



BUILDING INTERFAITH AMERICA

Annual Report
2019



Dear Friends:

At its founding, America was a first-of-its-kind experiment in building a religiously diverse democracy. It is now the most religiously diverse nation in the world.

Great American leaders—Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Jane Addams, George Washington—believed in a religiously diverse American experiment. They teach us that the strength of our social fabric depends upon how tightly woven those diverse threads are. This idea has always been at the center of IFYC’s work.

As you’ll see in this annual report, we have helped change how higher education approaches religious diversity. We have partnered to make it real with over 500 institutions and trained thousands of young interfaith leaders. Over 1,600 of them are now IFYC alumni and are applying their lens of interfaith cooperation to some of the most important professional sectors in society.

Our progress is held beside the reality of deepened polarization and division in our country, a nation facing the profound challenges of Covid-19, and the emergence of a critical movement for racial equity. In our work, we see countless examples of religious diversity being engaged in a spirit of respect, relationship, and cooperation—never more so than the stories of interfaith cooperation between healthcare and other workers who are battling a great pandemic. We have included some of those stories in this report. We also see inspirational Black leaders whose work sits at the intersection of racial justice and interfaith cooperation. It is with this sense of hope that we ask ourselves how an increasingly diverse America welcomes people of all different faiths, traditions, backgrounds, and beliefs to the table? How do we encourage and celebrate the contributions of everyone to our shared civic life? After all, the more distinct the contributions to our Potluck Nation, the richer the feast.

In response to current challenges and the unpredictable ways in which higher education and American life will be impacted long term, we stand ready to push toward an interfaith America. We are also excited to lift up the stories of our partners, young leaders and alumni to a wider audience. We are committed to integrating racial equity with our work for interfaith cooperation. At a time in which higher ed and broader society needs it more than ever, we are rapidly expanding the area of hybrid and online higher education.

We are excited to share where we have been and where we are going. The shaping of tomorrow’s interfaith America is critical, and we couldn’t do it without your steadfast support. For that, we are eternally grateful.

In gratitude,



Eboo Patel

Eboo Patel
Founder and President



Brad Henderson

Brad Henderson
Chair of the Board of Directors



Read *Interfaith America*,
our full five-year
business plan.



Watch Eboo
share his vision of
America as a Potluck
Nation at the 2019
Upswell Conference.

Mission

Our mission is to partner with colleges and universities working to turn religious diversity into a positive force in our society.

Vision

We are working towards an America where people of different faiths, worldviews, and traditions can bridge divides and find common values to build a shared life together. A society where interfaith cooperation is the norm.

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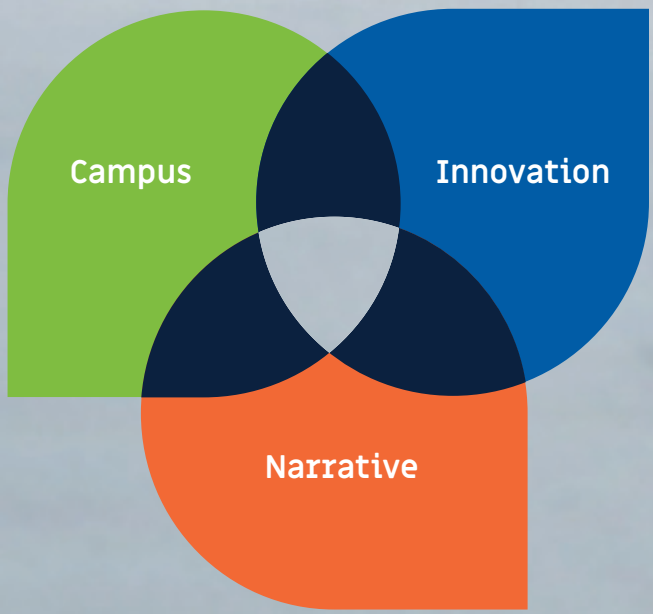
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Provide high quality interfaith programming that suffuses and sustains higher education's commitment to engaging religious diversity.

Innovate relevant and useful approaches in emerging spaces in higher education, beginning with hybrid education.

