

Best Practices in Interreligious / Worldview Engagement

How does DePaul's support for interreligious/worldview engagement compare to other best practice institutions?

Methodology

- An internally created Qualtrics survey was distributed by e-mail to 20 best practice institutions identified by the Interfaith Youth Core.
- Follow-up phone interviews using an internally designed protocol were conducted by department staff with 6 schools who agreed to participate.
- An assessment graduate intern conducted frequency and cross-tabulation analyses on the survey data.
- Department staff conducted thematic analysis of the phone interview responses.

Key Findings

- 5 institutions (including DePaul), all of which are religiously affiliated, rely most heavily on full time internal staff and paid student workers.
- The 5 most commonly served religious communities via student groups among 12 best practice institutions (including DePaul) are Muslim (12), Catholic (11), Evangelical/Non-denominational Christian (11), Jewish (11) and Interfaith Leadership groups (10).
- Most institutions (including DePaul) systematically work on interfaith efforts with Religious Student Group Leaders (10), Resident Assistants (8) and Orientation/New Student Programs Leaders (6); however, other institutions, unlike DePaul, also systematically work with Multicultural/Diversity focused student group leaders (8) or and Other Registered Student Group Leaders (7).

Plan of Action

- Consider establishing recognized Hindu and Mainline Protestant student groups, reconvening the secular/humanist group, and supporting the current "Thinking Positive" group that serves "non-religious" students.
- Conduct a follow up assessment with demographically similar institutions (e.g., Catholic, urban, commuter-based) to understand the benefits and challenges of relying more heavily on staff employed by outside organizations or of asking religious communities to raise funds externally.
- Share our findings with the new Centers serving African-American, Latinx, and LGBTQ students regarding ways we can promote awareness of interreligious / worldview diversity and a faith based perspective on social justice and inclusion.

Demographics

- Out of 20 institutions invited to complete the online survey (including DePaul), 12 institutions (60%) participated.
- All 12 institutions were private; 4 (33%) were Roman Catholic, 4 (33%) were affiliated with other Christian denominations (33%) and 4 (33%) were not religiously affiliated.
- 4 institutions (33%) had undergraduate enrollments over 10,000; 4 institutions (33%) had undergraduate enrollments between 3,000 and 6,000; and 4 institutions (33%) had undergraduate enrollments of less than 3,000.

Number of Institutions With These Recognized Student Groups

