An Interdisciplinary Approach to Creating a Faith, Values and Spirituality Program at a Secular Institution

Presented by:
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The University of Tampa
Introductions (5 minutes)

- Who are we, why do we work together, and why do we care?
Sykes Chapel Survey

• Serendipitously, I conducted a survey of religiosity prior to the formation of the resource team

• Why?
  – New chapel:
    • $19.5 Million Project funded by donations
    • Construction started in 2008
    • Slated for completion in 2010 (or 2011)
    • will include non-denominational facility, pipe organ, plaza, musical sculpture/fountain
Sykes Chapel Survey

• This survey gives us some baseline information for religiosity and spirituality on the campus
• 3,268 students were invited to participate.
• 473 students completed the survey
  – response rate = 14.5%
• Additionally, similar survey was conducted at Eckerd to compare over time and determine affect of chapel vs. social changes (unfortunately, I don’t have this data yet)
Survey Results

- Average age = 21.28 (range = 18-48)
- 70% female
Religious Affiliation

- Catholic: 32%
- Protestant: 25%
- None: 30%
- Jewish: 4%
- Some other religion: 5%
- Don't know/choose not to respond: 3%
Religious Service Attendance

- Never: 25%
- About once or twice a year: 21%
- Several times a year: 14%
- Less than once a year: 13%
- About once a month: 6%
- Several times a month: 5%
- Nearly every week: 6%
- Every week: 7%
- Several times a week: 3%
Where do students attend

- In my home city, state, or country: 48%
- Near campus (<5 min.): 9%
- Local area (>5 min. from campus): 14%
- On campus: 2%
- Don't attend: 24%
- Other: 3%
Belief in life after death

- Yes: 64%
- No: 16%
- Don't know/choose not to respond: 21%
Frequency of Prayer

- never: 28%
- less than once a week: 26%
- once a day: 12%
- several times a week: 16%
- several times a day: 12%
- other/choose not to respond: 6%
Belief in God

- I am confident God exists (37%)
- Higher power (25%)
- Believe but doubt (10%)
- Believe sometimes (3%)
- Other/choose not to respond (3%)
- Agnostic (13%)
- Atheist (8%)
How Religious (1-10)
How Spiritual (1-10)
Views of the New Chapel

- It's a very positive addition to campus: 9.7%
- It's a positive addition to campus: 20.7%
- It's neither a positive nor negative addition to campus: 26.2%
- It's a negative addition to campus: 14.2%
- It's a very negative addition to campus: 11.6%
- Missing: 17.5%
In what ways does UT express that it cares about all aspects of a student’s life?

• “The building of a chapel shows that they care about the religious/spiritual aspect of a student's life. Hopefully, this chapel will be used for all religions equally, but it's nice that those who want to use it will be able to worship on campus.”

• “I think the University does a good job of providing and supporting groups that appeal to all different areas of life: religion, sexuality, sports, interest, etc.”
In what ways does UT express that it cares about all aspects of a student’s life?

- “UT shows it openness to all religious groups, allowing many of them to organize on campus in different cocurricular groups.”
- “Well, UT strives to make the campus feel welcoming and friendly. The staff is very helpful, and the students are usually respectful. If they didn't care about the students, we wouldn't have such a beautiful and open campus. Or we wouldn't be able to begin new student organizations or participate in an on-campus chapel.”
In what ways does UT fall short in caring about all aspects of a student’s life?

• “We don't even get major religious holidays off like Good Friday which is the epitome of our faith as Christians”

• “Just because we live in a Christian society, does not mean we should dominate and structure our classroom materials after it. I'd like to see the University of Tampa offer other religious courses like the Torah or the Quaran.”
In what ways does UT fall short in caring about all aspects of a student’s life?

- “There are not many religious groups on campus or incidences where students are offered opportunity's to participate in religious services even off campus.”
- “There is no place for religious affiliations to meet... but with the new center it'll be awesome!”
In what ways does UT fall short in caring about all aspects of a student’s life?

• “I don't feel that UT has any part in caring for my life. The professors are kind and great teachers of their subject, but in a spiritual aspect, there is no care for my feelings or thoughts about God and life after death.”

