular space. In interfaith dialogue, educators facilitate conversations across lines of religious difference about students' religious or nonreligious identities. Students are asked to bring their own religious, faith, and spiritual identities into the classroom and to talk about them honestly. In many institutional settings, it is unusual, if not unheard of, to bring up faith in a course that is designed to engage religion critically. Interfaith studies courses are certainly not intended to replace the critical study of religion but rather to provide an important complement.

4. Religious literacy: Religious literacy is always an important part of interfaith studies. Students should learn some clear and concrete things about religious traditions: they should know what Ramadan is, why Mormons might not study on Sundays, and what the *bindi* is on a Hindu woman's forehead. Religious literacy should be taught not with the goal of thoroughness but rather with the aim of demonstrating the diversity within religious traditions (intrafaith diversity); the ways history, geography, and context shape religion; and the influence religions have always had on each other.

5. Personal journey and reflection: Interfaith studies faculty have noticed that as students learn about and engage with people who are religiously different, they inevitably reflect on their own identity. Recognizing that this will happen and not wanting self-reflection to dominate the learning experience, faculty build in opportunity for students to do deep self-reflection. The goal is to give students the opportunity and the challenge to understand, interrogate, and locate their own religious or nonreligious identity.

6. Interdisciplinarity: As I mentioned above, the field of interfaith studies is interdisciplinary by design. Courses are taught in various departments, and the field draws on a range of fields of study. The interdisciplinarity allows for a more accurate study of traditions and better trains leaders who will work in many different settings. For example, medical professionals need to understand diverse religious practices, beliefs, and

needs to adequately care for patients. Increasingly, business professionals are working on international teams with people from a range of different religious traditions. Knowing about the most important holidays is an important part of developing a hospitable culture and bonded team.

7. Intersectionality: Our religious identities never exist independent of the myriad other identities that shape us: race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. In the context of diversity work, religion is often left out entirely or is only tacitly engaged. Interfaith studies lifts up religion as one of the identities that matter and seeks to understand how it complicates or intersects with the others.

8. Professional relevance: The ability to work well with people across lines of difference is an increasingly necessary skill for many professions. The growth of religious diversity within the United States means that it is extremely likely, if not guaranteed, that students will work with people who are religiously different from them. From business to education to healthcare, more and more faculty are integrating interfaith studies as part of preprofessional development (Meyer and Jones, forthcoming).

IFYC has tracked more than five hundred interfaith studies courses across the country. These courses cover the gamut of topics from interfaith cooperation and the civil rights movement, to sports management and religious diversity. They are housed in the philosophy, English, business, and biology departments, to name but a few. As the field has grown, so has interest in providing students opportunities to go deeper into interfaith studies. In response to that interest, more than fifty campuses have created majors, minors, or certificates in interfaith studies.

Hosting the first interfaith studies major in the country, Elizabethtown College in Pennsylvania seeks to develop “a cadre of professionals who can assume the mantle ‘interfaith leaders’” (n.d.). Students in this program take courses like Conflict Dynamics and Transformation, Exploring Interfaith Leadership and Service, and Comparative Theology and Interfaith Engagement while also completing an interfaith leadership internship.

Other schools have taken a distinctly preprofessional approach to their interfaith

studies programs. In Virginia, Shenandoah University’s Religious Diversity and Leadership in the Professions certificate program gives students “the resources to understand, problem-solve and communicate about conflicts that may arise from religious diversity as well as the opportunity to practically apply what they learn within their area of professional interest” (n.d.). In addition to general courses on interfaith leadership, students are required to take courses relevant to their professional area of study that engage religious diversity topics.

Increasingly, colleges and universities are recognizing that while they prioritize many kinds of diversity, equity, and inclusion, they are not addressing religion. All students need skills to engage across lines of religious difference in order to be responsible citizens and competent professionals. In response, schools are embedding interfaith competencies into their general education programs. Thanks to a generous grant from the Teagle



Foundation, IFYC is supporting three institutions—California State University–Bakersfield, Utah Valley University, and Purdue University—to create and implement robust general education curricula that take a civic approach to teaching about religious diversity. Embedding the topic in general education courses ensures that all students will gain some interfaith knowledge and skills.

There are countless and ever-emerging ways to engage interfaith and religious diversity topics in the curriculum. The best courses and programs are created in response to a campus’s context and are aligned with the institution’s priorities and culture. In the following chapters, interfaith leaders reflect on the development of the interfaith curricula on their campuses. In Chapter 6, Olga Solovieva at Washington and Jefferson College shares what she learned when the COVID-19 pandemic forced her to move her interfaith leadership studies capstone course to a hybrid model, with a combination of online and in-person experiences. In Chapter 7, faculty at Calvin University discuss interfaith classroom experiences that have emerged out of and are informed by the Reformed Christian tradition, with which the university affiliates. In Chapter 8, University of Miami faculty reflect on their interfaith studies course that relies on the intergroup dialogue method. In Chapter 9, Ursinus College faculty write about curricular and cocurricular initiatives that embed interfaith cooperation into the fabric of their institution. These rich examples show the opportunity and value of interfaith studies as a part of a broader campus commitment to prioritizing interfaith cooperation and engaging religious diversity.

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CHAPTER 6

Going With the (Interfaith) Flow: What I've Learned While Teaching Not According to the Plan

BY OLGA SOLOVIEVA

Olga Solovieva is an associate professor and the director of religious studies, and the interfaith leadership studies coordinator, at Washington and Jefferson College.

That Thursday afternoon I opened the classroom door and walked straight into an ambush. While making my way to my seat, I started picking up some cues: the sudden hush falling upon the room, the looks exchanged among the group, the air of barely concealed excitement. Feeling slightly off balance at the disruption of the usual routine (like having to shout out a bunch of loud young people in order to begin the class), I perched on my desk and hesitantly asked, “So, how did you like the Interfaith Leadership Institute?” I expected the room to explode with the noise of many people talking excitedly over each other. Instead, there was another conspiratorial exchange of glances, and then a voice announced triumphantly, “Professor Solovieva, we have decided what we want to do for our experiential project—and we think you’re going to like it!”

Let me backtrack. The class in question was a capstone course in the interfaith leadership studies (ILS) program that I taught in fall 2020. In 2018, Washington and Jefferson College (W&J)—a nationally ranked private liberal arts college in Pennsylvania—launched the ILS program. Two factors combined to allow my curricular dream of launching such a program to finally materialize. For one, I was exceedingly fortunate to get some very vocal, thoughtful, and persistent students after starting my job as the director of religious studies at W&J in 2014. By the end of my first year, I had already received several passionate requests from my advisees explaining how having more courses devoted to interfaith understanding would benefit them on their chosen professional paths such as medicine and law. These conversations supplied the motivation; Interfaith Youth Core supplied the courage and the know-how during the 2016 faculty seminar on Teaching Interfaith Understanding. As I sat listening to the seminar directors, Eboo Patel (founder and president of IFYC) and Laurie L. Patton (president of Middlebury College)—and maybe even more importantly, to my fellow participants from more than two dozen institutions—speak of their past and present efforts, plans, and hopes, I became increasingly convinced that my students’ wish could be granted. Happily, I discovered several like-minded colleagues at my institution who were interested in issues of religious pluralism and were willing to help. During the 2016–17 academic year we proposed the new interdisciplinary program, and it was approved. In 2019, we graduated our first cohort of interfaith leaders.

As is the norm for interdisciplinary concentrations at W&J, the ILS curriculum consists of several elective courses from multiple disciplines and a required core course. Keeping in line with Patel’s emphasis on the “practitioner dimension” of interfaith studies and the importance of providing future interfaith leaders with both the “knowledge base” and a relevant “skill set” (Patel 2013, 40), I intentionally designed my ILS capstone as a dual-focus course combining theoretical and experiential dimensions. On the theory side, scholar Diana Eck’s *A New Religious America: How a “Christian Country” Has Become the World’s Most Religiously Diverse Nation* and Patel’s *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer* provided helpful guides for navigating the complex terrain of interfaith history, ethnography, and scholarly analyses of interfaith engagement. Accompanying assignments ranging from informal reports on the interfaith leaders that students selected, to the final research paper

investigating specific instances of interfaith encounters, served to expand and deepen students' understanding of interfaith history and theory. It was the experiential aspect of the course, however, to which I paid particular attention—perhaps because it was a novel and thus challenging addition to my standard course design. Fortunately, I didn't have to start completely from scratch. The faculty resources that IFYC provided during their summer seminar and via their bountiful website (<http://ifyc.org>) helped me envision a sequence of what I called engaged learning assignments, which offered some ideas for the intended centerpiece of the course—the interfaith experiential project.

I offered the first iteration of the capstone in spring 2019, and it seemed to be a relative success. Of course, as is often the case with new courses, there were some logistical glitches, certain assignments that didn't work out perfectly, and some great materials that I discovered too late; I duly noted all of those for the future. It was quite clear, however, that the main premise of the course—to offer students multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge in practice—was effective. The experiential project in particular elicited enthusiastic feedback: students credited it with improving their organizational skills and giving them a much more immediate appreciation of the importance of interfaith work. As an added bonus, all three events organized by students—a “Speedfaithing” session integrated into W&J's International Week; an interfaith discussion with local faith leaders; and a Religion Expo for local residents—offered educational opportunities for the campus and surrounding communities. Accordingly, I decided to keep the experiential part of the course the same for its subsequent iterations.

The ILS capstone course was scheduled to be offered for the second time in fall 2020. I was feeling both confident and excited: this time around, I actually knew what I was doing, had plenty of time to fine-tune course assignments and structure, and—last but definitely not least—had a stellar course roster. Then things fell apart.

At times, the whole group almost got reduced to (happy) tears by some particularly touching letter of support from an alum. At other times, they felt discouraged by institutional delays or instances of miscommunication but learned how to cope with them and to go on—a useful lesson for any interfaith leader.

Like other colleges throughout the nation, W&J went fully remote in late March 2020; by the end of a summer filled with uncertainty and rapidly mutating plans, the college decided to go to a hybrid teaching model in the fall. This was an unnerving prospect on many levels; it was, however, the thought of the capstone that was making me particularly apprehensive. How do you teach a discussion-based seminar course with only half of the class physically present? How do you send students to do site visits when local places of worship are closed? Worse yet, how do you hold public interfaith events in the midst of a pandemic? No way around it: the capstone was shaping up to be a disaster.

Miraculously, it wasn't. Part of the credit goes to IFYC, whose efforts to keep up their good work under inauspicious circumstances were a source of both inspiration and tangible components for rebuilding the course. My students get a lot of credit, too, for their initiative and good-humored partnership. If I were to claim

any credit for myself, it would mostly be, ironically, for being able to step back, let others step in, and let go of my best-laid plans—nothing short of miraculous, given my obsessive-compulsive approach to course planning! Together, these three ingredients made for an unexpectedly successful course recipe, one I will be definitely using in the future. Let me offer here just a taste or two.

