



Texas Christian University

Interfaith, Spiritual, Religious, and Secular
Campus Climate Index

2022 Campus Report



INSPIRES
Campus Climate
Index

Interfaith, Spiritual, Religious, and Secular Campus Climate Index
2022 Campus Report for Texas Christian University

www.inspiresindex.org
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INTRODUCTION TO INSPIRES

The Interfaith, Spiritual, Religious, and Secular Campus Climate Index, or INSPIRES Index, is an assessment tool that measures, evaluates, and represents an institution's efforts toward, and commitment to, establishing a welcoming climate for students of different religious, secular, and spiritual identities.

The INSPIRES Campus Climate Index project is a collaboration between researchers at The Ohio State University and North Carolina State University, based on data gathered through the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS). The project is funded by the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, an organization committed to courageous multi-faith efforts.

OUR PURPOSE



Create a tool to help students and families make informed college choices;



Engage the public and higher education stakeholders in conversations about religious, secular, and spiritual diversity; and



Advance research on college students' religious, secular, and spiritual identities and welcoming campus climates in higher education.

On the following pages, we provide an assessment of your campus' efforts to welcome students of different religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Based on your campus representative's responses to the INSPIRES inventory, we assigned one to five stars to reflect overall welcome, as well as accomplishments in seven specific domains:

Religious Accommodations

The availability and accessibility of academic and residential/dietary accommodations.

Institutional Behaviors

Institutional actions to support religious, secular, and spiritual inclusion, including the collection of demographic data and assessment, training, and the role of councils and committees.

Efforts to Reduce Negative Engagement

Policies and response protocols that address religious insensitivity on campus and communicate institutional values.

Extra-Curricular Engagement

Opportunities for interfaith encounters, dialogue, programming, service, and reflection.

Spaces for Support and Expression

Multifaith and dedicated spaces and communities for support and expression, both on and off campus.

Structural Diversity

Representation of people with different religious, secular, and spiritual identities within the university.

Academic Engagement

Curriculum, classroom practices, and faculty behaviors that engage religious, secular, and spiritual diversity.

Star levels were criterion-referenced and based on scores derived from tallying the practices, policies, and opportunities in place at your institution. Some practices, policies, and opportunities we weighted more heavily if, based on empirical evidence from IDEALS, they are known contributors to college students' perceptions of religious, secular, and spiritual welcome. Campuses that had overall and sub-scale scores ranging from 80%-100% of possible points were assigned five stars; 60%-79% four stars; 40%-59% three stars; 20%-39% two stars; and 0%-19% one star.

In addition to your campus' scores, the report offers benchmarking data on your peer group—that is, those campuses of a similar institutional type (public, private nonsectarian, Protestant, Evangelical, or Catholic).

As the intent of INSPIRES is to catalyze institutional improvement, the remainder of the report features recommendations that speak specifically to the seven domains we assess. These recommendations are based on years of research focused on the campus climate for religion and spirituality and the impact of students' college experiences on interfaith learning and development. Also, we examined the practices of exemplary INSPIRES campuses (i.e., those that scored four or five stars overall or on specific domains) and base many of the recommendations on their innovations.

We recognize that your campus may already have implemented certain recommended practices and policies but consider those you do not currently have in place as opportunities for continued growth as your institution seeks to welcome and help students of different religious, secular, and spiritual identities thrive during college.



OVERALL CAMPUS SCORES & PEER BENCHMARKING

Institution's Overall Climate Score: ★★☆☆☆

Protestant Institutions' Overall Climate Score: ★★☆☆☆

The *INSPIRES* Index is an overall indicator of institutional commitment to establishing a welcoming climate for students of different religious, secular, and spiritual identities.

