The Role of Faculty in Students’ Spiritual Development

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What do we know about college faculty and "internal stuff"?
Enhancing Self Understanding (% “essential” or “very important”)
Developing Moral Character
(% “essential” or “very important”)

Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 81%
Protestant Colleges: 74%
Catholic Colleges: 72%
Two-year Colleges: 65%
Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 64%
Private Universities: 59%
Public Colleges: 56%
Public Universities: 50%
Developing Personal Values (% “essential” or “very important”)

Protestant Colleges: 73
Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 71
Catholic Colleges: 71
Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 65
Two-year Colleges: 64
Private Universities: 58
Public Colleges: 57
Public Universities: 51
Providing for Emotional Development
(% “essential” or “very important”)

- Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 56%
- Catholic Colleges: 47%
- Protestant Colleges: 46%
- Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 42%
- Two-year Colleges: 42%
- Private Universities: 36%
- Public Colleges: 35%
- Public Universities: 29%
Developing a Meaningful Philosophy of Life (% “essential” or “very important”)

- Catholic Colleges: 84%
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 82%
- Protestant Colleges: 82%
- Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 80%
- Public Colleges: 76%
- Two-Year Colleges: 75%
- Private Universities: 75%
- Public Universities: 73%
Integrating Spirituality in My Life
(% “essential” or “very important”)

- Protestant Colleges: 71%
- Catholic Colleges: 65%
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 64%
- Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 56%
- Two-year Colleges: 56%
- Private Universities: 50%
- Public Colleges: 50%
- Public Universities: 41%
Help Students Examine & Understand Their Personal Values (% “highest” or “high” institutional priority)
Help Promote Students’ Religious/Spiritual Development (% “highest” or “high” institutional priority)

- Catholic Colleges: 78%
- Historically Black Colleges & Universities: 71%
- Protestant Colleges: 66%
- Private Universities: 53%
- Private Nonsectarian Colleges: 35%
- Two-year Colleges: 11%
- Public Colleges: 9%
- Public Universities: 8%
Professors Provided …
(% “frequently” and “not at all”)

- Encouragement to discuss religious/spiritual matters: 8 frequently, 62 not at all
- Opportunities to discuss the purpose/meaning of life: 8 frequently, 56 not at all
Why is it important to study faculty perspectives on spirituality?
Spirituality and the Professoriate: A National Study of Faculty Attitudes, Experiences, and Behaviors

Funded by
The John Templeton Foundation
Administered triennially since 1989

Completed by over 300,000 faculty at more than 1,100 two- and four-year colleges and universities nationwide

HERI staff uses data to create norms that represent the nation’s total population of ~400,000 full-time undergraduate faculty
Project Timeline

Faculty Survey Design
(Winter 2004-Spring 2004)

Survey Administration
(Fall 2004-Winter 2005)

Data Analysis & Dissemination
(Winter 2005-Summer 2005)
Research Questions

- What role do faculty believe spirituality should play in the undergraduate experience?

- How do faculty view their responsibility for helping students achieve a greater sense of meaning and purpose in their lives?

- To what extent do faculty view themselves as potential facilitators of students’ spiritual/religious development?
Research Questions

- To what extent do faculty engage their students in curricular activities that can promote inner development?

- How might life stage and/or generational differences affect how students and faculty differentially define and experience their spirituality?
Research Questions

- To what extent do faculty perceive themselves as spiritual beings? What proportion are actively seeking opportunities to grow spiritually?

- Do faculty feel a sense of integration between their personal and professional lives? To what extent do they perceive there to be congruence or divergence between their own values and institutional values?
Research Questions

- Are faculty engaged in work that is connected to what they feel is most important in life? How readily can they identify connections between their work and the larger social good?

- What are the structural and cultural aspects of campus life that faculty perceive as facilitating (and inhibiting) their own and/or their students’ spiritual expression and development?
Hypothesis 1

- Faculty who prioritize their own spiritual development will be most likely to create an academic climate that facilitates students’ spiritual development.
Faculty are interested in discussing issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality with their students and colleagues but academic culture, institutional structure, and the inherently personal nature of such discussions discourage such dialogue.
Hypothesis 3

- In the aggregate, women, racial minority, and “older” faculty will be more inclined than men, non-minority, and “younger” faculty to be open to addressing issues related to students’ spiritual development. They will also be more likely to view themselves as being on a spiritual quest.
## Integrating Spirituality in My Life

(% “essential” or “very important”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
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<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>63</td>
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<td>Mexican American/Chicano</td>
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<td>+12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>+1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Integrating Spirituality in My Life (% “essential” or “very important”)

- 2003 Entering Freshmen: Men 37, Women 43
- Gen X Faculty: Men 45, Women 53
- Baby Boom Faculty: Men 48, Women 61
- Silent Gen Faculty: Men 47, Women 62
Hypothesis 4

- There will be considerable variation across academic disciplines/fields in the extent to which faculty view themselves as highly spiritual and to which faculty are open to actively facilitating students’ spiritual development.
### Integrating Spirituality in My Life

(% “essential” or “very important”)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Diff</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Sciences</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>+7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 5

- Regardless of their academic discipline, faculty who aspire to facilitate students’ spiritual development will employ different pedagogical methods than their colleagues who are not as attuned to this aspect of students’ development.
Hypothesis 6

- Although faculty will define their spirituality in different ways, many will view their work as a medium for expressing their spirituality and for finding meaning in their lives.
“[My] beliefs give me hope and something to cling to during hard times. [My religious faith] socializes compassion and that is something that is important to me and I try to have in my life, teaching, and other aspects of my work.”
“In terms of spirituality…it means deep connections with people, emotional connections. It means the ability to reflect.”
“I consider spirituality not just organized religion…[it’s] a sense of connectedness with other human beings. Teaching provides me with a kind of spiritual sense of connectedness.”
Hypothesis 7

- Faculty who are highly spiritual will often experience tensions between their own values and those that they perceive to predominate within their institutions.
Hypothesis 8

- Time pressures will play a major role in faculty feeling disconnected from their spirituality.
“Until this January, I worked almost every night and every weekend. Last year I took three weekends that I did not work on academic stuff the entire year. That’s how it’s been and I just can’t do it anymore. Inside me I can’t. I’m dried up.”
“I’m not just a fleshy being, but I don’t know what the other part is. I haven’t had time to think about that part very much, but I would like to be more than my fleshy self…but I’ll worry about that after I get tenure, hopefully.”