CONFLICT AND COMMUNICATION IN THE WORKPLACE: AN INQUIRY AND FINDINGS FROM XYZ UNIVERSITY’S STUDY ON RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND DIVERSITY SUGGESTING IRONIES OF CULTURAL ATTITUDES, FREE EXPRESSION AND CONFLICT IN AN ACADEMIC ORGANIZATION

Stephanie Huneycutt Bardwell, Christopher Newport University

ABSTRACT

Organizational freedoms, rights and attitudes about diversity and tolerance are important to all organizations’ core values. Exploring perceptions of diversity and tolerance and providing a protected forum for free expression can be controversial, but vital, to the integrity of the workplace. This article describes the activities of a university committee commissioned to execute a study of religious related concerns; it summarizes results of a survey in which 165 faculty members of the XYZ public University participated and also describes findings of the study. It offers observations, recommendations and identifies concerns that are pertinent to all organizations, particularly academic entities, on this controversial topic. It describes a vivid, vocal and sometimes vexing journey of discovery and inquiry about faculty views on religious tolerance and diversity in the workplace. In this study, the workplace is, of course, the university.

INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Exploring attitudinal and legal perceptions of diversity and tolerance on a macro view

The founding fathers did not include the term “diversity”, nor did they include the phrase “tolerance” in the First amendment. In founding father George Washington’s address to the Hebrew Congregation in Newport Rhode Island in 1790, (Karp, 1991) a sense of respect for religious tradition and expression is clearly present, but more as a matter of civility than law. “Diversity” and “tolerance” are more modern terms used to indicate modern concerns related to freedom of expression and freedom from government sanctioned religions, government prohibitions of religious practices, and inhibition of religious expression. The desire to create mutual respect and a sense of mutual beneficence is both old-fashioned, and modern; multiculturalism is an ideal which has yet to be realized, though it is still a vital and worthwhile goal, according to Tilson and others (Tilson, 2011) (Thomas, 2008) (Barnard, 2010).
Basic individual freedoms, such as freedom of expression and freedom of religion (Amendment I, 1791) are guaranteed to each of us by the United States Constitution’s first ten amendments, known as the Bill of Rights, ratified December 15, 1791. Every alert school age Jack and Jill knows this; but do our highly educated, intellectually refined and astute scholarly faculty know how these rights affect their workplace environment…and whether the private university workplace differs from the public University workplace in regard to religious expression, tolerance and diversity?

There is a need to open a conversation on this topic; many scholars have described the potential benefits of heightening awareness and commencing positive change (Harris & Ackah, 2011) (Wegner, 2006) (Farrell, 2003) (Sorenson, 1996); others remark on the need to neutralize the influence of religion and thus the terms tolerance and diversity are sometimes a counterweight to favoritism (Hanson, 2008) (Barnard, 2010) (Schultz, 2007), or so-called “mainstream” viewpoints (Bryant, 2011) (Huntington, 1996)(Lichterman, 2008). Many look to institutional culture or policies for guidance in preserving individual rights, like those described in the first Amendment; others look to the courts for definition, boundary making and interpretation of these complex issues. The climate and culture of the modern college campus is a perfect laboratory to experiment, though in contrast to a pristine scientific lab, the college campus cannot truly be controlled, made uniform, nor produce results that can be perfectly replicated.

**Does the law clarify or confuse?**

The Constitutional guarantee (US Constitution, 1791) for separation of church and state is provided for in the "Establishment Clause" of the first amendment, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion,;" this prohibition, this statement of restriction upon Congress is simple in verbiage, but complex in meaning. How can these words offer both individual protection and governmental restrictions?

To address this question, one must also grapple with the functionality of law and the system of judicial review of laws. A shared belief may or may not result in a shared perception; this is evident to scholars who may study the intersections of university practices and religious tolerance and diversity. We may well ask, what is the role of the university as it relates to religion, expression, diversity and tolerance (Harris & Ackah, 2011) (Schultz, 2007)and may find no true peaceable kingdom is possible (Tilson & Venkateswara, 2004) and yet the commitment to opening and maintaining a dialogue (Dufford, 2009) (Gray, 2010) is tremendously important to the integrity of the organization (Davis G. B., 2009) (Marchand & Stoner, 2012). When we attempt to reconcile practices and policies we may realize the impossible complexity of achieving a singular viewpoint, particularly and certainly when we realize the actions which seem beneficial to some are branded as onerous to others.
Over many years and many cases mainly involving religion in public schools, the Supreme Court has developed three "tests" to be applied to religious practices for determining their constitutionality under the Establishment Clause. These are the Lemon test, the coercion test and the endorsement test (Lemon v. Kurtzman, 1971) (Lee v. Weisman, 1992) (Allegheny County v. ACLU, 1989). The principles of law found in these cases are used to decide most legal questions about the permissibility of actions, especially those actions relating to universities, that arise and are related to religious expression, establishment and inclusion or exclusion. Understanding the basic tenents of these basic cases can be useful and they are described below.

The Lemon Test

Based on an important 1971 United States Supreme Court case (Lemon v. Kurtzman, 1971), the Court will rule a practice unconstitutional if:

1. It lacks any secular purpose. That is, if the practice lacks any non-religious purpose.
2. The practice either promotes or inhibits religion.
3. Or the practice excessively (in the Court's opinion) involves government with a religion.

The Coercion Test

Based on a 1992 case (Lee v. Weisman, 1992) religious practices are examined to see to what extent, if any, pressure is applied to force or coerce individuals to participate. The Court has defined that "Unconstitutional coercion occurs when: (1) the government directs (2) a formal religious exercise (3) in such a way as to oblige the participation of objectors."

The Endorsement Test

Finally, drawing from an 1989 case (Allegheny County v. ACLU, 1989), the practice of the organization or governmental entity is examined to see if it unconstitutionally endorses religion by conveying "a message that religion is 'favored,' 'preferred,' or 'promoted' over other beliefs."