	Texas Christian University	All Protestant Institutions
 Religious Accommodations	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆
 Institutional Behaviors	★★★★☆	★★☆☆☆
 Efforts to Reduce Negative Engagement	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
 Extra-Curricular Engagement	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
 Space for Support and Expression	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆
 Structural Diversity	★★★☆☆	★★☆☆☆
 Academic Engagement	★★★★☆	★★★☆☆



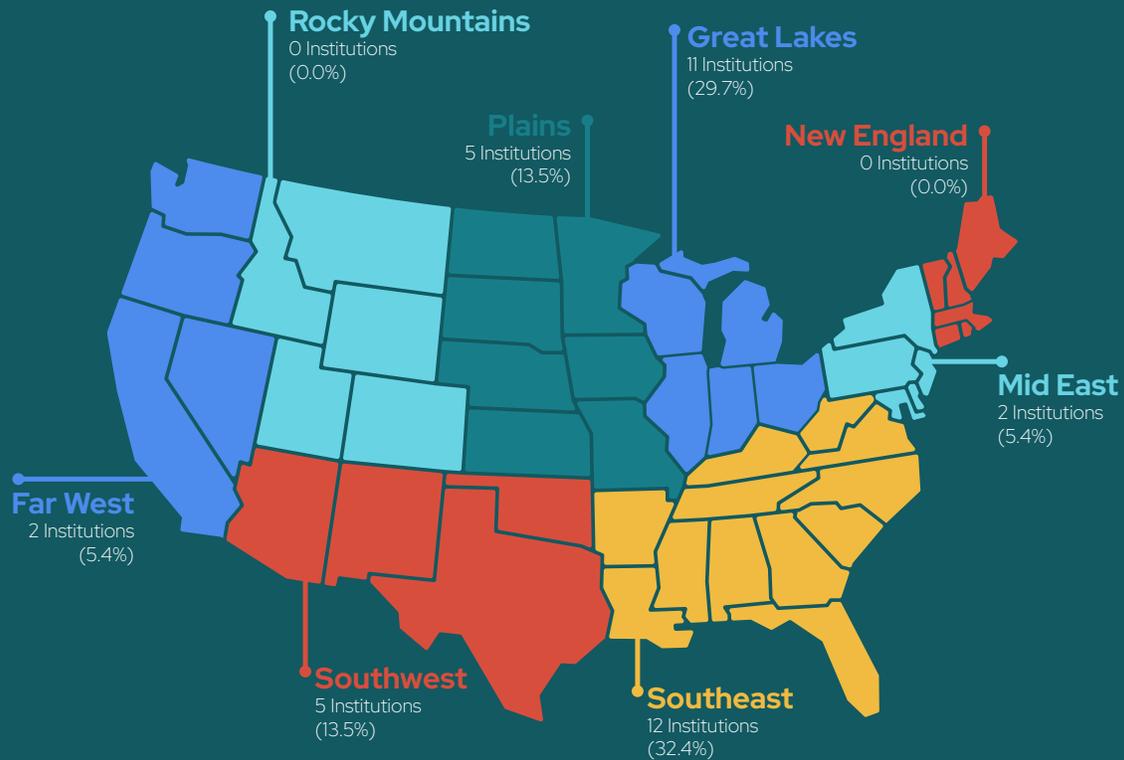
“Improving the campus climate for people of all faiths is essential for students to feel comfortable sharing their beliefs and navigating religious differences. These experiences will equip them to approach similarly challenging situations effectively when they move beyond college and into new civic and professional spheres—a skill-set that is sorely needed in today’s world.”

– Rockenbach, A. N., Mayhew, M. J., & Associates. (2020). *IDEALS: Bridging religious divides through higher education*. Interfaith Youth Core. <https://ifyc.org/sites/default/files/navigating-religious-diversity-9-27.pdf>

Peer Group Characteristics

Understanding the pool of institutions that participated in INSPIRES informs how you interpret comparisons between your institution and the peer benchmarking group. This page describes some characteristics of the 37 Protestant institutions in the peer group to ensure accurate interpretations of the data.

LOCATION



UNDERGRADUATE CLASS SIZE



CARNEGIE CLASSIFICATION





RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATIONS

Religious accommodation policies should be designed around the value of religious pluralism and support students from all religious, secular, and spiritual identities (RSSIs). Phrasing and word choices matter. Avoid legal jargon and clearly define terms when included. Outline a specific appeals process and clarify which specific office is in charge of the religious accommodation policy. Communicate your policies to students, faculty, and staff on a regular basis.



