



ALBERT AND AMELIA FERST INTERFAITH CENTER

Fall Semester Report 2019

Abstract

This fall report provides the WSU campus community a window into some of the activities, events, initiatives and programs undertaken by the Interfaith Chaplains' Council and Interfaith Advisory Council in response to the mission of the Interfaith Center.

Prepared by Fr. Warren J. Savage, Director and Catholic Chaplain

The mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center is to support religious and spiritual life and to promote interfaith understanding at Westfield State University. During the academic year, Center staff members provide and support opportunities for worship, meditation, spiritual exploration, religious learning, celebration, fellowship and service. In support of the College's mission to prepare students for life in the global community, the Center seeks to promote respect for and understanding of diverse religious traditions and to help students relate their moral and religious traditions to their personal choices and service to society.

December 22, 2019

On behalf of the Interfaith Chaplains' Council and the Interfaith Advisory Council, I am happy to submit to Westfield State University campus community, the Westfield State Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors and the Interfaith Subcommittee, the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center Report for the Fall Semester 2019.

The fall semester report reflects some of the activities, events, and programs resulting from the collaboration between the Interfaith Chaplains' Council and the Interfaith Advisory Council in view of the mission statements of the Interfaith Center, the Westfield State University and the expressed needs of the campus community.

I am grateful to Westfield State University Board of Trustees, the Westfield State Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors, and the Westfield State Alumni Association Executive Council for their ongoing support of the mission and important initiatives of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center.

I am particularly grateful to the many individuals, student clubs, groups, and organizations beyond the campus community that have donated non-perishable food items and financial resources to support the COMMON GOODS Food Pantry located at the Second Congregational Church.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to Lisa McMahon, liaison from the Westfield State Foundation to the Interfaith Center, for her ongoing commitment to the mission of the Interfaith Center, her generous spirit of service, compassionate ways, and wise counsel.

Sincerely,

Fr. Warren J. Savage, Director and Catholic Chaplain
Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center
Westfield State University

THE INTERFAITH CHAPLAINS' COUNCIL

The Chaplains' Council exists to support the mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center, to oversee services, programs and faith-based clubs using the Interfaith Center and to serve the spiritual needs of the campus community.

The Chaplains' Council is comprised of the clergy under contract with the Westfield State Foundation and one representative of the Foundation. Fr. Warren J. Savage, the Director and Catholic Chaplain, in collaboration with the Interfaith Chaplains' Council oversees all programs, events and activities at the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center

The Interfaith Chaplains' Council has identified the following goals:

- To support students in the practice of their own religion, faith tradition within the mission of the center;
- To focus on interfaith education, interfaith service projects, interfaith relationship building and opportunities for interfaith dialogue and prayer;
- To support students who do not consider themselves to be "religious" but do identify themselves as "spiritual";
- To help Westfield State students address behavior related to religion, religious leaders and/or religious groups that are disrespectful, harassing or intruding on student's rights or privacy.

The Interfaith Chaplains' Council is tasked with assuring faith-based and religious groups using the center have mission statements that are aligned with the Mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center and the Mission of Westfield State University. **The Interfaith Chaplains' Council meets on the 1st Wednesday of the month at the Interfaith Center during the academic year.**

INTERFAITH CHAPLAINS' COUNCIL FALL SEMESTER ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Common Goods Westfield State University Food Pantry – Open Tuesday & Wednesdays (12-4 p.m.)
commongood@westfield.ma.edu

Manager, Celeste Donovan, Ph.D., Director, TRIO Student Support Services
Food Collection Coordinator, Deacon James Conroy, Assistant Catholic Chaplain
Graduate Student Intern, Daniel Dobek



The Interfaith Chaplains' Council in collaboration with the TRIO Student Support Services, the Westfield State Foundation, Inc., the Second Congregational Church continues to oversee the management and operation of the COMMON GOODS Food Pantry located at the Second Congregational Church, 467 Western Avenue.

The mission of COMMON GOODS is to alleviate food insecurity for the Westfield State community and provide a safe and welcoming space in which to distribute a variety of non-perishable food items and personal care items at no cost.

The most highly requested food and personal care items are: Tuna, Granola Bars, Snacks, Coffee, Soups Quick Microwaveable Foods, toilet paper, deodorant, soap, toothpaste, shampoo and conditioner.

