

Center for Religious Services
Meeting on
August 30, 2007

Present: Javid Djalili - Co-Chair, Steve Perry - Co-Chair, Tom Balma, Gary Brower, John Conolly, Donna Drebenstedt, Carl Johnson, Colleen McCaskey, Rachel Pinsker, Tucker Plumlee, Chana Serebryanski, Lisa Sytsma, Randy Weiss, Mark Wylie

Excused: Ron Gustman, Ken Tankersley

Following a moment of prayerful silence and a quick round of introductions, Carl was thanked for the refreshments.

The two new CRS members, Colleen and Tucker, were introduced and welcomed. They spoke briefly about their groups.

The new Chaplain, Gary Brower, was welcomed. He spoke about some of his plans and hopes for the position. He noted that the CRS website will be moved to the Chaplain's website. His e-mail address is gary.brower@du.edu, and his phone number is 3/871-4488.

Javid reported on the Forum for Religion and Society. He noted that the idea of the Forum is to increase religiosity on campus and to provide religious programming for the community.

It was announced that the Pioneer Carnival will be held Saturday, September 8th at the Richie Center. Anyone who would like a table may reserve one by going to Campus Activities at the DU home page.

The idea of holding a Religious Fair on the Bridge in September was discussed. The Fair will be held either September 18th and 19th or the following Monday/Tuesday, depending on the availability of tables. Mark noted that there are no available days when we can have the Bridge solely for the CRS.

Javid and Steve noted that the issue of campus benefits for CRS members is still under discussion. At the current time, CRS members can get a DU e-mail address, and can pay staff rates for membership at the Richie Center. The issue of whether CRS members can get access to DU's wireless network and audit classes is still under discussion.

The idea of a religious movie series was discussed. Tucker reported that the IFA has had good turnout when it has shown

religious movies followed by a discussion of the ideas in the movie.

Steve raised the idea of hosting the "Porn Debate" at DU. This is a debate between a porn star and a Christian minister that has been presented in various locations. A long lead time is necessary if we want to do it. The group agreed that the idea was worth looking into. For further information, google the "XXX Church" on the web.

Carl reported that a new branch of DUPB has been started. It's called University Programming Sponsorship (UPS), and its purpose is to help campus groups who otherwise would not have the money or manpower put on programming of campus-wide interest.

Rachel asked if the group would be interested in watching a religious movie done by a man in Ft. Collins. Interest was expressed, but no time was set.

Javid recommended CNN's series, "God's Warriors." He pointed out that Menorah Ministries appeared in an article in "5820" magazine.

Mark Wylie was elected Chair to replace Javid. (Thanks, Mark!)

Rachel announced that during Winter Quarter Hillel will do interfaith multicultural programming. The programming will conclude with a Freedom Seder.

Gary expressed his wish to do some sort of observance for the International Day of Peace on September 21st. The problem is the date conflicts with too many other campus events. Gary noted that the University would like more inter-religious events, and he plans to try to do one or two per quarter. He let the group know that his office is in Driscoll South in the same hall with Academic Advising. It is Suite 29. He has access to a conference room, if we ever need to meet there.

The next meeting will be October 18th at Hillel. (Thanks again, Rachel!) Steve Perry noted that he will need to be excused from that meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Sytsma

Center for Religious Services
Meeting on
October 18, 2007

Present: Gary Brower- Chaplain, Mark Wylie- Chair, Rachel Pinsker, Colleen McCaskey, Chana Serebryanski, Randy Weiss, Laura Compton, Ken Tankersley, Duane Troxel, Phil Day, Donna Drebenstedt, Anna Ikeda

Excused: Steve Perry, Tucker Plumlee, Lisa Sytsma, Chad Stewart, Tom Balma, Randy Weiss

Following a moment of prayerful silence, representatives from the organizations introduced themselves and described when their groups typically meet on a weekly basis. The minutes from the last meeting were approved.

Gary Brower explained guidelines concerning the use of the chapel, mentioning specifically the need to contact Tara Nicolay at 871-7477 to reserve the space even if your organization has informally held it in the past and the need to keep the chapel tidy.