Classroom Accommodations

Recognize the power dynamics between faculty and students and among majoritized, minoritized, and non-religious identities. Take the steps necessary to remove the burden of responsibility from students having to seek accommodation directly from faculty or having to disclose their identities or practices to faculty. This policy removes faculty from the position of adjudicating students' requests or wondering if students are inappropriately taking advantage of policy. Students should not be required to provide outside documentation or a reference from an authority figure to confirm the sincerity of their beliefs, practices, or identity, as these can privilege organized religion and authority structures not shared by all religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Remove faculty from being the final decision-makers over whether accommodation is granted. Instead, committees can be composed of students, faculty, and staff from various functional areas and academic departments, with diverse RSSIs (religious, secular, and spiritual identities), who are trained for addressing and responding in a timely manner to accommodation requests.

Dietary Accommodations

Dining halls should accommodate students' religious dietary needs. Ensure that at least some dining halls are equipped to fulfill the needs of your students. Food items should be properly labeled, and ingredients listed to remove anxiety about finding the appropriate foods. Continually assess whether food offerings meet the diverse dietary needs of students. Ideally, all dining halls would offer service or provide accommodations for students' needs to access food around fasting times, regardless of location on campus. Consider shifting some dining hours of operations during certain times of the year

to accommodate these needs. If such a change is not possible, consider alternatives that can provide students with food such as delivered meals, off-campus meal vouchers, or access to religious and ethnic grocers. Ultimately, the priority is that students have access to the food they need.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

-  Include options for religious dietary restrictions such as halal, kosher, and vegetarian in dining halls.
-  Accommodate religious students' access to food around fasting times by extending dining hall hours of service.
-  Include kitchens in at least some residence halls so students may prepare their own food according to religious dietary restrictions.
-  Provide information to support students religious dietary needs near campus (e.g., which nearby restaurants serve halal food).
-  Ensure transportation is available to students to access religious and spiritual spaces in the community from campus..
-  Allow exemptions from required meal plan participation for students who have religious dietary or fasting restrictions.
-  Encourage faculty to include information about religious accommodations in their syllabi.



INSTITUTIONAL BEHAVIORS

Councils and Committees

Campuses benefit from having an interfaith council or committee that advocates for and attends to the diverse religious, secular, and spiritual needs of the campus population. The group opens communication between the university and religious, secular, and spiritual stakeholders and may choose to conduct coordinated interfaith programming or service. Ideally, councils or committees would include diverse representations of religious, secular, and spiritual traditions, as well as different constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, administrators, affiliated student organization staff members, religious workers, and/or members of the local community. In addition to establishing a standing council or committee, ensure that the group has a clear communication line to a university division or representative, a clear directive and action items so that the work can be productive and

reflect positively on the climate for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity on campus.

Assessment

Coordinate data collection on student religious, secular, and spiritual identities, as the information can aid in understanding the landscape of diversity and attending to student needs. Such data may be gathered through different offices and stakeholders on campus, including admissions and enrollment; diversity, equity, and inclusion; institutional research/assessment; multicultural affairs; religious life; or student affairs.

Assessing the campus climate for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity is another important step toward understanding the experiences and needs of students who identify with a diverse set of religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Ask questions about the climate for

religious, secular, and spiritual diversity on campus to illuminate strengths and areas for improvement that will ultimately benefit all students. In addition to surveys, consider interviewing stakeholders through one-on-one conversations and focus groups to provide a deeper and more nuanced perspective on the campus climate for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity.

A clearly outlined assessment plan can bolster the effectiveness of existing diversity efforts. A plan can help identify student needs, evaluate the effectiveness of current practices and student awareness of existing resources, and inform future directions. Assessment efforts can identify what events and co-curricular engagement opportunities have taken place as well as how those events were received by the campus community. The assessment should also discover which courses or academic tracks already incorporate concepts related to religious, secular, and spiritual diversity, how those are received by students, and how faculty navigate the courses that include these topics (and any associated challenges). Ultimately, assessment results should be used to identify appropriate training and development initiatives and inform decision-making on campus.

Training

Professional development opportunities for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity training should be instituted for faculty and staff. These may be embedded in other competency-based diversity initiatives. It is important that a religious, secular, and spiritual diversity training introduces tools to navigate religious, secular, and spiritual differences when they arise in and out of the classroom, particularly when it comes to political dimensions of religious, secular, and spiritual identity. Training should also include awareness-building about faculty behaviors in the classroom that create welcoming vs. unwelcoming climates for free expression of diverse perspectives. In addition, training should provide student affairs staff with the skills needed to incorporate religious, secular, and spiritual diversity in various programmatic efforts. In order to prevent negative engagement and promote positive interactions, stakeholders should be equipped with the skills and resources needed through a cycle of regular, intentional training opportunities.