Meaningfully contribute to a national narrative that prioritizes bridge building in a religiously diverse democracy.



Higher Education Plays a Key Role in Shaping Interfaith America

In 2010, IFYC made the strategic decision to focus our work within higher education. Our belief then, and now, is that higher education plays an imperative role in shaping the civic priorities of America. Campuses serve as environments for academic, social, and cultural discourse, and space for interactions between people from diverse backgrounds—truly operating as mini civil societies. Colleges and universities cultivate a critical mass of next-generation leaders, who go on to influence their local communities, the civic spaces they engage in, and their workplaces—setting the priorities of influential sectors like K-12 education and healthcare. By partnering with higher education, we get closer to our vision of an America where interfaith cooperation is a norm.

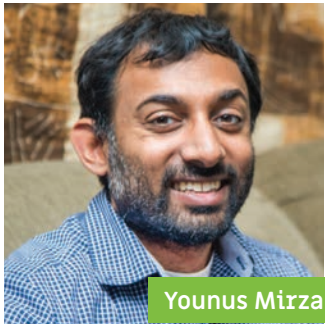
The past five years has seen progress on our mission to interweave our interfaith leadership approach into higher education, making the case that these skills are an essential part of what it means to be an educated individual, effective citizen, and competent professional.

Since 2015 we have collaborated with partners in the sector to raise the importance of interfaith engagement within higher education, as well as supported 523 U.S. colleges and universities to advance institutional change. By lifting up these exemplar campuses, we have also seen an increasing adoption of interfaith best practices across higher education.

Program Spotlight: 175 faculty members have attended the Teaching Interfaith Understanding seminar

Each year a cohort of multi-disciplinary faculty from across the country comes together for the Teaching Interfaith Understanding (TIU) seminar. A partnership between IFYC and the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC), the seminar is co-taught by Laurie Patton—President of Middlebury College—and Eboo Patel. The program offers a unique space for faculty members to deepen their own interfaith understanding, build a network of peers committed to exploring interfaith topics, and develop plans for future curricular work.

Younus Mirza was an assistant professor of Islamic Studies at Allegheny College, Meadville, Pennsylvania when he attended the Teaching Interfaith Understanding (TIU) seminar. Younus felt that, as a small private liberal arts college, his campus didn't have access to the right resources, language, and people to explore ways in which religious studies could prepare students to make impact beyond their campus walls. Networking with colleagues from across the nation, Younus was fascinated to learn how introducing interfaith work and interreligious studies had impacted diverse campus communities. Inspired by their stories, Younus applied for a Curriculum Development Grant from IFYC to develop 'The Qur'an and the Bible' course, which explored the similarities between Quranic and Biblical figures and offered a space for students from both faith backgrounds to share their perspectives. Younus is now teaching this course at Shenandoah University. One of his celebratory moments was when an Evangelical Protestant student, who had expressed feeling uncomfortable learning about the Qur'an as a Christian, later became an active participant in class and shared how the course had pushed her to reflect on her understanding of faith.



Younus Mirza

I was unfamiliar with interfaith work before attending the seminar. I appreciated learning from Eboo and Laurie why religious literacy matters, and how it isn't just about teaching interfaith studies. I see it as a way to prepare my students to be more engaged, informed, and empathetic in their careers.

IFYC works with campuses to increase curricular engagement and religious diversity, train student interfaith leaders, and equip educators to lead interfaith efforts...

437 courses and **52** course sequences with interfaith themes developed to date

Over **\$400K** awarded in curriculum grants

Program Spotlight: Three-year AAC&U Partnership has helped transform 20 campuses

IFYC's partnership with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) and the resultant annual Institute on Teaching and Learning for Campus-wide Interfaith Excellence, prepares college and university leaders to develop curricular and co-curricular plans to foster interfaith cooperation on their campuses. Originally supported through a grant by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, and now with continued support from Lilly Endowment Inc., each year campus cohorts of administrators, staff, and faculty attend the intensive four-day institute. Each team develops action plans to take back and implement campus-wide programming for interfaith excellence supported by a \$5,000 grant. Over the course of the project's first two years, we have awarded \$100,000.

