

December 2014

Dear Friend of the Tufts University Chaplaincy,

As I approach a year and half serving as University Chaplain at Tufts, it is a pleasure to write and update you on some of the exciting things we have been developing in and through the University Chaplaincy in this new chapter of our vision and work. What drew me to Tufts and to this endeavor was the spirit and the passion of Tufts' students, the world-class colleagues who serve as chaplains and staff in our department, and the support we have from fellow university leaders, alumni, and friends who deeply understand the importance of spiritual and ethical life in the experience of students, faculty, and staff.

Last year, I began my work by meeting and building relationships with as many stakeholders in the University Chaplaincy as possible—our senior leadership and deans of all Tufts Schools, faculty, staff, student organization leaders and members, our chaplaincy team, local spiritual leaders, alumni, and friends. A goal in doing so was to assess the needs, potential, and opportunities for the University Chaplaincy's work across all of our campuses in the short, middle, and long terms. In addition, I worked to update and improve the University Chaplaincy's visibility and communications (especially through our new, weekly e-newsletter), to build an inclusive, collaborative, and empowered student leadership team in our Interfaith Student Council, and with them to develop new experiments in core programming.

This year, with the launch of our past Protestant and Muslim chaplains into great new positions for their careers, as well as the creation of the new positions of Program and Outreach Specialist, Humanist in Residence, Buddhist Chaplaincy Intern, and Graduate Assistant, my primary focus has been on searching for, onboarding, and supporting the new colleagues in these six positions and their programs and services. In addition, we have been working to reshape our Student Worker Program into a robust leadership development experience; we hosted the Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA) Annual Conference in October; and we have begun a strategic planning and development process for our department in keeping with the university's new T10 Strategic Plan. One very exciting program we are redeveloping is the CAFÉ (Conversation, Action, Faith, and Education) Pre-Orientation Program. We have gathered an interfaith student task force for this who will be engaging in a community organizing training process with the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts' Leadership Development Initiative this spring, in order to launch this new interfaith activism pre-orientation program for the Class of 2019 in August of 2015.

Since Tufts' Universalist founding, our university has drawn a close connection between exploring and developing one's worldview and engagement in active citizenship, global learning, and promoting the common good, and that is as important as ever today on the community, national, and international levels. It is an honor and a blessing to serve this university community in the pursuit of those ideals through our efforts in community building, leadership, providing sacred space, programming, and pastoral care. Below is a partial list of the highlights of what we have accomplished in each of these areas over the past 18 months:

#### Community Building

- Revamped the University Chaplaincy website ([chaplaincy.tufts.edu](http://chaplaincy.tufts.edu)) and three Facebook pages (University Chaplaincy, Goddard Chapel, and Interfaith Center), and created a Twitter profile (@TuftsChaplaincy); developed a Spiritual Life at Tufts website with Undergraduate Admissions
- Created a new visual identity system including an outreach brochure, staff insert card, banner, poster template, brochure template, and giveaways (pens, note pads, water bottles, and tote bags), and are building a visual archive of spiritual life on campus, including events such as Eid and Diwali
- Developed a contact management system and a weekly e-newsletter with a distribution list of 2500 people

- Created a new brochure on Avoiding High Pressure Groups, for use in presentations at International Orientation and Fletcher School Orientation, etc.
- Worked with Institutional Research to create a new electronic Spiritual Interests Survey to send to all incoming undergraduate and graduate students, launched in summer 2014; saw high response rates at 60% of incoming undergraduates and 50% of incoming graduate students; it allows students to indicate not only spiritual interests but cultural backgrounds, interest in multifaith work, interest in various types of spiritual activities, and spiritual and ethical questions and topics of interest to them
- Offered a professional development lunch session for the Division of Student Affairs
- With the Asian American Center, twice taught about religious and philosophical identity diversity and social justice in the “Moving from Diversity to Social Justice” first-year seminar

