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Introduction: Steps Forward, Even in the Physical Distance

By J. Cody Nielsen

A world changed and transformed. Those are the only words that come to mind anymore as I write this in early May 2020. Our institutions of higher education are empty, as are our streets and too many of our businesses, replaced with lives at home. But the world is not empty. Perhaps it is even more full: of emotion, of grief, of what joy looks like, and of the simple things. Human beings are deeply connected together in the struggle to claim our full identities and to nurture a sense of self in the world. The world may be stuck in a pandemic, but we must endure toward the rights of full inclusion and support of students on campus. The work that continues to happen at institutions across North American for religious, secular, and spiritual identities slowly but surely pushes those rights forward.

As Convergence focuses on our online content, there is no greater joy than to see the continuation of our tri-annual magazine, which this month offers its 6th full issue. Contained in the issue are articles highlighting lessons from the newest generation in college, deep explorations of spiritual care, and foundational programming for religious, secular, and spiritual identities. This issue is our most comprehensive to date, with all sections having robust content included.

What may stand out are two specific pieces related to the Hindu community, in response to the creation of the new North American Hindu Chaplains Association (NAHCA), which launches this month with an online only conference. Convergence is immensely proud to be a major supporter of this work. Contained within the magazine, you will find an article by NAHCA’s founder, Dr. Asha Shipman, Hindu Chaplain at Yale University, containing deep reflections upon the core concepts of Hinduism. With the population of
Hindus in America continuously on the rise and expected to cross the one million mark when the 2020 Census data is released, this reflection is critical for any professional to explore. In addition, Dr. Joe Pritchett offers a book review of Hindu Approaches on Spiritual Care: Chaplaincy in Theory and Practice, which should be considered the organization’s founding volume and speaks to the depth of Hindu chaplaincy across North America.

Elsewhere in the issue, Brother Larry Whitney offers a fascinating and in-depth look at the religious demographics in the Pew Research Center’s latest data that gives an even broader understanding of the changing but also deepening religious, secular, and spiritual makeup of the United States. The Opinions section of this issue as well sparks reflective learning, as Dr. John Eby, Cassidy Oberreuter, and Keyera Shaw explore IDEALS data as it relates to the “provocative encounters” students have when meeting peers and building religious literacy and understanding. This opinion piece explores Generation Z and how as practitioners we can best support their religious, secular, and spiritual needs.

A second book review, of Spirituality in Higher Education: Autoethnographies, by Sydney Curtis, explores an edited collection on the role of spirituality in the lives of college and university faculty members. Finally, our Spotlight Program this issue is nothing less than a remarkable look at the work of Ellie Thompson, from Utah Valley University. Her facilitation work on inclusion in the religious, secular, and spiritual realm is worth considering for all professionals, especially when we inevitably return to our campuses.

This 6th volume of Convergence Magazine again shows just how deep the field of religious, secular, and spiritual identities goes. I hope you enjoy it. I know I did. Stay safe and stay well, and may the work continue forth toward justice for all identities.
Hinduism and Chaplaincy: Relating Core Concepts to Spiritual Care

By Asha Shipman

In the U.S., Hinduism still remains much of a mystery to the wider population, a faith tradition most commonly associated with yoga, curry, meditation, and henna tattoos. My own personal understanding, and that which I draw upon in my work as a Hindu chaplain in higher education, is of a faith tradition that prioritizes a humanitarian stance underlain by diverse relevant philosophies and practices.

Unlike other faith traditions, Hinduism has no founder, and Hindus have no central religious body that administers membership. Aside from being born into a Hindu family, which is how most of the 1.1 billion of us gained our affiliation, there are no strict requirements for being an adherent. One need not worship at a Temple, utter any particular prayers, give prominence to any particular form of the Divine, or display any outward markers of the faith, although all of these may be commonly practiced. Even diet is not officially mandated, though many Hindus are vegetarian or at least do not eat beef. Social practices vary considerably within India from state to state, as well as more distinctly north to south. Distinctions exist in cuisine, language, clothing, and marriage practices. Similarly, Hinduism is expressed in various ways according to regional, sectarian, familial, and personal customs and tastes. The same remains true for Hindus all over the world. Thus, in order to understand how an individual Hindu follows his or her faith, one must first ask questions about the family practices and personal beliefs rather than make any assumptions. According to Radhakrishnan (1888-1975), philosopher, statesman, and second President of India:
Hinduism is not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex and subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the Godward endeavor of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages. (Radhakrishnan, 1927, p. 8)

All the above being true, here are some select core philosophies that most Hindus would endorse or at least find familiar:

**Core Concept 1: Advocacy for Religious Pluralism**

Hindus consider all faiths and their representations of the Divine as legitimate. This concept originates in the Maha Upanishad, a sacred Hindu scripture, which pronounces: *Only small men discriminate saying: One is a relative; the other is a stranger. For those who live magnanimously the entire world constitutes but [one] family.*

Such philosophical stances were championed down the ages by Hindu theologians including 8th century sage Adi Shankara and 19th century spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda. Mahatma Gandhi, too, espoused this idea of inter-religious harmony:

- Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads, so long as we reach the same goal?

- In reality, there are as many religions as there are individuals. If a man reaches the heart of his own religion, he has reached the heart of the others too. (Gandhi, 1958, p. 59)

In my work as a chaplain I often reflect on the many ways in which we relate to the Creator and to one another. Student populations on U.S. campuses are more diverse than ever before, and students seem more open to engaging with multiple religious, secular, and spiritual practices. Hinduism, with its philosophy of lifting all religious and spiritual traditions, offers a welcome ground for such spiritual questers. Hinduism provides a pluralistic and world-embracing attitude that grounds my interactions with students and frames my intra-and inter-faith engagement. In fact, it breaks the walls between the hyphenated and allows simply for open-hearted and intelligent engagement.

Photo Courtesy Asha Shipman
Given that the Hindu Life Program is part of an educational institution, we facilitate broad participation in our ritual services by handing out printed programs which include translations of the Sanskrit mantras. I also, from time to time, workshop the services, offering more insights regarding how the practices meld with Hindu philosophies. During interfaith engagement we find universal themes to plumb such as love, service, duty, and divine grace. This was certainly true for the Jewish and Hindu communities on campus, who found common ground in January 2019 while sharing delicious food and melodious chanting. The Joseph Slifka Center for Jewish Life at Yale welcomed the Yale Hindu community to a Friday night Shabbat dinner, and the next week our Hindu Life program hosted the Jewish community to one of our worship services and dinners celebrating the Hindu patron goddess of learning, Saraswati. We basked in the shared meanings imbued in shaanti and shalom during these heart-warming and intellectually stimulating exchanges. Beyond ritual, other wonderful means of interfaith exchange that I have supported include drama, sacred song, and visual art.

Core Concept 2: Cognizing the Divine
Within Hinduism, nuances pertain to exactly how the Divine is conceptualized. For many, this is an immanent and transcendent supreme force that has no form, no beginning, and no end. It exists within and without and manifests all that we are conscious of. Hindu scriptures refer to this entity by many names including Ishwara and Brahman. Alongside this notion of the Absolute coexists a Hindu pantheon with hundreds of gods and goddesses. How can this be?

Anthropomorphizing can be understood from a psychological perspective. God as a Creative Force is a very abstract notion and, for some, too emotionless and woefully lacking in arms to hold and bless His or Her devotees. Visualizing God in the form of “Father,” “Mother,” “Nature,” or as angels and other entities endowed with human-like traits and behaviors may facilitate a deeper personal and emotional communion.

The hundreds of gods and goddesses in the Hindu pantheon reflect the fullness of human lived experience. Just as many wavelengths comprise white light, the gods and goddesses represent the myriad forms and powers of the One. For many Hindus, to pray to one instantiation is to pray to that Supreme Force. It is the force behind atmospheric phenomena such as rain, sunlight, and wind. It represents the cosmic and micro-cosmic cycles of creation, sustenance, and destruction. It is the granter of wealth, courage, wisdom, and a smooth path ahead, to name but a few attributes. Book 1, Hymn 164, Verse 46 of the Rig Veda, an ancient foundational sacred text neatly summarizes this philosophy: They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni, and he is heavenly nobly-winged Garutmān. To what is One, sages give many a title: they call it Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.
Ritual services (called pujas) at Yale University highlight major Hindu holy days, though celebrations will be added or amended based on student input. For example, we added a hymn to one Navaratri program that one of the student leaders considered central to her own practice. By doing so we continue to broaden our understanding and appreciation of this vast tradition. Once we hosted a “mental” puja in which we asked participants to sit with eyes closed and envision the Divine as they wished to, as well as envisioning all of the offerings. This was unusual but allowed a freer form of ritual observance and (hopefully) deeper contemplation.

Many Hindus equate the Divine with the highest truth in the universe. Everything else is said to be a reflection, like moonlight. A popular quote taken from Book 10, Hymn 85, verse 1 of the Rig Veda is: *Truth is the base that bears the earth.* Some Hindus believe the world is a complete illusion and that the Divine represents the only truth and reality. I take a more moderate stance. I believe in the reality of the world around me and believe humans are quite capable of parsing physical, social, and emotional truths. Yet, there are human frailties we must also acknowledge.