• “I have not personally been shown in any way that I am special or stand out from any of your other walking bags of money.”
Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality Mission

*To further strengthen UT students’ academic and personal development through character-building, spiritual development and enhancing their understanding of world cultures and religions.*
Members of Resource Team for Faith, Values, and Spirituality

Stephanie Russell Holz, Chair

8 Faculty Members
Jeff Klepfer       Bethany Fleck       Gregg Bachman
Joe Sclafani      Scott Paine        Ryan Cragun       Steven Geisz

7 Staff Members
Tim Harding        Megan Frisque      Rachel Rollo      Matt LeBrasseaur
Katie White        Hamid Khowsrowabadi Monnie Wertz

4 Students
Tanner White       Charu Bahl         Randy Tarnowski
Jenna McMahon
UT Student Quotes

“It is a really good opportunity to build a community among students who represent different cultures with different faiths/beliefs.”
- UT Junior

“It will encourage certain dialogues that you did not have earlier on campus.”
- UT Senior
UT Student Marketing Project
Primary Finding

“Our initial assumption was that there was very little student interest in the Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values; however, based on our research, this is not the case.”

“Our conclusion to the research is that with the right marketing and student relations, support of The University of Tampa’s Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values will become an integral part of student life on campus, and that the center will act to fill a niche part of student needs and development during their college years.”

- Graduate Student Marketing Project Team
Learning Outcomes

**In the domain of character building, students will learn to:**
- Make choices based on principles, beliefs, and values
- Identify and represent personal values
- Find or deepen their true vocation

**In the domain of spiritual development, students will learn to:**
- Develop and/or deepen their sense of purpose and meaning in life
- Seek enhanced self-awareness and identity through reflection
- Ask fundamental “why” questions to broaden their understanding of various world views

**In the domain of enhancing understanding of world cultures and religions, students will learn to:**
- Promote campus-wide understanding and enhance recognition of diverse spiritual beliefs in the broadest sense through dialogue, discussion, and personal discovery
- Seek out opportunities to learn about world cultures and religions
- Explore interfaith conversations
Spiritual Life Programming

Starting Fall 2009

- Spirituality through Film Series
- Book Clubs
- Conversation Groups
- Values-based retreat
Spirituality through Film

“The questions brought meaningful, deep answers.”

“Brought understanding from the unspoken themes and symbols of the film. Brought together different views from everyone.”

“I enjoyed speaking about the aspects of the film and how they relate to everyday life. Also, analyzing the film and the themes of the film.”

“I like it because it opened the movie and helped explain it a little bit more and helped me see the inner metaphors.”

“The concept of doubt is normative.”

“Everyone has doubts.”
Class of Student Attendees

- Sophomore, 25%
- Junior, 25%
- Senior, 18%
- First year student, 23%
- no answer / other, 11%
Religious Affiliations of Film Series Attendees

- Catholic: 21%
- Jewish: 4%
- Southern Baptist: 7%
- Atheist/agnostic/none: 11%
- Pentecostal/Charismatic/Holiness: 2%
- Non-denominational Christian: 23%
- Other: 19%
- Don’t know/no response: 7%
- No answer/other: 7%
Why did you choose to participate in the film series?

- I like films: 14%
- I like the film that was selected: 2%
- I like the topic of the film: 5%
- I like discussions: 2%
- I always attend Student Production films: 5%
- I came with my friends: 14%
- I was looking for something to do: 2%
- No answer/other: 56%
Participate Again

- yes, 67%
- maybe, 31%
- no, 2%
“There were some discussion topics that I didn’t even think about and it was very insightful to hear what other people had to say.”

“It was really good to reflect on the ideas in this book. I don’t always reflect as profoundly when I read on my own.”

“I think the discussion was great. The diversity of the group (having students, faculty, and staff) made the book club more meaningful.”
Participants

- Staff, 44%
- Students, 38%
- Faculty, 19%
Class of Student Attendees

- no answer / other, 41%
- Senior, 29%
- Grad Student, 6%
- Sophomore, 6%
Religious Affiliations of Book Club Participants

- Catholic: 11.8%
- Jewish: 5.9%
- Atheist/agnostic: 11.8%
- non-denominational Christian: 17.6%
- Other: 47.1%
- no answer: 5.9%
Why did you choose to participate in the book club?

