



Building Bridges, Deepening Faith: Interfaith Leadership on Christian Campuses

CCCUC + IFYC CAMPUS GRANTS Academic Year 2020-2021

Request for Proposals

Growing diversity in the United States is challenging our country's cohesion. Tribalism has reached dangerous levels in the U.S., which many believe threatens the very fabric of our civil society. Hate crimes against religious groups are rising, and Americans have entrenched themselves into communities that often hold one another in mutual distrust and derision. When diversity is left unengaged it can contribute to and exacerbate tribalism; nevertheless, we know that diversity can also be a source of strength when engaged productively.¹ We are at a critical crossroad in our national history: will we continue to divide further, or will we choose to come together to build a stronger society? Graduates of CCCUC colleges have the opportunity to view differences as a barrier - or as an opportunity to build bridges and forge a stronger America.

Many CCCUC schools are considering ways to equip their students to engage religious difference productively while simultaneously maintaining and deepening their Christian faith commitments. A recent groundbreaking longitudinal study of 20,000+ college students across the country showed that students who took part in activities that intentionally engaged religious diversity simultaneously deepened their commitment to their own religious identity.² Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC) works with students, educators, and other campus partners to create precisely these kinds of educational experiences, identifying shared values across religious communities and equipping college graduates to build bridges across religious lines. Together, CCCUC and IFYC are committed to elevating the importance of civic religious pluralism among Evangelical communities and planting the seed for a commitment to interfaith learning and engagement among the CCCUC network.

Through generous support from the Arthur Vining Davis Foundations, CCCUC and IFYC are offering grants in the amount of \$10,000 to support individual CCCUC campuses as they implement initiatives to advance civic religious pluralism.

Grant applications will be accepted starting February 12, 2020 with a deadline of April 10, 2020. Any and all CCCUC schools in the United States are eligible to apply for a Campus Grant. Grants are

¹ "E Pluribus Unum: Diversity and Community in the Twenty-First Century" by Robert Putnam, *Journal of College and Character*, Volume 12, No. 1, February 2011.

² "Best Practices for Interfaith Learning and Development in the First Year of College." Rockenbach, A. N., Mayhew, M. J., Correia-Harker, B. P., Dahl, L., Morin, S., & Associates. (2018). Chicago, IL: Interfaith Youth Core.

https://www.ifyc.org/sites/default/files/resources/IDEALS_20182.pdf



primarily intended to support activities on campuses new to the field of interfaith engagement, though innovative approaches to deepening existing work will also be considered. Grants will be awarded in May 2020. Grant funds must be spent between August 1st, 2020 and June 30th, 2021.

Please contact Megan Johnson megan@ifyc.org with any questions pertaining to grant submission.

Civic Religious Pluralism

Guiding this partnership is a foundational belief that engaging with difference allows for a deepening of one's own tradition, in all of its distinctiveness, without the need to minimize differences. Individual religious identities can and should serve as a bridge, not a barrier, to working together with others from diverse backgrounds toward the common good. This foundational principle is rooted in a deep commitment to the importance of religion and religious identity as an essential element of a strong democratic society.

Based on these commitments, IFYC advances the idea of *civic religious pluralism* which preserves and uplifts the distinctiveness of individual religious communities while affirming the possibility of mutually enriching relationships across difference that are anchored in a commitment to the common good. CCCU shares this commitment, building on its advocacy for the right of each of its member institutions to practice its religious beliefs while also participating fully in civic life and public discourse. Civic religious pluralism underscores CCCU's existing commitments to the importance of distinctive religious identity while also contributing to a thriving civic space.

Diversity can cause division in a community that drives it toward conflict, or it can be engaged to build a spirit of respect and cooperation. IFYC and CCCU believe that through respect for religious and nonreligious identities, mutually inspiring relationships, and common action for the common good, this diversity can be a source of strength and inspiration while also deepening one's own faith commitments.³

Grant Project Parameters

CCCU schools are invited to apply for funding to support activities that will advance civic religious pluralism on their campuses in academic year 2020-2021.

Civic religious pluralism is defined as: 1) respect for diverse religious traditions; 2) mutually inspiring relationships across religious lines; and 3) common action for the common good. How a campus advances civic religious pluralism will vary depending on its unique environment. CCCU schools may consider proposing projects in one of the three following areas or propose a project that advances civic religious pluralism through a different means.

³ For a more detailed definition, please see <https://www.ifyc.org/interfaith>.

Curricular Initiatives

Campuses may choose to develop new courses, add modules to existing courses, launch campus-wide reading programs, adjust learning outcomes of relevant courses, and/or lay the groundwork for course sequences, all with an eye to increasing students' religious literacy and fostering students' leadership around civic religious pluralism. In order to prepare faculty to teach the new content, many campuses may also support faculty development for teaching interfaith studies. Key grant activities might include:

- A religious literacy seminar series with book reading and discussion.
- A campus-wide professional development day with follow-up workshops.
- A series of workshops with faculty from diverse disciplines to explore incorporating interfaith engagement and learning into coursework.
- Developing an Interfaith Leadership certificate program.