Humans rely heavily on our sight to interpret the world, and human visual perception is constrained by the morphology of the human eyeball. The point of greatest visual acuity and resolution is the fovea, a tiny portion of the retina. Research on visual cognition suggests that, in accordance with the anatomy of the eyeball, humans can only pay close attention to a small part of their surroundings, filling in the rest with expectations based on prior experience. Color perception, too, is based on the visual processing centers within the brain rather than the
perceived object. This suggests the world around us is actually more veiled and subject to our internal biases than we might otherwise believe.

Perhaps this is the foundation of Hindu rishis’ (enlightened religious teachers) exhortations that the means to true clarity is through opening the inner eye. A popular prayer from the Brihadaranyaka Upanishad entreats: *Lead me from Unreal to Real, from Darkness to Light, from Death to Immortality.* In other words: Lead me from what I think I see, to what is truly present; from the darkness of ignorance, to the light of understanding, and from the fear of death to an understanding of one-ness with the Supreme.

Given how time-pressed and distracted this modern life can be, it is often hard to find a slice of time to stand still and take a long look at what is happening around us. Yet I find such attention vital to my work in supporting the Hindu campus community. Knowing that humans respond to natural and social cycles, I rely on three particularly useful tools: The academic calendar, Hindu calendar, and the seasons. When we convene in August the weather is hot, trees leafed out, and flowers abound. The campus air itself is energized as students reunite with friends and dive into new courses. Through September the days feel long and the light golden; students read and play on the lawns. At dinner after pujas I encourage first- and second-year students to seek advice from their seniors regarding course selection, faculty mentoring, and clubs to join. Graduate students of Indian origin who are new to the area often rely on Hindu Life programs to connect with others from India and feel a sense of home as they settle into their new surroundings and the campus culture. I cater foods light on the taste buds and stomach.

Cooling weather and the press of midterms push students inside and apart. Students scurry across the bare quads, bundled in coats and hunched against the wind. Pujas now offer a time of respite against hours alone contending with the storm of work. Chanting, quiet at first, rises to fill the Puja room and by the end of the program faces are visibly more relaxed. I choose legumes and more heavily spiced foods bathed in rich sauces for dinner afterwards to encourage some lingering conversation rather than a hasty exit back to study. We incorporate programming that explores Hindu practices and philosophies addressing mind-body balance and anxiety reduction. I reach out to students I haven’t seen in a while, invite them to the Hindu Life programming, or to sit in my office armchair for a chat about what’s on their
Core Concept 3: The Eternal Soul

Hindus believe that an immortal, individual soul, we call the atman, resides within the lotus of the heart. The atman is believed to be divinely connected with the Creator, sometimes called the Paramatman (the ultimate atman). I like to think that due to this higher order connection, all souls are automatically united with a global soul network. Consider the amount of time we each spend tending to various digital social networks, pruning and adding to our lists, keeping in touch and ensuring that our access to such platforms remains open. While this has become more critical during these times of social distancing and sheltering in place, imagine the marvelous dividends should we tend to our soul networks with such devotion. Pun very much intended. The belief among Hindus is that while we are each on our individual path, it places us alongside other souls, and those connections are vital for the development of the atman. The paths, each unique, ultimately lead to the Paramatman; some might term this Salvation. We are in this together, all imperfect and all trying our best. The best gifts we can offer are attention, time, and love. As the Svetasvatara Upanishad exhorts: All this universe is in the glory of God, of Siva, the God of love. The heads and faces of men are His own, and He is in the hearts of all.

Core Concept 4: Reduction of the Ego and Concept of Karma

Connected as we are, we have obligations to our families, communities, the global ecosystem, which we deem sacred, along with our own spiritual development. Our lifelong quest for Truth manifests in our entire being - our work, our domestic lives, our thoughts and plans. Hindu philosophy supports such endeavors but cautions against egoism. Rather than personal gain, the scriptures exhort we act in the name of the Paramatman and for the common good. The focus is squarely placed on action and intention rather than the outcomes. In fact, the actions and intentions are cosmically weighed. Herein lies the concept of karma. Karma is action with consequence. Souls accrue karma, positive and negative, which affect the next life cycle. Put very simply, actions done properly and for the right reasons purify the atman and move it closer to the Paramatman. Too much karma is a barrier to merging with the Paramatman. The mindset that all we do is for the good of other people, animals, or the environment, for example has two positive outcomes, one prosocial and one personal: it is both a humanitarian stance and a means to reduce the karmic load.

As Rameshbhai Oza, a Hindu religious leader and education advocate, states:

God is with us. It is He only who gives us the strength to work. If we live with this inspiration in our heart, we will
surely experience Divinity in our life. Our work will become our devotion and means of our spiritual progress. (Oza, 2018)

Core Concept 5: Chaturvidha Purushartha: The Four Major Goals of Hinduism

Hindus rely on a vast trove of scriptures for philosophical, practical, and spiritual guidance. This literature expounds four key goals: dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Together they present a framework meant to ensure a well-functioning society in which individuals may flourish. First among these goals is dharma (right conduct or right action), which consists of specific duties and behavioral norms, subject to change according to need and circumstance. Artha relates to the acquisition of wealth for the benefit of both family and community so that no one is in need. For example, artha includes patronage of religious institutions, the arts, and supporting the needy. Kama encompasses pleasure, health, and well-being. In the Vedas, kama seems directly related to wealth acquisition, which may sound familiar, though in those times the measure was the size of one’s cow herd. Moksha is the release of the atman from the cycle of rebirths such that it can merge with the Paramatman. Artha and kama are pursued within the framework of dharma, while moksha is achieved by living a dharmic life and then transcending earthly bonds.

The foundational authoritative Hindu scriptures are the four Vedas (Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Artharva Veda), which contain hymns, rites, incantations, philosophies, and observances of the world and its people. Rooted in the Vedas, there developed four major Hindu denominations centered on worshiping specific anthropomorphic forms of the Divine: Vaishnavism [Vishnu], Shaivism [Shiva], Shaktism [Devi], and Smartism [Vishnu, Shiva, Ganesha, Surya, and Devi]. The broadest differences between the denominations lie in their conceptualization of the Divine, in their ritual practices, and the mode by which one might attain moksha, or salvation. If a devotee prioritizes bhakti, love and surrender to the Divine, then the Vaishnava approach might be more appealing. If one’s orientation is more towards gaining knowledge, then the Shaiva approach may be a better fit. If the power of maternal love, compassion, and a reverence towards the natural world provides spiritual centering, then the Shakta approach may appeal. And if the concept of dharma is central to one’s conceptualization of spirituality, then, according to Srinivasan (2011), the Smarta approach may serve one best. It is best to keep in mind that these differentiations are quite broad, mutually acceptable, and not always applicable.

Commentaries branching from the Vedas include rituals for marriage and other important milestones (e.g., pre-birth rituals for expectant mothers, naming rituals for newborns, initiation into religious studies) which many Hindus continue to mark as part of their dharmic duty. Also indicated were life stages: the first phase is being a student, the next forming a family of one’s own and pursuing a career, then retirement with time spent mentoring the younger generations, and finally a phase tightly focused on tending to the atman.
engaging in spiritually nourishing practices, and preparing for the next life. Each phase of life – the student phase included – has its own obligations.

The Upanishads, some of which are quoted here, are esoteric writings; they are tantalizing and poetic, designed to open the inner eye. The epic literature, however, with its focus on society and ethics, seem better suited to offer guidance to students. The two main epics of India, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, focus on dharma, translated as right living, proper conduct and duty – to oneself, to society, and to the Divine. Many Hindu students, particularly those who grew up in India, are very familiar with the stories within these epics, which teach lessons revealing the moral scaffolding provided by the chaturvidha purushartha. They provide memorable episodes in which the protagonists and antagonists struggle (against) or flourish in response to artha, kama, and dharma.

Against this philosophical backdrop, in providing student support, I find that student anxiety often arises from seeming conflicts between expectations based on the familial denomination, practices and norms, and their personal development and understanding of Hinduism. Usually this is expressed as “I don’t think I am on the right path” or “I don’t see how my family traditions relate to my own life.” What they seem to really be wondering is: What is the dharma of a student? I see my role as accompanying students through this phase and offering resources so they can identify whether the conflict really exists, and the Hindu philosophies and practices that might lend to their spiritual discernment as they navigate this major life phase. I help them determine their dharma, with the understanding that it will change.

Hindu students repeatedly are told by their families to study hard and achieve the best grades they can. The pressure for high academic placement is high and seen as their dharmic duty. While I don’t entirely disagree that studies are central to student life, I prefer to temper the message a bit. Students are not disembodied brains; intellectual success requires the tending of their hearts, minds, and souls as well. Engaging in sacred Hindu practices such as yoga, meditation, and breathing exercises helps unfurl and balance the mind and body.

According to Cybele Tomlinson, author of a yoga book and co-director of the Berkeley Yoga Center:

Yoga is about clearing away whatever is in us that prevents our living in the most full and whole way. With yoga, we become aware of how and where we are restricted — in body, mind, and heart — and how gradually to open and release these blockages. As these blockages are cleared, our energy is freed. We start to feel more harmonious,
more at one with ourselves. Our lives begin to flow — or we begin to flow more in our lives. (Tomlinson, 2000, pp. 6-7)

This self-tending instills resilience and fosters the ability to fulfill dharmic potential; in the particular case of students, it lights the fire of their intellect.