These tests are provided to permit a methodical and structured examination of the practice, and then permit a decision to be made to determine whether the practice is constitutional. For example, the constitutionality of displaying a monument to the Ten Commandments on the grounds of the Texas state capitol (Van Orden v. Perry, 2005) came before the USSC; is such a display a violation of the anti-establishment clause?

In that case, Chief Justice Rehnquist announced the judgment of the Court and delivered an opinion, in which Justices Scalia, Kennedy, and Thomas joined. CJ Rehnquist stated that,
“The question here is whether the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment allows the display of a monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments on the Texas State Capitol grounds. We hold that it does.” (Van Orden v. Perry, 2005).

In this simple explanation of the legality of the potentially offensive behavior, the opinion goes on to explain that historical references to religion, law, and tradition can and could be disengaged from a sponsorship or promotion of a specific religion or religious viewpoint. Does this case pose yet additional issues for the far future…for example, what is the longterm effect of excusing historic, questioning current and prohibiting future displays that may have religious undertones or religious associations? Scholars who study diversity and tolerance in the context of judicial decision-making have noted the difficulty of applying the general pronouncements of law and policy to specific examples affecting everyday campus life (Rigaux, 1995) (Comegys, 2012) (Roberson, 1998). There are some who have observed the differences between pre and post September 11, 2001 attitudes with both trepidation and cautious optimism (Putnam R. D., 2001) (Davis, Dunn, & Davis, 2004); others have found a way to describe, in their own voice, the way a group, in this case, campus ministers, feels about the state of religious tolerance and diversity on campus (Davis, Dunn, & Davis, 2004).

In 2010, Justice Ginsburg delivered the opinion of the Supreme Court in a case specifically about public universities and the constitutionality of their attempts to restrict student organizations based upon viewpoint, including religious viewpoints. (Christian Legal Society Chapter of Hastings College of the Law v. Martinez, 2010).

In the Hastings Law case, a lovely trail of precedents is provided to the reader. These past decisions are instrumental in guiding decision-making. We are informed in this case, that discrimination by a university against students or student groups based upon the group’s viewpoint is NOT permitted. According to Ginsburg, “in a series of decisions, this Court has emphasized that the First Amendment generally precludes public universities from denying student organizations access to school sponsored forums because of the groups’ viewpoints. See (Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of Univ. of Va., 1995); (Widmar v. Vincent, 1981); (Healy v. James, 1972)).”

Ginsburg identifies the main question presented to the USSC by this case,

“May a public law school condition its official recognition of a student group—and the attendant use of school funds and facilities—on the organization’s agreement to open eligibility for membership and leadership to all students?” (Christian Legal Society Chapter of Hastings College of the Law v. Martinez, 2010).

The importance and the essence of the historical perspective cannot be diminished; to truly understand what activities, actions and behaviors are legal and which are unconstitutional under the current USSC guidelines requires knowledge and comprehension of these precedential building blocks. In the Rosenberger case, the Widmar case, and in Healy v. James, challenges to
public university actions and policies are minutely explored and analyzed. These cases form compelling links that can bridge historic behaviors to current contemporary behaviors; indeed the irony is that well-reasoned intentional actions may survive based upon conflicting core values that have been recently [post 1964] introduced into our ethical environment.

For example, in the spirit of prohibiting discrimination, a university may decide to ban all religious groups which require members to adhere or subscribe to a credo or set of member rules. This indeed, is the actual circumstances of the Widmar case. In that case, a public university desired to avoid any appearance that it was providing state support for religion; therefore, it denied use of its campus facilities to a registered student group that wanted to use university space for religious worship and discussion. In other words, the university denied the student organizations use of facilities based upon the fact that it was a religious group and perhaps the university feared that letting religiously affiliated student groups use campus facilities would imply the university was promoting religion. This university decision was viewed by the USSC court under the most demanding of all judicial analysis, strict scrutiny. Strict scrutiny review is reserved for those most cherished rights under our constitutional framework, namely where the governmental action may impinge upon individual rights like those implied by the Bill of Rights.

When the USSC reviewed the Widmar case and also determined it should use strict scrutiny review guidelines it finally decided that the university’s self-proclaimed reason to deny the student group use of university facilities was not sufficiently compelling; indeed, the university’s behavior resulted in the equivalent of discrimination; but the discrimination was not religious discrimination, but discrimination against religious speech (Widmar v. Vincent, 1981).

The Rosenberger case, (Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of Univ. of Va., 1995) determined that a university generally may not withhold benefits from student groups because of their religious outlook. An officially recognized student group at the University of Virginia was denied student-activity-fee funding to distribute a newspaper because the publication discussed issues from a Christian perspective. The court subjected the university behavior to strict scrutiny and decided that the university violated the First amendments’ free speech clause by selectively prohibiting expression of a Christian [religious] viewpoint.

The Healy case (Healy v. James, 1972) was possibly the least controversial of all university anti-discrimination, freedom of expression cases. In Healy, the court ruled that a university requirement forcing a student group to agree to abide by campus rules and regulations as a pre-condition of receiving “official recognition” was a legitimate exercise of the university’s authority. The USSC confirmed that this university behavior was not unconstitutional under any interpretation, and did not violate the student group’s right of free association.

Of course, these foregoing United States Supreme Court cases constitute the supreme law of the land. Nonetheless, individual states have also faced complicated questions relating to university actions and the state and federal constitutionality of those actions. While the Lemon case of 1971 is a famous federal USSC decision, there is another case with a similar name that pertains to the permissibility of university actions related to funding religious facilities or
programs in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Supreme Court case is referred to as the *Lemons* case and is so-named because the author of the opinion is Justice Lemons. This case revealed an interesting issue regarding public bond funding from the state to a private university that is religiously affiliated and whether such funding for religious purposes is constitutional or not (Virginia College Building Authority v. Barry Lynn, 2000).

