

BYLAWS OF THE BERRY COLLEGE INTERFAITH COUNCIL

Endorsed by President Colley, November 2002

I. CONTEXT

In December 2001, the Board of Trustees approved a strategic plan outlining the desired trajectory of Berry College over the next ten years. With regard to religion, the plan makes clear Berry's desire to be simultaneously Christian and pluralistic in character. The plan states: *"The college remains dedicated to the interdenominational Christian values on which it was founded and welcomes individuals of diverse backgrounds into the campus community."*

The strategic plan makes clear Berry's desire to be welcoming of diversity in general: *Goal Seven: Foster a culture that is open, friendly and inviting to all members of the campus community and that welcomes and values diversity, encourages interaction and negotiates the differences among us.*

Two objectives under Goal Seven speak directly to religious diversity:

***Objective A:** Create an interfaith council charged with raising levels of awareness and understanding of the variety of beliefs and religious traditions represented on campus and in the surrounding communities.*

***Objective B:** Publicize and promote to the campus community a variety of religious opportunities both on and off campus.*

Given this context, Berry College's Interfaith Council will be established with the following characteristics:

II. MISSION

The Interfaith Council will help foster a welcoming environment at Berry College by supporting and promoting opportunities for people to learn about and participate in a variety of religious opportunities on campus and in the surrounding community.

III. CHARGE

The Interfaith Council shall:

- A. work closely with the Religion and Philosophy Department and the Chaplain's Office to provide educational speakers, panels, and discussions which educate and make students aware of diverse religious traditions;
- B. work closely with the Chaplain's Office and the Religion and Philosophy Department to address specific desires and needs for religious expression that are not effectively addressed by Berry College Religion-in-Life groups;
- C. work closely with the Chaplain's Office and the Religion and Philosophy Department to publicize off-campus opportunities for diverse religious education and practice;
- D. make recommendations to the Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, and/or Chaplain on ways to promote a welcoming environment for people from minority or underrepresented religious traditions;
- E. review and make recommendations on the charge, structure, composition, and selection of the committee as needed.

IV. STRUCTURE

The Interfaith Council shall:

- A. be a standing committee of the College;
- B. report to the President;
- C. work closely with the Chaplain's Office, the Religion and Philosophy Department, and the Office of Student Affairs on all matters.

V. MEMBERSHIP

- A. Members of the Interfaith Council will support the college's goal to welcome individuals of diverse religious backgrounds while it remains dedicated to the interdenominational Christian values on which the college was founded.
- B. While it is not possible to embody every religious viewpoint on the Interfaith Council, members of the council should represent a diversity of religious perspectives both within and beyond the Christian faith.
- C. The Interfaith Council shall be comprised of six faculty members, six students, two staff members, and six *ex officio* members.

1. FACULTY MEMBERSHIP

- a. Of the six faculty members on the Interfaith Council, two will be elected by the Faculty Assembly.
- b. The remaining four faculty members will be selected by the Provost in close consultation with the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Chaplain, and the Chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department (or the Chair's designee).
- c. Faculty membership on the Interfaith Council will usually be for two years, with staggered terms to ensure continuity from year to year.

2. STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

- a. Of the six student members on the Interfaith Council, two will be elected by the Student Government Association.
- b. The remaining four student members will be selected by the Provost in close consultation with the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Chaplain, and the Chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department (or the Chair's designee).
- c. Students who are interested in serving on the IFC will be encouraged (via campus-wide email) to fill out a simple application form. Faculty and staff will also be asked to recommend student members, and these students will be encouraged to fill out a form.
- d. The Provost will earnestly consult with the Chaplain, Vice President for Student Affairs, Chair of the Department of Religion & Philosophy (or the Chair's designee), the President of the Student Government Association, and the President of the International Student Association.
- e. An interview with all likely nominees will be conducted by the Provost to ensure that the students are an appropriate selection for the Interfaith Council.
- f. Ideally, the sophomore, junior, and senior classes should be represented among the appointed student members.
- g. Student membership on the Interfaith Council will be for one year, with the opportunity to be reelected or reappointed.

3. Staff Membership

- a. The two staff members will be selected by the Provost in close consultation with the Vice President for Student Affairs, the Chaplain, and the Chair of the Religion and Philosophy Department (or the Chair's designee).
- b. Staff membership on the Interfaith Council will usually be for two years, with staggered terms to ensure continuity from year to year.

4. *ex officio* Membership

- a. The *ex officio* members shall be the President, Provost, Vice President for Student Affairs, Associate Vice President for Student Affairs, Chaplain, and Chair of Religion and Philosophy Department (or the Chair's designee).

VI. MEETINGS AND CHAIR

- A. The Interfaith Council typically shall meet on a monthly basis.
- B. Like other councils, meetings of the Interfaith Council are open. Any member of the Berry Community may visit.
- C. Like other councils, minutes of the Interfaith Council will be made available via the Berry College intranet.
- D. The Chaplain shall call and convene the first meeting of each academic year.
- E. At the first meeting each year, members of the Interfaith Council shall select a Chair using a typical procedure of nominations and election.
- F. The Chair of Interfaith Council will serve for one year, with the possibility of reelection in subsequent years.
- G. The Chair of Interfaith Council shall appoint a secretary to take minutes at each meeting.
- H. **The Chair of the Interfaith Council will be an *ex officio* member of the Religion-in-Life**

Advisory Council. The Chair of Interfaith Council and the Chaplain will serve as liaisons between the Interfaith Council and the Religion-in-Life Advisory Council.