But life is not all about achievement. Student life should include fun and the development of deep, nourishing friendships. Returning to the idea of cultivating a soul network, I encourage students to spend time with friends, to enjoying a walk, lunch, a visit to the art museum, and un-scheduled hang-out time. These activities allow the students to see others and in turn, to themselves be seen. This often helps soothe episodic feelings of loneliness and anxiety. Social distancing has put a brake on this kind of interaction; however, it is possible to maintain connections using online platforms, perhaps sharing a meal or taking a video-streamed walk together. During normal times I encourage time alone with devices turned off to allow for reflection, for day-dreaming, and to retain the practice of unplugging from the world and plugging into oneself. That could mean just staring out a window or doing something leisurely like drawing or listening to music. This still seems like good advice if, for nothing else, to reduce eye strain.

When students feel overwhelmed and at risk of burn-out, I like to remind them that they are supported and loved by many communities and that the world will (and in some cases already does) benefit from their work. The work is hard, and the days are long, but they are where they should be for their age and circumstances: students in an institution of higher learning. For a student, artha is the knowledge they are earning through study and in dialogue with teachers; kama is the soul network they are tending to and the times of pause which are necessary for reinvigorating the mind and body. They are fulfilling their dharma as students. I like to remind them of the following maxim which originates in a section of the Mahabharata
called Yaksha Prashna: “Dharmo rakshati rakshitah: Dharma protects those who protect it” (Srinivasan, 1984, p. 69).

The message is clear: responsibility is bi-directional; the framework of dharma will guide and protect us. However, we also have an active obligation to defend and cultivate this beneficial moral ecosystem. Just understanding that they are a part of this larger collective effort often provides a sense of comfort and inspiration to students. It also serves as a reminder that while internal and external gains may feel incremental, they remain possible, and that individual efforts can achieve broad positive outcomes.

While philosophies and practices vary under the immense banyan tree of Hinduism, there exist core concepts, several of which I have mentioned here. They offer a framework for crafting a life path imbued with attention, compassion, integrity, resilience, and purpose that may be recognizable to like-minded individuals regardless of their religious, secular, or spiritual affiliations. As Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950), Indian philosopher and reformer, said: “That which we call the Hindu religion is really the Eternal Religion because it embraces all others” (Aurobindo, 1909).

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Making Sense of and Supporting Fluidity of Religious, Secular, and Spiritual Identity on College and University Campuses

By Lawrence A. Whitney

Grappling with the Scale, Scope, and Contours of Religious Unaffiliation

In October, the Pew Research Center (2019) published its latest demographic analysis of religious trends in the United States, entitled In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace. The main thrust of the report, unsurprisingly, has to do with the rapidly declining share of the U.S. population who identify as Christian. Of course, the corollary to this finding is that other identities are growing. Indeed, the most significant growth in identification is among the religiously unaffiliated – frequently dubbed “nones” – which includes atheists, agnostics, and those who identify as “nothing in particular.”

The decline of Christian identification as reported by the Pew Research Center, from 78% in 2007 to 65% in 2018/19, and concomitant growth of the unaffiliated, from 16% in 2007 to 26% in 2018/19, is significant enough in the general population. It is even more pronounced among the youngest generation to appear in the report, namely Millennials (b. 1981-1996), among whom Christian identification declined from 68% to 49%, and unaffiliation grew from 25% to 40%, over the same interval. Alas, us data junkies had to wait all the way until February for Melissa Deckman (2020) to publish her data showing that unaffiliation seems to be holding steady at about 38% among both Millennials and the subsequent generation, GenZ (b. after 1996). Paul A. Djupe and Ryan P. Burge (2020) add credence to this finding by comparing three other datasets, though there remain plenty of reasons to be cautious about making overly strong claims about
GenZ, beginning with the fact that the generation itself remains as yet unbounded. If anything, it appears that many survey instruments may be generating significant undercounts of unaffiliated persons, to the point that the real share of the population may be as high as 31% (Burge, 2020).

As fascinating as the sheer demographics are, things get even more interesting when we begin to dig a little deeper. What does it mean to be religiously unaffiliated, anyway? The category includes atheists, which seems straightforward enough, as the definition of an atheist is someone “who does not believe in the existence of a god or any gods” (Lipka, 2019). It turns out, however, that 18% of atheists in the United States do believe in some kind of higher power or spiritual force (Lipka, 2019). Moreover, when the Pew Research Center (2018) tried to suss out When Americans Say They Believe in God, What Do They Mean?, they confirmed that no atheists believe in God as described in the Bible, but 3% of agnostics and 28% of those who identify as “nothing in particular” do believe in such a biblically described deity. The blossoming of recent literature on the unaffiliated (e.g., Drescher, 2016; Mercadante, 2014; Oakes, 2015; and White, 2014) continues to frame the meaning of affiliation or not on the basis of what individuals do or do not believe.

The literature in religious studies for the past 20 years especially is replete with analyses of how this focus on belief as fundamental to religion derives from Protestantism (Mcconeghy, 2020). Frequently such points serve as a means of redirecting the field to focus instead on practices in order to escape such parochial modes of analysis. Indeed, when salvation becomes dependent upon holding right beliefs, as in much of Protestant Christianity, then determining which beliefs are right and which are wrong becomes paramount, as does evaluating the beliefs of others.

One of the nice things for social scientists about this alignment of religion and belief is that it makes writing surveys very easy: “Are you a:” followed by a long list of religious identities such as Christian, Jew, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Jain, etc. Inevitably, the list will end with the categories of atheist, agnostic, and none. The problem is that the latter terms are not entirely like the former, which are not entirely like one another either. In Sacred Stories, Spiritual Tribes, Nancy Ammerman (2014) excavates the contours of these nuanced categories to elucidate aspects of identity that have become taken for granted in the lives her study subjects. Indeed, the so-called turn to everyday life as a focal point of sociological analysis (Sztompka, 2008) puts pressure on the sorts of surveys that lump so many categories together. Nevertheless, an underlying assumption still lurks that everyday activities have a rational basis in at least implicit beliefs that can be interpreted so as to make them explicit.
Fluidity: Reframing Unaffiliation with Reference to Confucianism

Studies such as those identified above that describe and interpret the expansion of the categories of unaffiliation seem themselves to take for granted the novelty of this shift in the religious landscape. Those that do seek to make connections to other social contexts usually turn to comparisons with the rapid secularization experienced in Europe since World War II and the Holocaust. Little attention has been paid to an ancient religious tradition that has consistently defied demographic accounting according to the typical categorical scheme, namely Confucianism. Indeed, according to the World Religions Database, there were only 200,000 Confucianists in China in 1900, or 0.04% of the population, in spite of the fact that, as the database notes, Confucianism was the state religion of China. By 2015, according to the database, the Confucians had grown to 1,749,914, or 0.13% of the population, in spite of the change to the virulently anti-religious, and especially anti-Confucian, Communist leadership in 1949. The problem with these numbers is that they are derived from a survey method in which people are asked to check a box next to an identity category label, in this case, “Confucianist.” Anna Sun (2013) provides a magisterial account of the problematics involved in taking an identity category label approach and how they have played out across numerous survey instruments.

A proper sociological analysis of Confucianism requires a different survey approach guided by a different methodological framework than the Protestant framework of religion as belief. Sun (2013) notes:

Do people who pray to Confucius actually have belief in the supernatural power of Confucius’s spirit? This is indeed a wrong question to ask; the right question is, does it make sense to people who pray to Confucius that they are offering their prayers without having a firm or clearly articulated belief in the divinity or supernatural power of Confucius? The answer seems to be an unqualified yes. (p. 168)

Even this question, however, only pertains to what Sun (2013) identifies as the “minimal criterion” of Confucianism (p. 127), namely various forms of Confucius worship in a Confucius temple, which forms an inner core surrounded two more expansive concentric circles that together circumscribe what might be understood as Confucianism. The next wider circle is delimited by the “inclusive criterion,” (p. 127) which has to do with the practice of ancestral rites. The widest circle, defined by the “extended criterion,” (p. 127) is also the most diffuse, including expressions of cultural Confucianism such as practicing Confucian virtues (e.g. filial piety), Confucian spiritual exercises (e.g. reading classics, quiet sitting meditation), and other Confucian social rituals (e.g. family rituals). Unlike in considerations of other cultural religious expressions, e.g. cultural Catholicism or cultural Judaism, however, cultural Confucianism is not meant to impute that this type of religiosity is less authentic, sincere, or fervent. This is because, as Sun notes, Confucianism is a “diffused” form of religion that “does not exist separately and apart from the secular social settings in which it is practiced” (p. 123). Moreover, many of the practices of the minimal criterion historically would have been reserved to elite classes, whereas the practices of the inclusive and extended criteria were available more widely. In each of these latter senses, Confucianism would have been socially assumed and individually taken for granted as simply the reality of Confucian-influenced societies.

This framework results in a very different set of survey questions than would be asked to ascertain the religious identity of Protestant Christians and their ilk. The Spiritual Life Survey of Chinese Residents, while abiding primarily in the realm of religion as belief, nevertheless provides an example of some of the sorts of questions that have to be asked in order to uncover the Confucian religiosity at play in China (Yang et al., 2019). One revealing set of questions invites respondents to rate the importance of six domains in their lives: family, friends, entertainment, politics, work, and religious belief. Only 2.7% of respondents identified religious belief as “very important,” and another 9% said it is somewhat important. Meanwhile,
19.8% said it is somewhat unimportant, and 62.5% said religious belief was not at all important. By contrast, 85.5% identified family as very important, and another 13.6% said family is somewhat important. Only 0.9% said family is somewhat unimportant, and only one person (0%) said family is not at all important. This emphasis on family is further confirmed by the identification of happiness with the accomplishment of children (30%), the good health of family members (53.4%), and a harmonious family life (4.5%), far more than with the well-being of the self in terms of health (6.3%) and success (3.8%). Given the centrality of the virtue of filial piety for Confucianism, this remarkable devotion to the importance of family locates the vast majority of respondents within the extended criterion for identifying them as Confucians, in spite of the fact that 81.5% of respondents say they have no religious belief, and only 0.2% self-identify as Confucian.