In the Virginia College Building Authority v. Barry Lynn case, building funds in the form of bonds were approved for Regent University building projects. The building projects included student housing in the primary location of the university as well as a new campus facility in another city. Barry Lynn and other unnamed Virginia members of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, and Frank Feibelman, Mary Bauer, and Bernard H. Levin appeared during a hearing and contested the legitimacy of the bonds. The hearing to challenge the legitimacy of the bonds was held in circuit court; this resulted in the circuit court determination that the bonds could NOT be validated and further, that Regent University was not eligible to receive this type of funding due to its religious mission. The case was then appealed from the Circuit Court to the Virginia Supreme Court. This issue on appeal was whether Regent was or was not eligible to receive state bond funding pursuant to the Educational Facilities Authority Act, Code § 23-30.39 et seq. After an exceptionally simple though explicit review of the facts of the case, the opinion disclosed that the two issues identified on appeal (namely the free speech issue and the establishment clause issue) easily could be handled.

Thus, two constitutional issues were raised, but only one was required to resolve the case. Only the establishment clause issue was addressed by Justice Lemons who held that permitting Regent University to participate in the Bond financing program did not violate the establishment clause. Furthermore, although the Divinity School of Regent University was NOT eligible for public bond financing, the rest of the Regent University schools were eligible. Since the case was resolved in Regent’s favor (with the exception of the School of Divinity), there was no need to review the second issue at all; thus, this decision did not address the free speech issue raised on appeal.

One might ask if the issues raised in these cases reflect the concerns shared by faculty across the United States, and whether these promote an interpretation that a conservative or a liberal professor would embrace (Mayhew & Grunwald, 2006) (Comegys, 2012). In posing the question, “why are professors liberal” (Gross & Fosse, 2012) there is a humorous attempt to address yet another perception, but is it true and does liberal mean tolerant? Can the discussion truly be held and can personal attitudes ever remain intact whilst the dialogue continues (Jakobsen, 2006) in the public forum? Perhaps the irony of tolerance aficionados themselves exhibiting intolerance as suggested by Krotoszynski in his article entitled, If Judges Were Angels:Religious Equality, Free Exercise, and the (Underappreciated) Merits of Smith (Krotoszynski, 2008) provides the only provable and viable lesson. We can certainly understand this central theme in the academy, the unspoken rule that religious viewpoints are both personal and public, private and yet pertinent as policy. Indeed, the meaning of diversity, tolerance, and
communitas can run headlong into a narrow-minded traffic jam where ideas are not exchanged so much as thrown without being caught. Nonetheless, we attempt to understand the ironies and vagaries of life and can best progress on this goal by studying the views of …ourselves, the faculty.

Diversity and tolerance from a micro view

During “Getting Started Week” of XYZ University, a small public liberal arts University with about 5000 students, many dormant issues are brought to life. In the fall of academic year 2011-2012, the Faculty Senate invited all faculty to an open forum during which faculty formed a variety of interest groups to identify special topics of concern suitable for study and/or action. One of these topics garnered much popular interest; the topic was the university’s forthcoming chapel, then currently under construction on the premises of the XYZ state university grounds. Those present identified multiple issues of interest related to the chapel: its use, its scheduling, and its relationship to religious tolerance, religious diversity on campus and the perceptions of the XYZ community about related issues including classic concerns of establishment and separation. There are many fine articles describing tensions, problems and issues related to tolerance and diversity on college campuses; there is no doubt that college life affects religious practices of students(Hartley, 2004), that viewpoint discrimination is a pressing problem (Bryant, 2011) (Wolf, 2006) (Snider, 2004). There are few studies on faculty perceptions, and fewer still that capture faculty perceptions of religious tolerance and diversity in the university setting.

Faculty Senate President and the Senate agreed to form a few ad hoc committees to study the key issues raised during the “Getting Started Week” Open Forum; therefore, the six member committee to study these issues was formed. The general purpose was to investigate the attitudes of the faculty, students and staff of a public university toward a chapel under construction, identify concerns relating to religious observances on campus, and determine whether these topics were pertinent to the campus culture. Members of the committee volunteered to serve; all were tenured but one; members of the committee presented diverse academic disciplines as well as diverse viewpoints. The initial members included one tenured history professor, one restricted business instructor, one tenured associate business professor, one tenured English professor, one tenured Philosophy and Religious Studies) professor, one tenured associate Philosophy and Religious Studies professor. The chair of the committee was appointed by the faculty Senate President; the chair was a member of the executive committee of the faculty Senate.

Charge to the Committee

The official charge to the committee from the Faculty Senate President was phrased thusly:
“Charge: Given the building of the XYZ chapel, the committee will study religious diversity on campus and student attitudes towards religious tolerance in order to understand the ways that XYZ's present state of religious engagement enforces or challenges XYZ's liberal arts mission. The committee will present a report to the Faculty Senate by the end of the 2011-12 academic year.”

Practices and Processes

A concise summary of the committees’ operational strategies is easily described; a master agenda was set up to outline the timelines, goals, objectives and expected outcomes. The members of the committee identified background resources, reviewed practices relating to chapels on other university campuses, and exchanged recommended reading all pertaining to the keys issues. The chair called the first meeting of the committee in October; the committee met and discussed the goals and objectives, research and products. We decided to utilize an Open Forum Model; this will be achieved by posting our scheduled meetings in advance. It was decided to take minutes to record our thoughts and ideas related to the committee “charge”. The agenda was used to jumpstart the exchange of ideas.

Subsequently, the committee began to execute the preliminary objectives by drafting informal guidelines for the committee work; these included that our meetings would be open to the public, and that dates, times and locations of our committee meetings would be made available on the Faculty Senate website. We asked for and received helpful information from the administration related to other state universities with chapels on campus, and noted issues and model policies in place at those universities. We arranged to meet with the campus ministry in November to discuss and learn about the issues of concern to that constituency group and to further inform our study by sharing pertinent views.