The group then had an opportunity to give feedback from the religious fair. Anna noted that she would like to see better promotion and a keynote speaker or event instead of merely having tables for the different groups. Laura mentioned that the fair was a great chance for the leaders of the groups to catch up but that it was not necessarily effective for reaching students. Several people felt that while the bridge is a step up from previous locales for the fair, it is not an ideal location due to the limited range of students that use it between classes and the fact that students do not typically linger because they are headed for class. Gary questioned the group as to what they think the purpose and goal of the fair is and whether the name "fair" is appropriate. Several suggestions were offered, including making the fair an event worked on by all organizations with tables before and after, placing tables along the side of the gallery, having a speaker, having a panel instead of a speaker to keep costs down, and having a program around Valentine's Day on the topic of inter-religious relationships. Potential speakers listed for a fair would be Gary, Matthew Fox, and a contact of the Rabbi's. Mark ended the conversation by encouraging the group to keep the dialogue going through email and to keep moving ahead in creating a religious

fair that better serves the needs of our groups and the students on campus. He ended with a farewell to the bridge. The next topic of discussion was a religious movie series. Mark reminded us that we need to have the proper licensing to make it happen. Questions were posed as to whether or not licensing is necessary. Gary noted that we may need to let DUPB take on the event if they have a free movie night and brought up the fact that a public showing carries stricter regulations than simply emailing your students to come over for a movie. Mark expressed that we are not delaying unnecessarily but that we want to go through the proper channels. He then volunteered Tucker to help with the project if possible due to Tucker's potential inroads on campus. Rachel mentioned a contact who has made Judeo-Christian movies in the past and might be interested in showing something. Laura asked that we be kept posted on a list of potential dates and other information.

Mark requested that the group have a meeting that lasts longer than usual early in December. The purpose would be to discuss the identity, purpose, and future of the DU Center for Religious Services. Gary noted that much has changed in the way the group functions over the past few years due to changes in policies, lack of a building, etc., and that discussing the questions would take about three hours. The group agreed that clarification was necessary. They then decided to set a date over email for the meeting.

Rachel announced that Hillel would be sponsoring multicultural programming to take place during the Winter quarter. It will include a Freedom Seder. She invited anyone interested to join the planning committee, which would hold their first meeting on Tuesday the 23rd at 1 pm at the Hillel house.

Gary mentioned that there were still a couple of spots open to help out with Habitat for Humanity. He then announced a lunch meeting to be held from 12-1 pm on November 15th in room 1864 of the Driscoll center. The topic would be the issue of doubt in light of Mother Teresa's new book. There will also be an event on the evenings of November 5-6 devoted to different traditions of honoring ancestors, featuring a traditional Days of the Dead ceremony on the 6th. Gary then announced that January 18-25 is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and proposed a service for the various groups in order to bring them together.

The next CRS meeting was slated to be the longer December meeting.

Mark announced that Javid has a Facebook account for anyone interested in maintaining contact with him.

Respectfully submitted,
Colleen McCaskey

Center for Religious Services
Meeting on
December 6, 2007

Present: Gary Brower - Chaplain, Mark Wylie - Chair, Tom Balma, Ryan Canaday, Laura Compston, Claude d'Estree, Ron Gustman, Colleen McCaskey, Rachel Pinsker, Yossi Serebryanski, Lisa Sytsma, Randy Weiss

Following a moment of prayerful silence, the group launched into a discussion of why the CRS exists. What purpose does it serve? Two purposes emerged from the discussion. First, it serves as a means by which DU can know which religious groups are active on campus and have some means of ensuring those groups are functioning within University guidelines. Second, the CRS, through its individual members, provides a support to the religious and spiritual life of students, faculty and staff.

The members present then each explained why they, as individuals, were members of the CRS. Several reasons emerged. Almost everyone noted that they belonged to the CRS because they are required to by DU rules. But belonging brought various benefits, some of which included: the ability to be of service to students in helping them grow in their faith and integrate that faith into their daily lives; to help students from different cultures learn more of our culture, as well as helping those students settle into life in Denver; to introduce members of the DU community to the world of contemplative prayer; to create a space where students can comfortably express their religious and spiritual doubts and ask the hard questions; to bring a different point of view to the DU community; to meet people from different faiths and establish a collegial relationship in an interfaith environment.