Interfaith Campus Ministry Bulletin

An Interfaith Campus Ministry Bulletin is prepared each week and emailed to the faculty and staff. The primary purpose of the bulletin is to inform people about the work of the Interfaith Center, the various faith/spiritual based clubs and organizations, and campus events, activities and programs related to the mission of the Interfaith Center: to promote respect for and understanding of diverse religious traditions on campus. The weekly bulletin includes the following standard information: a weekly theme/focus, Pastoral Reflection, Immigration Message, *This Week at the Interfaith Center*, Faith-Based Student Organizations' Activities, Upcoming Services for the Congregation Ahavas Achim, Spiritual Counseling (Reclaiming Conversations), Information on Food Pantries and Soup Kitchens, and the National Suicide Prevention LIFELINE 1-800-273-8255.

Interfaith Chaplains' Council Welcomes Cantor Colman Reaboi



The Interfaith Chaplains' Council welcomed Cantor Colman Reaboi last fall to replace Rabbi Efraim Eisen who retired as the Rabbi for Congregation Ahavas Achim and Chaplain for the Jewish Student Organization (JSO). Cantor Reaboi leads the Shabbat Services and High Holy Days for the Congregation Ahavas Achim. He has served as Hazzan, Director of Education, Spiritual Leader, conducted Shabbat, High Holy Days and Festival services at Synagogues in MA, FL, OK and RI. Cantor Reaboi studies voice and opera at The Boston Conservatory, Boston, MA, and received a Certificate in Jewish Music, a Bachelors in Jewish Studies at Hebrew College, Newton, MA. He is a member of The Guild of Temple Musicians.

Interfaith Living and Learning Center Project

Fr. Savage, in collaboration with the Interfaith Chaplains' Council, submitted a proposal to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield to renovate the vacant Blessed Sacrament Rectory in Westfield into an Interfaith Living and Learning Center for students interested in living together as an Interfaith Community committed to Interfaith Dialogue, Prayer and Collaboration.

The Blessed Sacrament Rectory belongs the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield and is under the care and maintenance of the Pastor of Blessed Sacrament Parish. The Interfaith Living and Learning Center will remain under the care of the parish with oversight from the Director of the Catholic Campus Ministry at the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center c/o the Westfield State Foundation, Inc.

The project draws its inspiration from the *Mission Statement of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center* (see Mission Statement above) and the Mission of the Diocesan Office for Campus Ministry Outreach: *"That they may know You..." John 17:3*

After consultation with the Finance Office, Diocese of Springfield, Bishop Rozanski gave his approval on September 26, 2019 to continue moving ahead with the proposed plan. The planning and implementation of the project will be guided by the policies of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield, the building codes of the City of Westfield (Commonwealth of Massachusetts), and the Office of Residential Life, Westfield State University.

Letters of Endorsement have been received from area congregations, the Congregation Ahavas Achim, the Islamic Center of Western Massachusetts, President Ramon Torrecilha, the Westfield State Foundation, Inc., The Right Reverend Dr. Douglas J. Fisher, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts, and the Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Springfield.

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Campus Interfaith Inventory

The Interfaith Chaplains' Council completed the Campus Interfaith Inventory (CII), a project of the Interfaith Youth Core. The report and feedback we received is a valuable tool and great resource to share with other partners across campus and for our own planning Interfaith programs, activities and events during the 2019-20 academic year.

Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Campus Innovation Grant 2019-20t: Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative: An Interfaith Study, Dialogue and Immersion Experience on Immigration and Race

The Interfaith Chaplains' Council, on behalf of the Interfaith Center, submitted a proposal to the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) last May and was awarded an Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Campus Innovation Grant in the amount of \$4,000. The purpose of the grant is to train students from diverse religious traditions to facilitate dialogue with students, faculty and administrators across cultural, political, and religious differences on the issues of immigration and race.

This grant was written in collaboration with Sydney Scannell, an English Major and Intern in the Internship Program coordinated by the English Department, Westfield State University. Sydney graduated in May 2019.

An Interim Report of the IFYC Campus Innovation Grant can be found in the Appendix.