Of all the engaged learning assignments, the site visit was the one the COVID-19 pandemic affected the most—and the one whose loss I bemoaned the most. This assignment includes two parts. In addition to observing and analyzing a ritual in a tradition with which they aren't personally familiar, students are asked to

conduct interviews with members of the communities they visit. This worked out very well for the 2019 capstone students who were able to explore the rich religious landscape of Pittsburgh, including—a fortuitously direct connection to the interfaith ethnography covered in the course—the Sri Venkateswara Temple featured in Eck’s book. This option was out for the 2020 capstone. Although some places of worship offered online services that enabled students to complete the observation part, they did not allow for the kind of personal conversations that the previous class found so rewarding. As an alternative way to complete the interviews, I suggested that students seek out their peers at W&J with differing religious and spiritual worldviews. The results exceeded my expectations. As became clear during the in-class review, students found the experience to be not only informative but also emotionally compelling. Although no interviewees claimed to have been targets of religious intolerance at W&J (an encouraging discovery), there were some poignant stories shared about the perceived loss of spiritual connection and identity stemming from the inability to practice their rituals in a communal setting while on campus, due to the lack of a designated space. My students were clearly touched and at times heartbroken by this newly discovered aspect of their peers’ experience. They were also—as subsequent events revealed—filled with the resolve to do something about it.

This revised assignment ended up dovetailing perfectly with another equally unplanned modification to the course. Like many other IFYC events that year, the 2020 Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI) had to be moved online. This forced change, however, turned out to be a blessing for my capstone. Since the online format made scheduling and funding much more manageable, I opportunistically added participation in the ILI to the list of our engaged learning assignments. Once again, the effects were startling. For one, interacting with their peers from all over the country proved to be a genuinely transformative experience for my students in terms of their self-confidence and self-perception. Virtually overnight, they transitioned from referring to themselves (as they were prone to do before) as someone “interested in learning about interfaith leadership” to identifying as interfaith leaders in their own right—if, clearly, in need of further training. The opportunity to network with people from other schools also made them aware of various ways of fostering interfaith engagement on campus, and as a consequence, helped drastically reshape their plan for the capstone project.

This is how I ended up facing an unexpected ultimatum during the class session following the ILI. For their experiential project, students decided to work together to create an interfaith space that would provide all members of the campus community with a welcoming place for their spiritual practices as well as for interfaith activities and conversations. My students came to class clearly having done their homework and were prepared to move quickly. By the end of that session, they had already put together a flowchart of their next steps, a task distribution agreement, and a preliminary list of campus allies. The cell phones and laptops came out, the contact information for club presidents and student government officers was exchanged, and GoogleDoc lists were set up right as we were talking. It was both fascinating and slightly unnerving, like watching a tornado form. I did the only sensible thing: I sat back and confined myself to an advisory role.

This whirlwind of activity continued for the next two months. Students set up meetings with Student Life and faculty allies. They lobbied student organizations for support. They reached out to alumni. They secured donations as well as applied for (and won) the ILI Action Fund grant. They partnered with the Office of Assessment and Institutional Research to conduct a student survey on the needs of potential interfaith space users. They presented a proposal to the college president and deans leveraging these data and detailing how the interfaith space ties into the college’s commitment to inclusion.

Our class meetings never ended on time. There were days when I wished I had a bucket of cold water handy to break up the arguments. At times, the whole group almost got reduced to (happy) tears by some particularly touching letter of support from an alum. At other times, they felt discouraged by institutional delays or instances of miscommunication but learned how to cope with them and to go on—a useful lesson for any interfaith leader. They also learned that major undertakings do not always have conveniently firm end dates. Our class officially ended in December 2020, but the work on the Interfaith Space continued through the rest of the academic year.

As it transitioned from the visionary stage to the mundane but equally important plane of practical details and institutional logistics, the project continued to put demands on students' time and skills. There were discussions to be had with representatives of Student Christian Association, Hillel, and other faith-based groups on campus regarding desirable ritual and educational resources. Several Zoom meetings were arranged with the Residence Life staff to talk about furniture options—and, correspondingly, class representatives had to troop over to the designated space equipped with cameras, tape measurers, and diagram sketching supplies. Although most of the group graduated in May, several students managed to stay involved with the project, showing up at the end of the summer to help move furniture, unpack the interfaith library books, assemble a “meditation fountain,” and roll up the donated prayer rugs in preparation for the fall semester. Even as I write this piece months after the class ended, I keep getting messages on the group chat with new suggestions for religious objects and books to be purchased, so my phone just keeps on chiming!

It's clear that my students learned a lot from our class, but so did I while working with them. Whatever the next version of the capstone might turn out to look like, I am sure it will be better for this experience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the organizers and faculty of the summer 2020 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence for the curricular resources and administrative tips they provided during the sessions and individual consultations. I would also like to thank the students in my fall 2020 interfaith leadership studies capstone class (Kali Bunecicky '21, Marilyn Burkhardt '21, Selena Easley '21, Annalyse Friday '22, Lucy Hutchinson '21, Tori McKeehan '21, Kiley Miller '21, and Jessica Wensus '21) and members of the Student Life division at Washington and Jefferson College who helped with the setup of the Interfaith Space.

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CHAPTER 7

Embracing Interfaith in the Classroom: Lessons Learned at a Christian Institution

BY ANDREW F. HAGGERTY, PENNYLYN DYKSTRA-PRUIM, FRANS VAN LIERE, DOUG HOWARD, MICHELLE LOYD-PAIGE, AND MARY HULST

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Calvin University is a small Christian liberal arts university located in Michigan. It was founded in 1876 by Dutch immigrants as a school of ministry training and has since grown into a dynamic university with more than one hundred academic majors, minors, and programs. Throughout its history, one constant has been its deep commitments to its Reformed Christian roots and its identity as an institution of the Christian Reformed Church. In recent years, interfaith initiatives have been increasing in breadth and depth due largely to a committed and passionate group of students, faculty, and staff seeking to incorporate interfaith engagement and understanding into the Calvin experience. Notably, given Calvin's deep Reformed Christian theological commitments, this outgrowth of interfaith activity has occurred largely *because of not in spite of* the university's religious identity.

These interfaith initiatives have touched most areas of campus, including in the classroom. While it has not been uncommon throughout Calvin's history for specific courses to include interfaith content and experiences, opportunities for Calvin students to engage across faith and worldview in the classroom are increasing each year. Since the late 2010s, three courses have provided rich opportunities for interfaith engagement both on and off campus:

- **Muslim Neighbors and Christian Hospitality:** This course introduces students to Islam, to Muslims in the United States, and to some of our local and regional Muslim neighbors. By including an introduction to intercultural learning, the course builds skills for engagement across all types of cultural lines.
- **Interfaith Scriptural Reasoning:** Scriptural reasoning is an interfaith practice in which Christians, Jews, and Muslims meet to study their sacred scriptures together to deepen their understanding of their own faith traditions and those of others. In this course, Calvin students join with Jewish and Muslim students from around the world via video conferencing and occasional in-person visits to explore select readings from their respective sacred traditions and see how these traditions help believers to make sense of contemporary issues.
- **India and Its World:** This course is focused on the cultural history of South Asia from the earliest times to the twentieth century. The course involves interfaith relations, which include both guests coming to campus and a visit to a local mosque.

These courses have afforded valuable opportunities for innovative pedagogy and interfaith engagement with partners in our local community and around the world, including virtual synchronous scriptural study with interfaith counterparts as far away as Oman and conversations with faith leaders, both local and across the globe. Such experiences have led to meaningful outcomes for both students and instructors who facilitate them.

Student assessments and evaluations regularly demonstrate that these courses have been transformational for many who participate. On our Christian campus, it is not uncommon to hear from students that they approach interfaith classroom experiences with a certain level of apprehension, perhaps expecting them to be contentious. Many of those same students, however, describe a profound sense of growth after engaging with peers from other faith traditions. They articulate a mutual approach of openness and humility, and they describe these new relationships as incredibly humanizing for a previously unknown other.

This theme is borne throughout most interfaith work on our campus—actual interpersonal interaction with members of other faiths and worldviews ends up as the most enjoyable and impactful aspect of these experiences. While embodied, in-person interaction is the primary aim for most instructors, experimenting with virtual technologies has opened up a range of possibilities (and success stories) of expanding our interfaith network around the world. For example, as described above, the scriptural reasoning course has expanded to include collaboration with partners worldwide. Additionally, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Muslim partners in our local community designed a creative virtual “visit” to their mosque in 2020 in place of the traditional in-person tour as part of the Muslim Neighbors and Christian Hospitality course.

Faculty teaching these courses have largely found them to be moving and personally transformational experiences. Though a minority of the student body has participated in these classes thus far—and largely for the purposes of fulfilling a cross-cultural engagement core education requirement—the evaluations and assessments that tell stories of appreciation for and growth through interfaith experiences are edifying for instructors who facilitate these challenging courses. And beyond a sense of professional satisfaction, instructors have found that these courses motivate them to continue incorporating such deep learning experiences into their classrooms. One remarked that teaching an interfaith course demonstrated the rich set of interfaith resources in our local community and that he was resolved to continue using these resources in the classroom as long as our local contacts are willing.

An additional benefit for faculty was the personal development they experienced through engaging new interfaith resources alongside students. While many instructors have pursued interfaith experiences throughout their careers out of an alignment with personal and professional values, teaching interfaith courses inspired them to engage in theoretical literature that has helped them articulate and organize thoughts around why and how they do the interfaith work that they have been doing for years or decades.

An important concluding note is that the positive outcomes described above are not guaranteed and not necessarily consistent year to year. Some students join these courses out of an obligation to fulfill requirements for graduation rather than an intrinsic interest in interfaith engagement. As a result, the students tend to range from enthusiastic to apathetic. However, in a recent semester, one course had several students whose postures were beyond apathetic and were in fact critical or even resentful that a Christian university would be engaging in such experiences. This led to a tense and fraught classroom environment for the instructors and other students. While stories of authentic engagement and personal transformation far outweigh those just described, such challenging experiences remind us that carrying out the work of interfaith engagement on a Christian campus requires risk, patience, and resilience—both to press on after difficult experiences and to learn from our mistakes with humility.



CHAPTER 8

“Respect and Recognition”: The Intergroup Dialogue on Worldviews Course at the University of Miami

BY MIRIAM LIPSKY, ASHMEET KAUR OBEROI, AND RYAN SCHOOLEY

Miriam Lipsky is the director of special projects in the office of the provost and an adjunct faculty member in the School of Education and Human Development, Ashmeet Kaur Oberoi is an assistant professor of professional practice (clinical line) and the director of the community and social change master's program, and Ryan Schooley is a PhD student in counseling psychology, all at the University of Miami.

In 2013, Florida's University of Miami (UM)—a private, nonsectarian, major research university in one of the most dynamic and multicultural cities in the world—launched a culture transformation initiative, aiming to increase both engagement and inclusiveness and to help faculty and staff create a culture of belonging that benefits students (Frenk 2016). In line with UM's core values and commitment to creating a culture of belonging, the university launched an intergroup dialogue (IGD) course in 2018. The goal of this course is to help participants build skills and tools to promote respectful dialogue across differences in the classroom, the workplace, and beyond—while sharing perspectives and ideas that advance intellectual growth, personal development, and an equitable campus climate where empathy, productivity, and progress can flourish.

UM's program follows the model developed by the University of Michigan's Program on Intergroup Relations. Research on this IGD model (Gurin, Nagda, and Zúñiga 2013) has indicated significant differences in IGD participants versus a comparison group in the areas of structural understanding (how power and privilege are related to various types of intergroup inequality), intergroup empathy (emotional empathy), and intergroup action (finding ways that people can work together to create a more just society).

Diversity and inclusion programs often focus on race, gender, and sexual orientation, and the initial offerings in the UM IGD program were no exception. Realizing that faith and spirituality are an oft-neglected area of diversity, and with support from Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities, we were able to design and launch an additional version of the course that focuses on diverse worldviews. To help inform the design of this course, we assembled a team to attend the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence in 2018, where we had the opportunity to network with colleagues from other institutions who were engaged in interfaith work, as well as learn about IFYC resources. It was at the institute that we began to develop our plan for this new IGD course.