The group then approached the question of "Who do we want to be? What should campus ministry and the CRS look like today?" A member noted that it would be good if whatever the CRS turns into it doesn't add more work to already busy ministers. One idea shared included the CRS becoming a moral and ethical compass for the University, DU's conscience, sort of an outside review board. Another idea was that the CRS should model to the University community the ability of a group to discuss difficult issues in a civil manner, and to come to differing conclusions as individuals while still maintaining mutual respect.

The meeting concluded with the formation of a subcommittee consisting of Claude, Rachel, Gary, Lisa and Ron which will meet separately to come up with a draft blueprint of what the CRS will look like in the future, as well as to draw up documents which would codify that plan. The subcommittee will remain in e-mail contact with the of the CRS, even prior to the next CRS meeting, regarding any suggestions for major changes.

The next meeting will be Tuesday, February 5, at 2:30 p.m. in the Conference Room at Hillel. (Thank you again, Rachel!)

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Sytsma

Center for Religious Services
Meeting on
February 5, 2008

Present: Gary Brower - Chaplain, Mark Wylie - Chair, Tom Balma, Ryan Canaday, Laura Compton, Anna Ikeda, Rachel Pinsker, Chad Stewart, Lisa Sytsma

Excused: Claude d'Estree, Donna Drebenstedt, Coleen McCaskey, Steve Perry, Ken Tankersly, Randy Weiss

Following a period of prayerful silence, the group approved the minutes of the December 6 meeting. Each group present provided an update of its current and upcoming campus activities. Mark passed along an update given him by Coleen.

The Charter Revision Committee reported that it is still working and plans to meet in the near future.

Gary provided some updates from the Chaplain's office, and then discussed some ideas circulating regarding redoing the inside of the chapel. He noted that it's been determined that the interior can be remodeled, though the exterior has been designated a landmark and cannot be changed. He's still investigating whether special provision needs to be made for the current furnishings. Once the way has been cleared, he has some ideas for how to get wider input into the best way to redo the interior for multiple purposes. Some group members gave input into consideration for improved usage.

The group then discussed the possibility of having a Campus Round Table, which would involve different CRS members explaining their denomination's views on particular issues of interest to students. The idea was proposed that the CRS have booths where students can ask questions and state their views. The group thought perhaps a combination of the two might be effective. There was some discussion as to whether the IFA should be involved. It was agreed that it would be good to have them involved, but not necessarily in charge.

The group decided that all CRS members would be invited to join together for dinner on Thursday, March 13th, at 5:30 p.m. at the "House of Kabob."

Mark proposed opening each meeting with sacred music provided by a different member. Gary will bring the opening sacred music to the next meeting.

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 6th from 9 - 10 a.m. at Hillel. (Thanks again, Rachel!)

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Sytsma

Center for Religious Services

Meeting on March 6, 2008

Present: Gary Brower - Chaplain; Mark Wylie - Chair; Tom Balma, Laura Compton, Phil Day, Ron Gustman, Colleen McCaskey; Rachel Pinsker; Ken Tankersly, Duane Troxel; Randy Weiss

Absent: Ryan Canaday; John Connely; Donna Drebenstedt; Claude d'Estree; Anna Ikeda; Steve Perry; Chad Steward; Lisa Sytsma

The meeting began with a short selection of klezmer music (provided by Rachel), followed by a period of silence, and the approval of the February minutes.

Gary had several things to report:

