

Presbyterian and Pluralist Strategic Plan

Queens University of Charlotte

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Who Are We? Strategic Planning Working Group

- Chandler Barrett, Executive Director, Institutional Effectiveness
- Stephanie Bunao, Student
- Talli Dippold, Associate Director, Greenspon Center & Director of Jewish Life
- Crystal Dunham, Assistant Director of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement
- Angie Edwards, Director, Myrta Pulliam Center for International Education
- Brooke Edwards, Student
- Mohammed el-Nawawy, Professor, International Communication/Middle Eastern Studies
- Noah Goldman, Student
- Lily Halsted, Professor, Psychology
- Joey Haynes, Interim University Chaplain
- Suzanne Watts Henderson, Professor, Religion
- Jessie Laney, Marketing and Traffic Manager
- Diane Mowrey, Chaplain Emeritus and Professor, Religion
- Mac Mullins, Administrative Assistant for University Programs & Academic Affairs
- Amber Perrell, Associate Dean of Students for Residence Life and Housing
- Alexa Royden, Associate Professor, Political Science
- Judy Schindler, Director, Greenspon Center & Associate Professor, Religion

Why Does Queens Care about Interfaith Engagement?

"Presbyterian and Pluralist" Statement

We affirm Queens' ties, established at our founding in 1857, with the **Presbyterian Church (USA)**. This tradition has embedded core values such as service, intellectual curiosity, and commitment to the common good in Queens' DNA. Thus the **Queens community** promotes the **civic good** by **fostering knowledge** and **nurturing relationships** among people of different **religious and philosophical world views**. This **pluralistic approach** lies at the heart of the transformative educational experience Queens provides. (See below for more detailed explanation of these terms.)

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (USA): The Presbyterian Church is anchored in the Reformed tradition, which is marked historically and theologically by commitments to education for the common good and to the dignity of all people. As a Christian denomination, the PC (USA) affirms the value of pluralism through official policy as well as institutional structure. Thus, our pluralistic approach is because of our heritage, not in spite of it.

QUEENS COMMUNITY: Our community is student-centered, diverse, and inclusive of all people. Thus, our faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners support, strengthen, and share the student journey through transformative encounters across all kinds of difference—including religious and philosophical world views. The following values guide the Queens community in all its endeavors: focus on students, integrity and respect, stewardship, creativity and innovation, and service.

CIVIC GOOD: The aim of a Queens education goes beyond the classroom and campus to repair the world to which we belong. Our motto, "Not to be served, but to serve," anchors this goal in the Christian tradition while reflecting a universal value of service and equipping us to live as engaged citizens who promote a just social order for all people.

FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE: As an academic institution, we aim to educate our community about religious and non-religious world views. In the classroom and beyond, we value both appreciative inquiry and critical appraisal as we explore core teachings (book knowledge) as well as the diverse human expression of those world views (personal and socio-political knowledge).

NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS: At Queens, we affirm the deeply relational nature of learning, which extends beyond academic instruction or training. Campus organizations such as the Chapel, the Greenspon Center, DICE (Diversity, Inclusion and Community Engagement), and the Center for Ethics and Religion offer opportunities for the Queens

community to build bridges of understanding and cooperation across different world views.

RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL WORLD VIEWS: Members of the Queens community understand their "ultimate concerns" in diverse ways. While many find life's meaning through religious world views, many others do not. Our life together, both at Queens and in the wider world, depends on our ability to explore the deepest questions about the human condition with those whose world views differ from our own.

PLURALISTIC APPROACH: Pluralism promotes conversation and collaboration across different world views. Its aim is to understand others on their own terms and to find ways to work together toward the wider good. We affirm both the shared values that bind us and the distinctive features that each world view brings to the table. Above all, we value the people who inhabit those world views, at Queens and in the wider world.

Where Are We Now?

Context Analysis

Queens University is uniquely poised to create a campus culture of interfaith cooperation and model interfaith engagement in higher education. Queens has the second interfaith studies major in the country, indicating strong commitment and support for interfaith cooperation at the University. In addition to the major, programming in a variety of campus initiatives support interfaith engagement: the Chapel, the Center for Ethics and Religion, the Stan Greenspon Center for Social Justice and Holocaust Studies, the office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement (DICE), to name a few. It is important to showcase this good work and publicly communicate this commitment.