The Intergroup Dialogue on Worldviews course aims to create a space for students to discuss how religious and nonreligious traditions affect their individual faiths, perspectives, and worldviews. To date, we have held a total of three sections across three semesters. Students earn three credits for the course, which is offered as part of the community and applied psychological studies major in the School of Education and Human Development. Enrollment is capped at twelve students to provide an optimum setting for dialogue. In the course, we aim to cultivate dialogue skills and appreciative knowledge to address the following urgent questions:

1. How are my identity, values, and worldviews informed by my faith or secular traditions?

2. How can I engage in dialogue with people who belong to religious and nonreligious traditions different from my own?
3. How do I work with people of different faith backgrounds and worldviews to promote social justice and religious pluralism?
4. What is interfaith leadership, who are past interfaith leaders, and how might I become one in my own community?
5. How does religious discrimination intersect with additional social “-isms”? What steps can we take to overcome these intersecting issues within a polarized contemporary culture?

What is distinct about this course is that we examine the above questions with a lens of intersectionality as informed by Black feminist thought and women of color feminism (Crenshaw 1989; Combahee River Collective 1977). We use the framework of intersectionality to create a space where students examine the relationships among social systems with disparate impacts across race, class, gender, age, ability, religion, and citizenship status. Through this course, we aim to create nuanced, intersectional understandings of identity, socialization, and avenues for change as well as to foster critical consciousness through dialogue. The course is grounded in a belief that dialogue can be transformative and lead to further action. To ensure an open space with intentional conversation, we teach the tenets of dialogue to all participants, such as equity and efforts to minimize coercion in communication, empathetic (not strictly intellectual) listening and responding, and engagement with assumptions underlying stated content (Bohm 2004; Huang-Nissen 1999; Yankelovich 1999). The course facilitators are Ashmeet Kaur Oberoi and Ryan Schooley, coauthors of this chapter.

In the development of this course, we relied heavily on resources available on IFYC’s website (<http://ifyc.org>). For example, in one of our class sessions, we used two resources from the Building Regular Interfaith Dialogue through Generous Engagement (BRIDGE) curriculum: videos that describe what interfaith leadership is and how it contributes to the community, and the “identity gears” activity to help students explore different aspects of their identities. We have also used the introductory video from IFYC’s “We Are Each Other’s” curriculum, which students find very inspiring and uplifting. Additionally, we have assigned a couple of chapters from IFYC Founder and President Eboo Patel’s book *Acts of Faith: The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation*, and IFYC’s podcasts on intersections between interfaith and racial justice leadership as required readings for the course. Finally, we have created two assignments inspired by the Ethic of Interfaith Cooperation and My Neighbor’s Faith activities available as resources on IFYC’s website.

In her final reflection on the course, one student noted,

Religion is something that I never thought about too much, but once I started learning about its importance regarding intergroup dialogue, it actually became something that I could confidently say interested me. I may not know the backgrounds of every religion, but I know how to learn about others’ faith through conversation and research. This class taught me how I can teach myself and how I can teach others in my life.

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent transition to virtual classes caused clear instructional impacts on the course. Experiential activities guide much of the discussion in an IGD course. We had to adapt activities to fit the new teaching modality and replace some activities altogether. The informal relationship building critical to IGD courses that is typically bolstered through conversations before class and during breaks could not happen. To ensure that we built the relationships foundational to effective dialogue courses, we intentionally privileged community over content when necessary and held space for students to discuss the impact of world events on their engagement.

Course content and framing also shifted in 2020 following the uprising for racial justice after the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and continued racialized violence and brutality of policing. Inspired by Patel's call that "racial equity is an interfaith movement" (2020), we subsequently revised the course to take a more explicit intersectional lens while continuing to focus on religious traditions, cultural identity, and worldview. We incorporated further readings, podcasts, and discussions concerning connections among these constructs, white supremacy, and ongoing racial injustice. By taking such a lens and being flexible in facilitation, we were able to have in-depth discussions about religious pluralism, culture, racism, and the intersections of oppression and justice within the current sociopolitical context.

Students have provided positive feedback concerning the impact IGD has had on their interactions and experiences at the university and beyond. One student told us, "The interfaith and social justice concepts from the course have inspired me to get out of my comfort zone and interact with people who come from different backgrounds and walks of life."

Another student reflected on how her assumptions were challenged in this course, saying that it helped her realize that "other people have such greatly different opinions because of their differing experiences. This lesson is one that ever since I learned it, I find myself applying it everywhere." She explained that while she once thought of people who don't believe in a specific religion as very different from herself, "I realized that while yes, they are different in some ways, we do share similarities that deserve both a lot of respect and recognition."

One student spoke to the importance of discussing current issues in the course: "With everything going on in the world, it's been incredible to have a productive outlet to discuss current events and social issues. I feel that this class has solidified my trajectory for my future career aspirations."

Finally, a student remarked, "I finally feel like I learned meaningful information and had the real-life opportunity to engage in quality conversation in a university. This is the type of class I came to school for."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The development of this course was supported by an Interfaith Youth Core Campus Innovation grant for innovative curriculum development and an Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence grant.

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CHAPTER 9

From Academics to Accommodations: Interfaith, Inclusion, and Interdependence at Ursinus College

BY ALEXANDRIA FRISCH, MEREDITH GOLDSMITH, AND HEATHER LOBBAN-VIRAVONG

Alexandria Frisch is a visiting assistant professor in Jewish studies and the coordinator of Jewish life, Meredith Goldsmith is a professor of English and the associate dean, and Heather Lobban-Viravong is the vice president for college and community engagement, all at Ursinus College.

From 2019 onward, Ursinus College, a nationally recognized, private, nonsectarian, liberal arts college in Pennsylvania, has been engaged in strategic planning—supported by Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities—and in implementing a plan to support religious and worldview diversity. Our work began with our participation at the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence in 2019, and our programming has continued, and even accelerated, during the global COVID-19 pandemic. In numerous instances, we’ve been reminded just how much interfaith conversations can strengthen bonds and provide comfort during this extraordinarily challenging time. Below are highlights of just a few initiatives that developed out of the project, including an interfaith cooperation course, work toward a future interfaith studies minor, and a campus-wide interfaith accommodations policy.

Among our curricular initiatives, in the spring 2021 semester, we launched our first interdivisional one-credit course, Interfaith Cooperation from Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter, cotaught by Terri Ofori (college chaplain and director of religious and spiritual life); Alexandria Frisch (visiting assistant professor in Jewish studies, coordinator of Jewish life, and coauthor of this chapter); and Ashley Henderson (director of the college’s Institute for Inclusion and Equity). This course traces the role that religious communities and faith leaders have played in the fight for racial justice in the United States. By using the dual lenses of racial and religious diversity, the course educates students on how to use their own agency to speak about issues of social concern with a focus on intersectionality. We have further divided the course into a tripartite structure with distinct foci and goals, each taught separately by one of us:

1. What is our worldview and how does that factor into interfaith cooperation?
2. How does the civil rights movement provide us with a historical foundation for interfaith cooperation?
3. How can we use our own self-reflections from part 1 and the historical lens of part 2 to achieve change in today’s fight for racial equity?

The course concludes with a focus on the Charette Procedure—an intensive, collaborative brainstorming exercise—on issues of race among diverse participants, as a modality for having productive conversations across difference.

Not only did students learn about the concepts and history of interfaith leadership in this course, but the class itself—full of students who identified as Christian, Muslim, secular, Jewish, and Catholic—functioned as its own microcosm of interfaith cooperation. Students learned as much from each other as they did from the instructors and material.

We expect to offer a second one-credit course in the future. The expectation is that students will enroll in the second course in the semester after completing the first one. They will use what they learned in the first

course to facilitate conversations among their fellow students about topics that reflect how religious beliefs and worldviews intersect with other aspects of identity such as race, culture, sexual orientation, gender, and different abilities. The two semesters will culminate in the opportunity to participate in a field education experience in the US South (postponed to spring 2022 because of COVID-19), focusing on prominent civil rights sites, museums, and memorials. We intend to integrate both of these courses and the trip into the planned interfaith studies minor.

To work on developing the minor, we hosted an asynchronous discussion group on interfaith studies among ten faculty and staff throughout January 2021. The group, which we named Texting about Interfaith Texts, conducted its discussions through the chat app on Microsoft Teams. Members of the group, who volunteered to participate and received a stipend, included faculty from diverse departments such as art history, music, religious studies, history, education, environmental science, media and communication studies, philosophy, and English. We discussed our own experiences with interfaith programs and spaces; reflected on the interfaith legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.; parsed out the differences among interfaith, theological, and religious studies; and identified where in our current curriculum interfaith conversations naturally occur. By steering the conversation from the personal to the curricular, not only did we raise awareness about the field of interfaith studies, but we were able to ascertain that there are multiple courses in different departments that would make a good fit for an interfaith studies minor, and we are more assured that faculty would support this interdisciplinary minor. Planning work for the minor has continued with the formation of an interfaith studies working group.

In our planning work with IFYC, we identified the lack of a campus-wide interfaith accommodations policy as an area of strategic concern, and in subsequent conversations, we've come to understand the centrality of the policy in our work. In response to this concern, the college formed a working group—with representation from dining, student life, disability services, academic affairs, and human resources—to begin the work of developing such a policy. Months of information gathering and discussion resulted in a Religious and Spiritual Life Observance Policy, which went into effect in spring 2021, and supports all students and employees who seek accommodations for religious and spiritual observances (Ursinus College 2021). The policy ensures that students and employees who seek this type of accommodation have the needed flexibility to meet their academic, extracurricular, and work obligations. The policy lives in multiple places on the college's website so awareness among faculty, staff, and students about the policy continues to grow. As we continue introducing the policy to the campus, we're also asking colleagues to refer to an interfaith calendar that can inform the scheduling of assignments on syllabi as well as larger college programming. Jordan Scharaga, associate director of college events and signature programs, notes, "Integrating the interfaith calendar as part of the campus-wide calendar process takes us a step closer to building a more interconnected, holistic, and vibrant community."

We have now embarked on broader education for administrators, faculty, staff, and students regarding the accommodations policy, which touches many aspects of residential, academic, and professional life at the college. Our presentation to the president's cabinet in February 2021 focused on the accommodations policy and strategic plan and emphasized the power of interfaith work to break down silos, as it has already begun to

Not only did students learn about the concepts and history of interfaith leadership in this course, but the class itself—full of students who identified as Christian, Muslim, secular, Jewish, and Catholic—functioned as its own microcosm of interfaith cooperation. Students learned as much from each other as they did from the instructors and material.