Another set of questions in this survey has to do with ancestor veneration and ancestral rites, the hallmark of the inclusive criterion for identifying someone as Confucian. 72.4% of respondents said that they participated in the veneration of ancestral spirits by their graves. Perhaps even more interesting is that 43.2% of respondents indicated that they worshipped God or gods/spirits at the graveside of a deceased ancestor or in ancestral temples, and another 17.4% said they did so in conventional religious settings (i.e. churches or temples), in spite of the fact that 75.2% of respondents said that “There is no such thing as God, gods, spirits, ghosts or Buddha in this world.” Clearly, the notion of justifying practice on a rational basis in belief fails to account for the reasonableness of the practice in spite of lack of such rational justification in the case of the practice of these ancestral rites in China. Also notable is that 79.4% of respondents indicate that they participate in religious activities with family members, revealing that filial piety is intertwined with ancestral rites and other religious activities. Finally, unlike the classic survey assumption that degree of devotion correlates to frequency of religious activity, 72.3% of respondents indicate that they participate in religious activities “only during religious and/or traditional holidays such as Grave Sweeping Day (or Festival for Tending Graves) and Spring Festival,” and another 21.7% say they do so “only occasionally.”

From questions that never mention the name Confucius or the category of Confucianism, this survey reveals remarkably high adherence to Confucianism according to the inclusive and extended criteria outlined by Sun (2013). Ethnographic research that she presents in the last chapter of Confucianism as a World Religion indicates increasing involvement in Confucianism according to the minimal criterion as well. This is in spite of the fact that only 12 out of 7018 respondents (0.2%) to the survey self-identified as Confucian. Thus, Confucianism clearly makes important contributions to self-understanding and collective coherence in China, but does so while
remaining largely taken for granted and thus apart from any identity category label. Insofar as identity is understood to necessarily involve self-appropriation of the categories and labels employed to interpret it, an important dimension of religious studies scholarship, Confucianism as elaborated here does not qualify as a category of identity. In this sense, then, Confucianism may serve as a nonidentity contrast example to the Protestant emphasis on categorical identity in formulating an understanding of religion and religiosity. As Sun notes (2013),

to become a Confucian in China has not been about the renunciation of other religious beliefs or the exclusion of other religious practices but rather a deepening of one’s bonds in a given community and tradition and a consolidation of one’s different social and cultural identities. (pp. 120-121)

Confucianism understood in this way is not about adopting a label; it is about establishing and maintaining bonds capable of embracing a variety of labels in a more or less coherent yet loose frame. Notably, the establishment and maintenance of such elastic bonds that exceed identity category labels is what the religiously unaffiliated are often seeking as well. As Elizabeth Drescher (2016) points out, “being None is also a matter of social identity—of who a person understands herself most authentically to be in relation to others” (p. 53). The prevalence and potency of identity category labels in our Protestantized society, however, means that being disaffiliated takes on a dual aspect. Identifying as unaffiliated is positive in the sense that nones “consistently [see] themselves as active creators in the story of their own spiritual lives.” That said, unaffiliation is largely negative in that the identity is rooted in what it is against as “the emotions associated with the shift from affiliated to unaffiliated map to the religious tradition in which a person was raised” (p. 53). This duality results in a further category conflation, as many who identify against the “religious” label employ the word “spiritual” as a contrast to religion, even as many who embrace the “religious” label also identify as “spiritual.” Given this categorical confusion, it is especially important to center the commonality among Confucians and the unaffiliated in the desire for more elastic bonds. Indeed, as the literature attests, what the religiously unaffiliated reject in religious identification is the taut bond that, as a result of its tension, is unable to extend to embrace those who identify otherwise on something at least resembling their own terms.

Fluidity Framework in Practice

Over the past couple of decades, in part in response to the growth of the category of the religiously unaffiliated, offices of religious life on college and university campuses across the United States have been renamed to something along the lines of the “Office of Religious and Spiritual Life.” The goal in expanding the nomenclature is to embrace the increasing fluidity of students’ ways of expressing and enacting the religious, spiritual, and spiritual aspect of their identities. The elasticity of the bonds implied in this fluidity is articulated in the operational definition of spirituality offered in Cultivating the Spirit:

[Spirituality] involves an active quest for answers to life’s “big questions”; a global worldview that transcends ethnocentrism and egocentrism; a sense of caring and compassion for others coupled with a lifestyle that includes service to others; and a capacity to maintain one’s sense of calm and centeredness, especially in times of stress. (Astin et al., 2011, p. 137)

Notably, belief is radically decentered in this conception of spirituality, to the point that not only those who identify as “nothing in particular” but even self-identified atheists and agnostics could find shelter under its umbrella. It is little wonder, then, that so many unaffiliated students identify as “spiritual but not religious” when spirituality is understood in this sense.

The primary way in which newly baptized offices of religious and spiritual life have operationalized their
expanded mandate is under the rubric of interfaith programming. In embracing an interfaith mandate, these offices begin to take a significant step away from the Protestant Christian character of their religious life predecessors. Nevertheless, while with the best of intentions and some signal successes in improving engagement across lines of difference, the interfaith paradigm is not entirely suited on its own to support students operating in the framework of fluidity exemplified by the unaffiliated. This is because, as Alexander Astin (2016) points out,

Most of the rest—the “spiritual but not religious” (“SNR”) students—may believe in a deity or in some sort of reality beyond the physical world of matter, but for various reasons have found themselves unable to embrace either the theological claims, code of conduct, or rituals of particular religious denominations. For this reason, educators need to keep in mind that most SNR students would probably not see themselves as participating in an activity that carries the label “interfaith.” (Astin, 2016, p. 18)

While intending to be broadly inclusive, it is understandable that the label of “interfaith” would provoke an allergic reaction in those who either were never part of or are explicitly moving away from the kind of “faith” identity that would be suitable for being “inter.” Indeed, the very notion of interfaith seems to presuppose the kind of fully determinate identity category label characteristic of the religion as belief paradigm.

In order to effectively deploy programming amenable to both affiliated and unaffiliated students, chaplains and religious and spiritual life professionals on college and university campuses must adopt the inclusive orientation the turn to interfaith intends. Actually achieving the goal of inclusion, while avoiding provoking allergies among the unaffiliated, however, requires eschewing identity categories entirely. Instead, programming should directly address areas of common concern, focus on the level of individual authenticity rather than group representation, enable exploration of belief apart from preconceived categorial schemes, and be deeply contextually relevant to the needs of students within their institutions. While imagining such programming may at first glance seem an insurmountable task, four practical examples demonstrate that, to the contrary, success is readily available with resources already at hand.

Both standing apart from and the very process of moving away from religious communities and belief systems that provide a framework for making sense of human mortality provokes questions among unaffiliated students about death, dying, and the afterlife. Of course, students who do identify as religious in one way or another also

Programming to include unaffiliated identities:

1. Death Cafe (deathcafe.com)
2. The People’s Supper (thepeoplessupper.org)
3. The Parable of the Sower reading group
4. Study Retreat
have questions about these topics and may feel insecure exploring them in the context of their religious communities due to the risk of being labeled deviant and stigmatized. Notably, this topical interest among students is prevalent even when they are not dispersed from their campuses due to a pandemic. Thus, a Death Cafe (https://deathcafe.com/) can be an excellent way of fostering an inclusive conversation about an area of common concern focused at the level of individual authenticity. According to the website, “A Death Cafe is a group directed discussion of death with no agenda, objectives or themes. It is a discussion group rather than a grief support or counselling session.” The goal is “to increase awareness of death with a view to helping people make the most of their (finite) lives.” Fostering a culture of open and inclusive conversation about death is an important contribution to improving campus climates by overcoming societal taboos about discussing our shared mortality, so as to enable help-seeking from both peers and professionals.

One of the breakdowns that some unaffiliated people identify as spurring their movement away from religious communities is the bedrock of trust that enables cooperative action. As Drescher (2016) quotes one former Catholic, “I didn’t leave Catholicism. The church left me. It abandoned me. It cast me out. And I was heartbroken” (p. 53). Indeed, there are plenty of reasons not to trust that religious institutions and leaders always have the best interests of their members at heart. At the same time, extreme social polarization across a number of identity matrices – from economic class, to race, to sexuality, and especially politics – erodes trust in all sectors of society and culture. The People’s Supper (https://thepeoplessupper.org/) uses “shared meals to build trust and connection among people of different identities and perspectives.” While food has been a hotly contested area of both intrareligious and interreligious infighting throughout history, this agonism arises precisely from the importance of food and shared meals in religious communities for fostering trust and belonging. As the architects of The People’s Supper note,

For millennia, sharing a meal has stood as one of the few things that all of us—whomever we are and wherever we come from—have in common. Suppers are a place where we can come together over one of humanity’s most ancient and simple rituals. A place where we can share meaningful stories, good food, and a sense of community. A place where we can build the relationships and trust on which our work depends.