Mental Health Awareness Task Force

Fr. Savage is the Interfaith Chaplains' Council representative on the newly established Mental Health Awareness Task Force. The purpose of the task force is to make Mental Health Awareness a priority in the WSU campus community (students, staff, faculty and administrators). Since the initial meeting last September, the Interfaith Chaplains' Council committed to and followed through with the following initiatives:

- Collaborated with Tricia Oliver to have the President send a letter to the campus community to celebrate *World Mental Health Day 2019*. This resource was made available at the Interfaith Center.
- Included in the Weekly Interfaith Campus Ministry Bulletin information on the **NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE** 1-800-273-TALK (8255), suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
- Collaborated with the Interfaith Chaplains' Council in the planning of the *Annual Interfaith Campus Ministry Summit - Suicide Prevention Soul Shop Workshop* for campus ministry chaplains, advisors, leaders, ecumenical/interreligious clergy, etc. This event is scheduled for January 9, 2020 at WSU.

- Discussed with the Interfaith Chaplains' Council and collaborated with members of the President's Cabinet on Postvention protocols for *Memorial Services* after a death by suicide. Collaboration is ongoing.
- Provided resources on Suicide Prevention to the members of the Interfaith Chaplains' Council and the Interfaith Advisory Council.

Memorial Services for a Deceased Faculty and Student

Reverend Barbara Hesse, Protestant Chaplain, presided over the Service of Remembrance and Celebration of life with the family, friends and colleagues of WSU Faculty Emeritus Dr. James Phillips (Biology) on November 25, 2019 at the Interfaith Center.

Fr. Warren J. Savage, Catholic Chaplain, presided over the Service of Remembrance and Celebration of life with family, friends, and teachers of Wildalie Lopez on December 15, 2019 at the Interfaith Center.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Spiritual Counseling, Direction and Guidance

The chaplains have weekly office hours to meet with anyone to provide spiritual counseling, direction, guidance, or simple conversations. Individuals are welcome to meet with one of the chaplains or Joanne Murphy, LICSA, MSW, to process what's going on one's life. All sessions are confidential.



THE INTERFAITH ADVISORY COUNCIL

The Interfaith Advisory Council promotes the Mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center with emphasis on respect for and understanding of diverse faiths and religious traditions.

The Interfaith Council exists to collaborate with the chaplains in their work within the Mission of Westfield State University and the Mission of the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center by:

- advising the Foundation and Chaplains on the direction of the Interfaith Center;
- providing information and support to approved religious groups on campus;
- designing, implementing and/or supporting interfaith and ecumenical education programs and community service projects.

The Interfaith Advisory Council is comprised of the Interfaith Chaplains, a representative of the Foundation and representatives from faith-based organizations approved by the Student Government Association.

The Interfaith Advisory Council is responsible for:

- Reading and sharing material and insights related to responsible, respectful interfaith/interreligious and ecumenical relationships;
- Planning at least two main annual events or programs on campus;
- Coordinating community service and hosting discussions and forums to promote Interfaith dialogue;
- Educating the campus community about the different religions and faiths;
- Offering support to victims of religious discrimination on campus.

The Interfaith Advisory Council meets on the first Monday of the month during the academic year.

INTERFAITH ADVISORY COUNCIL FALL REPORT OF ACTIVITIES, EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

ANNUAL INTERFAITH DIALOGUE, ART OF LISTENING EVENT

Dr. Mary Keator, a member of the Interfaith Advisory Council, planned the *6th Annual Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening* event in collaboration with the leaders of the Jewish Student Organization (JSO), the Newman Club, and the Muslim Student Organization (MSO). The event was held on Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at the Owl's Nest. The focus of the dialogue was Immigration and Race. Many of the participants found the event to be a transformative learning experience.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Ashley Whitaker, President

Laura Pissano, Advisor

The Mission of Christian Fellowship is to help Christians grow towards maturity as Disciples of Christ by study of the Bible and by Christian fellowship, to present the call of God to the world mission of the Church, to help students and faculty discover God's roles for them and to contribute to the educational,

cultural, and social climate of Westfield State University. The Christian Fellowship meets every Tuesday (7:00 p.m. – 8:30p.m.) for Bible Study at the Interfaith Center.

JEWISH STUDENT ORGANIZATION (JSO)

Elli-Ann Oskar, President

Hannah Wald, Vice-President

Dr. Christopher Gullen, Advisor

Rabbi Robert Sternberg, Advisor

The purpose of this organization is to bring Jewish students together to experience the Jewish culture as a group and to spread awareness of important Jewish issues to the campus community. The Jewish Student Organization meets on Tuesdays (5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.) at the Interfaith Center.