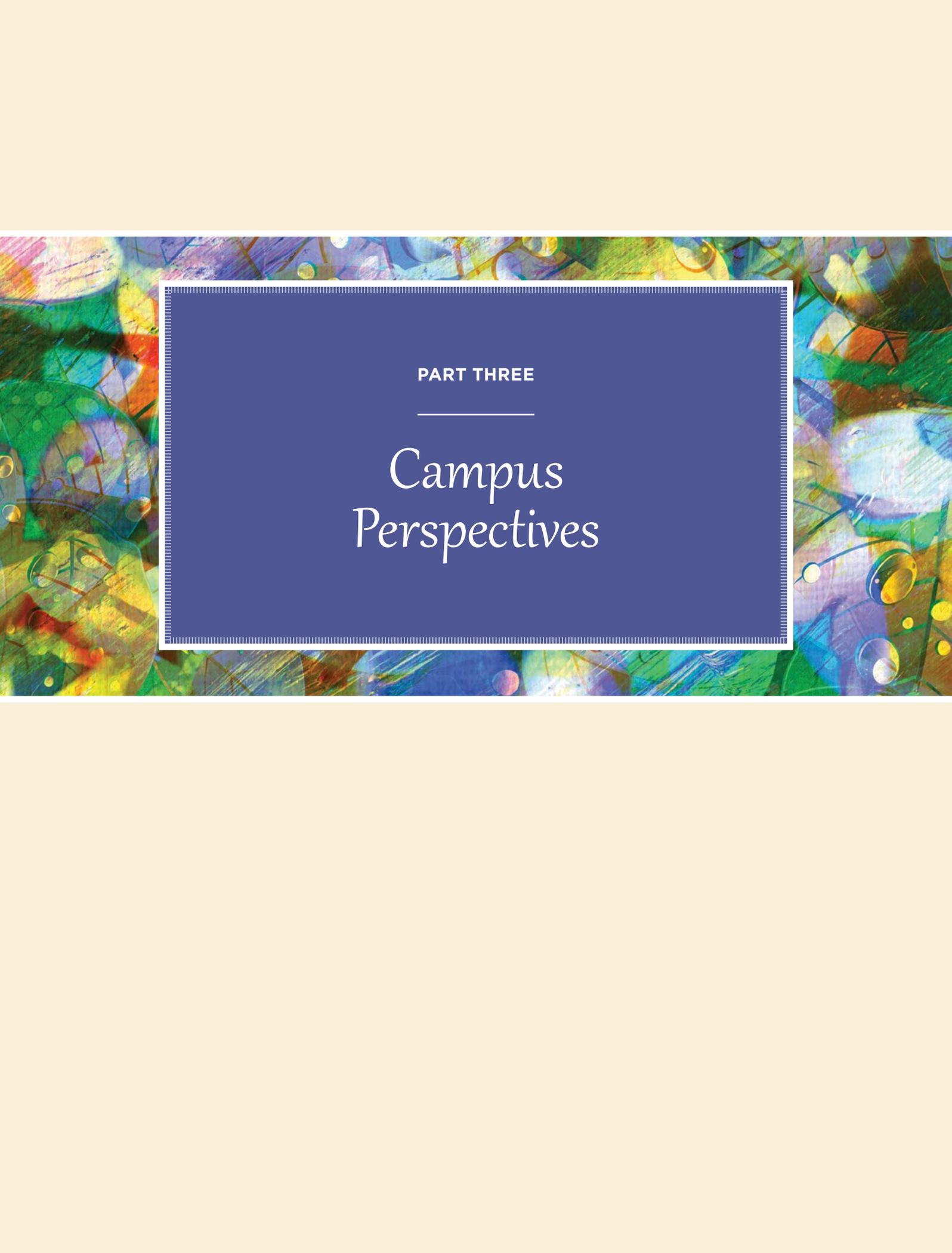
do, among faculty, staff, and students; among members of different identity groups on campus; and among the curricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular divisions that typically characterize a college community. We've realized that interfaith work can fundamentally challenge those divisions and help us conceive of the student experience more holistically—and more richly—than before. We are eager to continue this work at Ursinus, rooting interfaith work even more thoroughly in the college landscape. (For more on interfaith work at Ursinus, see Chapter 3.)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge Ursinus College's dean's office, members of our interfaith studies working group, and support from Interfaith Youth Core, without which these initiatives wouldn't have been possible.

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The background of the page is a vibrant, abstract collage of colors including green, blue, yellow, and purple, with various textures and patterns. A central blue rectangular box with a white border contains the text. The text is centered within the box and includes a horizontal line above the main title.

PART THREE

Campus
Perspectives



CHAPTER 10

Interfaith Incentives: Funding and Measuring Interfaith Education at Doane University

BY AMANDA IRIONS, LEAH CECH, AND LUIS SOTELO

Amanda Irions is an assistant professor of communications, Leah Cech (formerly Leah Rediger) is the director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life, and Luis Sotelo is the vice president for diversity, equity, and inclusion, all at Doane University.

After attending the 2020 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence, a team from Doane University (a nationally recognized private liberal arts university in Nebraska that is historically affiliated with the United Church of Christ) decided to advance interfaith education and cooperation at our institution in part by establishing incentive grants. These grants encourage full-time and adjunct faculty to edit their syllabi to include interfaith content in existing courses. We also developed a measure to assess the interfaith learning outcomes of these efforts. The desire behind this initiative is twofold. One, we recognized that the university's Office of Religious and Spiritual Life has had success in interfaith education and outreach but broadening our scope to include academic curriculum and faculty incentives has potential for university-wide impact. Two, by inviting all faculty and adjuncts to apply, but particularly those who teach the general education courses required of all first-, second-, and third-year students, we have an opportunity to reach a wider audience, as not all of these students attend optional programming from Religious and Spiritual Life.

Using funding we received from the institute, we offered a total of five interfaith incentive grants at \$250 each. We asked full-time and adjunct faculty recipients to use the funds as individual compensation for their time and energy in developing a new mini-unit, activity, or component within an existing course that would incorporate interfaith knowledge or skills into the course topic. To increase impact, we gave priority to general education courses and those with higher projected enrollment. We asked applicants to submit the current course syllabus, a description of the course, projected enrollment, and learning outcomes for the proposed interfaith component.

The first round of proposals was extremely limited in number, and we ended up giving only one award out of the five we had planned. This first award was for a spring 2021 general education course. We estimate that both internal and external factors contributed to the low number of proposals, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of a budget reprioritization process at our institution, which led to job insecurity for many faculty and staff.

In response to these factors, our team applied for and received an extension of one year, plus additional funding. With the goal of encouraging more proposals in the second year, we increased the amount of the stipend to \$500 per award and reduced the number of awards available to three. Additionally, to foster interfaith engagement and opportunity for education among colleagues, grant recipients for the spring 2022 semester will participate in a supportive learning community that will meet once a month during the grant period (January to May 2022). We anticipate increased impact and engagement within our university community as this project continues to adapt and evolve in the future.

Our team thought it important to design an interfaith measure to capture students’ beliefs about how the grant-funded class lesson(s) affected their interfaith knowledge, growth, and appreciation for the diversity of religious, secular, and spiritual identities. To that end, we created a measure of six overarching interfaith learning outcomes (see the table on this page) with a mix of open- and closed-ended items. The closed-ended items are measured on a scale anchored by 0 (“This statement is not true of me at all”) and 6 (“This statement is completely true of me.”)

This measure is based in part on an existing tool our institution uses to assess seminar participants’ growth and appreciation of broader matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our team modified that measurement tool to respond to the structure of the grant and assess specific interfaith learning outcomes, based on Interfaith Youth Core’s learning outcomes bank (n.d.).

Our team designed this new tool as a pre-test/post-test design so that students’ growth in these key areas can be measured. We believe that these growth scores offer important feedback for grantees about how impactful the interfaith mini-unit was for their students. We also believe that these growth scores provide important information to students about their interfaith knowledge and practices. Finally, we hope that the granting process will eventually result in so many students being exposed to interfaith concepts in these grant-funded mini-units that our team will be able to provide reliable and valid information in a future publication.

TABLE: Measure of interfaith learning outcomes.

Interfaith Learning Outcomes	Sample Question 1 Please rate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statement.	Sample Question 2 Please rate to what degree you agree or disagree with the following statement.
1. Situate their own evolving worldview and/or Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identity (RSSI) within a pluralistic context.	Through this unit, I understand that fully expressing my RSSI in a context that enables others to fully express theirs leads to greater inclusion and belonging.	Through this unit, I am able to engage in interfaith conversations in ways that empower those of all RSSIs to participate.
2. Identify and explain how attitudes, appreciative knowledge, and relationships function in tandem in interfaith engagement.	Through this unit, I am able to explain how sharing my interfaith knowledge can both increase another’s appreciation of RSSIs and reduce religious prejudice.	Through this unit, I am confident in seeking diverse interfaith relationships as a means to increase social cohesion.
3. Understand the role that intersectionality and multiple identities play in religious diversity and inclusion.	Through this unit, I have improved my ability to understand how our multiple identities affect religious diversity.	Through this unit, I appreciate how RSSIs intersect with additional identities I have.
4. Integrate understanding of interfaith literacy into building interfaith relationships.	Through this unit, I am more confident seeking out relationships with people who hold beliefs or values different from my own.	Through this unit, I am able to use my interfaith literacy to help me understand how to navigate interfaith relationships.
5. Compare common values between two religious or philosophical worldviews other than their own.	Through this unit, I can identify the values of other religious or philosophical worldviews.	Through this unit, I have improved my ability to identify values that two religious or philosophical worldviews have in common.
6. Connect interfaith cooperation to the topic of this course.	Through this unit, I see connections between interfaith concepts and the topic of this course that I did not see before.	Through this unit, I can apply interfaith cooperation to [insert topic] in ways that could benefit myself, my peers, and my community.

Launching the faculty interfaith incentive grants to promote interfaith learning in more classrooms across disciplines aligns with Doane’s mission to instill a commitment in our students to lead and serve in the global community. The accompanying pre-test and post-test interfaith measure empowers our students, faculty, and Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to access a ready-to-use instrument to collect actionable data that reveal the impact of interfaith components in our curricula. Faculty members have the flexibility to design their interfaith classroom components to meet a few or all of the six learning outcomes on the measure.

We recognize that the customizable interfaith measure will increase the availability of data on the effectiveness of interfaith learning at Doane—at the course section level and in the aggregate from courses embedding interfaith mini-units. This will assist faculty in making decisions about how they design and reshape interfaith learning experiences to optimize results and progress within the classroom. At the system level, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion drives inclusion and belonging by embracing a hybrid strategic framework, which we call the Forward Together Strategy. The strategy balances centralized coordination and leadership with decentralized initiatives led by fifteen departments, colleges, and divisions across the institution. This approach enables us to model a learning organization culture and integrate the data from the interfaith measure to build our team’s capacity to tailor holistic support for students and faculty. In this way, we can support faculty in delivering high-impact learning outcomes, convening interfaith-focused learning communities, celebrating progress, and elevating the relevance of systemically and sustainably advancing interfaith education and cooperation. These efforts will prepare our students to thrive in the global community as they foster communities of inclusion and belonging for all.

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CHAPTER 11

Relationships, Resilience, and Identity: The Power of Student-Led Multireligious Partnerships

BY DREW TUCKER, NICKY GUTIERREZ, AND NIEL JOHNSON

Drew Tucker is the university pastor, Nicky Gutierrez is an interfaith intern and a 2021 graduate with a bachelor of arts degree in creative writing and religion, and Niel Johnson is a Muslim representative and coconvener of the Interfaith Council, all at Capital University.

An online Passover seder? A take-home Diwali? Meet Your Muslim Neighbor via Zoom? None of this is what we imagined, but this is interfaith leadership in an era shaped by the COVID-19 pandemic. We've learned about the challenges of communication and the difficulty of connection, as well as the power of multireligious partnerships to transform our world.