While a People’s Supper event may be explicitly interfaith, focusing on religious differences, the program is potent for addressing a wide variety of fractures and fissures in campus communities, focused as it is around the question of “What needs healing here?” The narrative approach of the program allows for focusing on an area of common concern, empowering students to explore and express their beliefs through stories so as to skirt the imperative to categorize. Storytelling also privileges authenticity over representation. And, of course, the contextualization in a meal fulfills the dictum, “if you feed them, they will come.”

The fact that unaffiliated persons are not readily accounted for on the basis of belief-based categories does not mean that belief is outside their scope of interest. Unaffiliated students, and others, do have a tendency, though, to be less interested in belief systems instituted, codified, and promulgated by religious authorities and institutions. Instead, they are more prone to engage in exploration of belief in conversation and dialogue with texts and ideas that run against the grain of established canonical traditions. One excellent example of this is the theospiritual vision developed by Octavia Butler (1993) in the voice of the protagonist of The Parable of the Sower, Lauren Oya Olamina. Contrary to classical theism, which envisions God as perfect, immutable, omnipotent, and omniscient, Butler begins her novel with a poem:
All that you touch
You change.
All that you Change
Changes you.
The only lasting truth
Is Change.
God Is Change.

Due to the rampant and racist inequalities exacerbated by global climate change racking her society, Olamina develops a spiritual vision from this basic insight that she employs to gather and lead a remnant toward a new, renewed, and mature human flourishing. The story has recently been rendered as both a graphic novel (Duffy & Jennings, 2020) and in operatic form (https://www.parableopera.com/), making it especially apt for engaging students across a variety of modalities.

It is hard to imagine anything more central to an academic community than study. Pressures related to study are also one of the stressors leading to declining mental health among students on many college and university campuses in the United States (Liu et al., 2019). Reduction of stress levels generated by study may be achieved by improving study practices and lifestyle factors that contextualize study. Both of these tactics are addressed in the form of study retreats, which employ the monastic practice of dividing the day into a series of hours, each dedicated to particular tasks. The day begins with breakfast, followed by a morning meeting with introductions and meditation. Accountability is provided as students are invited to list what they intend to accomplish over the course of the day on a poster hung on the wall, crossing off completed items as they gather for successive meetings. The midday gathering includes another meditation and then lunch, followed by another block of study time. The evening gathering has yet another meditation practice and then dinner. After a final block of study, students gather for dessert and a bedtime story, with a final enjoinder to in fact go home and sleep so that all they have studied has a chance to seep into memory. The goal is to set a rhythm for study accented by the meditation practices, drawn from a variety of sources, and grounded in regular table fellowship. Eating regular meals, taking breaks, moving, and having communal accountability all contribute to far more healthy study patterns than are commonly characteristic of college students, to say nothing of the emphasis on the importance of sleep. The rhythms and practices of spiritual traditions are thus rendered directly relevant to the purposes of the academic community and the thriving of students.
in a way that is inclusive and noncoercive.

Given that unaffiliation is most pronounced among younger generations with higher educational attainment, the prevalence of unaffiliation among students, faculty, and staff on college and university campuses is likely to be at least a plurality, if not in some cases a majority, at most higher education institutions in the United States. Thus, it is incumbent upon those responsible for attending to the religious, secular, and spiritual aspect of identity on campuses to properly appreciate the dynamics of this cohort and provide support and programming that are responsive to their needs while also attending to the needs of the more traditionally religious. The sort of identity unaffiliated persons cultivate is characterized by what they take to be far more elastic bonds, capable of stretching to include and incorporate a wide variety of views, practices, and the people who subscribe to them, than what they associate with being religious. This fluidity requires a reorientation in religious and spiritual life offices to provide programming and services that are neither tradition-specific nor interfaith but rather nurture exploration at the intersections of relevance and authenticity, so as to tap into a variety of forms of wisdom and practice without needing to categorize and label them.

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It is a cliché in our society that you should avoid talking about politics and religion, but recent research demonstrates that some “provocative encounters” (Rockenbach et al., 2018, p. 3) can promote greater understanding of other worldviews and perspectives when experienced in appropriate contexts. This seems surprising given the divisive rhetoric of our time, when the current cultural climate for dialogue resembles the arena more than the forum, with partisan opponents arming themselves for confrontations of apocalyptic significance.

The IDEALS Survey

In partnership with Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), the Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS) surveyed thousands of college students at higher education institutions around the country about their experiences with worldview diversity on campus. Students took the survey early in their first year (Fall 2015), then again at the end of their first year (Spring 2016), and finally at the conclusion of their fourth year (Spring 2019). Findings from the end of students’ first year show that provocative encounters, which challenge students to rethink assumptions and stereotypes of other worldviews, enhance appreciation for other worldviews when they happen in environments that provide a sense of safety and support (Rockenbach et al., 2018, p. 5).

In contexts where students reported “high space for support and spiritual expression,” (p. 4) provocative encounters corresponded to a nearly 7% growth in appreciative attitudes. In contexts where such support was “medium,” there was minimal (1.2%) change; while in situations where there was little support for religious identity and spiritual expression, appreciation of other worldviews decreased slightly by nearly 1%.
IDEALS also showed that students value and desire interaction with worldviews other than their own, but that they tend not to actively pursue such opportunities. 83% of students agreed that we can overcome many of the world’s major problems if people of different religious and nonreligious perspectives work together. However, after one year in college, only 50% of those participants had worked with people of other religious and nonreligious perspectives on a service project (Mayhew et al., 2016, pp. 6-7).

These results suggest that an effective way to heal our cultural chasms is to seek out chances to cooperate with others and learn from them. The findings also suggest that we need some help creating such opportunities through organized efforts to build bridges with collaboration and conversation.

The findings apply to political perspectives as well. One surprising revelation of the IDEALS survey was that it found that students’ appreciation of politically liberal and conservative perspectives increased at the same rate after the first year, improving by 8% for both. This suggests that meaningful interfaith encounters prompt changes in political attitudes. The IDEALS research team suggests that “exposure to diversity in one domain (religion and worldview) is closely linked to growth in appreciation of identities in another domain (politics)” (Rockenbach et al., 2017, p. 5).

Data from Dubuque

Loras College is a case in point. Loras is a Catholic Liberal Arts small college in Dubuque, Iowa. IDEALS findings from Loras College suggest that, of the students who took the survey, there is a more balanced population of conservatives and liberals than at many other institutions. The national trend reflected in IDEALS was also evident at Loras, with appreciation for others growing as engagement with difference in a learning environment increased. Additionally, the Loras students showed an elevated level of high appreciation for both liberals and conservatives relative to peer institutions and the national norm. High appreciation of liberals after four years of college was 74% at Loras, 72% at peer institutions, and 72% nationally, while high appreciation of conservatives was 60% at Loras, 46% at peer institutions, and 43% nationally (Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey, 2019).

The Loras sample may suggest that its robust Spiritual Life Office (SLO), the campus-community interfaith collaboration called “Children of Abraham” in Dubuque, and the comparatively balanced population of liberal and conservative students can contribute to opportunities for provocative encounters in a supportive and well-informed environment that expand students’ interest in understanding people different than themselves. Children of Abraham is a campus-community partnership that involves leadership and participants from five institutions of higher learning and at least a dozen congregations in monthly thematic conversations oriented toward promoting personal relationships and religious literacy. With normal attendance between 90 and 150 each session, students have an opportunity to interact directly with people of all generations from faith traditions that range from Catholic to Mainline Protestant to Fundamentalist to Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and agnostic.

The Spiritual Life Office has a large staff (five) for a small institution (1,500 students), and the team includes a Muslim and a Presbyterian. This diversification of SLO personnel to include people from traditions other than Catholic is a recent development that post-dates the IDEALS research, so it is unclear if this enhances appreciation even further—so far, anecdotal evidence suggests it will. The Spiritual Life Office has been very supportive of interfaith activities and highly engaged in promoting them on campus and in the community. The strength of the SLO is an important resource that helps many students feel comfortable enough to engage in provocative encounters.

Data collected by a team of student and faculty researchers at Loras College confirms such a trend at the city level as well. Over several years, the Loras College Interfaith Research Team has collected data using
two different surveys, the Religious Climate Survey of Dubuque and the Social Climate Survey of Dubuque. Participation in these surveys were voluntary and typically recruited institution by institution, so results are not fully representative of the city population at large, and the Social Climate Survey did not get as much participation, with fewer than 140 usable responses. According to data collected in the Social Climate Survey, people in Dubuque who reported more direct interaction with people of other religious traditions and political perspectives showed a higher degree of understanding and sympathy for differences in worldview, while groups with less personal contact were seen more negatively. Of respondents, 14% reported a strongly negative view of Muslims, and 13% a strongly negative view of Mormons. Correspondingly, 23% of people responded not knowing any Muslims, and 27% said the same about Mormons.

This is reflected also in the results from the Religious Climate Survey, taken by several congregations in the Dubuque community. Like the Social Climate Survey, there was a strong relationship between lack of familiarity and negative perception. At one large congregation, members reported little to no interaction with those who identify as atheist, Mormon, or more generally, other non-Christian religions. This correlated to perceptions, where a significantly higher number reported negative feelings toward the same groups: 35% of respondents feeling negatively about atheists, 22% towards Mormons, and 14% towards Muslims. A similar outcome was seen in other congregations, such as one belonging to a different religious identity, a third of whose members reported not knowing any atheists and the congregation members reporting stronger negative feelings towards atheists than other religious orientations.