A willingness and ability to articulate what one believes is a necessary precursor to interfaith engagement. Yet self-reflection and subsequent commitment to a particular religious, secular, and spiritual identity can

actually be catalyzed by engagement with diverse—and sometimes conflicting—perspectives. Faculty, staff, and administrators can be trained to consider how they can better support students in this journey in academic and non-academic spaces. In what ways can they encourage students to thoughtfully and responsibly examine their own beliefs? How might interfaith engagement opportunities be strategically designed to foster self-understanding and encourage participation among students who are in different developmental places with regard to religious, secular, and spiritual identity?

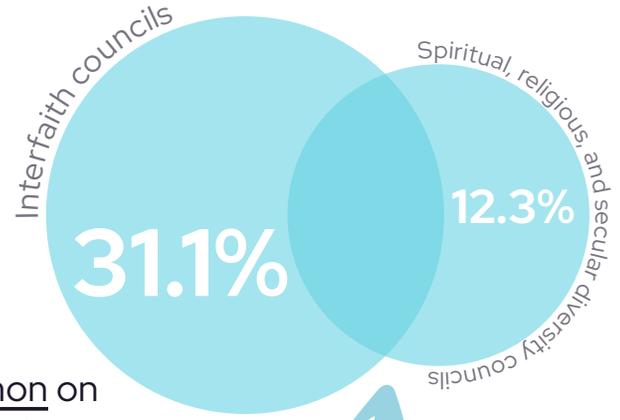
College is an important time for spiritual development during which many students experience religious, spiritual, or existential struggle. Continue to train different campus constituents such as counselors, residence life staff, and others about supporting and where to refer students experiencing these struggles.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

-  Establish an interfaith council or committee with faculty, student, staff, and administrator representation.
-  Establish a religious, secular, and spiritual diversity council or committee with faculty, student, staff, and administrator representation.
-  Encourage units across campus (e.g., Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Institutional Research/Assessment; Religious and Spiritual Life; and Student Life/Student Affairs) to gather and publicize data on religious, secular, and spiritual diversity.
-  Require religious, secular, and spiritual diversity training for student staff (e.g., resident advisors, peer tutors, orientation leaders).
-  Support the establishment of students groups around interfaith initiatives.
-  Provide training on how to support students with different religious, secular, and spiritual, identities to residence life staff and mental health/wellness counselors.

BEHAVIORS BY THE NUMBERS



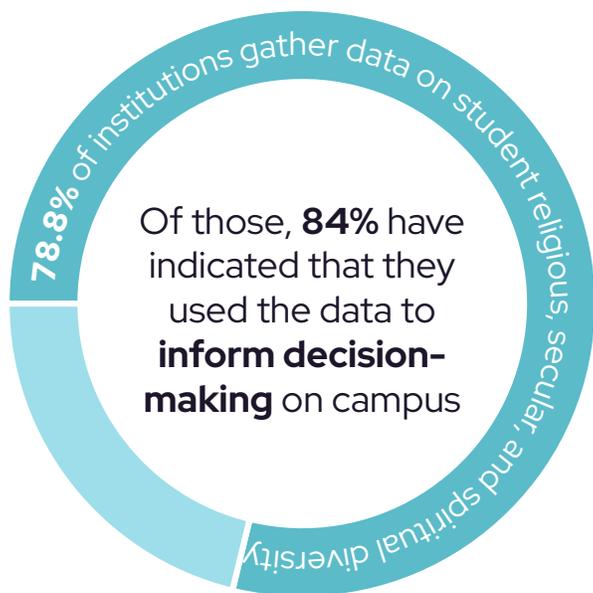
Interfaith councils and committees are more common on college and university campuses than spiritual, religious, and secular diversity councils and committees.

22.7% of institutions have both types of councils and 33.9% have neither.