Capital University in Ohio, a liberal arts university that is nationally recognized in the area of student success, is a different community now than the one that joined the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence in 2019. The global pandemic interrupted us. The international cry for anti-racism confronted us. We are now in the process of reform. As we are an institution of Lutheran higher education, reform should not be too far from our identity. Yet, like any predominantly white institution (PWI), the gravity of stasis all too often pulls us into redressing white supremacy rather than dismantling it, recasting privilege rather than redistributing power, and reinforcing the status quo rather than rebuilding a more just structure that meets the needs of all students, faculty, staff, and community partners—with special attention to those people most often marginalized, minoritized, oppressed, or ignored by the powers that exist and persist. While our struggle is our own, there is certainly overlap with other church-related PWIs.

The phoenix that arose from the ashes of the pandemic was the excellent leadership of our students. After a strong start to our interfaith efforts in 2019 and early 2020—with students and faculty defining our understanding of Lutheran values (Tucker 2021) and exploring a statement on religious diversity—pandemic immediacies nearly derailed our work. Faculty were called to redesign entire courses for online delivery, practically overnight. Staff were called to triage student needs, with counseling, pastoral care, student success, and faith coaching requests skyrocketing. Already stretched thin, the important resource of employee time served to meet the needs associated with both the emergence of the novel coronavirus and the persistence of racism as they both gripped the world around us and our community. It appeared we might have to table, temporarily, the work we'd begun to focus on campus-wide interfaith excellence.

Our students, our *raison d'être*, were unsatisfied with that possibility. Instead, they took charge and placed an interreligious focus at the center of their programming efforts. None of this was easy. We realized the terrible inefficiency of group text messaging as a communication medium, despite its accessibility. We recognized quickly that there were multiple demands on students' time, just as much as for faculty and staff. Yet we discovered that part of excellence in interfaith teaching and learning is listening to the needs and following the leadership of our students, whose proximity to their peers highlights cultural priorities and generational willingness to participate in any given event. Through that emphasis, what we found as driving forces of these interfaith events were relationships in the face of isolation, resilience amid transition, and identity development through obstacles.

Relationships in the face of isolation: The necessity of relationships inspired students to develop unique ways to continue once-popular in-person events with a remote twist. When our local guidance prevented gatherings of more than ten people, both our annual Diwali celebration and campus seder could have folded. Instead, student leaders reformed the events both to keep our community safe and to celebrate vital ethnic, cultural, and religious traditions. Rather than gathering one hundred people together to celebrate Diwali, student groups like the Asian American Alliance and Global Student Association planned for an event that incorporated a digital and a take-home component. Participants stopped in the student center to pick up food provided by local Indian caterers and then engaged in online activities featuring some of the art, dance, and light so common to the festival. Our seder, coordinated by a Jewish student and an alumnus in rabbinical training, featured a ten-person gathering streamed live to many more who had come by to pick up food, including latkes and other kosher foods homemade by Capital students. Still others saw creative potential amid our struggles and launched brand-new events. One of the coconveners of our Interfaith Council, a Hindu student, connected with the Turkish-American Society of Ohio (TASO) to host a remote Meet Your Muslim Neighbor event. This included a dinner catered by a local Turkish, family-owned restaurant; an online introduction to Islam's Five Pillars; and conversation, via Zoom, with TASO members from across Ohio. In the face of isolation, students prioritized relationships in bodily and in remote fashions.

Resilience amid transition: The unexpected transitions that COVID-19 thrust upon us revealed a core resilience among Capital students. For instance, while our Students of Latinx Affinity (SOLA) group annually hosts a Día de Los Muertos event, there was no previous infrastructure connecting that commemoration to our Center for Faith and Learning (CFL). SOLA, CFL, our seminary, and Activity Management and Programming (a student organization that funds student programming) combined efforts to widen event participation and advance the momentum of our campus-wide commitment to interfaith excellence. Together we created an *ofrenda*, an altar with pictures of the dead and marigolds to surround them with beauty, and we connected with an Episcopalian priest who served in a Hispanic community to do a blessing. We discussed the Indigenous beliefs that influenced this specific tradition and also connected it to the pandemics of anti-Blackness and COVID-19 by memorializing those who had died from these afflictions on the *ofrenda*. All socially distant, with individually prepared meals purchased from a local restaurant owned and operated by Mexican migrants, this event grew its reach despite varied COVID-19 restrictions. The connectedness among our groups, and the connections between this tradition and the plight of the dual pandemics, highlighted the resilience that comes from our interconnectivity.

Identity development through obstacles: Religious oppression of and prejudice toward the LGBTQ+ community is well chronicled, as is a resulting distrust felt by some LGBTQ+ people for organized religion. Yet pandemic obstacles also led to new events and opportunities for identity formation at the intersections of sexual orientation, gender identity, and spirituality. Our Interfaith Student Organization (ISO), a student organization offshoot of our Interfaith Council, collaborated with Capital University PRIDE to put on Out Loud! A Panel About Religion, Sexuality, and Gender. The event focused on the intersections of identities and the experiences of Queer people within religious contexts. During Leadership Circle, a gathering of the student leaders of groups affiliated with Capital's Office of Diversity and Inclusion, the president of PRIDE brought up that her organization was considering a panel involving faith and spirituality. ISO offered to collaborate and send panel members, as we have representatives from a wide range of faith and nonfaith traditions, and many of those representatives are part of the Queer community. The excitement for this collaboration, within both PRIDE and ISO, indicated two things: a passion for the subject matter and a desire to do something in-person on a small, safe scale. With a few people managing the technology, six panelists spoke to a virtual audience of dozens about the benefits and dangers of religious engagement in their experience as people of faith who are also LGBTQ+. This opportunity not only provided a chance for public reflection on identity but also inspired numerous

conversations afterward within our groups to explore how we can more healthfully engage religion, sexuality, and gender.

When asked about their experience with interfaith teaching and learning in 2020–21, one of our student leaders succinctly said, “When organizing online, I think groups should be encouraged to lean on each other. It worked for us.” That is the essential reality of interfaith partnerships. They work. They bring relationships when we’re otherwise isolated. They breed resilience as we manage transitions. They center, celebrate, and cultivate identities as we encounter obstacles.

What kept our interfaith efforts alive in the pandemic was not funding, nor was it a staff model. It was students who, through their passion for the work and relationships with one another, catalyzed further growth of our interfaith priorities at Capital University. In fact, the necessity of excellent interfaith teaching and learning became so evident through 2020–21 that the work we did prior to the pandemic reemerged in the president’s cabinet (which now includes the directors of Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Center for Faith and Learning as regular members) and in our diversity and inclusion strategic plan (Cochran et al. 2021). Multireligious partnerships, with students at the center, have truly changed our world for the better. We are thankful for that unexpected gift. We take it now as a directive to continue the work of interfaith relationships that equip us with resilience for the road ahead and create a community that supports identity development for all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank the following members of Capital University for ensuring vitality for a diversity of religious and spiritual life throughout the COVID-19 pandemic: the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Interfaith Council, Interfaith Student Organization, Jewish Student Association, Muslim Student Association, Students of Latinx Affinity, Center for Faith and Learning, Activity Management and Programming, Embrace Ministries, and Trinity Lutheran Seminary.

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CHAPTER 12

Beautiful Things: How Queens University of Charlotte's Interfaith Programming Built Leadership and Community in a Pandemic

BY SHAWN BOWERS AND JOEY HAYNES

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The Friday after spring break in March 2020, Queens University of Charlotte made the executive call—days ahead of the North Carolina governor's order—to move classes completely online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. What began as a two-week shutdown soon became, as we all know now, a much longer haul. The pandemic fundamentally changed the fabric of our campus, and as the spring months gave way to summer and then fall, it was clear Queens needed to find new ways to safeguard the interfaith leadership and cooperation work that we had initiated on our campus, especially following our participation in the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence in 2020.

Queens—a regionally ranked liberal arts university and member of the Association of Presbyterian Colleges and Universities—is a close-knit community, and when the institution physically closed its doors, the chaplain's office had to reimagine ways to build intentional community and facilitate meaningful interfaith dialogue in virtual settings. What resulted was a framework for interfaith programming that not only endured through the drastic changes the global pandemic brought to our campus but further built on the foundation we had already established. Here we share reflections on how the chaplain's office adapted to meet the needs of our campus community.

A new model for our interfaith programming was born out of clear necessity as the university began to operate virtually for the 2020–21 academic year. Adapting existing in-person programming to a virtual platform didn't feel appropriate, so the chaplain's office made good use of the “We Are Each Other's” curriculum from Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) as an opportunity to devise new programming. Instead of the one-off workshops we had offered before the pandemic, we convened microcommunities—small cohorts that engaged in readings and dialogue—to allow for sustained, semester-long programs that cultivated interfaith leadership and cooperation and built community among different campus constituencies. Specifically, we offered three virtual programs: an interfaith leadership training program for students, an interfaith cooperation and engagement training program for faculty and staff, and a series of discussions around racial equity and interfaith cooperation for our entire campus community. These programs became anchors for participants in a shaky and taxing world as the pandemic stretched on longer than anyone had imagined.

At the onset of the fall 2020 semester, we pivoted to provide a structured leadership training program for students in a virtual format. This was a marked change from in-person, single workshops and discussions that were designed to be stand-alone programs before the pandemic. This new program provided scaffolding for students to develop interfaith skills and new knowledge of other faith traditions. The tiered online program, which consisted of a series of interfaith trainings, allowed students to work through the curriculum at their own pace. Attendance at monthly (virtual) gatherings, as well as at least three additional programs related to interfaith engagement or religious life outside the actual training modules, rounded out the program. By creating

a robust, semester-long program instead of singular trainings, our goal was that students would gain a deeper understanding of interfaith engagement and cooperation and the importance of these skills postgraduation.

A critical component of the training was personal reflection. We asked students to contemplate what they knew prior to the additional interfaith and religious life sessions they were asked to attend, what they learned from those additional programs, and how they gained a deeper understanding of engaging in religious or philosophical diversity and interfaith frameworks of cooperation. Student reflections showed promising outcomes; they illustrated that students felt more deeply rooted in their own religious traditions but also reported feeling more comfortable engaging in conversations with people of other worldviews, demonstrating an embrace of pluralism. Recognizing the differences among faith traditions while seeking common ground was a prevailing theme, as expressed by this student's feedback:

I have definitely noticed a change in my understanding of interfaith. Having never been exposed to other religions (other than the occasional Lutheran), I was excited to explore beliefs outside of my own. I now understand that, while we may disagree on certain topics, there are going to be areas of overlap. We all can agree on certain things, and I think that that is a beautiful thing.

The pandemic disrupted campus life not only for students but for faculty and staff as well. In fall 2020, a six-week online training program, entitled Introduction to Interfaith Cooperation and Engagement, replicated the camaraderie that faculty and staff sorely missed. The interfaith training provided a safe space for faculty and staff to come as they were to learn about religious pluralism and cross-cultural community building. What ensued were cooperative discussions that didn't feel like "work" being added to already cumbersome schedules but rather a connective tie to the university in the absence of shared physical space. The meetings reinforced the campus community, provided much-needed togetherness, and also had the added benefit of serving as pastoral care, with emotional and mental health check-ins for attendees. The training program enjoyed robust attendance, thanks in part to the convenience of the online format. Upon reflection, we believe the digital platform created space for institutional buy-in that may not have been afforded in the traditional face-to-face architecture of previous programming. Attendees represented many different departments and university units (or schools); this helped break down the typical silos.