During the semester the Jewish Student Organization (JSO) collaborated with the Interfaith Advisory Council planned and participated in the following activities:

- *Rosh Hashanah* Party, October 2, 2019
- Participated in the Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace, October 6, 2019
- *Sukkah* Celebration, October 15, 2019
- Interfaith Movie Night with the MSO and Newman Club, October 19, 2019
- JSO Bake Sale, October 31, 2019
- Student-Lead Shabbat Service, November 1, 2019
- Participated in the Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening Event, November 6, 2019
- Participated in Interfaith Game Tournament, November 14, 2019
- Sinai Temple Visit and Noah Aronson Concert, November 15, 2019
- *Hanukkah* Celebration, December 14, 2019

MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION

Coordinator: Charlotte Capogna-Amias, M.Ed. (ccapogna@westfield.ma.edu)

The Group Meets on Wednesdays (12:15 – 1:00 p.m.) at the Interfaith Center

A small group of faculty and staff meets every Wednesday afternoon at the Interfaith Center to enjoy some quiet time sitting together in silence, often followed by a short conversation about how the quiet sitting was for them and how they have been dealing with stress in their lives, etc. They come together with a range of experiences with meditation and mindfulness- from none to years of sitting practice- and they initially used the free, online, self-paced course on Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction to guide their sits week-to-week: <https://palousemindfulness.com/>.

MUSLIM STUDENT ORGANIZATION (MSO)

Hibo Hussein, President

Ashia B. Richeme-Alcide, Advisor

The Mission of the Muslim Student Organization is to unite Muslim students and faculty around programs and activities based on the Qur'an, to carry out religious, educational, social, and charitable activities and to foster friendly relationships with non-Muslims. The Muslim Student Organization meets on Tuesday (4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) at the Interfaith Center.

During the semester the Muslim Student Organization collaborated with the Interfaith Advisory Council planned and participated in the following activities:

- Participated in the Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace, October 6, 2019
- Interfaith Movie Night with the MSO and Newman Club, October 19, 2019
- Participated in the Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening Event, November 6, 2019
- Talk To a Muslim Day, November 13, 2019
- Participated in Interfaith Game Tournament, November 14, 2019
- Sinai Temple Visit and Noah Aronson Concert, November 15, 2019
- Participated in Interfaith Movie Night, November 19, 2019
- Observed Salat (Daily Prayers) at the Interfaith Center

NEWMAN CLUB

Eric Olafsen, Co-President

Marc Widing, Co-President

Sr. Jeanne Branchaud, SSJ., Advisor

Patricia Byrnes, Advisor

Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern

The Newman Club is an organization of Catholic students bound by faith and called to serve others on campus and in the broader community. Its mission is to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all students so that they may live their Christian faith and deepen their spirituality through the study of God's Word, friendship and community service. The Newman Club meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month (5:00 – 6:00 p.m.) at the Interfaith Center.

During the semester the Newman Club collaborated with the Interfaith Advisory Council and planned and participated in the following activities:

- T-Shirt Fundraiser Project
- Kayaking Trip, October 5, 2019
- Participated in the Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace, October 6, 2019
- Interfaith Movie Night with the MSO and Newman Club, October 19, 2019
- Participated in the Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening Event, November 6, 2019
- Participated in Interfaith Game Tournament, November 14, 2019
- Sinai Temple Visit and Noah Aronson Concert, November 15, 2019
- Interfaith Movie Night with the JSO and MSO, November 19, 2019

Appendix 1

**Advancing Interfaith Excellence: Bridging Divides on U.S. Campuses
IFYC Campus Innovation Grant 2019-20**

Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative on Immigration and Race

TO: President Ramon Torrecilha
Westfield State Foundation, Inc.
Interfaith Chaplains' Council and Interfaith Advisory Council
Brian Anderson, Program Manager, Interfaith Youth Core

DATE: December 2, 2019

RE: Interim Report on Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative

This report represents the work and activities associated with the IFYC Campus Innovation Grant that was awarded to Westfield State University (Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center) in May 2019. The focus of the grant is Immigration and Race.

ORIENTATION SESSIONS

Facilitator: Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern

Orientation sessions were held at the Interfaith Center to introduce the student leadership of the faith-based organizations to the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Campus Innovation Grant. The title of the grant is: *The Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative on Immigration and Race*. Information was presented on the scope and goals of the initiative.