**Broader Implications**

Culturally, this evidence supporting provocative encounters is instructive. While Generation Z (people who were born in 1997 or later) are often the target of criticism, the IDEALS data may imply that Gen Z is aware of something that could be good for all of us. According to a Pew Research Center study in 2018, 62% of Generation Z believe that increasing racial/ethnic diversity is good for society compared to 48% of the Boomer and 42% of the Silent generations (Doherty et al., 2018). Despite the high-stakes partisanship of the national climate, a good portion of Gen Z seems to respond by getting to know other people and their perspectives. Rather than demonizing, many young folk today seem more likely to look for ways to appreciate and respect points of view different from their own and to try to develop collaborative relationships.

Generation Z, in fact, has benefitted from intentional efforts on the part of parents, educators, religious leaders, and mentors to provide provocative encounters in which participants are faced with difficult
issues and opposing opinions. As the IDEALS findings show, these are most successful in contexts of deliberate and structured support and respect, such as what interfaith organizations, spiritual life offices, and inclusion programs at colleges regularly provide.

**Going Forward: Policy and Practice**

Loras College, with the guidance and support of Interfaith Youth Core, is developing an Interfaith Strategic Plan that will be closely mapped to the College’s Mission and supported in its new Strategic Plan. One of the things the Interfaith Strategic Plan will seek to address is the discomfort faculty and staff have with engaging students’ religious identities and worldviews. The Interfaith Strategic Plan calls for addressing this engagement gap with professional development, more diverse cultural events, and by creating more opportunities for provocative encounters to complement those already in place, such as Children of Abraham and DuTalk (a civil discourse model used at the College).

Personal narrative events, called “Welcome Wednesdays,” will build a stronger campus community by familiarizing a diverse range of perspectives to a broad cross-section of the students, staff, and faculty. Required for some classes and open to all, Welcome Wednesdays will involve a couple of people at the College sharing stories in which their worldview has been challenged or confronted, how they responded, and how they reflect on the impact on that encounter. The story-telling is followed by small group conversation oriented toward building religious literacy and reflecting vocationally about how purpose and significance are considered in different contexts.

Collaboration between Better Together (the student interfaith organization), the Interfaith Leaders Program, and other organizations around campus such as the Alliance, LEAF (the environmental club), and Black Student Union will contribute to literacy, appreciation, and encounters that encourage students to develop a self-authored worldview. Some of these may be structured as events specifically for faculty and staff, in order to expose them to diverse student perspectives outside the classroom.

**Another Model: Dignity, Respect, and Provocative Encounters**

When we engage difference without respect for the dignity of the other or the humility to acknowledge that their capacity for error is similar to our own, the outcome can be catastrophic. As a result, we keep mum until we can connect to the tribes with which we agree, where echo chambers such as social media incite us to vent and fume unchallenged.

Major media organizations reinforce such tendencies. Panels pit adversaries in sound-bite gladiatorial rings before hundreds of thousands of virtual spectators. Our cultural experience of discourse on religion and politics is too often a high-stakes zero-sum game in which combatants have thirty seconds or one hundred forty characters to fell an opponent.

Even the way that networks and political parties structure debates during election season aims for bloodletting more than real dialogue. Post-debate commentary prioritizes entertainment by focusing on jabs, insults, winners and losers, with less attention to ideas and policy proposals.

It is no wonder we keep to ourselves rather than dialogue about how to respond to crucial religious, political, and social issues of the day.

Maybe Generation Z is calling us all to re-examine our approaches to political engagement and religious difference. The IDEALS data suggests that young people recognize that divergence and diversity are healthy components of the common good as long as they are cultivated in a context of respect and dignity rather than the spectacle of zero-sum contests.
Generous listening—in which we assume the best of intentions, honor the insights that others have to offer, respond with curiosity to difference, and have the humility to admit that all perspectives are limited—is our duty and our gift to a civil society. As Rachel Mikva (2019) suggests, we “should be willing to excavate our disagreements and cultivate our commonalities” (p. 38). Provocative encounters, in contexts of support, can help us interact constructively with different worldviews and challenge our cultural cynicism. Provocative encounters, coupled with a disposition of generosity and curiosity, can help us build our constitutional community collaboratively rather than spur the spectacle of the coliseum.

References
BOOK REVIEW

Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care: Chaplaincy in Theory and Practice edited by Vineet Chander and Lucinda Mosher

By Joe Pritchett

The editors of *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care: Chaplaincy in Theory and Practice* make the case early in their edited volume that chaplaincy has become increasingly multifaith. In referencing two other sources, they note chaplaincy being “a job invented and in many ways still defined by liberal Protestant tradition” (Blumenthal, 2013, p. 99). The work called chaplaincy has experienced a significant shift away from the “monopoly of Christian pastoral care” to a “more inclusive, multifaith approach that speaks to the experiences of spiritual caregivers from various religious and non-religious ... traditions and perspectives” (Schipani, 2013, p. 2). The editors are Vineet Chander, who is Hindu and Coordinator for Hindu Life and Hindu Chaplain at Princeton University, and Lucinda Mosher, a Christian and faculty associate at Harford Seminary, where she is a scholar of multi-religious concerns with expertise in chaplaincy education. Chander and Mosher hope that their edited volume will fill a much needed gap in the literature, which largely focuses on chaplaincy through the Abrahamic traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam despite the field becoming increasingly multicultural.

To fill in this gap, the editors have called on 27 individuals, many of them chaplains and scholars themselves, to “reflect on the theology and practice of Hindu chaplaincy” (p. 19). Their approach is broad, recognizing that the role of chaplain is not just a position that is occupied in spaces of higher education...
but also hospitals, nursing homes, the military, schools, prisons, and police and fire departments, among other places. For that reason, the editors have to sought to take a broad approach in cultivating this edited volume. While the book was not written exclusively for those serving in pastoral care and chaplaincy roles within the context of higher education, there is a lot of insight to be gleaned in the pages of this book for those working in a college or university setting. With that being said, this review will primarily focus on exploring how *Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care* might serve the needs of higher education professionals and scholars.

The editors have divided their book into three sections, including “Foundations of Care,” “Care in Context,” and “Care at the Crossroads.” The first section, “Foundations of Care,” provides diverse explorations “of the theological and metaphysical roots of Hindu chaplaincy, examining the way in which it is informed by sacred texts, teachers, or practices” (p. 19). At the very beginning of this section, Rita Sherma makes a short but convincing argument for the need of a Hindu-American chaplaincy. In many ways, this short essay sets the tone for the remainder of the first part of the book. Sherma notes that for the Hindu diaspora in the United States, there are few traditional support systems, or formal communities of faith, available. A trained Hindu chaplaincy that exists within various spaces outside of a traditional Hindu Temple is key for Hindus to find places of support.

For the purposes of thinking about this book in the context of higher education, Sherma’s chapter couples nicely with that of the editor Vineet Chander’s own chapter, titled “The Yoga Sutras of Patanjli in the Context of College Chaplaincy.” Chander, the first full-time Hindu chaplain at an American college or university, provides a practical example of what Sherma is arguing for in her chapter. Chander is able to articulate the theological underpinnings of his work around spiritual caregiving and articulate how it applies in a multifaith, largely secular space. His exploration around how he navigates his practice, grounded in a very specific theological framework, for a multifaith audience is important reading for anyone who might be engaging in pastoral care or spiritual caregiving at a college or university. Chander also demonstrates a certain level of self-awareness, as he includes a critique of what might be lost as a result of adapting practices
for a broader audience. The entirety of Part One provides valuable insight regarding the theological underpinnings of Hindu chaplaincy. As someone whose fluency is greater in the Abrahamic traditions, Part One of this book appropriately stretched me to consider the work of spiritual caregiving in new ways.

Part Two, “Care in Context,” provides 10 chapters focused on the practice of Hindu chaplaincy in specific spaces, including hospitals, during end-of-life care, in the military, prisons, and corporate settings. While each chapter is illuminating in its own way, four chapters in the heart of this section should be of particular interest to those working in higher education. As a whole, these four chapters provide insight into what it means to serve as a Hindu chaplain at institutions where Hindu students are in the minority. The authors argue that in these settings, Hindu chaplaincy takes many forms, both serving Hindu students and student organizations, cultivating interfaith engagement, and finding ways to serve the broader college community regardless of religious affiliation or nonreligious identity. Challenges abound, especially at larger institutions where there are multiple chaplains, particularly for the various Protestant Christian denominations. “Instead of a similar system, the singular Hindu chaplain must provide for Hindus of all manner of Dharmic religions, even including students of Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh backgrounds,” (p. 174) points out author Brahmachari V. Sharan when describing his time at the Jesuit institution Georgetown University. These four chapters also emphasize the importance of physical space on campus. Asha Shipman, in her chapter “Space for Spiritual Care,” emphasizes how physical space on a college campus can validate Hindu students and support their cultivation of a sense of belonging. The whole of the section part of the book succeeds at highlighting some of the common challenges and opportunities faced by those who provide spiritual care for individuals, especially to students of minority religious and nonreligious groups. At the same time, it brings to the surface how those challenges and opportunities are approached specifically in a Hindu context.