Co-curricular programs

Grant funds could be used for a variety of co-curricular interventions designed to raise awareness of the importance of civic religious pluralism, offer students opportunities to engage with traditions different from their own and deepen their own faith commitment, equip staff to lead interfaith engagement in co-curricular programs, or to enhance student interfaith leadership development. Key grant activities might include:

- Support for student organizations or student leadership programs to incorporate interfaith leadership development into their year-long activities.
- A series of workshops for interested staff who work in residence life, student ministry, chapel, experiential learning, or other offices or departments that support students outside of the classroom, to explore opportunities to incorporate interfaith learning into their activities on campus.
- A series of interfaith community service and dialogue opportunities for the campus community.
- Incorporating interfaith learning into existing campus-wide programs (e.g. a program for RAs to use in residence halls or Orientation Leaders to include in Welcome Week).

Campus Visioning and Planning

As CCCU campuses explore their goals and positioning regarding the prosocial aspects of civic religious pluralism, careful planning with campus stakeholders will be required. Many colleges may want to gather members of their campus communities to consider how productive engagement across religious lines connects to and grows out of existing missions and strategic plans, and the ways in which these efforts work to establish a strong, shared foundation to build civic religious pluralism on their campuses and within their communities. Key grant activities might include:

- Creating a Civic Religious Pluralism Planning Team to draft a multi-year strategic plan for interfaith learning and leadership development on campus.
- Crafting a vision statement that articulates the campus's unique commitment to engaging religious diversity and organizing public forums for presenting and discussing the statement with the campus community.
- Site visits to other campuses to learn from their approach to civic religious pluralism and how they implement interfaith leadership activities.

IFYC has developed several free online resources to assist campuses in their curricular and co-curricular interfaith engagement. We recommend drawing from these existing resources, as relevant, as campuses craft their proposals and implement their projects.

- The [BRIDGE curriculum](#) is a series of modules that can be used in faculty and staff interfaith capacity building.
- The [Blended Learning curriculum](#) can be used in the classroom or in co-curricular educational spaces.
- The [Assessment Toolkit](#) offers resources for interfaith goal-setting and assessment.
- Based on over a decade of partnerships with colleges and universities across the U.S., IFYC has identified [9 Leadership Practices for Interfaith Excellence in Higher Education](#). These practices collectively offer a framework through which campus stakeholders can unite diverse communities and positively engage religious identity and diversity on campus.

Application Process Overview and Guidelines

To be considered for a Campus Innovation Grant, applicants must submit an online application. Applicants can expect to enter demographic information, a brief abstract of their proposed initiative, a description of the outcomes and narrative detail of their proposed initiative, a project timeline, a list of the project implementation team members, and a proposed budget. A link to the online application and a pdf of the application questions can be found at www.ifyc.org/grants/cccu.

Applicants are required to complete the [Campus Interfaith Inventory](#) to reflect on where they have existing assets for interfaith cooperation on campus and where there are areas for growth. We encourage proposals that creatively leverage existing assets to address real needs and advance interfaith cooperation into new areas of campus. Request your institution's unique Inventory link [here](#).

In the selection process, CCCU and IFYC will give preference to campuses that:

- propose innovative ways for the campus to engage with and commit to civic religious pluralism within their unique context.
- are new to interfaith engagement.

- involve a variety of stakeholders from diverse areas across campus in their grant efforts, including both campus professionals and student leaders.
- propose projects that are focused and achievable within one academic year.
- have proposals that include concrete mechanisms to ensure impact beyond the grant term.
- have a clear plan for assessing the outcomes of their project.

Grant funds should be used for project expenses, which can include but are not limited to the following:

- Program supplies (food, books, printing costs, room rentals, speaker fees, etc.).
- Travel expenses if your project includes site visits within your community or to other institutions.
- Stipends (e.g. for student interns or staff/faculty project leads).

Funds should not be used for the following:

- Indirect or overhead costs. The entirety of the grant funds should go directly to project expenses.
- Costs associated with bringing IFYC staff to campus.
- Furniture or equipment as a standalone project, unless these are incorporated into a larger programmatic strategy.

Application Deadline and Funding Timeline

Applications will be available on February 12, 2020. Applications are due on April 10, 2020. Grantees will be notified of their award in May 2020. Grant funds will go to support initiatives on campus from August 1st, 2020 – June 30th, 2021.