In spring 2021, the chaplain's office joined forces with the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE) to merge interfaith concepts with racial equity discussions in light of the sociopolitical climate that also accompanied the pandemic. DICE, with its shared mission, was a natural partner for this endeavor. Funding from IFYC allowed the program to include participants across all constituencies of campus. Faculty, staff, and students alike learned about interfaith cooperation in the civil rights era, in hopes of deepening their understanding of the role faith communities and leaders play in racial justice in modern contexts. A postprogram survey showed that all student participants strongly agreed that they gained knowledge or skills that would help them navigate conversations on racial justice and equity more effectively. These are promising results.

Takeaways from this momentous academic year provide guideposts for this important work moving forward. Strong attendance indicates both students and staff are interested in developing interfaith leadership and learning about other faith traditions outside of their own worldviews. Tracking attendance has also shown widespread institutional buy-in from many critical student-facing departments on campus. It also shows us where we still have room to grow and which constituents on campus to target moving forward. Students and staff gained an understanding of interfaith concepts that they feel have served them well.

Indeed, the pandemic has revealed beautiful things, and this challenge allowed Queens to meet the needs of our community creatively. Some of the architecture of these programs will carry over in a postpandemic campus as we have seen that meaningful programs yield positive gains.



CHAPTER 13

How We Are Called to Be: Interfaith Engagement at Religiously Affiliated Institutions

BY JO M. BELD, ELLEN CROWELL, EZRA GWILLIAM, JULIA SHEETZ-WILLARD, AND FRANCES M. SWEENEY

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The mission of Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) is to “[partner] with U.S. colleges and universities to make interfaith cooperation a vital part of the college experience” (Interfaith Youth Core, n.d.) How does this mission intersect with missions of religiously affiliated institutions? How do such institutions express—in both word and deed—the relationship between their own religious traditions and the inclusive aims of interfaith engagement? This chapter examines responses to these questions for five institutions that participated in the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence between 2018 and 2020: Saint Louis University (Jesuit Catholic), Brigham Young University–Idaho (The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints), Villanova University (Augustinian Catholic), St. Olaf College (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), and Saint Mary’s College of California (Lasallian Catholic).

As religiously affiliated institutions, we embrace interfaith work as critical not *in spite of* but *because of* our religious heritage. Our missions call us to develop students holistically, with special attention to the dialogue between faith and reason as students are learning to discern their callings and to work for the common good. We are called to affirm the *imago Dei* (image of God) of all people and to educate our students to live lives of empathy and respect for all.

This chapter offers a look at the ways our five religiously affiliated institutions are integrating interfaith understanding and engagement, with specific examples of curricular and cocurricular programming ranging from the first-year experience to general education to vocational discernment. These case studies shed light on how faith-based institutions are embracing interfaith engagement as a mission-critical imperative for the twenty-first century.

Saint Louis University: Interfaith Engagement in the First-Year Experience

Saint Louis University (SLU) is a Catholic, Jesuit university in Missouri, “motivated by the inspiration and values of the Judeo-Christian tradition [and] guided by the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus.” SLU’s educational mission is one “dedicated to leadership in the continuing quest for understanding of God’s creation and for the discovery, dissemination and integration of the values, knowledge and skills required to transform society in the spirit of the Gospels” (Saint Louis University, n.d.-a). SLU is also an intentionally inclusive community that welcomes all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, national origin, age, disability, faith, sexual orientation, gender, class, or ideology. Our 7,500 undergraduates—only 21 percent of whom currently identify themselves as Roman Catholic—come to us from all fifty states and from seventy-two countries. How does an institution whose mission statement makes such faith-based claims transform this mission into an

inclusive first-year experience for all students? And what professional development opportunities are necessary to adequately prepare all faculty members, regardless of faith tradition, to teach within this mission?

Our recently ratified new core curriculum includes (1) a first-year Ignite Seminar that engages “each instructor’s distinct area of expertise as the lens through which students practice the Ignatian learning process—an integrative and personal approach to inquiry rooted in context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation”; and (2) a university orientation course entitled *Cura Personalis 1: Self in Community*, which launches all SLU students “on a path of self-discovery and deeper meaning-making by exploring fundamental questions of identity, history, and place” (Saint Louis University, n.d.-b). Known as “Ignatian” because it is rooted in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm places student experience, reflection, and action at the center of teaching and learning. SLU’s first-year Ignite Seminar thus introduces students to the distinctive nature of Jesuit education, while our university orientation course familiarizes them with the concept of *cura personalis*, the Ignatian ideal of care for the whole person. Our new core, elements of which were piloted in the fall 2021 semester, is set to launch in fall 2022 for all incoming students.

All full-time faculty are eligible to propose a first-year seminar course on a topic that ignites their own sense of intellectual passion. But each faculty member is also required to teach this topic through the five-step Ignatian pedagogical paradigm of context, experience, reflection, action, and evaluation. These five elements together make up the essential components of Jesuits’ meditative practices and became integrated with the Jesuits’ approach to education in the schools they established around the world. All instructors who elect to teach the Ignite first-year seminar are required to attend a workshop on Ignatian pedagogy, in which they are oriented to this history and philosophy and are guided in considering how to design their course in ways that make this educational paradigm visible and accessible to students. In this way, all faculty—regardless of their own relationship to faith traditions—are invited to demonstrate for our students what makes teaching and learning within the Jesuit intellectual tradition distinct and transformative, enabling students to identify and explore the questions that ignite their own sense of wonder and urgency.

In addition to Ignite Seminars, first-year students at Saint Louis University will also be enrolled in *Cura Personalis 1: Self In Community*. The first of a three-component sequence, this orientation course situates students within the histories, places, and resources of SLU and St. Louis, Missouri; invites them to consider the diverse perspectives and backgrounds that make up SLU, including their own; and orients them to a variety of academic, cultural, and wellness resources available to enrich their journeys. Every student enrolled in *Cura Personalis 1* will begin by completing an adaptation of IFYC’s Building Regular Interfaith Dialogue through Generous Engagement (BRIDGE) identity gears activity, which helps them reflect on their own identities, how these relate to each other, and how they might live them out within our campus community. This activity serves as the foundation for additional readings, discussions, and experiences through which students will examine their own identities and privileges and how they might act as allies in the care for and solidarity with fellow students.

As a two-hundred-year-old Catholic, Jesuit university, our intellectual traditions are inseparable from the faith traditions that inspired them. Yet by focusing our colleagues’ and students’ attention on two conceptual frameworks within that intellectual tradition—namely, the Ignatian pedagogical paradigm and the concept of *cura personalis*—our intention is to welcome all members of our SLU community to expand our collective sense of how these terms extend beyond their histories and spiritual traditions to include us all. As SLU moves toward our core launch in fall 2022, we will learn more about how our invitational approach to teaching and learning in the Ignatian tradition creates bridges among faculty members and students of all (and no) faith traditions.

Brigham Young University–Idaho: Interfaith Engagement in the Curriculum

Brigham Young University (BYU)–Idaho enrolls approximately twenty-four thousand students from all fifty states and forty-one countries. BYU–Idaho is religiously homogeneous as 98 percent of students are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the university’s religious sponsor. Given the identity and demographics at BYU–Idaho, the religious education department formed a religious literacy committee, seeking to enhance curricular offerings and religious literacy in our students. This goal originated from the aims stated in our university mission statement and institutional learning outcomes to “develop disciples of Jesus Christ who are leaders in their homes, the Church, and their communities” (Brigham Young University–Idaho, n.d.-a) and to develop “sound thinkers,” “effective communicators,” and “skilled collaborators” (Brigham Young University–Idaho, n.d.-b).

To this end, we carried out three curricular implementations: (1) create an interfaith leadership course in the religious education department, (2) develop an interfaith module in the department’s Foundations of the Restoration course, and (3) offer professional development opportunities by forming a world religions teaching team.

Interfaith leadership course: Before this course reaches approval to be included as a general education elective course (our long-term goal), it is housed and taught in the religious education department as a special topics class, beginning in fall 2021. The course objectives are for students to (1) develop and articulate a vision of interfaith leadership that leads toward understanding and cooperation; (2) cultivate a knowledge base for interfaith leadership, including an appreciative knowledge of traditions other than one’s own while still maintaining one’s personal religious and spiritual convictions; and (3) nurture and apply fundamental skills of interfaith leadership within their own sphere of influence to forge bonds of cooperation. Specific curriculum was adapted from IFYC and Dominion University’s Interfaith Leadership Video Series, the interfaith outreach of the church, and the Faith Counts website (<https://faithcounts.com>).

Foundations of the Restoration interfaith module: In the Foundations of the Restoration course, students study key doctrine, people, and events related to the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ. Given the doctrinal emphasis of this course, the religious literacy committee deemed it an appropriate avenue to emphasize the doctrinal underpinnings of interfaith work as found in and established by the church and its leaders.

Following the recommendation of our department chair, teachers added curricular and pedagogical strategies within the course framework. This new module explores interfaith engagement by introducing IFYC conceptual language and teachings from past and current church leaders, such as the joint statement from church President Russell M. Nelson and three National Association for the Advancement of Colored People leaders, President and CEO Derrick Johnson, Chairman of the Board Leon Russell, and Chairman Emeritus of Religious Affairs Reverend Amos C. Brown:

Unitedly we declare that the answers to racism, prejudice, discrimination and hate will not come from government or law enforcement alone. Solutions will come as we open our hearts to those whose lives are different than our own, as we work to build bonds of genuine friendship, and as we see each other as the brothers and sisters we are—for we are all children of a loving God. (Nelson et al. 2020)

By including an interfaith module in a required course espousing the history, doctrine, and practices of the church, we highlight the importance of interfaith engagement to more than five thousand students annually.

World religions teaching team: In recent years, the world religions elective course has steadily increased in popularity, with 350 students enrolled in the winter 2021 semester. To provide specific curricula objectives and unification, the faculty engaged in efforts to harmonize the course within the American Academy of Religion’s religious literacy guidelines. Faculty members also learned pedagogical approaches and curricular adaptations

emphasizing the importance for students not only to understand the key history, beliefs, and practices of major religions but also to appreciate the divinity within each of these religions following the prophet Joseph Smith’s exhortation that church members should “gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up” as “one of the grand fundamental principles of ‘Mormonism’ is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may” (Smith 1856, 1,681, 1,666).

Interfaith work and religious literacy are critical in developing the kind of leaders envisioned by the BYU–Idaho mission statement and institutional learning outcomes (Brigham Young University–Idaho, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). While there is much work to do, faculty are implementing specific curricula approaches with the appreciated aid of IFYC. Our hope is that students increase in awareness, thoughtfulness, and love for God and neighbor.

Villanova University: Interfaith Engagement in Student Leadership Development

Villanova University in Pennsylvania is one of only two Augustinian Catholic institutions of higher education. A nationally ranked university, Villanova has a student body of 10,200, with 6,700 undergraduates drawn from across the United States and from nearly fifty countries. Approximately 65 percent of students identify as Catholic, while the remaining 35 percent include Protestant, evangelical, and Orthodox Christians; students with no religious affiliation; and students identifying with diverse religious traditions.

The university mission statement affirms Villanova’s “ground[ing] in the wisdom of the Catholic intellectual tradition” while also explicitly stating the commitment to religious diversity that grows directly out of that tradition: “The University community welcomes and respects members of all faiths who seek to nurture a concern for the common good and who share an enthusiasm for the challenge of responsible and productive citizenship in order to build a just and peaceful world.” The enduring commitments that flow from the mission statement further emphasize the inherent compatibility of drawing on the wisdom of “Catholic intellectual

and moral traditions” while at the same time valuing the presence and contributions of those from other faith traditions. The Augustinian context of Villanova is reflected in the values of *veritas*, *caritas*, and *unitas* (truth, love, and community), which encourage respectful inquiry, dialogue, and learning within “a community ethos governed by love” (Villanova University, n.d.).

