Religious Life Review
Wrap Up Session, April 21, 2010

Dean Michael Cartwright convened this final session of the Religious Life Review Process which took place in the context of a celebratory meal at the final meeting of the Ecumenical & Interfaith Council.

I. Review of What We Have Done Over the Course of the Academic Year

Kory Vitangeli, co-convener of the Religious Life Review, presented a power point review of the year-long religious life review sessions. Vitangeli recapped the sessions:

**September 16th:**
- History of the Office of Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs
- Four “patterns of religious life” shift from “no chaplain on campus” to creation of the denominationally-sponsored chaplaincy during Sease administration.

**September 30th:**
- Lilly Endowment/Crossings Grant
- Crossings Mural

**October 14th:**
- Origins of the Lantz Center for Christian Vocations
- Giving and Receiving Hospitality

**October 28th:**
- Sankofa Initiatives engaging students of color
- Spiritual Engagement

**November 11th:**
- Interfaith Ventures
- Campus Engagement

**November 18th:**
- Student Development
- Religious Diversity/Ecumenical Patterns
- Religious Student Organizations

**February 3rd:**
- Multilateral Approach to Campus Ministry
- Code of Ethics/Christian Ministries Council

**February 17th:**
- Catholic student activities, needs and concerns
- Ecumenical ministries
- Student Engagement

**March 3rd:**
- Graduate & Non-Traditional Students
- Satisfaction Survey

**March 17th:**
- Student Satisfaction Survey
- Student Engagement
Details from each session can be found on the Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs website http://eip.uiindy.edu/publications/religious_life_review/

Kory identified the following concerns as areas that need to be explored further:

- Future needs/expectations for campus Chaplains
- Spiritual engagement for students of color
- Mentoring
- Responsibilities and expectations for giving/receiving hospitality
- Benchmarks
- Rallying critical masses of students for involvement
- Building Bridges across campus
- Campus-wide initiatives for spiritual development
- What is hospitality vs. tolerance?
- Number of ministries on campus
- Student engagement regarding various programs/activities
- Involving graduate & non-traditional students in religious life
- Student involvement and satisfaction

10 Overall Thoughts that Kory Vitangeli Gleaned from the review:

1. There are a LOT of initiatives coming out of the E & I Office in a variety of manners.
2. EIP Staff time/energy are at the maximum capacity.
3. The role of the University Chaplains needs to be more clearly defined in regards to the expectations. At present, there are many competing descriptions that surround this role: program oversight/listener/mentor/faculty member/etc.
4. Perhaps the University’s expectation in regards to the role of religion/religiosity on campus needs to be revisited. How do we connect students to the history/unity of the campus? Not meaning a mandate of religious matter, more a knowing of the history/background/mission, etc.
5. As does need to occur across campus, the ways in which UIIndy students are engaged needs to be explored – How can students get the most out of what is being offered in regards to religion on campus? How can initiatives meet the needs of the MOST students while still being inclusive to ALL?
6. What are on-going ways that religious life programs/initiatives can be assessed in an effective manner?
7. In what ways can the discussion of “hospitality” continue to be explored on our campus?
8. How can students outside of the “mainstream” (graduate, adult, non-religious) be included in religious life programming endeavors?
9. What are the WANTS vs. NEEDS of the students on our campus?
10. As students graduate, are they leaving campus better informed/aware/educated in regards to religious life?

After the Power point presentation, Vitangeli asked those persons present for the wrap up conversation if they had any overall comments that they wanted to offer in response to the list of twelve concerns or the ten sets of overall questions that she had posed.
II. Discussion of the Information that Kory Conveyed in Her Presentation

Beth Kiggins stated that she now has a greater awareness of what the EIP office is doing and about religious life on campus.

Vitangeli asked if the group feels that people on campus know about EIP events. Several stated that if people want to know they will know.