- ★ The **Charter Revision Committee** met. Main items of business were to identify the issues related to any revision. Main conclusion was that both the CRS and DU need to decide what is the purpose of the CRS. Once that is clear, all other matters will more clearly fall out. The committee suggests that the current CRS members devote some time to this at the next meeting.
- ★ On April 25th, from 8:30 to 3:30, there will be a conference at DU devoted to the topic: **“Religion and the Secular University Campus.”** More information will be available after Spring Break, but there will be a workshop (1:00 - 2:15) on “Putting the First Amendment into Practice” that will be of particular interest to CRS members (and any associated student groups).
- ★ On May 9th, DU will participate with the City of Denver and several social service agencies in **Project Homeless Connect 6**. Gary hoped that the religious communities could be involved in some significant way other than simply providing volunteers. He suggested associating foot-washing with clean-sock-giveaways. Other suggestions arising from the CRS members were spiritual counseling/prayer, literature distribution, interaction around food. Gary will take the suggestions to the PHC6 committee.
- ★ **Earth Day** is April 22nd. Gary reported that he is working with several students to put together a “smorgasbord” of activities on that afternoon that would take over the Humanities Garden (near Evans Chapel) and put participants in touch with the earth physically. Activities may include: yoga, walking meditation, a labyrinth, music in the chapel, planting (either trees or plants), making prayer flags, etc. A suggestion that came from the CRS was to have creation psalms read in the Chapel.
- ★ **Chapel Wish List** Gary mentioned again the effort that is underway to re-do the interior of Evans Chapel. He hopes that the CRS will be able to devote some time at its next meeting to brainstorm what might make the Chapel more “user-friendly” for a wide variety of groups. Movable seating seemed to be high on the list (as long as it was aesthetically in keeping with the building)!

The discussion then turned to the proposed CRS “Round-Table” event. Mark suggested that the Gallery was free either April 28th or May 1st. Then he suggested that we table (pardon the pun) the idea until the Fall—October specifically—so that we might plan it more effectively, and

do something in the context of the election. The idea was received favorably, and no CRS Round Table will happen this spring!

Mark reminded everyone of the “Fellowship Meal” at the House of Kabob on Thursday, March 13th at 5:30. He will be sending out an Evite. It was then suggested that the next such meal be held at a kosher restaurant.

Gary offered to bring “sacred music” to start the **next meeting which was decided to be on April 17th at 9:00 am.**

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Brower (secretary pro tem!)

Center for Religious Services

Meeting on April 17, 2008

Present: Gary Brower - Chaplain; Mark Wylie - Chair; Laura Compton; Colleen McCaskey; Rachel Pinsker; Chad Stewart

Absent: Tom Balma; Ryan Canaday; John Connely; Phil Day; Donna Drebenstedt; Ron Gustman; Claude d'Estree; Anna Ikeda; Steve Perry; Rabbi Yossi Serebryanski; Lisa Sytsma; Ken Tankersly; Duane Troxel; Randy Weiss

Guest: Caleb Nothwehr ("standing in" for Ken Tankersly)

The meeting began with a selection of "Miserere" by Arvo Pärt (provided by Gary), followed by a period of silence, and the approval of the February minutes.

Mark solicited volunteers for a subcommittee to work on the proposed "CRS On-Campus Round Table Event" for the fall. Committee will consist of Gary, Rachel, Colleen and Laura.

Gary had several things to report/announce:

- ★ The **Forum on Religious Inclusiveness at DU** occurred on April 4th. Conversation was good, and, it appears that some things will come out of it, e.g., a religious calendar to be hosted both on Gary's website, and another DU site; and a new, more comprehensive, religious accommodations policy.
- ★ On April 22nd, from 1:30 - 4:30: **Earth Day Celebration**. Located at the Humanities Garden, there will be a smorgasbord of events/activities for folks to engage in: prayer flag decorating, zen garden making, planting, labyrinth walking, etc.
- ★ On April 25th, from 8:30 to 3:30, there will be a conference at DU devoted to the topic: **"Religion and the Secular University Campus."** More information can be found at <http://www.religious-studies.us>. There will be a workshop (1:00 - 2:15) on "Putting the First Amendment into Practice" that will be of particular interest to CRS members (and any associated student groups).
- ★ On April 30th, from 6:30 - 9:00: **"For The Bible Tells Me So"**. The Chaplain's office, in partnership with DUPB and the Center for Multicultural Excellence, will provide a free viewing of this documentary on homosexuality and the Bible. The film will be followed by opportunities for break-out discussions with biblical scholars, LGBTIQ faculty/staff, and families/supporters of LGBTIQ folks.
- ★ May 2nd is DU's annual **Diversity Summit**. It will take place all day in Driscoll. More information and registration can be found at: <http://www.du.edu/cme/programsAndEvents/summit/index.html>.
- ★ On May 9th, DU will participate with the City of Denver and several social service agencies in **Project Homeless Connect 6**. Gary hoped that the religious communities could be involved in some significant way other than simply providing volunteers. He suggested associating foot-washing with clean-sock-giveaways. Other suggestions arising from the CRS members were spiritual counseling/prayer, literature distribution, interaction around food. Gary will take the suggestions to the PHC6 committee.