Recent interfaith initiatives at Villanova are geared toward helping the university community embody more fully this vision of loving and respectful welcome of those of all faith backgrounds, specifically through programming with key groups of student leaders.

Recent interfaith initiatives at Villanova are geared toward helping the university community embody more fully this vision of loving and respectful welcome of those of all faith backgrounds, specifically through programming with key groups of student leaders. An Interfaith Advisory Council, formed in 2018 as an outgrowth of Villanova’s participation in the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence, recognized

the significant role of specific student leader cohorts—residence hall advisors (RAs), campus tour guides, student government leaders, peer ministers, and student organization presidents—in shaping campus climate. Villanova’s Interfaith Leadership Initiative seeks to enhance the capacity of these student leaders to bring interfaith awareness and sensitivity into their respective roles on campus.

Since early 2019, members of the Interfaith Advisory Council have launched a series of interfaith trainings for student leaders through the Interfaith Leadership Initiative, adapting modules from IFYC’s BRIDGE curriculum as well as creating sessions tailored to specific groups. Depending on the role of the group, the training sessions have included religious literacy; bias awareness; personal reflection on faith, spirituality, and worldview; tools for interfaith dialogue; and allyship. With campus tour guides, for example, the training

emphasized their crucial role in communicating the university's embrace of religious diversity to prospective students. Sessions focused on inclusiveness in language about religious life at Villanova, as well as on increasing participants' familiarity with resources on campus (such as student groups, dietary and other accommodations, and prayer spaces) for students of diverse faith backgrounds. With RAs, training has included similar information but has also provided opportunities for increasing RAs' comfort with conversations about faith or spirituality that might emerge in the context of a residence hall.

More recently, the Office of Student Involvement has incorporated interfaith engagement training into its Resources Igniting Student Empowerment (R.I.S.E.) leadership development process. Here, we encourage sensitivity to dietary practices and holiday observance, while inviting student leaders to explore how engaging religious difference might enhance the activities of their organization. In addition, peer ministers (undergraduate students who provide leadership in residence halls and within Campus Ministry) receive training in interfaith allyship that enhances their capacity to support students of all faith backgrounds.

The Interfaith Leadership Initiative is one aspect of a multifaceted approach to interfaith engagement at Villanova. It is complemented by the presence and activity of student groups for diverse faith identities (such as Hillel and the Muslim Students Association); by increased diversity in curricular offerings and faculty hiring in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies; by interfaith lectures, dinners, and other events sponsored by Campus Ministry; and by coordination with wider strategic and programming efforts, particularly in partnership with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. But by infusing interfaith awareness and capacity building into the training of key student leaders on campus, the initiative has broadened the base of engagement and thus helps to foster a more comprehensive and campus-wide welcome of religious diversity.

St. Olaf College: Interfaith Engagement in Vocational Discernment

St. Olaf College is a nationally ranked liberal arts institution in Minnesota, one of twenty-six colleges and universities affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). With three thousand students representing all fifty states and more than eighty countries, St. Olaf is home to an ELCA student congregation and offers both Sunday worship and daily chapel services. Study of Christian theology is required in the college's general education curriculum. At the same time, St. Olaf hosts more than fifteen different student religious organizations, from the Fellowship of Christian Athletes to the Muslim Student Association, and we recently expanded our general education requirements in religion to include study of religious diversity. As of fall 2020, 21 percent of our students self-identify as Lutheran and another 8 percent as members of other denominations in full communion with the ELCA. While a majority of our total student population identifies as Christian, 25 percent claim no religious affiliation, and another 6 percent identify as Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, or another faith tradition.

St. Olaf's mission "challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition" (St. Olaf College 2016). Importantly, the "nourishment" offered by Lutheran tradition extends across the whole of the college's mission. St. Olaf's high standards in teaching, learning, and scholarship reflect the "first duty" of Lutheran colleges and universities "to be excellent schools" (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America 2007, 40). Conversations about faith and values—not only among students but among faculty and staff as well—are inspired and informed by Lutheran practices of theological study, ethical reflection, and dialogue across difference. Vocational discernment—the intentional pursuit of a life of meaning and purpose that connects individual gifts with the common good and the call of the transcendent—is a signature element of Lutheran higher education, foregrounded at St. Olaf in numerous curricular and cocurricular experiences. St. Olaf's vibrant residential life and global reach are animated by Lutheran commitments to community, hospitality, love of neighbor, and public engagement.



Eboo Patel, founder and president of Interfaith Youth Core

In 2019, the ELCA adopted *A Declaration of Inter-Religious Commitment: A Policy Statement of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America*, which articulates the premise that to be Lutheran in the twenty-first century is to be actively and intentionally interreligious and to engage with those who are nonreligious as well. Interreligious engagement is compelled by the faith commitments of Lutheran Christians to love, serve alongside, and stand in solidarity with the neighbor. What is true for individuals is also true for institutions like St. Olaf that are “nourished by Lutheran tradition.” In *Rooted and Open: The Common Calling of the Network of ELCA Colleges*

and Universities, the imperative of interfaith engagement springs from a Lutheran theological framework of relationality, grace, and humility, providing essential support for the vocation of Lutheran colleges to “educate for lives of meaning, purpose and responsible service” (Network of ELCA Colleges and Universities 2018, 7).

What these denominational statements mean for St. Olaf’s specific mission is that engagement with diverse faith traditions and worldviews is not merely permissible but part and parcel of the college’s Lutheran tradition.

A recent example of these principles in practice is St. Olaf’s four-session cocurricular seminar series on Interfaith Leadership for the 21st-Century Workplace. In collaboration with St. Olaf’s Lutheran Center for Faith, Values, and Community Director Deanna A. Thompson, IFYC Founder and President Eboo Patel offered a virtual seminar series focused on interfaith competencies for professional work in spring 2021. Each of the four sessions focused on one of several competencies Patel identifies in his 2016 book *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*: 1) building a knowledge base around issues of religious diversity, 2) building relationships across religious and worldview difference, 3) creating opportunities to bring together people who orient around religion differently, and 4) facilitating interfaith conversations with a religiously diverse group.

Following a talk by Patel illustrating the practice and impact of the competency in question, participants moved into small group discussions organized around different occupational sectors—health care; science, technology, engineering, and math; education and other types of social impact work; law, policy, and government; business; and the arts. Staff from St. Olaf’s Piper Center for Vocation and Career and alumni cofacilitated the breakout sessions.

The seminar was but one of several initiatives inspired by St. Olaf’s participation in the 2019 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence. The aims, content, and design of the seminar touched on all the elements of the St. Olaf mission, integrating the examination of faith and values with the exploration of meaningful vocation. The breakout sessions also served to cultivate inclusive community, bringing current students, faculty, staff, and alumni together in conversation about matters of deep significance for both personal life and professional work. All these features derive from the distinctive character of Lutheran higher education, which provides both the warrant and the wherewithal to lift up interfaith leadership as a vocational imperative in the workplace. (For more on St. Olaf’s interfaith work, see Chapters 3 and 4.)

Saint Mary's College of California: Interfaith Engagement as Integral to Institutional Diversity Efforts

Saint Mary's College of California is a liberal arts, Lasallian Catholic institution whose mission is to “probe deeply the mystery of existence . . . understand[ing that] the intellectual and spiritual journeys of the human person [are] inextricably connected” (Saint Mary's College of California, n.d.). Part of a network of more than sixty institutions of higher education worldwide, Lasallian schools promote five core principles: quality education, faith in the presence of God, respect for all persons, inclusive community, and concern for the poor and social justice. With an enrollment of four thousand from over fifty countries and representing a broad array of faith perspectives, Saint Mary's is nationally recognized for its JEDI initiatives—addressing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The College Committee on Inclusive Excellence (CCIE) has existed for nearly twenty years. The CCIE supports subcommittees including Black Lives Matter, Asian and Pacific Islander, Afro-Latinx/Latinx/Indigenous Peoples, Gender Equity and Women's History Month, and Que(e)ries: Diverse Genders and Sexualities. Though the college has long had dialogue and activity related to Catholic intellectual tradition and Catholic social teaching, missing from these conversations and from the CCIE was a group dedicated to religious diversity and interfaith. Through attending the 2019 Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence, a team of faculty, staff, and administrators developed a vision and action plan for addressing this gap. That plan was approved by the CCIE in spring 2020, and the Committee for Interfaith and Religious Cooperation, Learning, and Engagement (CIRCLE) was launched as a subcommittee of the CCIE. CIRCLE includes students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Its vision states,

In the spirit of our Lasallian Catholic heritage, we are committed to lifting the voices of all members of our community, including those of all faith traditions and those who orient around religion, faith, and spirituality in a variety of ways.

We recognize that our communities are comprised of vast intersecting identities and cultures. We aim to actively inform and support policies and practices . . . to promote healing and wellness among members of our faith traditions. We seek a campus community that embraces religious diversity as it seeks to fulfill its mission of *fides quaerens intellectum* [faith seeking understanding], and we view interfaith excellence as central to our dialogue and action. (Saint Mary's College of California 2020, 1)

In its first year, CIRCLE has influenced both comprehensive institutional culture and localized programming in collaboration with others, such as the offices of Human Resources, Faculty Development, and Student Life. CIRCLE brings a formal voice for interfaith cooperation to the monthly CCIE meetings. Other JEDI initiatives such as the required diversity training for employees and the campus-wide Bias Incident Response Team have collaborated with CIRCLE to expand their work with an eye toward religious diversity and interfaith. Additionally, CIRCLE is developing its own diversity training module as part of the optional training also sponsored by the CCIE. CIRCLE is partnering with Human Resources and the Academic Senate to establish an institutional calendar that includes religious holidays of many faith traditions, to revise policies of observation of religious holidays for staff and faculty, and to develop language for class attendance policies. CIRCLE worked with the college's Center for Engaged Religious Pluralism and the Mission and Ministry Center to develop intern positions and host interfaith solidarity circles; more plans are underway with these two critical partners. CIRCLE has cosponsored events with other CCIE subcommittees like the Healing Circle held by the Afro-Latinx/Latinx/Indigenous Peoples Committee, the Holding Space service with the Black Lives Matter Committee and the Gender Equity and Women's History Month Committee following the verdict in the trial of Derek Chauvin for the murder of George Floyd.

Reflecting on the importance of CIRCLE, we have found two critical takeaways. First, the creation of CIRCLE is having a tangible impact on the campus culture, as evidenced by the number of campus members reaching out to propose programs and seek support. This initial success, which we hope will lead to continued culture shift, is due to the tandem of organic, bottom-up interest by students, faculty, and staff, and the intentional support—in words, budget, and action—by institutional leaders. Both are necessary for institutional change. Second, having CIRCLE within institutional structure through the CCIE has led to beautiful collaboration with other JEDI-driven committees. This networked structure allows for timely, transparent, mission-grounded, and action-oriented essential communications to the campus community in response to institutional needs and societal events, such as the Chauvin trial. With CIRCLE as part of our diversity efforts, Saint Mary’s is able to address the intersectionality of identity that both affirms individual dignity and attends to our wholeness, which is at the heart of our Lasallian Catholic mission. (For more on interfaith work at Saint Mary’s, see Chapter 1.)