A lively and fruitful discussion occurred at the November meeting; the campus ministers and the committee discussed tender subjects including perceptions of religious tolerance, diversity, sensitivity to world religions, sensitivity to non-religious views, awareness of agnostic and atheistic views, privacy, pragmatism, proselytism, and sensitivity to the newest feature of campus life, the erection of a chapel. These topics were reviewed by the committee and eventually reduced to nineteen points. The input from the campus ministry generated additional impetus to conduct a survey and capture feedback from faculty and others on these topics. The November meeting with campus ministers included an invitation to attend any future meetings; and ministers were invited to submit questions for our survey by December.

The Fourteen points

At a full faculty meeting in early December, fourteen issues to be studied by the committee were presented to the faculty via PowerPoint.
1. What is the state of religious diversity on our campus?
2. What is the comfort level of students and faculty on campus regarding religion?
3. Who will determine how and when and by whom the chapel will be used?
4. How can we be encouraged to be sensitive to religious practices and holidays [holy days] of various religions and understand diversity?
5. What is the role of religious organizations, such as Intervarsity, in campus life and how do other student organizations [Greek, frats, sororities, clubs, etc.] view non-religious and religious activities? Are any/many students intimidated by overtly religious behavior?
6. Is there a gathering place or dedicated space for campus ministers?
7. Who will administer the programming and scheduling in the chapel?
8. What is the attitude of non-religious, agnostic or atheistic students, faculty and staff on campus?
9. How can XYZ avoid issues which [named other university] inexpertly addressed regarding the [name omitted] Chapel?
10. Is there a perceived conflict related to a state university housing a chapel on its campus and display of traditional religious symbols affiliated with specific religions?
11. Are there concerns regarding the religious references in benedictions, invocations and the selection of the religious representative at significant University events like Graduation, Honor Code invocation, etc.
12. What are the educational opportunities as we anticipate the chapel and its impact on campus life?
13. How can the Chapel be well integrated into the Mission of XYZ?
14. What do we say is our University point of view about the Chapel?

Several members of the faculty mentioned an interest in attending our Open Forum meetings. Those in attendance of the full faculty meeting were informed that dates for committee meetings would be posted on Senate Web page.

The committee met again in December. At that meeting the committee intended to design initial survey questions and then prepare the survey itself for the next stage involving selection, testing of final items and distribution via Qualtrics software. Our December meeting was a successful working meeting and resulted in the construction of several survey questions. These items were emailed to the director of assessment in January after semester break; the Chair met in person with the director of assessment to classify the questions, as well as determine the best Likert scale and terminology; a draft version of our survey was set up in Qualtrics- a survey software program licensed to the University. In December, the chair wrote a brief committee status report and sent these minutes to Faculty Senate President and Secretary.

In mid January, the chair of the committee met with director of assessment to whittle the questions to an even more manageable number. The survey used objective responses on a 7 point Likert scale and provided opportunities for open-ended responses. The chair met in person and via email with the committee to construct the edited survey form, check for spelling and clarity. It was determined [ultimately by the Office of the Provost] that the committee survey would be combined with other Senate sub-committee surveys on Faculty Life and distributed to the faculty target population for our survey. An original intent to survey the entire campus community or to survey a stratified group of students and staff was re-evaluated and ultimately rejected. Also the amalgamation with other surveys [some intended only for the faculty] altered the scope of the survey; it was determined it would be distributed via email list to faculty only.
The committee also attended to other related matters including university programs and forums relating to religious points of view. In January of Spring term the first Rumi Forum was presented; it was sponsored by XYZ’s Department of Philosophy & Religious Studies which featured a panel discussion "Religion and Social Justice," 7 p.m. in Gaines Theatre. This event was free and both XYZ community and the public were invited; it was well attended. It featured two members of the committee. Additional events in this series were planned; the committee invited ideas on similar topics that enrich campus discourse and campus life.

Later in January, the committee met to review the final version of the survey. The survey was again modified for clarity, edited for content and approved for distribution. Survey was electronically distributed to all faculty in the database; it was bundled with two other surveys and appeared first in the group of three. Survey was open for two weeks and a reminder was sent out halfway through the survey period to encourage participation.

The preliminary results of the survey were presented to the faculty Senate Executive Committee as well as Provost and to a high ranking administrator at the request for the Faculty Senate President. In addition, the committee chair met in person with the administrator to discuss the survey. At his point, the committee still desired to obtain additional surveys of randomly chosen students from each class, and randomly chosen staff. However, the committee agreed that the undertaking was too intensive and time-consuming for the committee to complete within the current academic year and would not be feasible or advisable due to time constraints, fear of survey fatigue, and reluctance by the administration and some of the committee members to survey the staff and student populations.

The survey closed and results were delivered electronically to the chair who distributed these to the entire committee. The committee met in February and reviewed the survey results. The number of comments received, and the strong response rate was noted. Chair reported on the status of the Survey to the Senate Executive Committee and provided a copy of the survey results at the March SEC meeting. In March the committee met and again reviewed the sections of the survey and allocated additional tasks [including categorization of commentary] to each committee member.

The committee members were each asked to review and analyze sections of the survey responses. The late March meeting of the committee, in which the chair, and two members participated in person, was spent evaluating analysis submitted by the other committee members and refining the method of presenting the commentary. A draft of the commentary analysis was compiled by the chair and distributed at the late March meeting. A report to the Senate consisting of Executive Summary, committee activities and meetings, Survey Findings, Other Campus Practices, Recommendations of the Committee on Key Principles [Open and Welcoming to All] and Topics [Scheduling, Voluntariness, Educational Uses, Interfaith Programs]. Appendices would include the PowerPoint presented to the faculty at the full faculty meeting in April, Sample Facility Use forms, and references utilized by the committee.
In April, a draft report and draft PowerPoint showing highlights of the survey was prepared by the Chair and distributed to the committee for review and comment. After review, a PowerPoint entitled, “committee Highlights of Report to Senate” was emailed to the Senate President, all members of the Senate Executive Committee, Provost, head of Assessment, and high level members of the University administration in mid April. The report was completed and presented to the Faculty Senate and full faculty in April by the chair of the committee.