University of Miami brought a cohort of diverse educators to the Institute for Interfaith Excellence (IIE) looking for guidance on creating action plans to support interfaith student leadership on campus. Although interfaith cooperation and religious diversity is an active part of the university's vision, the campus was facing challenges—a recent survey had revealed that students often struggled to interact effectively with diverse peers and, before that, a student had planned an anti-Muslim demonstration during Muslim Awareness Week. After the seminar, as part of the university's Intergroup Dialogue program, the cohort developed an Intergroup Dialogue course for students to understand the importance of discourse around diverse worldviews and hosted events like Religion Awareness Day, which brought in over 150 students and a standing-room-only panel discussion with student leaders from faith-based groups called "Getting to Know U." Miriam Lipsky, Assistant Provost, said,

"I greatly value the content that was covered at the Institute...Our team got wonderful ideas from the presenters and other teams and this exchange of ideas enriched our project."



Lynn Pasquerella
President of AAC&U

AAC&U is proud to partner with IFYC in helping colleges and universities to play a leadership role in catalyzing speaking across religious differences. At a time of increasing polarization and partisanship in our nation, this work is more critical than ever for strengthening our democracy.



6,947 student interfaith leaders trained over the last five years

6,188 staff trained and **1,353** faculty engaged over the last five years, with **\$647,250** awarded in campus innovation and strategic planning grants.

Program Spotlight: 2,643 students and educators trained through the Interfaith Leadership Institute

The Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI) is IFYC's annual flagship event. Participants from diverse backgrounds and from campuses across the nation learn to bridge divides and forge relationships across lines of religious and worldview differences. They return to their universities and colleges equipped with knowledge and skills to make interfaith cooperation a reality on their campuses.

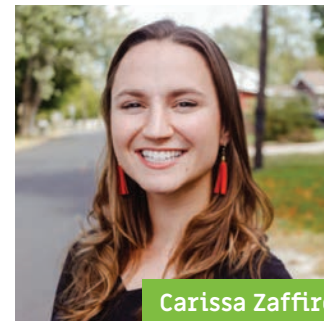
Gloria Winston-Harris, Director of the Office of Spiritual Development and Dialogue at North Carolina Central University, a historically Black university, attended the ILI in 2019. On campus, she's also the minister for the Wesley Campus Ministry. Spurred on by local religiously-motivated violence in North Carolina, Gloria brought a group of students with her to learn how to articulate and identify differences and opportunities for cooperation. After forming relationships with peers from diverse worldviews and backgrounds at the ILI, the group returned to campus and initiated Jumma prayers on Friday for Muslim students, hosted a women's interfaith circle, and invited the local community to share their experiences, faith traditions, and food.



Gloria Winston-Harris

They [the students] were always open to dialogue, but the ILI is where they learned how to articulate what pluralism meant to them and helped them understand how to do the work they wanted to do.

As an Evangelical Christian, Carissa Zaffiro, a student at Taylor University, had reservations about attending her first ILI in 2019, not knowing if she could be open and honest about her faith. But as she sat and engaged in deep conversation with peers at her table, including a Muslim student and a Jewish-Catholic student, she found a space where she could talk openly about her beliefs and engage in non-judgmental dialogue about how her views differed from, and aligned with, the other students. After the ILI Carissa returned to campus to organize World Religions Week which this year, focused on creating space for the campus community to learn more about Islam through informational sessions, chapel service, and in-person dialogues, including guests from a local Islamic center. Over 100 students, faculty, and staff attended the event, expressing interest in similar future events.



Carissa Zaffiro

On the very first day of the ILI, I fell more in love with interfaith work. I had conversations with people I've never had the chance to speak with before.



Watch Eboo's opening speech at the 2019 ILI.



Watch IFYC alums Hannah Minks and Usra Ghazi came back to the 2019 ILI to share about their unexpected friendship.



Interfaith America Demands Courageous Pluralism

As we enter our new business phase—Interfaith America—and a time of increasing cultural, political, and religious division, we will build on these foundations with higher education to project a vision for a pluralistic society and prepare leaders who can break down barriers and build bridges across difference.