Mary Ann Shurig is impressed with the energy and emphasis given to meeting the religious needs of students and the strong commitment of the EIP Office. She feels that the lack of interest in the assessment was due to general apathy on campus.

Michael Cartwright commented about how our campus is “inconsistently compartmentalized.” Deans are called upon by the Provost to sustain a collaborative culture. He pointed to the fact that the interim dean, Ann Thomas, had no knowledge of the parish Nursing program being a collaboration with the EIP office. The Lantz Center commissioning service is actually modeled from the Parish Nursing commissioning service. Just like this example, some truly significant collaborations may become unknown in the future.

Vitangeli asked how do you keep campus traditions going when new people come in? She talked about the recent EduServ staff seminar and acknowledged the importance of passing on the history of the university to new faculty/staff.

Shurig asked Lang Brownlee how he perceived his role as chaplain now compared to when he first came to the university. Brownlee said there are time constraints. Pastoral care has been a constant throughout his tenure here but the grant expanded programming and there has become more of an emphasis on programming. Vitangeli asked if there was as much time for pastoral care. Brownlee’s answer from Brownlee was no, there isn’t much time for that in the current configuration of positions. There growth in the staff and students on campus brings with it additional expectations for the chaplains.

Vitangeli asked if the university was providing the infrastructure for the increased amount of faculty/staff/students? Kiggins feels that the University probably is providing adequate infrastructure in some cases. For example, at the beginning of the nursing on-line classes there wasn’t always faculty support in designing the structure.

Livia Hummel is a 2nd year faculty member. She stated that she has learned more about religious life than most faculty who have been here longer because of her involvement with the Ecumenical & Interfaith Programs Council. She asked how involved can students be in campus life?

Cartwright suggested it in answering this question it is helpful to separate out programs from engagement. The previous chaplain thought of himself as providing a “pastoral presence” on campus. Accordingly, he made himself more available to students to pastoral care and counseling, but Chaplain Young did not have a programmatic role apart from encouraging students to develop programs that they were interested in developing through the Christian Life
Committee. During the Israel administration, all offices of the university were expected to develop programs that helped the university achieve its strategic plan. Vitangeli added that there are now two counselors on campus and 2 doctoral interns. She suggested that perhaps the roles for pastoral care and programmatic expectations should be reevaluated. Chaplain Jeremiah Gibbs offered a related observation. In his experience, it is in the context of programmatic involvement where he is introduced to the students who eventually come to him for pastoral care.

III. Vitangeli asked if anyone had recommendations that they wanted to offer at this point.

A. The Question of How and Whether to Involve Graduate Students: Candy Beitman feels that graduate students need to be included in religious life programming. Jyotika Saksena suggested that most grad students have classes in the evening and just come here for classes. Beitman stated that OT, PT, Psych students are on campus during the day. Cartledge stated that grad nursing students are on campus during the day, too. Communication is still an issue with getting information to graduate students. Saksena mentioned that students do not received intercom and have said they aren’t getting information about programs on campus. Vitangeli stated that all students get e-mail from her once per week with programming information.

B. Religious Life Involves Both Curricular and Co-Curricular Programming. Cartwright talked about academics and student affairs working together. This past year he worked with Dan Stoker, Executive Director of Student Series, on the University series. As the matrix and criteria that are measurable are institute on campus there will be less of a difference between curricular and co-curricular. The current wellness certificate. Assessment is different if thinking conjunctively. Cartwright stated that the Christian Vocation Courses were not reviewed as a part of the religious life review because the courses are working well. There are various models for religious life on campuses. The Dean of chapel model almost never is based on curricular.