August 27, 2019	Catholic Campus Ministry Team Meeting
September 9, 2019	Interfaith Advisory Council Meeting
September 19, 2019	Catholic Newman Club Meeting
September 24, 2019	Jewish Student Organization Meeting
October 1, 2019	Muslim Student Organization Meeting
	Christian Fellowship Meeting
October 2, 2019	Interfaith Chaplains' Council Meeting

RESOURCES

In preparation for the meetings an application was created for the *Interfaith Student Immersion Experience: The Encuentro Project, El Paso, TX* scheduled for the spring break in March 2020. The immersion experience is part of the Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative but is not funded by the grant. The immersion experience is limited to 15 students.

Over 30 students showed interest in the *The Encuentro Project*. The deadline for submitting applications is November 1, 2019.

Printed materials, resources and statements from the various faith traditions on immigration and race were presented to the students.

An information table was set up in the meeting room of the Interfaith Center to share these materials with other members of the campus community who visit the Interfaith Center. The resources included the following statements from various faith traditions:

- The Message of Pope Francis For The 105th World Day Of Migrants and Refugees (September 29, 2019)
- Episcopal Church Statement on the White House Decision to Reduce the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program (September 25, 2019)
- The Central Conference of American Rabbis Denounces Inhumane Treatment Of Immigrants And Refugees (June, 27, 2019)
- Islamic Relief USA's Statement On President Trump's Revised Executive Order On Refugees and Immigrants (March 2019)

Students and visitors to the center can also find articles and flyers on what they can do to assist undocumented immigrants.

The student leaders on the Interfaith Advisory Board were provided copies of two books for preparation for the *Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening Event on Immigration and Race*;

- *The God Who Sees* by Karen Gonzáles
- *Perennial Wisdom for the Spiritually Independent* by Rami Shapiro.

INTERFAITH CAMPUS MINISTRY BULLETIN

Facilitator: Fr. Warren J. Savage, Director of Interfaith Center & Catholic Chaplain

A quote or statement on immigration and race from various faith traditions or another resource is inserted into the weekly *Interfaith Campus Ministry Bulletin* for reflection.

PLANNING AND LEARNING SESSIONS FOR THE ART OF LISTENING: INTERFAITH DIALOGUE EVENT ON IMMIGRATION AND RACE

Facilitator: Dr. Mary Keator, Assistant Professor, English Department & Member of the Interfaith Advisory Council

The purpose of these sessions is for students of various faith traditions (Christian, Jewish and Muslim) to create fellowship with one another, explore and discover what the sacred texts from their respective religious tradition states on issues of immigration and race, begin to dialogue about these discoveries, learn from one another and work together to create a *Listening Café* using themes and verses from their sacred texts to develop pertinent questions around immigration and race.

Members of the Jewish Student Organization (JSO), Muslim Student Organization (MSO), Catholic Newman Club, and Interfaith Advisory Council discovered and selected the following themes in their respective sacred texts: "welcoming the stranger," "feeding the hungry," "clothing people" and, "loving one's neighbor." These overarching themes will be used to formulate questions that will be assigned to tables for the *Interfaith Dialogue, Art of Listening Event* on November 6, 2019.

Session One: September 16, 2019

Focus: Introductions, shared a meal together and framed the Art of Listening event within the Interfaith Youth Core Campus Innovation Grant.

Session Two: September 23, 2019

Focus: Student leaders compiled a list of verses from their respective traditions to share. We listened as they shared verses/*suras* from their respective sacred texts. Topics of verses included love of neighbor, feeding the hungry and welcoming the stranger.

Session Three: September 30, 2019

Focus: The committee dialogued and decided on four themes to begin: “welcoming the stranger,” “feeding the hungry,” “clothing people” and, “loving one’s neighbor.” At the *Interfaith Dialogue: Art of Listening Event*, each table will have one theme along with a verse/*sura* from various religious traditions that speak to this theme. Students will select verses from each theme to bring to our next meeting at which time we will begin to formulate a question for each theme/table.

Session Four: October 15, 2019

Focus: The committee decided to add an additional theme “self-examination” and began working to develop questions directed at each theme with selected verse from the world’s sacred traditions to educate and deepen participants thinking around immigration and race.

Session Five: October 21, 2019

Focus: The committee continued to dialogue and revise both the verses and questions directed at each of the five themes to educate and deepen participants thinking around immigration and race. In addition, committee members began to see for themselves some common teaching in the world’s sacred traditions.