Findings from the IDEAS survey, along with listening sessions, have yielded these observations about distinctive facets of Queens' culture:

1. Our students have a high pluralism orientation relative to lower *appreciative attitudes*. This seems linked to a lower rating on *appreciative knowledge*.
2. Though students rated our campus lower in terms of insensitivity and coercion, they also found it *less welcoming* than national averages. Worldview majority students perceive campus as more welcoming than non-majority students.
3. Queens students report lower-than-average *informal engagement* across worldview difference. We also have room for growth, especially among some groups, for provocative encounters and formal engagement.
4. Queens responses reflect national norms in the correlation between *support and space* for religious/spiritual expression and *appreciation* for diverse worldviews.
5. Faculty, students, and staff consistently express confusion over the connection between Queens' *Presbyterian ties and interfaith engagement*. This is an area that's ripe for cultivating.

What Will We Focus On?

Strategic Areas of Concern and Action Steps

Strategic Area One: Identity

Guiding Question: How can we name and explain why we're "Presbyterian and Pluralist"?

Our Presbyterian heritage provides fitting platform for promoting religious pluralism throughout our community. We will strengthen our "messaging" to educate both internal and external audiences about what pluralism entails and why it's vital to our life together at Queens and in the world. Among initiatives our Working Group identified, here's where we'll focus urgent attention:

- Create and publicize a "Presbyterian and Pluralist" statement.
- Promote campus-wide engagement with the statement.
- Build and implement a marketing plan to incorporate religious pluralism in University communications.
- Institutionalize efforts to promote pluralism.

1: Create "Presbyterian and Pluralist" Statement

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Draft statement	Identity Sub-Group	May/June
Share draft: Provost Sarah Fatherly	Suzanne and Chandler	May
Share draft: President Pamela Davies	Suzanne	May
Share draft: Presidential Search Committee	Angie	June
Influence Chaplain job description	Joey	Summer

Influence Chaplain search	Suzanne, Joey, Diane	Fall
Finalize statement	Interfaith Committee	September

2: Promote Campus-Wide Buy-In

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Build schedule of sessions	Identity Sub-Group	July/August
Incorporate feedback	Identity Sub-Group	Ongoing

3: Build and Follow Marketing and Communication Plan

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Website revision	Jessie, Joey, Judy, Diane	June/July
Admissions staff training	Diane	Summer
One Sheeter: Interfaith & Spiritual Life	Jessie, Joey, Diane	Summer
Admissions collateral	Jessie	2019- 2020 Academic Year
Publicity plan for initiatives	Jessie	Summer/Fall

4: Institutionalize “Presbyterian and Pluralist” Efforts

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Establish Interfaith Committee (formed by Faculty Council) and transition to Standing Committee status	Suzanne	2018-19 year
Add faculty representatives from business, health sciences, communication to Interfaith Committee	Suzanne/Joey/others	Summer/Fall
Divide IF Committee into “area of concern” sub-groups	Suzanne	Fall
Expand and rebrand Interfaith Week as Presbyterian and Pluralist Week (March 17-22)	Suzanne/Joey/all	2018-19 Academic Year

Strategic Area Two: Learning

Guiding Question: How can we equip Queens' faculty and staff to ensure student capacity to engage across lines of worldview difference?

Faculty, staff, and students are generally eager to build knowledge and skills that will equip them to negotiate worldview differences with care and meaning. We will assess existing platforms for education about diverse perspectives and build in training related to interfaith competencies. Here are our initiatives related to campus-wide learning:

- Incorporate worldview pluralism in all curricula related diversity and inclusion, including both General Education and discipline-specific programs.
- Incorporate worldview pluralism in existing student programs, such as T2U, RA training, and other student leadership initiatives.
- Incorporate worldview pluralism in existing faculty training, including CAFÉ offerings and more specific cohorts, such as John Belk International Program faculty.
- Incorporate worldview pluralism in existing staff training modules.
- Incorporate worldview pluralism in programs designed to hire and retain underrepresented groups.