Survey Objectives

The survey items were intended to:

a. Inquire about attitudes and perceptions of religious tolerance and diversity on campus
b. Inquire about attitudes and perceptions about our forthcoming chapel at XYZ
c. Inquire about attitudes and perceptions about religious ceremonies and traditions on campus
d. Provide opportunity for expression on these topics

Survey Findings pertain only to the results of a faculty survey; no students, staff or administrators were surveyed. The survey design was intentionally without any demographic items; it was designed to capture insight into the attitudes of those responding and was expected to establish that there are diverse attitudes about religion, religious observance, religious diversity and religious tolerance on campus; some faculty expressed concerns in the survey.

Other campus practices related to chapel use were reviewed and compared to assist the committee in making recommendations.

Recommendations of the Committee to the Senate include the adoption of Key Principles:

[Open and Welcoming to All] and Topics related to our University Chapel [Scheduling, Voluntariness, Educational Uses, Interfaith Programs].

Survey Methodology and Analysis

The survey contained one dozen statements related to religious activities, tolerance, diversity, construction of a chapel on campus; the format is summarized in Table A. As seen in Table A, several statements were associated with Likert scale responses as well as comment boxes; some statements were entirely open-ended [See Table B]. The questionnaire was constructed using Qualtrics survey software; it was alpha and beta tested, and then distributed to faculty via email. The email version of the survey contained an invitation to reply, assurance of
confidentially for respondents, a description of the purpose of the survey, and that the results would be reported in an aggregate format.

Survey was distributed to all 393 faculty using the official database of faculty emails. The number 393 represents all fulltime, part-time and adjunct members of the faculty. No demographic or other identifying questions were imbedded in the survey; that is, no questions about gender, rank, status, length of employment, etc. were asked. The survey was open for 2 weeks; one reminder email was sent to encourage survey completion. By the close of the survey, 166 respondents had completed the survey; each of the seven Likert response items was completed by a minimum of 164 and a maximum of 166 respondents. Each of these seven Likert scale items also received multiple comments by the respondents.

The five additional open-ended inquiries received multiple responses. The comments were not cross-tabbed for this report. Only aggregate data is reported; comments are associated by question, not by respondent.[Table B]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses to Statements 1-7</th>
<th>#n</th>
<th>mean</th>
<th>s.d.</th>
<th># of additional comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Comfortable with religious diversity</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>3.75/7</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. XYZ University is sensitive to religious practices</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3.55/7</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Gathering place for ministers chaplains</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>3.50/7</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. XYZ treats all religious traditions equally</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>4.48/7</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Comfortable chapel housed on state campus</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.56/7</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Concern w. religious references in XYZ events</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>3.73/7</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Chapel can be integrated into XYZ mission</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>3.11/7</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table B- Number of responses to Open-ended items [i,ii,iii,iv,v]</th>
<th># of commentary responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. On XYZ campus, what is role of faith-based organizations?</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. How should use of chapel be determined?</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. By whom should chapel use be determined?</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. As chapel opens, what are the potential educational opportunities?</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. What else should this committee consider related to religious tolerance and diversity?</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Commentary Analysis and Survey Results by Item**

**Statement #1. The campus community is comfortable with the degree of religious diversity on campus**

![Pie chart showing survey results for Statement #1.]

Objective LIKERT scale responses, n=164, Mean response is 3.75/7, Standard Deviation is 1.63.

The responses slightly favored *agree* in this item. As can be seen in the chart, in which shades of BLUE indicate agreement, and shades of RED indicate disagreement, more respondents agree than disagree. Strongly Agree = 5%, Agree = 25%,Somewhat Agree = 16% when compiled totals 46%. The Neutral [neither agrees nor disagrees] is 21%. The compiled Disagree responses are: Somewhat Disagree 16%, Disagree 12% and Strongly Disagree 5% for a total of 33%.

Overall results for Statement #1- AGREE: 46%   DISAGREE: 21%   NEUTRAL: 21%.

Of these 164 respondents to Item #1, 22 also added comments. These comments were reviewed and a table summarizing the commentary, with selected representative quotes is seen in the following table [Table 1 of Item #1 Comments]. It appears that objective responses [n164] and those who also offered comments [n22] are not parallel in point of view. Of those few who offered commentary on this Item #1, more than half offered negative criticism.
Table 1: Sample of Commentary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ITEM # 1: “The campus community is comfortable with the degree of religious diversity on campus.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive or offers positive view or observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-committal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical or offers negative criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant to question or objects to question posed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # COMMENTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item #2

Statement #2. XYZ University encourages sensitivity to religious practices and holidays [holy days] of various religions and understanding diversity.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Item #2- “XYZ encourages sensitivity to religious practices and holidays [holy days] of various religions and understanding diversity.”

Objective LIKERT scale responses n=166. Mean response is 3.55 out of 7. Standard Deviation is 1.66.

The responses favored Agree in this statement; 7% Strongly Agree, 26% Agree, and 17% Somewhat Agree. When compiled these Agrees total 50%. The Neutral response was 22%.
Somewhat Disagree is 14%, Disagree is 7%, and 6% reported Strongly Disagree. Thus, in this objective portion of Item #2, the Agrees are 50% and the Disagrees are 27%.