Session Six: October 28, 2019

Focus: The committee finalized the verses and questions directed at each of the five themes to educate and deepen participants thinking around immigration and race (see below). They also decided upon questions for the participant anonymous questionnaire to be completed at the end of the event and asked finalized other details such as who will keep time, and who will welcome the participants and introduce *The Art of Listening*. In addition, the committee decided to order Middle Eastern food to support the dietary needs of all the faith traditions along with sparkling water, and a selection of cookies for dessert.

The Themes, Verses and Questions *Interfaith Dialogue: The Art of Listening* are as follows:

Table #1 Love of Neighbor

Judaism: “Love you neighbor as yourself.” (*Leviticus* 19:18)

Christianity: “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” (*John* 13:34)

Islam: “Whoever believes in Allah and the last day should do well to his neighbor” (Prophet Mohammed, *Hadith*)

Confucianism: “Seek to be in harmony with all your neighbors; live in amity with your brethren.” (Confucianism)

Native American: "With all things and in all things, we are relatives." (Sioux Tradition)

Question: What does it look like to love your neighbor?

Table # 2 Feeding the Hungry

Judaism: "If a stranger comes and says, 'I am hungry. Please give me food,' we are not allowed to check to see if he is honest or not; we must immediately give him food." (*Mishnah Torah* 6:6)

Christianity: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink..." (*Matthew* 25:35)

Islam: "O Abu Dharr! Whenever you prepare a broth, put plenty of water in it, and give some of it to your neighbors." (*Sahih Muslim, Hadith*)

Hinduism: "Bounteous is one who gives to the beggar who comes in want of food..." (*The Rig Veda*)

Question: Who are the hungry and in what ways can I feed them?

Table #3 Self-Examination

Judaism: ""Let us examine and probe our ways, And let us return to the LORD." (*Lamentations* 3:40)

Christianity: "Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith." (*2 Corinthians* 13:5)

Islam: "Whosoever knows himself knows his Lord." (*Hadith*)

Buddhism: "Your purpose in life is to find your purpose and give your life to it." (*The Dahammapada*, 166.)

Sikhism: "Those who realize their self, get immersed in the Lord Himself." (*Guru Granth Sahib*)

Question: How do I examine myself?

Table #4 Charity

Judaism: "Defend the poor and the orphan; do justice to the afflicted and needy." (*Midrash Tehillim* 82:3)

Christianity: 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' (*Luke* 3:11)

Islam: "If the debtor is in a difficulty, grant him time until it is easy for him to repay. But if you remit it by way of charity, that is best for you if you only knew." (*Quran* 2:280)

Hinduism: "Learn three cardinal virtues – [self-restraint](#), charity and [compassion](#) for all life." (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, V.ii.3)

Question: What prevents me from sharing fully with others?

Table # 5 Welcoming the Stranger

Judaism: "And you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, since you were strangers in the land of Egypt." (*Exodus* 23:9)

Christianity: "I was a stranger and you welcomed me." (*Matthew* 25:35)

Islam: "Islam began as a something strange and it will return to being strange, so blessed are the strangers." (*Şahih Muslim* 145, *Hadith*)

Hinduism: Let a person never turn away a stranger from his house, that is the rule. Therefore a man should, by all means, acquire much food, for good people say to the stranger: ‘There is enough food for you.’” (*Taitiriya Upanishad* 1.11.2)

Sikhism: “None is our enemy, none is stranger to us, we are in accord with one and all.” (*Guru Granth Sahib*)

Aboriginal: "We are all visitors to this place. We are just passing through. Our purpose is to observe, to learn, to grow, to love... and then we return home." (Australian Proverb)

Question: Who have I made a stranger and why?

SUMMARY OF THE ART OF LISTENING: INTERFAITH DIALOGUE EVENT ON IMMIGRATION AND RACE

During the 6th *Art of Listening: Interfaith Dialogue* event the responses were once again overwhelmingly positive. Participants valued having time set aside to eat together and listen and learn about other people’s perspectives. Their awareness grew as they came to realize that the various world’s sacred texts share similar teachings in terms of love of neighbor and welcoming the stranger, “I learned that all faith traditions teach us how to welcome the stranger and love each other without judgement.” They began to see on a deeper level that although we share different skin coloring, religious beliefs, cultures and ways of life that we share a commonality, “I got to realize that we all think very similarly, with the same fears, desires, hopes and needs. We’re all the same on the inside.”