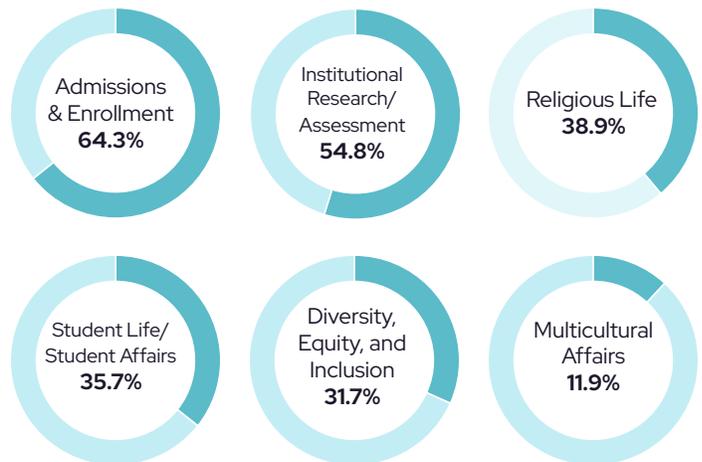
Interfaith councils are mostly comprised of college staff and students (40%*) with less representation by **faculty (26%*)**, **administrators (24%*)**, and **affiliated student organization staff (23%*)**.

*Percent of institutions with these constituencies represented on their interfaith council or committee



Data on religious, secular, and spiritual diversity are **mostly gathered through admissions**.

Percent of institutions with this office collecting data.





EFFORTS TO REDUCE NEGATIVE ENGAGEMENT



Incidents of bias, insensitivity, and religiously motivated hate crimes make for a less welcoming climate for all students. Becoming aware of these incidents on campus is an important step toward addressing them and reducing their frequency. Establish a bias-reporting system inclusive of diverse religious, secular, and spiritual identities and promote awareness of it amongst students, faculty, and staff. This messages to the campus that bias against members of different religious or nonreligious groups will not be tolerated.

Train faculty and staff how to identify, respond to, and report bias incidents related to religious, secular, and spiritual identity. All members of the campus community should clearly understand the systems in place for addressing harassment and discrimination related to religious, secular, and spiritual identity. It may also be prudent to assess whether such bias incidents are publicly acknowledged and condemned, and to explore with the interfaith council or committee ways for the university to better communicate a response when such events occur.

A Note on Proselytization

Religious proselytization occurs in public spaces on campus by non-campus affiliated individuals or groups at the majority of public institutions and at some private institutions. Public proselytization may be perceived as coercive by some and welcomed by others. Public institutions as state actors are limited in their ability to curtail free speech in public spaces. However, the campus community can be educated and engage in dialogue about religious expression on

campus, especially in cases where students express experiencing harm or discomfort from proselytizing individuals or groups. Campuses can consult with their legal teams to review and write clear and explicit policies concerning where, when, and how free speech, including proselytization, may take place on campus by affiliated and non-affiliated individuals or groups. Revise these policies at intervals and ensure that the campus community and visitors are aware of their presence.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

- Consult with legal counsel about policy development. For example, create policies to guide religious proselytization on your campus by non-campus-affiliated and campus-affiliated individuals or groups.
- Establish a team or group at your institution that is dedicated to tracking and responding to bias incidents related to religious, secular, and spiritual identity.
- Track bias incidents by location (e.g., residences, academic environments, co-curricular environments, off-campus spaces).

A photograph of two young women sitting outdoors, likely on a campus. The woman on the left is wearing a white hijab and a light-colored long-sleeved top, smiling broadly while looking at a laptop. The woman on the right is wearing a denim jacket and is also smiling, holding a blue pen. They appear to be engaged in a collaborative activity, possibly a study session or a discussion. The background shows a modern building with large windows.

Extra-curricular engagement opportunities that allow for appreciative inquiry of different religious, secular, and spiritual traditions help to counteract inaccurate assumptions about particular religious groups that may exist on campus. Thoughtfully planned and representationally diverse dialogues that explore intersections of faith and politics can be valuable for addressing the politicization of religious, secular, and spiritual identities and modeling civil discourse.