Overall results for Statement #2- AGREE: 50%  DISAGREE: 27%  NEUTRAL: 23%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUESTION # 2: XYZ encourages sensitivity to religious practices and holidays [holy days] of various religions, and understands diversity.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive or offers positive view or observation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-committal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical or offers negative criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant to question or objects to question posed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # COMMENTS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Item # 3. “There should be a gathering place or dedicated space for ministers and chaplains.”
164 responded. Of those: 15% Strongly Agree, 24% Agree and 10% Somewhat Agree. 26% were Neutral; and 10% Somewhat Disagree, 8% Disagree and 9% Strongly Disagree. Mean is 3.5 out of 7 and the Standard deviation is 1.82. As the pie chart depicts, there were approximately the same number of Neutral responses as the compiled Disagrees.

The Agrees total 49%; Disagrees 27%, with a parallel number of Neutral responses [26%].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3: Sample of Commentary</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>QUESTION # 3: “There should be a gathering place or dedicated space for campus ministers and chaplains”</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tr>
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</table>

TOTAL # COMMENTS 12
Item #4—“The XYZ campus community treats all religious traditions equally.”

165 Respondents in which 6% Strongly Agree, 11% Agree, 10% Somewhat Agree. 21% are Neutral, 21% Somewhat Disagree, 14% Disagree and 16% Strongly Disagree. This statement elicited a higher negative response. A majority [51%] disagrees that XYZ campus community treats all religious traditions equally. The Standard Deviation of the responses was 1.77 and the Mean response was 4.48 out of 7.

There were also 14 respondent comments associated with the statement in Item #4. These few comments reference a variety of points of view, objections and other expressions of dissatisfaction. Some complaints include objections to Christian symbolism, holiday trees, a chapel in the shape of a cross and Saturday exams. All 14 comments are included:

1. All I can say is that the *administration* does not appear to discriminate based on religious affiliation.
2. Bible Study group at [tile omitted] home is Christian
3. Holiday Happening? No, I do not think all religions traditions are treated equally.
4. I've never heard reference to anything but Protestantism/fundamentalism[sic]
5. If we have Jewish students, Saturday exams are not sensitive.
6. I hope so
7. It cannot possibly do so, especially for religions that are simply not represented here.
8. No...conservative evangelical Christian traditions are much more highly valued
9. Not by building a chapel in the shape of a cross. How are Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists supposed to feel?
10. The [name omitted] hosts Christian Bible groups in [pronoun omitted] office weekly on an invitation-only basis--serious infraction of the First Amendment.
11. There is an overwhelming Christian sense here.
12. Trees at the holidays are Christian symbols. Even our "holiday" tree on the Great Lawn was still a tree. Before the winter holidays, our campus was filled with Christmas trees - in the DSU, in the Library. I am a Christian, but this still felt like an imposition.
13. Unless your religion is Christianity or Judaism, XYZ is a pretty lonely place.
14. Worded too broadly; this isn't a realistic goal.
Item #5- “I am comfortable with a chapel being housed on a state university campus.”

165 Respondents in which 27% Strongly Agree, 17% Agree, 11% Somewhat Agree. 8% are Neutral, 7% Somewhat Disagree, 16% Disagree and 14% Strongly Disagree. This statement elicited a higher positive response. A majority [51%] agrees they are comfortable with a chapel being housed on a state university campus. The Standard Deviation of the responses was 2.24 and the Mean response was 3.56 out of 7. Of the 165 respondents, 14 provided comments. All comments are:

1. As long as it is paid for by private donations, it wouldn't violate the Lemon Test, if applied to a non-federal governmental entity.
2. As long as the funds are private
3. Frankly, I find the building offensive, oppressive, & a waste of money. The space was put to better use as a parking lot & the money would have been better spent building up library resources.
4. I'm comfortable with a faith center, not a chapel. I would look into changing the name of that space.
5. I'm still not sure of the justification for this.
6. I am not a religious person, so do not care for spending all of our tuition and tax dollars on a chapel.
7. I am uncertain that a chapel belongs on a state university campus unless it caters to *all* religions equally.
8. If it serves all denominations.
9. if only it weren't so ugly...

10. It would have been very appropriate to have had such a space in December, for the memorial service for the two students who died. Of my previous institutions, two had chapels on campus (though one was a private institution). The state university I was at that had a chapel made every effort to make it nondenominational.

11. I will only be comfortable with the chapel when I am assured that it will not be run by XYZ administrators who owe their positions to the President.

12. Strongly Disagree.

13. totally offensive

14. We have a [title omitted] with a fantasy of living in the eighteenth century. Witness the neo-Georgian craze in architecture. And in the eighteenth century, universities were religiously affiliated. Now, we are not, or are not supposed to be. I am most upset at the [name omitted]insistence on calling it a "chapel." And, and [sic] is evident, [pronoun omitted] simply doesn't care that the name has undeniable Christian connotations. So, a "chapel" is not so problematic. Being bullied into accepting that name and context—business as usual.

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**Statement #6. I am concerned about religious references in benedictions, invocations or in the selection process of the religious representative at significant university events (ex. Graduation, Honor Code invocation).**

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree

---

Item #6. “I am concerned about religious references in benedictions, invocations or in the selection process of the religious representative at significant university events (ex. Graduation, Honor Code invocation).”
165 Respondents in which 26% Strongly Agree, 15 % Agree, 9 % Somewhat Agree. 11% are Neutral, 7% Somewhat Disagree, 12% Disagree and 20% Strongly Disagree. The Mean response is 3.73, and the Standard Deviation is 2.71. In the objective responses, 11% were Neutral. 50% Agree they are concerned and 39% Disagree they are concerned.

Of all these 165 Respondents to Statement #6, 24 added comments on the statement.