Another point that stood out in the responses was the importance of respect. One way this surfaced was through our sensibilities: to listen to one another, to see one another, speak kindly, and offer a helping hand. Another way it stood out is through one’s ability to act: to respect, appreciate, accept, help, forgive, share, give, and feed. In reference to their obstacles to love, welcome, feed, and care for others, they identified fear, judgment, selfishness and anger.

The participants comments highlight the importance of creating a designated time and a welcoming space for people to gather, listen and learn from one another with respect and interest, rather than from judgement. Through active open listening, participant’s minds and hearts opened and expanded to take in and learn from one another. Perspectives grew.

During *The Art of Listening* event, participants were nourished through physical food, active listening, deep respect, good conversation, and a sense of community around a common goal to grow in knowledge, awareness, appreciation and understanding.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

IMMIGRATION POSTER REFLECTION

Coordinator: Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern

Colorful Posters depicting artwork and images of migrants and refugees were hung in the meeting room of the Interfaith Center accompanied by journal notebook. Students and visitors of the center are invited to view and reflect on an image and write their thoughts in the notebook.

INTERFAITH PRAYER SERVICE FOR PEACE

Coordinators: Lise and David Letellier, Music Ministers, Interfaith Center

An *Interfaith Prayer Service for Peace* was planned by the students from the various faith-based organizations and held on Sunday October 6th, 2019. The intention of the prayer service was to bring together people from the various faith traditions to pray for universal peace among all people.

LOOKING AHEAD TO SPRING SEMESTER 2020

Walk A Mile in My Shoes, Refugee Simulation Experience

Coordinator: Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern

The student leadership of the faith-based groups/organizations will be introduced to *Walk A Mile in My Shoes, How to Host a Refugee Simulation on your Campus or in your Community*. This is a project sponsored by the Jesuit Refugee Service/USA www.JRSUSA.org.

This experiential learning activity will be a campus-wide initiative inviting students to experience what it might be like to walk in a migrant or refugee's shoes.

Interfaith Student Immersion Experience: The Encuentro Project, El Paso, TX

Coordinators: Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern & Deacon Kevin McCarthy, Maryknoll Mission Education Coordinator

Colleen Mollica and Deacon Kevin McCarthy will offer orientation sessions to the student leaders/representatives of the faith-based organizations who will be participating in the Interfaith Immersion Experience on Immigration and Race. The orientation sessions will help to prepare the students for the *Encuentro Project, El Paso, TX* during the spring break (March 10-15, 2020). The immersion experience is not funded by the IFYC Campus Innovation Grant.

“WHO IS MY NEIGHBOR?” – INTERFAITH PHOTO EXHIBIT

Coordinators: Colleen Mollica, Campus Ministry Intern, Sophia Roméu, Artistic Consultant, and Mary Mollica, Student Photographer

This project will serve to advance the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) Campus Innovation Grant – Interfaith Student Leadership Initiative on Immigration and Race.

Student photographers from the WSU Photography Club will take black & white photos of a diverse group of WSU students - highlighting the following human features: eyes, mouth, ears, and hands. Each mini collection will have quotes from various sacred texts with reflection questions to prompt conversation around the theme, “Who Is My Neighbor?”

PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS

Fr. Warren J. Savage (Project Leader)
Director and Catholic Chaplain
Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center
Westfield State University

Sr. Jeanne Branchaud, SSJ
Interfaith Chaplains' Council and Interfaith Advisory Council
Assistant Catholic Newman Club Advisor
Westfield State University

Patricia Byrnes
Interfaith Advisory Council
Assistant Catholic Newman Club Advisor
Westfield State University

Cantor Coleman Reaboi
Interfaith Chaplains' Council
Jewish Chaplain
Westfield State University

Reverend Barbara Hesse
Interfaith Chaplains' Council
Protestant Chaplain (United Church of Christ)
Westfield State University

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*** The Encuentro Project in El Paso**

The "*Encuentro Project*", in Ciudad Juárez (Mexico) and El Paso (United States), offers services for planning and lodging to deal with life experiences, in the area between the two countries, dedicated to migrants.

The project includes direct work with applicants for asylum, migrants and refugees. Also, it offers social Catholic education about projects and the lives of migrants on the frontiers, through visits, meditation and spiritual accompaniment.