On the ground, we will continue to provide high quality programming to support senior administrators in embedding interfaith cooperation into institution-wide plans, working with faculty to integrate interfaith themes into their curriculum, and training staff and students to implement sustainable interfaith programming on campus.

To this end, we have recently launched a new project 'Courageous Pluralism' which, with generous support from the Fetzer Institute, the Charles Koch Foundation and the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, brings together 14 campuses in unlikely partnerships. Independent, progressive-leaning liberal arts campuses are paired with traditionally-oriented, orthodoxically religious campuses. Pairs include Oberlin College and Spring Arbor University (a nonsectarian private school and a small Free Methodist campus), and Westminster College and Brigham Young University (a small mainline Presbyterian campus and a large institution guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints). Pairs will collaborate on initiatives that allow for bridge building within and across diverse communities. Jan Saeed, Westminster's director of global peace and spirituality, said of the project: "I believe building community and building understanding of one another breaks down the barriers that cause division and the dissolution of society."

NARRATIVE



Since 2015, IFYC has

Published **81** articles and publications

Been cited **150** times

Grown our alumni network
to **1,617** members

Led **80** national presentations

Storytelling and Interfaith Leadership

Stories move people. Stories build bridges. Stories create change. They forge interpersonal bonds, create a shared sense of community, and shape our collective realities. Storytelling, the skill of crafting meaningful stories, is at the heart of interfaith cooperation.

In the past five years we have fostered this skill in students, educators and IFYC alumni. We have equipped young interfaith leaders to tell their stories and inspire their peers to get involved in interfaith cooperation. We have supported educators to advocate for the consideration of religious diversity at their institutions. Our alumni network receives training to share their interfaith stories in their spheres of professional and civic influence, after graduation. Lifting up stories of bridge building from our campus partners to the higher education sector has furthered the salience of interfaith cooperation and helped establish best practices around religious diversity.

Program Spotlight: Interfaith stories behind the data

The Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS), conducted in partnership with Dr. Matt Mayhew at The Ohio State University and Dr. Alyssa Rockenbach at North Carolina State University, is the first interfaith study of its kind in higher education and tracks approximately 20,000 students on 122 campuses over four years. In a time of profound demographic change and growing polarization, the research provides evidence about how interfaith engagement in higher education helps develop pluralistic attitudes in the next generation of leaders. These powerful data points are best illustrated by interfaith stories. Most recently the *Friendships Matter* report focused on the significant impact interfaith friendships have in cultivating pluralistic attitudes as well as appreciation towards others among first years.

The first time lyleah Hernandez had an interfaith conversation was after an undergraduate theology class. Nicole, a classmate at Dominican University, Illinois, approached lyleah to ask why she wore a rosary around her neck when she called herself an atheist. In what could have been a tense exchange, a rich conversation followed instead. lyleah explained that she grew up in a family where religion and politics was never discussed, and the rosary was a gift from her late grandfather. In turn, Nicole shared that she was a devout Catholic, and faith to her meant finding God through one's own perspective. Despite their clear differences, their friendship progressed as they tackled challenging conversations to understand each other's perspectives. It is this friendship with Nicole that lyleah credits with encouraging her interest in interfaith work and what pushed her to seek out other friends from different faiths to understand how they perceive the world. Today, with the training she has received at the Interfaith Leadership Institute (ILI) and grant support from IFYC, lyleah is an interfaith leader on campus, hosting events like potluck dinners where she welcomes all to the table.



Program Spotlight: Alums' interfaith stories continue after graduation

Comprised of graduates who have had deep IFYC engagement throughout college, IFYC's network of over 1,600 alumni interfaith leaders continues to grow every year. Our alums are in professional positions shaping key sectors—amongst them K-12 education, media, healthcare, government, and business. We offer funding, training, and mentorship to help them publicly share their message of interfaith cooperation, continue to bring people together across differences to do common good, and embed interfaith work into their work and civic spaces.