- ★ Two members of the **Interfaith Youth Core** will be on campus May 13 and 14th. The exact program has yet to be decided, but there will be an opportunity for the reps to meet with the CRS. Information will be forthcoming!

We then entered into conversation on three matters:

- “Spending the CRS’ nickel”—Noting that there was some money left in the CRS’ “account” that would ‘go away’ at the end of June 2008, Gary proposed that \$1070 be used to construct a storage cabinet at the Evans Ave. entrance to Driscoll South. This cabinet would be locked (CRS members would get a key), and would be available for storage of program materials that are used on a regular basis. The idea was met with a favorable response, and Gary said he would move ahead on that.
- CRS’ purpose (from the CRS members’ standpoint—Gary solicited from the attending members why they thought the CRS should exist (which may, or may not, stand in contrast to why the University thinks such a groups should exist). The responses were:
 - 1) “gatekeeping/accountability/official approval
 - 2) different representation of views for students asking spiritual questions
 - 3) there is value in the religious communities’ involvement and interaction
 - 4) mutual support/interaction/education/brainstorming—modeling cooperative/respectful behavior
 - 5) common/cooperative programming
 - 6) “collective bargaining” with the University
- CRS’ policies regarding (1) membership; (2) funding requests, and (3) absences. While most of these issues were to be tabled as the CRS undergoes “renovation”, there was some discussion as to whether or not there was a difference between “excused” and “unexcused” absences from the meeting. It seems that, while there is no distinction made in the Policies and Principles, there has been a *de facto* relaxation of the attendance policy. That would be revisited and made clear in any new governing document.

The next “Fellowship Meal” will be scheduled by Mark, and folks will be receive an Evite. the location will be the East Side Kosher Deli.

Colleen offered to bring “sacred music” to start the **next meeting which was decided to be on May 22nd, from 9:00 - 10:30. This will be the last regularly scheduled meeting of the year. Please make every effort to attend!**

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Brower (secretary pro tem!)

Center for Religious Services
Meeting on
May 29, 2008

Present: Gary Brower - Chaplain, Tom Balma, Phil Day, Javid Djalili (guest), Donna Drebenstedt, Ron Gustman, Rachel Pinsker, Lisa Sytsma

Following a moment of prayerful silence, the group approved the minutes of the April 17th meeting. Each representative then shared some moments of pride from the previous year, as well as summer plans and hopes and plans for the 2008 - 2009 school year.

Gary provided an update of events from April and May. He then presented the draft "University of Denver Religious Accommodation Policy" to be presented to the University administration. A major element in the policy is the ability of students, faculty and staff to take time off for important religious holidays. He noted that there is a calendar on the Chaplain's website listing every religious holiday for all religious groups; he plans to create a more specific calendar that lists only the important religious holidays.

He noted that there is now a cabinet for CRS members to use to store materials on campus. It is the blond wood cabinet as you enter Driscoll South on the ground level underneath the bridge. Gary will get everyone a key.

There was a discussion of the religious preference cards. Gary noted that they did not go out with the welcome packets last year, though he handed them out whenever possible. Instead of welcome packets, the University is sending out flash drives with the information this year. Gary didn't know if a place to indicate religious preference would be included in the flash drive. He's discussing with the University the possibility of including the question of religious affiliation on the registration forms; though how that information would be distributed remains in question.

The group then brainstormed ideas for next year. The idea of a Roundtable even was revisited. The possibility of another Religious Fair, renamed "Spiritual Fair" or "Spiritual Life Fair" to make it more appealing to students was raised. The question of reaching graduate students and University policy toward graduate student groups was discussed. The idea of having a "Religious Coming Out" event was discussed - say, a

concert or a dance - where religious students could feel free to admit their religious beliefs to their peers.

The question of communicating with students was raised. It was noted that students tend to use e-mail for study and work, and text-messaging and Face Book for fun.

The group concluded by considering the time of the next meeting. It was felt that there were not enough members present to set a time, though it was agreed it should be around the middle of August. Gary will e-mail with suggested times later in the summer.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Sytsma