- I like to read: 11.8%
- I like the book that was selected: 23.5%
- I signed up with a friend: 5.9%
- No answer / other: 58.8%
Participate Again

- yes, 93%
- no, 7%
“I loved being able to speak freely and not worry about how it was taken. This was a very safe space for free conversation.”

“This was a huge growth experience for me.”

“Some of our conversations gave me another perspective of thinking about things. These were uplifting gatherings that I looked forward to.”

“A lot of people have similar questions, with few answers. It’s good to know everyone puzzles through the same issues.”

“I learned so many things about myself and the outlook I have on life, it’s been a wonderful experience overall.”

“I was very impressed with the structure of the meeting and really enjoyed it—much more than I had anticipated.”

“I had a wonderful time. Can’t wait for our next gathering...”

“I enjoyed the lunch and the opportunity for deeper conversation – this is filling a need. And it was a pleasure meeting both faculty/staff and students.”
Class of Student Attendees

- First Year Students, 5%
- Sophomores, 9%
- Juniors, 9%
- Seniors, 18%
- No answer / other, 59%
Why did you choose to participate in the community conversations?

- I like to meet new people: 13.6%
- I saw the advertisement for the series: 4.5%
- I like to talk with faculty/staff outside of the classroom: 9.1%
- No answer / other: 72.7%
Participate Again

- no, 0%
- yes, 100%
In the domain of character building, students will learn to:

- Make choices based on principles, beliefs, and values
  
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- Identify and represent personal values
  
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- Find or deepen their true vocation
  
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Key: 1 = not at all; 5 = completely
In the domain of spiritual development, students will learn to:

- Develop and/or deepen their sense of purpose and meaning in life
  
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- Seek enhanced self-awareness and identity through reflection
  
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- Ask fundamental “why” questions to broaden their understanding of various world views
  
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Key: 1 = not at all; 5 = completely
In the domain of enhancing understanding of world cultures and religions, students will learn to:

- Promote campus-wide understanding and enhance recognition of diverse spiritual beliefs
  
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- Engage in dialogue, discussion, and personal discovery
  
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- Seek out opportunities to learn about world cultures and religions
  
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- Explore interfaith conversations
  
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Key: 1 = not at all; 5 = completely
What have you learned from your participation (all programs)?

• “I have been able to understand different perspectives on faith and values by listening to opinions that are completely different to mine.”
• “Everyone has doubts no matter how strong their faith is.”
• “I need to reflect on my thoughts and actions more often. I do not take the time to do so. I get so wrapped up in everyday things - and life.”
• “That students can be far more deep and thoughtful than we give them credit for.”
Thoughts on Before and After

• Participants were already into character building and spiritual development (that’s probably why they signed up)
• What these activities did was broaden horizons –providing diversity and understanding of others’ views
Community Partnership

• Formed Fall 2008
• Comprised of worship leaders in the Tampa area
• Meet monthly for interfaith discussion with spiritual student organization presidents
• Held two spiritual fairs in 2008-2009
• Conform to the UT Agreement of Spiritual Respect and Understanding
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<th>Community</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hyde Park Methodist</td>
<td>Islamic Society of Tampa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bayshore Baptist</td>
<td>Young Israel Chabad (Jewish Orthodox)</td>
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<td>Channelside Church (Christian – non denominational)</td>
<td>Bais Chabad Lubavitch (Jewish Orthodox)</td>
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<td>First Baptist Church of Tampa (Jewish Orthodox)</td>
<td>Chabad Lubavitch of South Tampa</td>
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<td>Davis Islands Baptist Church</td>
<td>Congregation Schaarai Zedek (Jewish Reform)</td>
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<td>New Salem Baptist Church</td>
<td>Rodeph Shalom (Jewish Conservative)</td>
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<td>Sacred Heart Catholic Church</td>
<td>Covenant Life Church (Christian)</td>
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<td>Holy Trinity Presbyterian Church</td>
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<td>St. John’s Greek Orthodox Church</td>
<td>Underground Church (Christian)</td>
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<td>First United Methodist Church</td>
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Spiritual Student Organizations (8)

- Campus Crusade for Christ
- Catholic Students Association
- Chabad Jewish Student Union
- Hillel Jewish Student Organization
- Indian Cultural Association
- Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
- Muslim Student Association
- Space: Christian Conversations
QUESTIONS?

Be kind, we have kids!