Growing up as a first-generation Pakistani American Muslim in a Chicago suburb, Sara Rahim regularly engaged in conversations around religious literacy with her peers to dispel the prevailing stereotypes around her faith and ethnicity. She learned about interfaith work when she read *Acts of Faith* by Eboo Patel as a part of her undergraduate orientation for St. Louis University. Intrigued by the concept, she attended the Interfaith Leadership Institute in Atlanta, and learned the language and frameworks to establish interfaith dialogue on campus. Sara became a Better Together Coach, an Interfaith Innovation Fellow, IFYC Alumni Speaker & Trainer, and used professional development funds to host interfaith training sessions in Germany, Morocco, France, and Sudan. Today she is the integration manager at CARA Chicago, where she uses her interfaith lens and training to engage national leaders to help those affected by poverty re-enter the workforce.



Sara Rahim

IFYC has built my own capacity as a young leader to articulate my story and I feel like a powerful facilitator, where I can go into a space and acknowledge diverse traditions, and just bring people to the table.

Chelsea Garbell has been an interfaith leader since her undergraduate years at New York University (NYU), where, in part inspired by her own Jewish faith, she co-founded Bridges—a Jewish-Muslim student group. Chelsea became a part of the IFYC network in 2016 and with IFYC's support, she turned her passion for Jewish-Muslim bridge building into initiatives with the American Jewish Committee, the Sisterhood of Salaam Shalom, the NY Muslim Jewish Advocacy Council, and the Muslim Jewish Interfaith Coalition (MJIC). Using a professional development fund from IFYC, Chelsea, as a part of MJIC, hosted a forum in Essaouira, Morocco, a coastal town known for its long history of coexistence between Muslims and Jews. The event encouraged a more nuanced understanding of the theological, cultural, and deeply personal underpinnings of Judaism and Islam and had a cohort of 70 young professionals in attendance from around the world. Chelsea is now the Research Scholar & Program Manager of the Applied Research Collective for American Jewry at NYU, where a key part of her role is to assist scholars and practitioners in addressing funding and policy recommendations for Jewish foundations and organizations. She is an active member of the IFYC alumni network.



Chelsea Garbell

[The IFYC Alumni network] is a terrific resource of people who are committed to walking the walk, and they've given me access to opportunities, language, and frameworks to articulate and guide my passion for bridge building and interfaith work locally and internationally.

Crafting the Interfaith America Narrative

In our increasingly religiously diverse and polarized society, more than ever, we need stories that highlight the good that comes from working together across our differences. America is a story written by people who have come from all over the world, and we are dedicated to telling the story of America as a Potluck Nation: one where all may feast. When everyone brings their individual faiths, worldviews and traditions to our shared civic spaces, and their unique identities are celebrated and appreciated, then we all thrive together as a nation.

IFYC will strengthen our training of the next generation of interfaith leaders, continue to equip educators to influence the higher education sector from within, and support our exceptional alumni in their work. At the same time, we move forward knowing that our narrative efforts need to reach a wider, public audience to meet the challenges we face as an increasingly diverse nation. We're excited to share stories that exemplify Interfaith America, lifting the voices of students, educators and alumni to America's most influential media outlets.



Explore stories of interfaith inspiration and more on [*Interfaith America*](#).



Watch a video to learn more about our alumni network.

INNOVATION



Interfaith Leadership in the Virtual Public Square

The digital revolution has fundamentally altered the way we experience life in all aspects. Advancements in technology have expanded our shared civic spaces from solely in-person experiences to include online interactions. There is a virtual public square, and with it, both new opportunities to widen diverse networks as well as the challenges of polarization and division we see in wider society. Sometimes those challenges are even more pronounced online. We recognize the need to educate and train interfaith leaders to have the competencies needed to navigate the online civic space and to leverage digital technology to increase our reach to young people increasingly learning online.

In nearly two decades, we have grown from an idea to engage young people in interfaith cooperation service projects to a national organization supporting more than 500 U.S. colleges and universities across the country. In that time, we have witnessed tremendous change, both for our campus partners and the higher education sector at large, and in wider American society. Led by our vision of making interfaith cooperation the norm in America, we have adapted and innovated in order to maximize our impact.