1. Agnostic, atheist, and pantheist students graduate without the aid of the standard Judeo-Christian deity or Jesus. That these entities should be invoked during state university activities bothers me greatly.
2. Atheism is also a religion and atheists need to tolerate other religions. As long as the references are not specific to any religion and only to "our creator", people can interpret however they want, including atheistic interpretations. The hypocrisy of those who want more tolerance on campus are among the most intolerant XYZ citizens.
3. Can someone tell me why we do this? What happened with the separation between church and state?
4. Embarassing[sic], arrogant
5. For the record, I'm a Christian...but there's a separation of church & state for a reason
6. I'd be concerned if there was no reference.
7. I am not a Christian, but feel forced to be a part of Christian rituals and references constantly. We have, for instance, never had a non-Christian give a benediction or invocation. For that matter, we have never had a Catholic priest either. There is a clear bias that we are all forced to participate [sic] in
8. I believe that we are a public institution that should observe a distinct separation between church and state. Therefore any references[sic] to god is inappropriate to those who do not hold to those beliefs. Better to have a moment of silence which respects everyone's beliefs.
9. I do not take offence but as a evolutionary biologist I do not agree with any specific religion, they are great to teach young children morals but I am strongly against enforcing morality by using fear of a "hell" that can never be scientifically proven.
10. I endorse these things, actually
11. I feel uncomfortable being required to attend an event that includes prayer.
12. It does me no harm and may do some good.
13. I think this creates community and solemnity. As a Christian, I am comfortable with prayer but I do not know how others perceive it.
14. It is completely disrespectful to non-Christians.
15. It simply will take a lawsuit from a student to stop this.
16. Know your audience. Is it christian, christian catholic, etc. Two years ago a student cited the Qaran during the breakfast commencement ceremony, and then there was a collective shocked sigh in the room...
17. Since student groups often choose the religious speaker and since the school is overwhelmingly Christian, there is an imbalance of Christian clerics.

18. Such benedictions have a long tradition and should be retained, but with an intentionally broader representation to include all faith traditions.

19. The prayers are exclusively in Judeo-Christian (mostly Christian) tradition: it seems inappropriate to ask students from other traditions to participate in these and give no representation to their beliefs, particularly on occasions that require attendance or are the culmination of their four years of work toward their degrees. They are stuck between participating in religious observances that do not match their faiths or not attending their own graduation ceremony.

20. The prayers at university events are utterly inappropriate and offensive.

21. These are in keeping with long established traditions in our country.

22. They have no place in the official business of a state institution and they have no relevance to the academic pursuits.

23. This is not a place to pray, and to expect others to observe Christian practices.

24. We should attempt to represent various faiths or to ensure that the religious representative speaks in such a way as to be inclusive of multiple faith traditions.

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Statement #7. The Chapel can be of service to the XYZ community and be well integrated into our University mission

![Pie Chart]

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat Disagree
- Disagree

Item #7- “The chapel can be of service to the XYZ community and be well integrated into our University mission.”
166 Respondents of which 24% Strongly Agree, 24% Agree and 12% Somewhat Agree. 19% are Neutral. 5% Somewhat Disagree, 8% Disagree and 7% Strongly Disagree. The Standard Deviation is 1.88 and the Mean is 3.11 out of 7. In this item, 60% of the Respondents support the statement. Only 20% disagree with the statement. 13 of the 165 Respondents added comments:

1. As a social space and a place for religious students to gather and worship, the Chapel can be of service to the XYZ community.
2. I don't think faith should be integrated into the University Mission, other than to state that students have the ability to explore.
3. If all faiths coexist
4. I feel that this is another space to rent
5. It looks good because main stream [sic] society believes in organized religion so I guess it is ok... It can be used as a device to lure religious students into the school....I grew up Catholic but after attending and graduating from the biology department and taking multiple religious studies classes, I now believe that Christianity [sic] is simply a culmination of previous religions. I know there is something out there but do not believe in "hell".
6. It may further the divided between christian [sic] and non-christian faiths
7. Just don't let the [name deleted] control the religious-life agenda. Please.
8. Only in the fact that it might bring more money to campus for the prez.
9. Students should feel comfortable with the direct linkage between chaplains and counseling. I think it is a great addition.
10. the chapel is a bid to get more money from alums for marriage ceremonies and receptions at the DSU
11. There is certainly a place for such a structure. But it should not be Christian.
12. Why would it be integrated into our mission? If I wanted to work at Regent or Liberty, I would have applied there. Furthermore, just because we have [name deleted] Stadium, "NCAA division 3 athletics" isn't included in our mission statement.
13. Yes, it could be used appropriately, and since it is obviously already being built, I would hope it is used conscientiously.

Open-ended response questions- Extra Questions [XQ#1]

In addition to the above 7 items, the survey included additional purely open-ended invitations for comments and thoughts. The results are summarized due to length considerations.
**Table X Q #1**

**QUESTION # i:** “On the XYZ campus, what is the role of faith-based organizations, such as interfaith ministry, intervarsity, Hillel, in campus life?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th># Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive or offers positive view or observation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-committal</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical or offers negative criticism</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not relevant to question or objects to question posed</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # COMMENTS</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table X Q #2**

**QUESTION # ii:** “How should use of the chapel be determined?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th># Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Relevant responses addressing “use” of the chapel | 74 | “By committee” 22 responses  
“By regular scheduling practices” 18 responses  
“For any event, religious or secular” 12 responses  
“All religions equally served” 11 responses  
“First come first served” 5 responses  
“Faith groups given priority” 3 responses  
“Exclusively religious use” 3 responses |
| Non-committal | 4 | “I don’t know” |
| Critical or offers negative criticism | 3 | “it would be my hope that the building would be renamed and repurposed for general campus use unrelated to religious expression” and also, “not at all.” |
| Not relevant to question or objects to question posed | 3 | |
| TOTAL # COMMENTS | 85 | |