The third and final section of the book, “Care at the Crossroads,” examines expressions of Hindu care not always associated with chaplaincy. I found author Murali Balaji’s argument in the first chapter of this section particularly helpful. The author emphasizes the importance of Hindu academics in the role of spiritual caregiving. Balaji convincingly makes the argument that much like Black and Latinx representation is so crucial for students from similar backgrounds, that the “need for a robust and empathetic Hindu American academic space is more important than ever” (p. 224). I also found chapters on Hindu care of LGBTQ people, along with work around trauma and vocation, equally insightful contributions to this edited volume.

As someone who was approaching this book primarily through the lens of how it might apply to higher education, I will admit that I naturally gravitated to some chapters over others. However, the book is worthy of a read from cover to cover, despite how you may approach the text. It provides a careful balance describing the theological underpinnings of this work while providing practical advice on its application in a number of contexts. It demonstrates the ways in which one can provide deeply grounded Hindu spiritual care, all while acknowledging the interfaith nature of much of the work within a diverse, oftentimes secular, environment. This book has broken important ground in the literature related to chaplaincy and spiritual care and is an important contribution for higher education and beyond.

References
Edited by Heewon Chang and Drick Boyd of Eastern University, *Spirituality in Higher Education: Autoethnographies* advances an understanding of spirituality in the personal and professional lives of faculty in the present-day academy. The structure of the book mirrors the primary elements of faculty life: research, teaching, and service. Similarly, the chapters are grouped into three parts: Part I: Spirituality and Personhood; Part II: Spirituality and Teaching; and Part III: Spirituality, Scholarship and Outreach. In each chapter of these three sections, faculty-authors use autoethnography to “reflect upon, analyze, and interpret” (Chang, 2008, p. 46) their experiences of spiritual growth in the context of higher education. Autoethnography is an autobiographical, qualitative research methodology that combines cultural analysis with narrative details and storytelling as the starting-point for analysis of a specific cultural landscape (Chang & Boyd, 2016; Chang, 2008), in this case, higher education.

Part I: Spirituality and Personhood, contains five chapters of autoethnography that explore the challenges and rewards of maintaining a spiritual practice as a faculty member. The authors explore tensions between living out their spiritual values and conforming to the “aggressively encouraged” (Galman, 2016, p. 44) agenda of secularism in higher education. In Chapter Two, the author discusses the tension between centering her Jewish identity in her work life and the pressure to perform as someone with few out-of-
work commitments and constant availability. In Chapter Three, the author incorporates insights from her own spiritual journey, as well as a historical account of academia’s transition away from its religious origins to confront the “secular imperative” (Poplin, 2016, p. 61) in higher education. Relatedly, the author of Chapter Four argues that for spiritual growth to occur in the academy, faculty must “rethink and reconsider (their) epistemological assumptions,” (Abigail, 2016, p. 82) by creating connections across difference with others. Chapter Five is a collaborative autoethnography by six faculty who formed a professional learning community to participate in conversations on spirituality and how it can be more integrated into their professional lives (O’Shea et al., 2016). Together, the autoethnographies in Part I use the faculty members’ personal insights to analyze secularism in higher education and promote spirituality as a conscious practice that can and should be incorporated into faculty life.

Part II: Spirituality and Teaching, is the most compelling section of the book. Rife with personal and professional applications, the autoethnographies in this section offer examples of best practices in teaching and learning, using spiritual and reflexive frameworks. Strategically placed first in Part II, the authors in Chapter Six (Nash & Swaby, 2016) share teaching strategies that help students discover deeper meaning in their education, prompting the reader to consider spirituality as a teaching tool. This lays the groundwork for the authors in Chapters Seven and Eight to share their strategies for encouraging students to explore the dimensions of their spirituality using personal narratives (Munro, 2016), Zen perspectives, and pedagogies of love (Grise-Owens, 2016). Finally, in Chapter Nine, the author explores how her religious identity informs her pedagogy and her approaches to conducting assessment and evaluation of student learning (Hernandez, 2016). Supplemented by the guiding words of known scholars of teaching and learning, the autoethnographies in Part II weave together stories from the classroom and the faculty’s lived experiences to make a rigorous claim for the importance of spiritual thought in teaching and learning.

In Part III: Spirituality, Scholarship, and Outreach, four higher education faculty discuss their experience with infusing spirituality into their research and outreach within and beyond the academy. The authors in Part III also reflect on the challenges of pursuing spirituality as a research agenda, as spiritual subject matter is still seen as a less rigorous, objective, and legitimate area of study (Ngunjiri, 2016). After describing the origins of her research on African women’s spiritual leadership, the author of Chapter Ten (Ngunjiri, 2016) explicitly emphasizes the importance of working in an institution where such “overly spiritual” (p. 190) scholarship is supported. In Chapter Eleven (Saggio, 2016), the author highlights opportunities for higher education scholars and practitioners to participate in spiritual discourse by “listening to the
spiritual voices of others,” (p. 199) through qualitative research, cross-cultural dialogue, and community activism. Relatedly, in Chapter 12 (Jacobs, 2016), the author reflects on lessons learned through a “Worldviews Seminar” that brought together people from various religious perspectives, including Muslims, Sikhs, Jews, and Buddhists, for an intensive course on religious tolerance and understanding in the aftermath of the attacks on September 11, 2001. Part III concludes with an autoethnography by one of the editors, Drick Boyd (2016), who reaffirms the importance for spiritual scholars to find an institutional home where commitment to faith and passion for spirituality are “honored rather than seen as suspect” (p. 241).

While Chang and Boyd (2016) are successful at using autoethnography to explore spirituality in faculty life, their selection of contributing authors reflects a need for continuous effort to diversify the spiritual narratives of faculty. The editors selected autoethnographies by authors with predominantly privileged religious identities, and were not inclusive of contributors who are atheist, agnostic, or otherwise religiously minoritized. Secondly, most the contributing authors were professors in religious studies programs or at religiously-affiliated institutions, and theologians who self-identify as “pastors-turned-professors” (Boyd, 2016, p. 246). It is vital that future works on spirituality in higher education include the voices of folks who do not have a traditional path into spiritual life, as well as folks who are nonreligious.

A volume of honest and critical reflections on spirituality, Spirituality in Higher Education: Autoethnographies exemplifies the use of self-narrative to examine the culture of higher education. The accomplishment of this text is not only its excellent demonstration of autoethnographic methods, but also its ability to introduce the reticent or unfamiliar reader to the key tenets of spiritual practice including personal development, intercultural dialogue, and community-building. These spiritual imperatives can be applied to policy and practice in higher education, to “enhance institutional climates for religious, secular, and spiritual identities” (Convergence, 2020). The content (spirituality) and process (autoethnography) of this book remain relevant over nine years after its initial publication; its focus on spirituality adds nuance to the perennial elements of faculty life. By “connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, p. 739), Chang and Boyd (2016) have brought together faculty from different disciplines, institutional types, and scholastic backgrounds to use autoethnography to encourage the reader to be more reflective, more focused on teaching and learning, and more committed to making space for spiritual and religious practice within academia. Faculty, instructors, and graduate students who are interested in spiritual development, pedagogy, or autoethnography would find this book to be a helpful resource.
References


Foundations of Inclusion: Interfaith, Interreligious, and Worldview Workshop Series

By Ellie Thompson

Program by Ellie Thompson, Utah Valley University

What was your role during the program?
I am the lead facilitator for the workshop series. I also developed level 2 and 3 workshops of the three level workshops. I train the co-facilitators for the workshops.

Program description
The Interfaith, Interreligious, and Worldview workshops focus on the religious diversity of the state and the institution. It examines the challenges that religious students and non-religious students have on UVU’s campus. It also details the experience of non-LDS students and their general feelings on the predominant LDS campus. This workshop explores religious and worldview diversity at UVU in connection with broader regional trends. Participants will engage changing demographics, best practices for engaging worldview on campus, and how religious and spiritual diversity can better connect to the educational experience of our students.

Program agenda
The workshop series takes place in the Reflection Center of Utah Valley University. The Reflection Center is a place for Meditation,
Prayer, Reflection, or other forms of individual religious expression including opportunities for interreligious dialogue, interfaith education, and spiritual practice. Utah Valley University is committed to providing meaningful activities that contribute to students’ physical, academic, social, and spiritual well-being whether you believe in God, Gods, or no god. We have a maximum of 25 people per workshop. Below is a photo of the room set up. I am the lead facilitator and I have one of the co-facilitator join me. Myself and the Dean of Students co-facilitate the level 2 and 3 workshops. Level one is around 90 minutes long and 2 and 3 are both two hour long workshops. We don’t do the standard go around the room and introduce everyone in the start of our level 1 workshops to give folks a bit of anonymity if they’d prefer. Religious and Worldview affiliation can be a very sensitive topic on our campus in particular. We have an outline agenda and learning outcomes for all three workshops. We include dialogue, video, and reflection, and interaction in all three levels of the workshop series. We offer a level 1 workshop once per month and level 2 and 3 workshops twice per semester.

Program Budget
The workshop series was originally funded through an IFYC innovation grant. The development of the curriculum relies heavily on the IFYC BRIDGE Workshop Modules (https://www.ifyc.org/bridge) adapted for our campus climate and specific worldview demographics. We don’t have a cost per workshop as the supplies are minimal, post-it notes, pens, clipboards, and handouts.