Our attention now shifts to innovating around hybrid education. Higher education is seeing a dramatic transformation in the way students want and need to learn. As of 2018, one in

six students were getting their college education entirely online and one in three were getting their degrees through hybrid (a mixture of online and offline learning experiences) education. As we remain committed to and continue to strengthen our work in residential higher education, we are also asking—how is hybrid and online learning preparing students to be effective citizens and competent professionals with the skills to navigate religious diversity in their work and civic lives?

Responding to this new moment, IFYC will develop innovative solutions in the digital space to equip students who are learning online, with the same skills in navigating religious diversity that their offline counterparts are now receiving. Through online interfaith leadership, we hope to equip the next generation of leaders with the tools to counter rising divisiveness and improve America's religiously diverse democracy.



IFYC developed an eight-part Interfaith Leadership **video series**, covering the foundational concepts of interfaith cooperation, inspiring interfaith leaders, and the history of American religious diversity.



IFYC recently partnered with the *Chronicle of Higher Education* to host a **webinar** with Dr. Paul LeBlanc, President of Southern New Hampshire University and Suzanne Gibbs Howard, Managing Director of IDEO U. The panel discussed the vital need of teaching online about religious diversity.

CUMULATIVE IMPACT 2020 RESULTS

	2016		2017		2018		2019		2020	
	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL	GOAL	ACTUAL
Model Environments										
Campuses integrating interfaith best practices	315	330	375	403	465	466	530	512	600	544
Leaders										
Advanced campus leaders trained/engaged	475	830	1,200	1,801	2,000	3,173	2,925	5,070	3,550	5,753
101 campus leaders trained/engaged	150	1,562	850	3,365	1,950	5,538	3,250	7,596	4,750	8,735
Knowledge Base										
Articles, publications, and presentations	15	50	73	107	123	181	180	245	250	311

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Giving reflects the 18-month period between August 1, 2018 and January 31, 2020.

\$500,000+

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FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Statement of financial position for IFYC Fiscal Year 2019, August 1, 2018 to July 31, 2019.

Assets

Current Assets

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 4,685,571
Investment.....	4,591,924
Accounts receivable	33,246
Grants and contributions receivable.....	3,554,954
Prepaid expenses.....	615,772
Total Current Assets	13,481,467

Grants and Contributions Receivable..... 2,371,984

Property and Equipment - Net..... 162,416

Total Assets **\$16,015,867**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities

Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 191,441
Accrued payroll.....	74,163
Deferred rent	22,329
Other accrued liabilities	55,669
Deferred revenue.....	40,397
Total Current Liabilities	383,999

Deferred Rent 133,277

Net Assets

Unrestricted.....	7,493,226
Temporarily restricted	8,005,365

Total Net Assets **15,498,591**

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$16,015,867**

Statement of Activities

Revenue Gains and Other Support

Individual contributions.....	\$ 429,805	\$1,075,000	\$1,504,805
Grants and contributions.....	816,304	1,592,888	2,409,192
Corporate grants.....	-	-	-
Publications.....	5,788	-	5,788
Seminars and workshops.....	46,345	-	46,345
University revenue.....	144,600	-	144,600
Interest and dividends.....	91,373	-	91,373
Net realized and unrealized gains on investments.....	43,261	-	43,261
Donated services and facilities.....	17,242	-	17,242
Other revenue.....	3,724	-	3,724
Survey revenue.....	-	-	-
Honorariums.....	250,700	-	250,700
Net assets released from restrictions.....	7,135,506	(7,135,506)	-
Total revenues, gains, and other support.....	\$9,029,648	(\$4,467,618)	\$4,562,030

Expenses

Program services			
Campus partnerships.....	1,084,158	-	1,084,158
Leadership.....	1,922,264	-	1,922,264
Communication.....	2,321,827	-	2,321,827
Support services			
Management and general.....	965,663	-	965,663
Fundraising.....	821,430	-	821,430
Total expenses.....	7,115,342	-	7,115,342

Change in Net Assets..... 1,914,306..... 4,467,618..... 2,553,312

Net Assets

Beginning of year.....	5,578,920	12,472,983	18,051,903
End of year.....	\$7,493,226	\$8,005,365	\$15,498,591