EXTRA-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT

Meet students where they are to increase engagement in co-curricular programs and remove institutional barriers to participation. For example, online learners may be more apt to participate in programs that take place virtually. A co-curricular activity that satisfies a course assignment may be more accessible for part-time students and commuters, as may be events that can be hosted at various times of day when different student populations (e.g., parents, people who work full-time) are on campus. Leveraging multiple communication channels to promote activities to different groups of students is another strategy for meeting students where they are.

Introduce religious, secular, and spiritual identity by providing common language. First-year seminars or orientation programs are a prime opportunity to introduce students to religious, secular, and spiritual diversity and interfaith engagement, and such efforts have borne fruit at other institutions. Ultimately, balancing informal and formal interfaith offerings lays a strong groundwork for enhancing the climate for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity and inclusion. For example, requiring a common reading focused on religion and spirituality for all first-year students could equip them with a shared language to prepare them for future encounters with religious, secular, and spiritual differences and serve as a bridge between classroom discussion and co-curricular experiences. A common reading related to religious, secular, or spiritual identity would normalize constructive engagement with religious, secular, and spiritual diversity as a separate construct from other forms of diversity across the institution.

Scholarship has consistently illustrated that meaningful learning occurs at the intersection of community engagement, personal reflection, and academic

content. Constructing environments that prompt students to situate their own religious, secular, and spiritual identities within a broader context, whether within the classroom or beyond it, offers opportunity for deep, meaningful learning that helps students to refine their underlying assumptions and beliefs. Draw on community engagement, religious studies faculty expertise, and interfaith scholarship best practices for cultivating strong mutually beneficial partnerships with off-campus local religious communities. To maximize student learning and growth, initiatives that expose students to various faith communities should include intentional reflection activities.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

-  Include religious, secular, and spiritual diversity in student orientation via printed material, communications, and social media.
-  Support the establishment of students groups around interfaith initiatives.
-  Encourage student participation and leadership in campus interfaith councils, committees, and organizations.
-  Create interfaith community service opportunities.
-  Offer leadership development opportunities specific to interfaith efforts on campus.



SPACES FOR SUPPORT AND EXPRESSION

Research has documented the importance of providing space for support and expression of different religious, secular, and spiritual identities on campus. These spaces have the potential to improve perceptions of a welcoming climate and foster appreciative attitudes toward other religious, secular, and spiritual groups. Dedicated spaces not only offer a physical location for religious practices but also symbolize a commitment to religious, secular, and spiritual diversity on campus.

Create multifaith physical spaces for prayer, reflection, or meditation on campus—and keep in mind that different faiths have distinctive needs in these spaces. Note that a historical chapel of Christian architecture

or origin may feel unwelcoming to students of other religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Consider repurposing public spaces in residence halls, the library, academic buildings, or the student center for interfaith and multifaith use. Base the location on student needs for accessibility and convenience. Larger campuses and those with residences separated from academic areas should consider whether multiple prayer rooms best meet their students' needs.

Religious and spiritual campus organizations often provide key spaces for students to connect with others who share their beliefs and practice traditions that are important to them. Periodically review evolving



student demographics and ensure that organizations adequately address the religious, secular, and spiritual groups represented on campus. Smaller student organizations benefit from institutional support to boost visibility. Avenues for supporting underserved religious, secular, and spiritual groups equitably include: co-sponsoring programs with a campus office or other organization, providing guidance to all RSS organizations for sustainable leadership transitions, identifying on- and off-campus opportunities for students to engage in activities related to religion, secularity, and spirituality, and seeking connections between local religious leaders, interfaith council representatives, and student group advisors. To maintain the viability of organizations that represent the religious diversity of the student body,

the institution must ensure minoritized groups have the same access to adequate financial and human resources as other groups across academic years. Assign engaged advisors who can maintain the groups' viability during transitions of student leadership and who are represented on the campus interfaith council or committee. The work of religiously minoritized student organizations should be paralleled by institutional programming so these students do not shoulder the labor for generating interfaith engagement and awareness opportunities on campus.