"*Project Encounter*" is an inter-congregational, collaborative project which includes the Jesuits, the Marist Brothers, the Sisters of San Francisco of the Holy Family, lay people, and the *Instituto Fronterizo Esperanza* (Border Institute Hope).

The *Encuentro Project* experience typically includes:

- Direct work and encounter opportunities with asylum seekers, migrants, or refugees, either in a local emergency shelter or detention center, or through the education and social service programs offered by El Sagrado Corazon, the Jesuit parish in El Paso;

- Education on immigration and migration;
- Discussion of the push and pull factors causing migration from Central America and Mexico to the United States;
- Site visits in El Paso and Las Cruces, and if desired, to organizations serving Ciudad Juarez residents across the US-Mexico border;
- Evening reflections, prayer, and community living.

Appendix 2

**WSU/Torrecilha Op-Ed
Ferst Interfaith Center
Springfield Republican**

Interfaith Center Plays a Special Role in Campus Life

By Ramon S. Torrecilha

In a day and age when faith can be tested on a regular basis, and at a time when it is imperative to find commonalities among our many individual differences, the Albert and Amelia Ferst Interfaith Center shines as a comforting and binding force.

The Interfaith Center situated in the heart of the Westfield State University's campus is symbolic of its influence on the University community. Led by Father Warren Savage and supported by a full council of area chaplains, the Center and its clergy serve as integral sources of comfort and help for students and other members of the campus community. And, thanks to the innovative and direct leadership exhibited by Father Savage, the Center continues to exude its relevance on stages beyond the campus of Westfield State, as it plans the second annual Interfaith Summit next month, which will attract spiritual stewards throughout the Pioneer Valley.

As all students, but especially first-year or transfer students acclimating to campus culture, look to form relationships and engage with those who share backgrounds, interests, causes, values, or perspective. The Interfaith Center has a hand in fostering those relationships and bolstering fellowship among the community.

As students adjust to the rigors of college life, try to make sense of the unimaginable tragedies that are occurring in the world around us, or attempt to grapple with the array of struggles inherent in young adulthood, the Interfaith Center provides a sanctuary and support for individuals to reflect, recharge, and engage.

The Center first opened in 1982 thanks to a community-wide fundraising effort involving 30 area businesses and stakeholders. The Center stays true to its founding mission as it continues to welcome all. Students, and others on campus that seek the Center's services, do so not as Catholic, Protestant, Episcopal, Methodist, Jewish or Muslim individuals; rather, they seek and receive services as members of our community.

College campuses serve as microcosms of the broader society. They are also settings where new social and political views and concepts are introduced and debated. Campuses are uniquely poised to encourage rich discourse on these topics and take advantage of teachable moments, which come early and often on the campuses of institutions of higher learning, here and around the globe.

This has been made clear several times during my presidency at Westfield State, but perhaps more poignantly in 2017, when Westfield State endured a series of hateful and bias incidences on campus. Among my first calls following the first and subsequent incidents was to Father Savage, asking for the Ferst Interfaith Center's help in facilitating discussion as we moved to heal our diverse campus community. The chaplains welcomed the chance to take a leadership role in bringing about greater understanding and compassion. They were effective in their emphasis of the elements that united our campus community rather than focusing on those that divided it.

The Center has also helped students during tragic events affecting a religious community, such as comforting Jewish students after the Tree of Life mass shooting in Pittsburgh in October 2018 and the mosque attack in Christchurch, New Zealand, last March. Helping students make sense of a world that seems to have lost its way is part of the Center's mission.

Beyond the support and engagement that students receive from participating in its activities, the Ferst Interfaith Center helps Westfield State in its academic mission. Clergy are often consulted by faculty and their knowledge is incorporated into coursework for various academic departments, including social work, criminal justice, and ethnic and gender studies.

Many public universities lack an interfaith center. Yes, you might find a Newman Center for Catholic students, a Hillel for those who are Jewish, and a Muslim Student Association in separate spaces on a particular campus. To tend to students of all faiths under one roof is less common, so we embrace the opportunity by promoting student involvement and inclusivity in our Interfaith Center.

The Center provides a vital platform for student support while nurturing diversity and civility. It fosters tranquility and fellowship in a fast-changing, less personal world. Although it has been part of the fabric of our campus culture for nearly four decades, we never take for granted the value of the Ferst Interfaith Center in our community.

Ramon S. Torrecilha, Ph.D. is the president of Westfield State University.