Room set up for the Foundations of Inclusion: Interfaith, Interreligious, and Worldview Workshop Series
Program Impact

Level 1 Learning Objectives

1. Examine and become familiar with the terms Interfaith, Worldview, and Interfaith Triangle
2. Gain awareness of campus worldview demographics
3. Recognize personal perspective of worldview in relation to campus context
4. Recognize Interfaith Leadership practices, and take inventory of UVU efforts to lead
5. Access worldview and interfaith resources available to faculty, staff, and students
6. Be open to opportunities to engage in interfaith dialogue at UVU

Level 2

1. Foster a community feeling through introductions and space-setting
2. Begin to build a sense of shared vision and ownership over worldview engagement on campus
3. Identify the connection between social capitol and pluralism
4. Make space for people to think individually about their own worldview in a way that separates the need for expertise from the willingness to enter into interfaith experiences
5. Help participants articulate their worldview, explore how it developed and continues to develop, and identify their potential biases, so they are willing to model worldview engagement for their students or peers on campus
6. Help participants discover the shared values between worldviews through text, storytelling, and reflection on issues of common concern
7. Encourage participants to practice how to talk about what they believe, and how to listen to others

Level 3

1. Grow an understanding of worldview engagement and relationship building as something that happens with time and intentionality, not a one-time, all-in discussion
2. Experience an abbreviated interfaith dialogue
3. Open a conversation about understanding personal bias, how it affects our work, and how we can begin to counteract personal bias
4. Explore how different groups can encounter bias
5. Identify further civic goods of pluralism
6. Foster a sense of shared ownership over worldview engagement on campus
Our audience is the entire faculty and staff of the university. It is a training open and available for anyone on campus to attend. I’ve had a couple of students attend in the past.

Assessment
Foundations of Inclusion workshops are all assessed with a general survey, I add specific question to assess whether or not I’m meeting my learning outcomes for my specific Interfaith workshop. I also do an assessment for the folks who complete the level 2 & 3 workshops separately.

Anyone who completes all three levels of the workshops is invited to a Train the Trainer workshop over the summer. We talk through the level 1 workshop agenda, some case studies, and do a practice facilitation. Then, if the person feels comfortable, we will meet much closer to the scheduled workshop they are to help co-facilitate. We break up the agenda into what the co-facilitator feels comfortable leading and I take the remainder of the content.

**What advice would you give someone running this program for the first time?**
You only need to be an expert in telling your own story not a religious expert.

Set up community guidelines and hold each other accountable to them because that’s where the real learning happens.

**Do you want to add anything else?**
I’m happy to meet and chat with anyone look to do more training on their campuses to support the development of their workshops!
Contributors

Sydney Curtis
Sydney Curtis is a PhD student in Higher Education at Loyola University Chicago, where she also serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of Critical Scholarship on Higher Education and Student Affairs. Her research interests include teaching and learning in higher education, Black Feminism, spiritual pedagogies, and values-based leadership.

John Eby
John Eby is a Professor of History at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. He co-directs the Interfaith Leaders Program at Loras, the Children of Abraham movement in Dubuque, and serves on the Editorial Board for Reacting to the Past. He is the co-author of The Collapse of Apartheid in South Africa, 1993, a Reacting to the Past pedagogic experience published in 2017. Eby received his Ph.D. from the University of Washington in Medieval History in 1998.
Dr. J. Cody Nielsen
Dr. J. Cody Nielsen is Founder and Executive Director of Convergence on Campus and lives in Minneapolis. Dedicated to the work of civil rights for religious, secular, and spiritual identities, Cody spends his time traveling to various conference and speaking engagements as part of the work of growing the movement amongst professionals in higher education. He is a bread maker, marathoner and biker, enjoys the outdoors and especially the mountains, and has a six-year-old son.

Cassidy Oberreuter
Cassidy Oberreuter is a senior at Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, majoring in International Studies and Politics. She is active in the Interfaith Leaders Program, the Interfaith Research Team, Dance Marathon, has been the Sustainability intern for the Spiritual Life Office, and has served as an intern in the Student Life Office. She is originally from rural Iowa.

Joe Pritchett
Joe Pritchett is the Director for Faith and Meaning at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, PA. In his role, he supports religious and spiritual life on campus along with other meaning-making pursuits. His work also focuses on interfaith engagement, contemplative spirituality, mindfulness, and he is trained in spiritual direction. He earned his doctorate at the University of Delaware. Dr. Pritchett also serves as an adjunct faculty member at Lancaster Theological Seminary, where he teaches courses on interfaith leadership.
Keyera S. Shaw
Keyera S. Shaw is a senior at Loras College, majoring in Elementary Education with a Mathematics endorsement. She has been highly involved with the Interfaith Leaders Program, the Interfaith Research Team, Black Student Union, and as a Resident Assistant. She has also been a Peer Advisor and a Student Ambassador. She hails from Chicago.

Asha Shipman
Asha Shipman is Director of Hindu Life and Hindu chaplain for Yale University. She is a contributor to the first book on Hindu chaplaincy in the US, Hindu Approaches to Spiritual Care. Dr. Shipman serves on the Advisory Board for Convergence and regularly speaks and writes on Hinduism and Hindu chaplaincy.

Brother Lawrence A. Whitney, PhD, LC†
Brother Lawrence A. Whitney, PhD, LC† has served as University Chaplain for Community Life at Boston University for 13 years and currently serves on the Board of Directors of Convergence. A fellow at the Institute for Culture Religion and World Affairs at the Boston University Pardee School of Global Studies, he is the current president of the North American Paul Tillich Society. He holds a Bachelor of Music from Ithaca College, and Master of Divinity and PhD degrees from Boston University. He is professed and a priest in the Lindisfarne Community, an ecumenical Christian religious order open to insights from other traditions.
Call for Submissions

**CONVERGENCE MAGAZINE WILL FOCUS ON TWO AREAS OF CONVERGENCE:**

1) the convergence between religious, secular, and spiritual identities on college campuses, and
2) the convergence between administrators and faculty members in all levels of higher education and religious, secular, and spiritual life professionals (including those in campus ministry positions). The magazine’s objective is to promote harmonious campus communities and the fostering of responsible global citizens through spreading understanding among those who espouse a wide range of identities and worldviews.

The target audience for *Convergence Magazine* is professionals, students, and scholars located on college campuses in the areas served through the publication’s content. In addition, the magazine is aimed to those working in related fields beyond campus borders, such as in religious organizations, schools of theology, and houses of worship, and in non-profits and educational service organizations serving the field of higher education student affairs.

*Convergence Magazine* is published online on a tri-annual basis and acts as one of the pillars of the Convergence organization, others of which include training professionals, consultation with universities, organizational systems and collaborations, and additional content (blog, podcast, webinars, and conferences).

The editors of *Convergence Magazine* solicit contributions in the following categories:

**Promising Practices**
Practitioners from all divisions, particularly those employed in the target convergence areas, are invited to tell the stories of the successful convergences on their college campuses. (Word count: between 3,000 and 4,000 words)

**Administration and Policy**
Administrators and other professionals are invited to describe the higher-order administrative practices and implemented policies that have led to successful convergences on their college campuses. (Word count: between 3,000 and 4,000 words)

**Opinion**
All higher education professionals are invited to share their opinions on steps that can be taken within our shared field to promote the two categories of convergence. (Word count: between 2,000 and 3,000 words)
Book Reviews
All higher education professionals are invited to share a review of a new or recent book publication on a related topic, such as interfaith dialogue, worldview development, or chaplaincy work. (Word count: between 1,000 and 1,500 words)

Spotlight Programs
All higher education professionals are invited to share brief information about a promising program on their own campus that meets Convergence Magazine’s goals of promoting harmonious campus communities and the fostering of responsible global citizens. The format for this category is question and response, differing from the feature-style writing in the Promising Practices category.

In addition to on-the-ground practitioners and administrators, the editors invite faculty and graduate students to submit articles in the above categories. However, the focus should remain on concrete strategies and ideas for practical implementation.

Convergence Magazine is not a research journal. The tone of the magazine will be forthright and conversational, rather than research-intensive. However, as the editors strongly believe that all promising practices, policies, and opinions are undergirded by high-quality research, we expect that cited references to supporting literature will be included in all published pieces. Please utilize the APA 6th edition for formatting these references.

Call for Submissions
Submissions for each tri-annual issue will be due two months prior to the publication month, on the 15th of the month. For example, upcoming submission deadlines will be:

July 15, 2020 for publication in September 2020
November 15, 2020 for publication in January 2021
March 15, 2021 for publication in May 2021

Any submission that misses a deadline will automatically be considered for the following issue.

Note: Submissions to Convergence Magazine do not need to be blinded. Because the editors are seeking stories based on real-world experiences, details about specific campuses and programs are necessary and should not be anonymized. Authors should think carefully about whether this is appropriate for the articles they are submitting.

Because Convergence Magazine is an online publication, authors are invited to submit full-color photos to accompany their pieces.

To be considered for publication in any of the first four categories listed above, upload your document and photos at the following website: https://convergenceoncampus.wufoo.com/forms/sgyg5f903xhasp/

To be considered for publication in the Spotlight Programs category, complete the following online form: https://convergenceoncampus.wufoo.com/forms/m16e590j0ivlq8v/

Questions can be directed to Dr. Jenny Small, Associate Director for Education and Content: jenny.small@convergenceoncampus.org.
What We’re Talking About
What’s Being Talked about in the Convergence Columns

MARIA AHMAD - THE MEANING OF RAMADAN

BRAD SELIGMANN - WHEN IS EASTER? DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK

AMY JOSEFA ARIEL - OPPORTUNITIES TO DANCE