1: Incorporate Worldview Pluralism in Diversity-Oriented Curricula

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Audit academic programs	Chandler	Summer
Participate in Gen Ed training	Suzanne/Diane	Summer
Meet with Deans	Learning Task Force	Fall
Conduct Faculty/Staff Survey	Learning Task Force	August

Connect to Common Read Committee	Learning Task Force	Fall
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2: Incorporate Interfaith Training in Existing Student Programs

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Add module to T2U	Angie/Suzanne	Summer
Include in Deliberative Dialogue series	Darryl/Crystal	Summer
Add to Leadership Summit	Angie/Amber	Summer
Conduct training for ILC	Joey	Summer
Add to RA training	Angie/Joey/Noah/Amber	Summer
Connect with SGA	Amber/Joey	Summer

3: Incorporate Interfaith Training in Existing Faculty Programs

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Connect with new CAFÉ director	Chandler	Summer
Write for Wabash Grant to train faculty	Suzanne	Fall/Winter

Include training in Belk curricula	Angie	Fall
Compile Speaker Bureau for faculty to use	Angie/Suzanne/Diane/Joe y	2018-19 Academic Year

4: Incorporate Interfaith Training in Existing Staff Programs

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
2019 Staff Development Day	Crystal/Joey	Spring 2019
Connect to athletic director	Diane	Summer/Fall
Host session for Admissions staff	Angie/Suzanne/Joey/Diane/Judy/Talli	Summer

5: Hiring Diverse Faculty/Staff

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Coordinate with DICE	Crystal/Judy	Summer
Research Inclusive Hiring Practices		Summer
Inclusivity Statement/Religious Diversity		Summer
Research hiring/retention		Summer

Strategic Area Three: Welcome

Guiding Question: How can we welcome and actively support people from all religious and philosophical worldviews?

Research shows that active support and welcome for non-majority worldview groups pave the way for their deeper engagement in the campus community. We will pursue a range of initiatives designed to convey the welcome that coheres with our motto, “Not to be served, but to serve.” Those initiatives include the following:

- Hire an imam and/or director of Muslim Life.
- Promote and maintain a current, inclusive religious holiday calendar to support both academic and student life programming.
- Extend an explicitly pluralistic welcome at Orientation.
- Explore and implement meal plan options that reflect religious dietary restrictions.

1: Secure an Imam or Director of Muslim Life

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Seek input from Muslim students, faculty, and staff	Mohammed/Lily/Talli/Joey/Crystal	Summer
Write Job Description		Summer
Host a gathering of local Imams		Fall
Secure short-term presence for next year		

2: Ensure Current, Inclusive Religious Holiday Calendar

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Master Calendar	Crystal/Talli/Joey	Summer
Academic Calendar	Mac	Summer
Student Life Calendar	Crystal	Summer
Regular QNews notes	Darryl	2018-19 Academic Year

3: Include Explicit Welcome Throughout Orientation

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Audit all elements of Orientation (e.g., ROAR, RAs)	Amber	
Feature pluralism in DICE/Spiritual Life skit		
ROAR Leader Training	Crystal/Talli/Joey	
ROAR Parent Session	Joey/Crystal	July
Dean Downey Welcome Speech	Amber	

Interfaith Activities: Trivia/Scavenger Hunt		
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4: Offer Kosher/Halal Meal Options

Action Step	Person Accountable	Timeline
Meet with Chartwells		Summer/Fall
Research Best Practices	Talli/Noah	Summer/Fall

Where Do We Hope to Go?

A Bold Queens Vision

At Queens, we make a “Yes/And Promise” to give all students the chance to connect rich, rigorous experiences inside and outside of the classroom and to reflect deliberately on those experiences. The “Presbyterian and Pluralist” initiative extends that promise to students’ spiritual lives and worldviews through curricular and co-curricular encounters across religious or philosophical difference. As a result, the Queens community will embody the knowledge, attitudes, and relationships that make the most of our diversity while we strengthen our own religious or worldview identity.

How Will We See the Impact of this Plan?

Our Assessment Strategy

Long term:

1. We will incorporate pluralism within our SLOs for both General Education and other courses.
2. We will also include narrative assessment in academic courses.
3. We will survey incoming students in the Roadmap (required) course, as well as in the Gen Ed capstone.
4. We will conduct interviews with students, faculty, and staff—both as focus groups and individually—and track our progress.
5. The Interfaith Committee will identify one research question to guide inquiry annually and gather responses from students, faculty and staff across all initiatives. The guiding question will be supported with probing questions related to identity, learning, and welcome. A qualitative analysis software will capture and code responses.
6. We will assess the assessment, asking if the data point to some aspect of the program that might be improved.

Short term:

For the 2018-19 academic year, we will begin with a three-pronged approach:

1. We will measure academic SLOs in Gen Ed, Interfaith Studies, and two QLC courses.
2. We will craft a brief survey for incoming students whom we will follow up with in later years at Queens.
3. We will use Collaborative Inquiry to agree on one question to guide our interview conversations during the upcoming year, whether those conversations are with students, faculty or staff.