### Leadership

- Reshaped an existing staff position into the position of Program and Outreach Specialist to provide high-level programming and communications support; conducted a national search and hired Zachary Cole who holds a BA in Religious Studies and Political Science from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and a Master’s in Higher Education from Boston College, and formerly worked for the Harvard Divinity School Office of Student Life and the Humanist Community at Harvard
- Created the two-year, part-time pilot position of Humanist in Residence—the first university-sponsored Humanist chaplaincy position in the country; conducted a national search and hired Walker Bristol, Tufts Class of 2014, former Freethought Society leader, and Boston Area Rape Crisis Center counselor, who is an MDiv candidate at Harvard Divinity School; Walker has begun offering weekly caregiving sessions, monthly Humanist reflection gatherings, and special events
- Conducted a national search and hired Celene Ibrahim-Lizzio as Muslim Chaplain; Celene earned an AB from Princeton University and an MDiv from Harvard Divinity School and is completing a PhD in Islamic studies at Brandeis; she has taught at Merrimack College and Episcopal Divinity School, and now serves as faculty and Co-Director of the Center for Inter-Religious and Communal Leadership Education (CIRCLE) at Andover Newton Theological School and Hebrew College; she lectures around the world on topics related to Islam including gender and sexuality, Islam in America, etc.
- Conducted a national search and hired Chanta Bhan as Protestant Chaplain; Chanta earned an AB from Columbia University and an MTS and MDiv from Harvard Divinity School; she previously served as Protestant Chaplain at Babson College and has served as a hospice and hospital chaplain for over seven years; she is also a member of the Cambridge Human Rights Commission; coming from a Pakistani-Christian Pentecostal background and now belonging to the Episcopal Church, she brings to our team great strengths in ecumenism, multiculturalism, social justice, and pastoral care
- Created an internship with Harvard Divinity School’s Buddhist Ministry Program, and hired The Venerable Upali Sraman; Upali is a Buddhist monk from Bangladesh who has also studied and taught in Sri Lanka and is now an MDiv candidate at Harvard; this fall he began offering weekly dharma studies and meditation and he participates in other programming and offers pastoral care
- Reorganized the University Chaplaincy Student Worker Program to be a leadership development program that supports students in building their skills and contributing them in service to our mission; this program includes the new position of Graduate Assistant, for which we hired Jennifer Naumchik, F1G who is connecting us with The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy

### Sacred Spaces

- Painted the Goddard Chapel common room and offices and installed new furniture
- Upgraded office computer systems
- Created an office in the Interfaith Center and installed furniture for the Humanist in Residence and Buddhist Chaplaincy Intern
- Purchased new zafu and zabuton meditation cushions (in Tufts brown and blue) for Goddard Chapel and the Interfaith Center

### Programming

- Reorganized the Interfaith Student Council (ISC) into a peer leadership team of roughly 15 students representing each major religious and philosophical student organization on the Medford/Somerville campus; the ISC now meets weekly over dinner to dialogue, build community across traditions, and plan collaborative programming; this fall the ISC began with a retreat to hone their mission, and over the past two years they have sponsored such programming as panels on religious misunderstandings and food and faith, two open mic nights, open educational religious and philosophical services and gatherings, and a Difficult Dialogues Retreat with Seeds of Peace attended by some 50 students
- Sponsored a recital by renowned pianist and Fletcher School student Pauline Yang, F2G
- With Music Director Janet Hunt, began a popular tradition of Halloween Midnight Organ Recitals
- Sponsored Humanist author Chris Stedman for a lecture about his book *Faithist*
- With the LGBT Center, sponsored the “We Have Faith” LGBTQ Faith Leaders Speak Out photo exhibition, and culminated the exhibition with a Transgender Spiritual Leaders Panel
- Continued sponsoring successful Annual Holiday Concerts, featuring the Tufts Concert Choir
- Continued sponsoring ecumenical Christmas, Lent, and Easter celebrations, and with Catholic Chaplain Lynn Cooper revived the Commencement Mass for Graduates, Alumni, and Families
- With the Africana Center, sponsored the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations 2014—a Campus Community Celebration entitled “The Road to Freedom and Justice” honoring King and Nelson Mandela, and a performance “Martin and Music” featuring Gerald Rivers and Charles Holt
- With Jewish Chaplain Rabbi Jeffrey Summit and Tufts Hillel, sponsored a 4-part program from the Ask Big Questions series, offered a d’var Torah on interfaith engagement, presented to the Hillel Student Board and Board of Directors, moderated a Tufts Against Genocide Panel of Genocide Survivors
- Sponsored a Bach’s Birthday Organ Recital in conjunction with a course on Western Music
- Sponsored the annual Russell Lecture and Dinner 2014 with Catholic author James Carroll
- Updated and led the annual multifaith Baccalaureate Service at Commencement
- Supported summer Ramadan programming including nightly Tarawih prayers and weekly iftar dinners, and sponsored an Interfaith Iftar during the Israel-Gaza conflict in summer 2014
- Sponsored an 8-week program “Restoring Dignity in the Israel-Palestine Conversation,” co-led by Rebecca Polivy from Encounter and Yousef Bashir from Gaza and Brandeis, to provide a “third space” to cultivate respectful relationships, dialogue, and learning about Israel-Palestine
- Sponsored the Association for College and University Religious Affairs Annual Conference with 85 chaplains from across the country, October 26-28, 2014, with a keynote by Pew Research Center
- With the Latino Center, as part of ACURA, sponsored a lecture and concert by Harvard Professor of Latin American Religions David Carrasco and Guy Mendilow Ensemble’s Ladino Music Project
- Sponsored leadership trainings for student organization leaders—Anti-Racism Training with Boston Mobilization and Community Organizing Training with the Leadership Development Initiative
- Registered three students to attend the Coming Together Interfaith Leaders Conference at Yale