For our institutions, interfaith engagement is becoming part of the lived educational experience, connected to our particular faith-based orientation rather than being a compartmentalized addendum. We have worked through a seemingly paradoxical question: how can institutions rooted in a specific religious tradition continue to make richly visible their own missions and tradition while simultaneously forwarding innovative approaches to inclusive interfaith engagement? These case studies demonstrate diverse possibilities for interfaith engagement across all levels of an institution. Moreover, they reveal that interfaith engagement can serve to strengthen the existing faith mission even as it expands its very definition.

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Appendix

Cohorts Participating in the Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-Wide Interfaith Excellence

2018

Concordia College, Moorhead
Gordon College
Keuka College
Middlebury College
Nazareth College
Pacific Lutheran University
University of Denver
University of Miami
Villanova University
Viterbo University

2019

Capital University
Duquesne University
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University
Loyola Marymount University
Nebraska Wesleyan University
Rollins College
Saint Mary's College of California
St. Olaf College
University of Portland
Ursinus College

2020

Bethune-Cookman University
Brigham Young University–Idaho
Calvin University
Doane University
Eastern Mennonite University
Elon University
Queens University of Charlotte
Saint Louis University
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota
Washington and Jefferson College
Washington University in Saint Louis

2021

Augustana University
Ball State University
Bowie State University
Bucknell University
Dominican University (Illinois)
Holy Family University
Seton Hall University
University of Michigan
University of the Incarnate Word
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

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Rebecca Russo, *Hillel International*

Dawn Michele Whitehead,
Association of American Colleges and Universities



Glossary

Civic pluralism: This term describes a society in which multiple religious, philosophical, and ethical beliefs and practices exist and interact. Civic pluralism is built on the belief that people who orient around religion differently can build relationships across lines of difference, have shared values, and engage together in common action for the common good. Civic pluralism does not require that one relinquish one's beliefs, share the beliefs of another, or even believe that the other has a valid truth claim.

High-impact educational practices: These widely tested educational practices have been shown to be beneficial for college students from many backgrounds. These teaching and learning practices take many different forms, depending on learner characteristics and on institutional priorities and contexts (Kuh 2008).

Interfaith: This term is best understood by separating it into “inter” and “faith.” “Inter” refers to the relationships between people who orient around religion differently. “Faith” is defined as the relationship between an individual and what we commonly understand as a religious or philosophical tradition. Put together, “interfaith” is about how our interactions with those who are different affect the way we relate to our religious and ethical traditions, and how our relationships with our traditions influence our interactions with those who are different from us (Patel 2016, 39).

Interfaith cooperation: A way to achieve pluralism; a process in which people who orient around religion differently come together in ways that respect different identities, build mutually inspiring relationships, and engage in common action around issues of shared concern (Patel and Meyer 2011). Where meaningful interfaith cooperation happens, there is less polarization, and communities are stronger and more resilient.

- **Respect for identities:** Where people have the right to form their own religious or nonreligious worldviews, express them freely, and expect some reasonable accommodations to live out their convictions. To respect someone else's worldview doesn't require you to agree with it or to accept it.
- **Mutually inspiring relationships:** Where there are conversations, activities, civic association, and friendly contact between people who orient around religion differently. Areas of both commonality and difference are recognized, but there is always some essential concern for the other's well being.
- **Commitment to the common good:** Where different people share common values, even despite theological disagreements, and support the things people generally agree that we have a collective interest to uphold. Think safe communities, good schools, defeating poverty, access to healthcare, and addressing climate change.

Interfaith leadership: When people who have the ability to lead individuals or communities that orient around religion differently toward understanding and cooperation. There are five key skill sets for interfaith leadership: (1) building a radar screen for religious diversity, (2) developing a public narrative of interfaith cooperation, (3) building relationships and mobilizing religiously diverse constituencies, (4) creating activities that bring people who orient around religion differently together, and (5) facilitating interfaith conversations with a religiously diverse group.

Integrative learning: An understanding and a disposition that a student builds across the curriculum and cocurriculum, from making simple connections among ideas and experiences to synthesizing and transferring learning to new, complex situations within and beyond the campus.

Signature work: An individual project related to a significant issue, problem, or question students define for themselves—immersing themselves in exploration, applying what they learn to real-world situations, and preparing to explain the significance of their work to others. Called “signature work” to reflect the high level of personalization and individual initiative involved, such a project bears the distinctive imprint of the interests, commitments, and cumulative learning of the student.

Worldview: A guiding life philosophy, which may be based on a particular religious tradition, spiritual orientation, nonreligious perspective, or some combination of these. The foundational outlook you have on life that helps you make sense of the world around you (Mayhew et al. 2016, 2).

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Resources

Building Regular Interfaith Dialogue through Generous Engagement (BRIDGE)

<https://ifyc.org/bridge>

These modules are filled with resources to activate an awareness around worldview engagement and develop skills to help foster interfaith cooperation. Each module is available free for download. The content in these modules focuses on increasing one's confidence to engage religious and worldview diversity through introducing foundational theories and concepts, guiding self-reflection, interrogating biases, and of course, engaging in practice.

Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS)

<https://ifyc.org/ideals>

This research project seeks to understand undergraduate encounters with religious and worldview diversity on a national scale. It is the first study of its kind to address US college students' engagement with religious and worldview diversity in such an expansive and nuanced manner. The design and scope of IDEALS makes it possible to examine how students' interfaith diversity experiences and attitudes change over time and to pinpoint programs, activities, and other environmental factors that foster meaningful interactions with diverse others.

Interfaith Leadership Video Series (ILVS)

<https://ifyc.org/interfaithleadership>

This eight-part Interfaith Leadership video series explores the foundational concepts of interfaith cooperation, inspiring interfaith leaders, and the history of American religious diversity. Facilitated by Eboo Patel and featuring the voices of young leaders from many different backgrounds, the videos come paired with lesson plans, reading lists, and classroom activities developed by Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) staff and faculty at Dominican University in Illinois.

We Are Each Other's (WAEO)

<https://ifyc.org/we-are-each-others>

Named for words from the poem "Paul Robeson" by Gwendolyn Brooks, the first Black Pulitzer Prize winner, this campaign activates and supports interfaith leaders responding to the current national crises. IFYC believes that interfaith leaders are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of this national moment, and "We Are Each Other's" is the set of curricula, funding, and connection opportunities that IFYC has developed to support that engagement.

Additional Resources

Interfaith Leadership in Higher Education Initiative

<https://www.aacu.org/interfaith>

Interfaith Leadership and Cooperation in Higher Education

<https://www.aacu.org/aacu-news/campus-model/interfaith-leadership-and-cooperation-higher-education>

IFYC Podcasts

https://www.ifyc.org/resources?field_type_value%5B%5D=podcast

Interfaith Calendar Project

<https://liberalarts.du.edu/center-for-judaic-studies/research-initiatives/du-interfaith-challenge>

When Interfaith Work on Campus Goes Virtual

<https://ifyc.org/article/when-interfaith-work-campus-goes-virtual>

Five Key Takeaways from IDEALS

<https://ifyc.org/article/five-key-takeaways-ideals>

Interfaith in the Cockpit

<https://ifyc.org/article/interfaith-cockpit>

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About the Funders

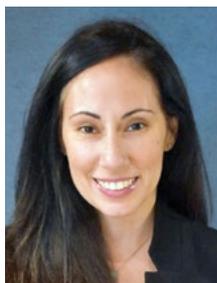
The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations

Throughout their history, The Arthur Vining Davis Foundations have supported efforts to improve education, public media, religion, health, and the environment across the United States.

Lilly Endowment Inc.

Lilly Endowment Inc. supports experienced organizations and emerging efforts that have the potential to address important challenges and issues in religion, education, and community development.

About the Editors



As the director of higher education partnerships at Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), **Janett I. Cordovés** works with professionals across the country to design and implement innovative learning strategies through digital learning platforms and education technology and is responsible for developing and leading key aspects of strategic planning initiatives within higher education. Prior to joining IFYC, Cordovés worked in academia for over a decade, elevating the importance of engaging worldview identity and creating religious policies. Janett serves as the associate editor and is a frequent contributor to the *Journal of College and Character*, a professional journal that examines how colleges and universities influence the moral and civic learning and behavior of students. She is a 2021 University of Chicago Civic Leadership Academy Fellow. Cordovés holds an EdD in ethical leadership, an MS in higher education, and a BA in applied mathematics. Her research interests include interfaith engagement, first-generation college students, #digitalfaith, leadership development, strategic planning, and online pedagogy.



Dawn Michele Whitehead is the vice president of the Office of Global Citizenship for Campus, Community, and Careers at the Association of American College and Universities (AAC&U). Her work focuses on advancing practices and strategies to integrate global and experiential learning across curricular and cocurricular initiatives, general education and the majors, within professional schools, and on-campus and off-campus experiences. She also works closely with institutions to embed high-impact practices and integrative learning with an emphasis on quality and equitable participation. Whitehead has presented nationally and internationally on global learning, civic engagement, community-based global learning, curricular change, experiential learning, liberal education, integrative learning, and strategic planning. She has also written articles on these topics and facilitated grant-funded projects to advance student success through curricular change. Whitehead earned her PhD at Indiana University Bloomington in education policy studies with a doctoral minor in international and comparative education and a concentration in African studies.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U)



The Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) is the leading national association dedicated to advancing the vitality and public standing of liberal education by making quality and equity the foundations for excellence in undergraduate education in service to democracy. Its members are committed to extending the advantages of a liberal education to all students, regardless of academic specialization or intended career. Founded in 1915, AAC&U now comprises more than 1,000 member institutions—including accredited public and private colleges, community colleges, research universities, and comprehensive universities of every type and size. AAC&U functions as a catalyst and facilitator, forging links among presidents, administrators, faculty, and staff engaged in institutional and curricular planning. Through a broad range of activities, AAC&U reinforces the collective commitment to liberal education at the national, local, and global levels. Its high-quality programs, publications, research, meetings, institutes, public outreach efforts, and campus-based projects help individual institutions ensure that the quality of student learning is central to their work as they evolve to meet new economic and social challenges. Information about AAC&U can be found at www.aacu.org.

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC)



Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) is a national nonprofit that equips the next generation of citizens and professionals with the knowledge and skills needed for leadership in a religiously diverse world. Partnering with higher education institutions and corporations, IFYC is dedicated to making interfaith cooperation the norm and building Interfaith America in the twenty-first century.

Throughout American history, college and university campuses have incubated transformative social movements—civil rights, gender equality, environmentalism—and shaped their leaders. That’s why IFYC’s strategy is rooted in the power and promise of US higher education. IFYC believes that a less divided and more pluralistic future requires new leaders at its core. When students leave college equipped with the vision, knowledge, and skills to positively engage difference, our religiously diverse democracy can and will flourish.

Our various programs and initiatives equip faculty and staff with programs and resources focused on the curricular and cocurricular engagement of interfaith topics. IFYC designs workshops and learning spaces to further develop the field of interfaith studies; offers grants to support curriculum development and programmatic initiatives to create opportunities to engage across lines of religious difference; advances research to support US higher education to find solutions and establish best practices; and consults directly with institutions to effectively engage complex issues of religious and worldview diversity.

No matter your role on campus, joining the IFYC network gives you news, knowledge, and opportunities to advance interfaith cooperation. Information about IFYC can be found at www.ifyc.org.

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