Religious organizations in the surrounding area can serve as important spaces of support and expression off-campus for students. Though efforts to develop inclusive on-campus resources and policies are vital, access to faith communities off campus can be critical for religiously minoritized students. Established religious, secular, and spiritual communities can provide students with familiar worship spaces and practices as well as spiritual support and development from people of shared religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Make it easy for students to learn about and practically access these spaces.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

- 🌐 Establish meditation/prayer spaces within high-traffic areas (e.g., union, student life center, activities center).
- 🌐 Ensure students have access to prayer spaces as needed.
- 🌐 Ensure transportation is available to students to access religious and spiritual spaces in the community.
- 🌐 Sponsor programs, events, or celebrations that support the needs of students who do not identify as Christian.
- 🌐 Sponsor programs, events, or celebrations that support the needs of non-religious students (e.g., Atheist, Agnostic).
- 🌐 Support the establishment of students groups focused on spiritual practices.



STRUCTURAL DIVERSITY

Creation of a specific home for religious and spiritual life at the institution provides a focal point for students seeking support and resources for their religious, secular, and spiritual commitments and exploration. This may take the shape of a religious, spiritual life, or interfaith office and/or the designation of a staff member liaison who coordinates with local resources and the interfaith council on behalf of students. Many private and some public universities offer a spiritual life or interfaith office, and public universities with medical schools frequently provide on-staff multifaith chaplaincy within their hospital systems. A designated office or center benefits students by its representational visibility; ability to engage in interfaith and religious, secular, and spiritual diversity work; and programming and serving as a resource for partnership and training. The office or liaison is instrumental in advising accommodation and bias response policies and is ideally situated to serve as the campus link to off-campus religious workers.

By building a diverse coalition, perhaps via an interfaith council or committee, interfaith work at the university could be strategically orchestrated and its visibility

would be enhanced. A coalition of interfaith leaders will also increase the likelihood that the scope and impact of interfaith efforts will gain ground as an institutional priority even as individual advocates for religious, secular, and spiritual diversity and inclusion come and go over time.

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

-  Employ part-time religious or spiritual life student staff at your institution.
-  Encourage the presence of religious or spiritual life staff employed through their respective organizations (e.g., InterVarsity, Hillel, local churches) on your campus.



ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Core curriculum and classroom practices should be designed to engage intentionally with interfaith topics. Increasing the number of courses on interfaith topics, embedding interfaith content within existing courses, and seeking opportunities for interfaith courses to meet general education requirement areas are all possible methods. Academic leaders can support faculty with clear statements about how religious, secular, and spiritual diversity fits within the academic mission and curriculum by providing exemplary materials, professional development, and faculty incentives to innovate their curricula.

Additionally, faculty should make religious accommodations and appeals processes explicit on their syllabi, which faculty councils can require. Faculty should be provided professional development in religious, secular, and spiritual diversity that includes how to facilitate productive classroom engagement. Academic leaders may incentivize faculty to connect their religious or spiritual class material to out-of-class experiences to broaden interfaith conversations and encourage faculty to pursue grants for incorporating interfaith activities (e.g., IFYC-Interfaith Youth Core).

Exemplary Campus Practices

Protestant campuses doing exemplary work in this domain engage in the following practices. Although your campus may already have established some of these policies, practices, and opportunities, if your campus seeks to grow in this area, you might implement recommendations on the list that you do not currently have in place:

-  Require courses in religious studies.
-  Address religious, secular, and spiritual diversity in the institution's core curriculum.
-  Encourage faculty to allow students to discuss their religious, secular, and spiritual views during and outside of class time.
-  Encourage faculty to include topics related to religious, secular, and spiritual identities in their courses when appropriate to prompt discussion.



INSPIRES Index Team Members

Matthew J. Mayhew

Co-lead, William Ray and Marie Adamson Flesher
Professor of Educational Administration
The Ohio State University

Musbah Shaheen

Doctoral Candidate, The Ohio State University

Renee L. Bowling

Doctoral Student, The Ohio State University

Laura S. Dahl, Consultant

Assistant Professor of Education
North Dakota State University

Jossie Muñoz

Program Coordinator, The Ohio State University

Alyssa N. Rockenbach

Co-lead, Alumni Distinguished Graduate Professor of
Higher Education Opportunity, Equity, and Justice
North Carolina State University

Gordon Maples

Doctoral Student, North Carolina State University

DaQuan Williams

Doctoral Student, North Carolina State University

Christa Winkler, Consultant

Assistant Professor of Educational Leadership
Mississippi State University

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 inspiresindex.org  [@IndexInspires](https://twitter.com/IndexInspires)

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