#### Pastoral Care

- Assisted in the recognition process for and supported student organizations—CampusHOPE (Seventh Day Adventist), Baha’i Students Association, Buddhist Sangha, Latter-day Saints Students Association, Sikh Association of Students, Non-denominational Christian Fellowship (evangelical), and C. Stacey Woods Programming Board (parachurch-related, evangelical)
- Supported Hindu Students Council in moving weekly puja services to Goddard Chapel
- Sponsored Boston Marathon Tragedy Anniversary Vigils (Medford/Somerville and Boston campuses)
- Participated in the Tufts Medical and Dental Schools’ Anatomical Gift Memorial Service
- Sponsored a Campus Gathering and an Interfaith Vigil in Response to the Events in Ferguson, MO
- Provided invocations and remarks at Matriculation and Commencements, National Coming Out Day, Veterans’ Day, Public and Environmental Safety Awards Ceremony, Shimenawa Ceremony, etc.
- Hosted celebrations of life and weddings for students, alumni, faculty, staff, and neighbors
- University Chaplain was invited to serve on the AS&E Committee on Student Life, AS&E Equal Educational Opportunities Committee, AS&E Diversity Council, President’s Sexual Misconduct Task

- Force, and interviews for the Sexual Misconduct Education Specialist and Chief Diversity Officer
- University Chaplain was elected President of the National Association of College and University Chaplains and appointed an Affiliate Minister in the Memorial Church at Harvard University and a member of the Harvard University Board of Religious, Spiritual, and Ethical Life
- Our Chaplaincy Coordinator Linda Karpowich assisted with many of these projects, and helped us to resume the tradition of ringing the Goddard Chapel bells for Tufts Football home victories

In addition to the highlights above, our chaplains and staff continued to support some 18 religious and philosophical student organizations, some 32 religious and philosophical gatherings and services that take place on campus each week during term, and countless one-time events, including retreats, holidays, pilgrimages, concerts, panels, speakers, films, service projects, fellowship opportunities, etc.

Looking ahead to 2015, as mentioned above, we will continue engaging in a strategic planning process, including stakeholders from among the students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of all Tufts Schools. We will explore the kinds of advisory bodies and committees that would support us in carrying forward our mission, and seek to strengthen relationships with alumni and friends to encourage their involvement. We also plan to continue building strong relationships with the excellent spiritual and interfaith resources in the Boston and Northeast area, and we intend to build an awareness of those resources into the CAFÉ Pre-Orientation Program that our interfaith student task force is developing this spring.

Looking ahead to spring programs, we have begun working with the Africana Center to plan the MLK Celebrations for 2015, which will include for the first time an Interfaith Service Day on Monday, January 19, as well as the annual Campus Community Celebration on Thursday, January 22 at 6 pm in Goddard Chapel. We are now finalizing plans for the 2015 Russell Lecture on Spiritual Life, which will address religion and race relations in the United States, and we will be working with the senior class to plan the annual multifaith Baccalaureate Service. All are most welcome to attend the MLK Campus Community Celebration, the Russell Lecture on Spiritual Life, and the Baccalaureate Service. Please stay up to date by subscribing to receive our weekly e-newsletter through the University Chaplaincy homepage at [chaplaincy.tufts.edu](http://chaplaincy.tufts.edu), or by liking us on Facebook (Tufts University Chaplaincy) or following us on Twitter (@TuftsChaplaincy).

As we look into the future, the needs, potential, and opportunities for the University Chaplaincy are strong, and of course they exceed the resources we have available to us at this time. We are looking into such matters as the need for more prayer space for Muslim students, hopes to increase our resources related to Africana Christian traditions, the desire on the part of our Hindu students for professional staff support, renovations to Goddard Chapel that are needed for air conditioning, increasing storage, and providing adequate restrooms and flexible gathering space, etc. Programmatically, we would like to deepen our offerings in the arts and music, offer more interfaith study-travel opportunities, and build a program through which our department can become a resource for training students, faculty, and staff in the multipartial dialogue facilitation so needed in today's world. As part of our long-term plan, we would like to move toward establishing endowed funds to secure our spiritual life personnel positions and programs long into the future. If any of these highlights or projects moves you to include us in your charitable giving, please contact me at any time or visit our website at [chaplaincy.tufts.edu/giving](http://chaplaincy.tufts.edu/giving).

We appreciate this opportunity to be in touch and hope that you will reach out to us with the joys, concerns, and hopes in your mind and heart as we enter into the New Year. Please keep in touch and always feel free to call, write, or come by to visit us. We wish you and yours the very best in this season and throughout 2015.

Warmest regards,



The Reverend Greg McGonigle  
University Chaplain