**Table X Q #3**

**QUESTION # iii:** “By whom should the use of the chapel be determined?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comments</th>
<th># Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most popular similar concepts</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular response</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular response</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popular response</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous responses</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humorous or facetious responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL # COMMENTS</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table X Q #4

**QUESTION # iv: As we anticipate the opening of the chapel, what are the potential educational opportunities for the campus community? Comments**

| Popular religious or spiritual suggestions | 18  | “A place to go in times of trial, confusion, seeking; a sanctuary of quiet serenity; one-on-one and small group conferences pertaining to spiritual matters; and exposure to less familiar points of view, practices and rites.” |
| What XYZ should encourage | 17  | “There are[sic] a wealth of opportunities if the chapel is truly used as an interfaith space. Opportunities dwindle if the XYZ community views the chapel as more available or welcome to only one or two faiths. If it is an open and inviting space to all perspectives, students can be encouraged to engage in critical thinking and dialogue about these various perspectives.” |
| Comparison with other universities | 5   | “Chapel at my undergrad state supported institution was used for concerts, visiting speakers, organization installations, and other non-religious activities. I am sure that people could reserve the space for religious ceremonies, weddings and possibly funerals. I hope XYZ has an open policy like that-open for non-religious as well as religious activities.” |
| Educational Opportunities | 14  | “There are wonderful opportunities for both interfaith and sectarian education and religious observance. But who will decide on use of the chapel when competing groups require the space at the same time. Also, no official activities should be held in the Chapel- the rights of the non-religious student must be observed too.” |
| Objection posed | 12  | “The chapel should have no educational role and should never be a place that students or faculty or anyone is required or expected to visit.” |
| TOTAL # COMMENTS | 66  | |

### Table X Q #5

**QUESTION # v: What else should the Ad Hoc Study Committee on Religious Tolerance and Diversity consider? Comments.**

| Wide range of concerns and suggestions – these include perceived objectionable practices, political correctness concerns, free expression concerns, establishment concerns, and others. | 32  | “Religious intolerance by those who despise the religious freedoms of others”. “Separation of church and state”. “I do not believe that Christmas celebrations and Bible Study groups at the President’s home are appropriate at a public university”. “That polytheistic religions (not Christianity, Judaism or Islam) have an equal right to use the chapel if they wish to do so”. “Let’s stop being afraid of acknowledging the importance of God and religion in the lives of the majority”. “The question about concern for religious references and representatives at University functions and ceremonies should be given more attention. If these functions are mandatory, and many of them are for faculty and students, a diversity of perspectives should be represented OR any religious association avoided whatsoever. The extent to which any particular religion is promoted at a state institution is concerning overall.” |
| Non-committal or satisfied | 5   | “The topics you are looking into seem adequate.” |
Table X Q #5

| Offers suggestion – or Asks question | 12 | “I think keeping the Chapel non-denominational and open to all should be the goal of the committee”. “Making such a space available to the XYZ community is not an endorsement of any particular religion, I do not oppose the implicit endorsement of religion itself as part of a student’s wellbeing any more than I do building a rec center. (You don’t have to go.) The minority that rejects religion should not exercise a veto over the majority (or Plurality) that embraces some form of spirituality. And given the role of religion in public affairs across the globe, we would dedicate space for confronting these issues directly, and not through shrouded or snarky asides in a classroom.”“Drop the label of “chapel”. Find another name. Spiritual Center or House of Reflection or Center for Inner Peace or Temple. No more prayer/benediction for university events (graduation, etc.). Where do the agnostics and atheists go?” |
| Suggestion related to policy | 3 | “How will the maintenance and monthly expenses the building incurs be paid for if it is a privately funded enterprise? Will state funds pay for the electric and water bills?” |
| TOTAL # COMMENTS | 52 |

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In an ideal world, the concepts of tolerance and diversity would be so natural they would be considered unremarkable. In their compelling article about civility which they name “authentic tolerance”, Von Bergen et al (Von Bergen, 2012) discuss the virtues of being polite, hospitable, respectful and most of all, accepting. This view is both admirable and ideal; unfortunately, it may be that kindness, civility and respect serve simply to mask negative authentic feelings, contrary beliefs and opposing viewpoints. So, the ultimate dilemma remains intact, how to celebrate differences while protecting and preserving the common good.

The undertaking to inquire about faculty perceptions of diversity and tolerance on our campus was the first of its kind. The open-forum nature of the study committee was at times fruitful and at times less fruitful. The faculty responses to our survey on religious tolerance and diversity, and religious expression and practices on a state university campus are remarkably honest. Faculty demonstrated a wide range of beliefs, feelings and viewpoints and were sometimes sincere, sometimes sarcastic, and sometimes angry. The comments of faculty in the open-ended and commentary demonstrate that some faculty are very angry and may express their anger by exaggeration, insult or broad generalizations. These are methods that are counterintuitive to modern concepts of “authentic tolerance”. Nonetheless, the opportunity to voice an opinion and be “counted” can be beneficial to both the listener and the speaker. Again, in an ideal world a dialogue would entail both transmitting ideas AND receiving ideas, perhaps I
secretly long for a suggestion box that would talk back! As the survey results demonstrate, faculty perceptions of diversity and tolerance and attitude about religious diversity and religious tolerance may wax and wane as the individual determines his or her own personal beliefs.

Finally, the committee recommendations to the Faculty Senate include advice on Key Principles for the Chapel, suggestions on Scheduling, Voluntariness, Educational Uses, Interfaith Programs, and recommendations on religious references and religious speakers at university events. The committee will continue to exist for the next academic year with additional members, and all but one member will return to the committee.

REFERENCES


Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of Univ. of Va., 515 U. S. 819 (USSC 1995).


US Constitution, Amendment I (December 15, 1791).

Van Orden v. Perry, 03-1500 (USSC 2005).

Virginia College Building Authority v. Barry Lynn, 992099 (Commonwealth of VA Supreme Court 2000).