C. The Question of Workload for the University Chaplains. Perry Kea worries about creeping responsibilities for chaplains. Brownlee is also Director of the Youth Ministry Program. He is glad to have Brownlee as a partner with the youth ministry program. Christian Vocations tie in curricular and co-curricular. If the path CVOC students are on is not youth ministry or religion than philosophy and religion department isn’t involved with these students and they feel that they should be. Some members of the philosophy and religion faculty are involved in the “Religification” series and he feels the department should do a little more to get staff involved with this series. Brownlee stated that the EIP has administrative responsibility for coordinating the Christian registered organizations but in some cases the EIP office has no real sense beyond what is on paper and that there is no real connection with EIP office. Until 2001, the chaplain’s office operated under student affairs. There are still silos on campus that can inhibit good working relationships.

D. The Question about the Role of Religion in the General Education Curriculum. Cartledge asked if religion would still be maintained in the core curriculum. Kea answered yes. She suggested using NSE to bring EIP into the beginning of the experience
by offering a face-to-face opportunity. Vitangeli said Deb Spinney is in charge of NSE and she gives each NSE instructor options to include in their class. Cartledge suggested EIP could do an SOS workshop. Vitangeli asked if chaplains/EIP addressed the new freshmen during welcome week and Lang answered no. The previous chaplain taught an NSE class but that would only reach about 8 students. Career services offers several NSE classes at one time information about their office on provides those sessions on about three separate occasions.

IV. Dean Cartwright’s Comments and the Discussion that Followed These Remarks

A. Thanking Kory Vitangeli and Terry Schindler. Before offering his remarks, Dean Cartwright thanked Kory Vitangeli and Terry Schindler for serving as co-conveners of the religious life review. The EIP office is truly grateful for the time they spent on this endeavor.

B. Cartwright’s Ruminations: We have looked back even as we have continued to reach out in ways that seek to be inclusive of students in the context of the EIP Office’s stated mission. As we “move forward,” Michael Cartwright offered a series of 12 “I wonder” statements in light of the year-long conversation about religious life at the University of Indianapolis. See “Michael’s Ruminations in the Wake of the Religious Life Review Process: I Wonder…” document on the EIP web-page for details.

C. Going forward, how should we think about interfaith endeavors at UIndy? In one of Michael’s “I wonder” statements on interfaith he asked whether interfaith engagement on campus is more than “aspiration” and Gibbs stated he feels that interfaith has already moved beyond the aspirational stage with the recent formation of the student interfaith forum. All five students are freshmen forming this group. Brownlee stated that the interfaith community on campus has been built intentionally and slowly. The EIC and Code of Ethics have brought us to this point. From book discussions, etc. the EIP office has done some tremendous things cautiously. The religification series has been around for 4 years and has helped a great deal in making the interfaith community on campus. Words given by those present to describe the interfaith initiatives on campus were “fledging” “intentional and developing.” The interfaith initiative is largely led by Christians. Gibbs commented that Haitham Alkhateeb stated earlier in the year that he thinks it is very important that “the EIP office is here” so there is a place for Muslims to be Muslims. Kiggins added that three new Christian RSO’s have been added this year and that no one is going to be excluded because of their faith. Brownlee suggested that we be intentional by establishing an interfaith activities council that shows we are moving forwarding and taking the next step.

D. How Should We Make Religious Endeavors More Visible at UIndy? Rebecca Cartledge suggested that when she thinks of EIP she thinks of Schwitzer Student Center only. She suggested having a presence in all the buildings by a picture or statue that would for example draw a grad student to ask questions and bring their attention to religious life on campus. Cartwright said the “tent of meeting” had been used in the past as a symbol of interfaith and wasn’t very successful. He also offered the example of the
Good Hall structure of lighting a lamp from the lamp of knowledge that no one seems to notice and even Fred Hill wasn’t aware of until Michael brought it to his attention.

E. **Next Steps?**
At the end of the discussion, Kory Vitangeli asked: “What is next step in the review process?” Cartwright replied that he will be consolidating the materials to put together in a “white paper” that identifies options that will be given to the Provost. He doesn’t expect to have a conversation about options to be explored until September or October of 2010. If there is a search for a new chaplain conducted, that process will probably begin around November or December.