Grant Participation Requirements

Campuses wishing to participate in the grant program are committing to join a 10-month program (August 2020-May 2021) with the following required components:

1. Send two campus leaders to attend a kick-off convening for all grantees in Chicago, IL, August 5-6, 2020 to build leadership capacity, explore assets and challenges for advancing civic religious pluralism in an Evangelical setting, and strengthen relationships with one another (all expenses covered by CCCU/IFYC; no costs for this convening need come from campus program grant budgets).
2. Execute a compelling initiative that advances civic religious pluralism on campus (August 2020-June 2021).
3. Participate in remote peer learning opportunities to share learnings and enhance program impact among the grantee cohort.
4. Submit mid-year (December 2020) and end-of-year (May 2021) reports detailing the progress and impact of their initiatives.



Ongoing Support and Training

Throughout the grant period, grantees will have continued access to support including peer-to-peer coaching, virtual CCCU and IFYC staff support, written resources, and in some cases, in-person consultation. We encourage grantee campuses to attend the CCCU Multiacademic Conference in February 2021 as an opportunity to convene and share learnings in person.

Questions

IFYC staff members are available for consultation and feedback during the development of your application. Please contact Megan Johnson at megan@ifyc.org with any questions pertaining to your grant submission.

Sample Initiatives

IFYC has previously awarded small grants to American colleges and universities to support civic religious pluralism efforts. Here is a sample of past grant-funded activities on CCCU campuses:

Baylor University (Waco, TX)

Faculty at Baylor University utilized grant dollars to bring interfaith engagement into the classroom in 2017-18. By building academic partnerships with the departments of Education, Spiritual Life, Social Work, Interdisciplinary Core and others, faculty offered two courses, "Interfaith Leadership," and "Religion and Public Life." These courses formed the backbone of an interdisciplinary "Civic and Interfaith Studies" curriculum at Baylor, which was the first of its kind on campus. Included in the curriculum was an interfaith community engagement project that allowed students to apply what they were learning through partnerships with social service agencies and diverse religious communities in the area. Pre and post surveys showed that, among other outcomes, students grew in their ability to share their own story of faith with others and to listen to and appreciate stories of faith from those different from them. Faculty built upon the success of the pilot curriculum to continue a Civic and Interfaith Studies course sequence.

Bethel University (St. Paul, MN)

Bethel's grant project focused on introducing the concepts of civic religious pluralism to the campus community and equipping staff and faculty to engage the topic in their work with students. Project leaders hosted an "Interfaith 101" summer workshop for over 50 staff in Student Life, Campus Ministry, and other areas. Due to the positive feedback and high level of interest they received, organizers were asked to continue to offer the session in future years. Faculty also facilitated several reading group discussions throughout the year for faculty and staff examining Bethel faculty Marion Larson and Sara Shady's book, *From Bubble to Bridge: Educating Christians for a Multi-faith World*. Lastly, project leaders hosted a two-day workshop in which 20 faculty and staff developed interfaith components for courses and extracurricular programs. Faculty and staff in the following areas are now implementing



interfaith leadership initiatives: Religious Studies, Career Services, Modern World Languages, Social Work, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Admissions, First Year Real Experience, University Library, Student Life, Journalism, Education and Art. As a result of these efforts, participants gained an in-depth understanding of interfaith concepts and are better equipped to articulate to others why civic religious pluralism is connected to the Bethel ethos as well as to the Christian commitment to love of neighbor.

Calvin University (Grand Rapids, MI)

In 2019-20, students and advisors at Calvin University formed the Calvin Interfaith Alliance, a new student organization that creates and leads interfaith activities for students on campus. The organization was started in order to bring students together to engage with and learn from one another. Among other events, Calvin Interfaith Alliance student leaders worked closely with faculty and staff in the Service-Learning Center to organize an event titled, "Food & Faith" to explore the similarities and differences of food practices across religious traditions and educate students about diverse religious rituals. The event prompted rich theological discussion among participants that went beyond a cursory look at food practices. In the spring, student facilitators from the Calvin Interfaith Alliance will lead a 3-week unit on Scriptural Reasoning as part of an existing course titled, "Muslim Neighbors and Christian Hospitality" in addition to other interfaith events for the community.

North Park University (Chicago, IL)

Staff and student leaders at North Park University recognized a need to reduce stigmas around mental health within diverse student groups on campus. Their grant project focused on the development of a new Health and Wellness Program that would accommodate the unique perspectives and needs of students from diverse religious backgrounds. North Park staff and faculty consulted with Swedish Covenant Hospital to provide training and education on how to approach health and wellness in a way that resonates with diverse communities. Stipends were given to diverse cultural and religious student groups on campus to support activities they led to increase campus-community dialogue on health and wellness from the perspective of multiple religious traditions.

Project Partners

Council for Christian Colleges & Universities

The [Council for Christian Colleges & Universities](#) (CCCU) is a higher education association of more than 180 Christian institutions around the world. With campuses across the globe, including more than 150 in the U.S. and Canada and more than 30 from an additional 18 countries, CCCU institutions are accredited, comprehensive colleges and universities whose missions are Christ-centered and rooted in the historic Christian faith. Most also have curricula rooted in the arts and sciences. The CCCU's mission is to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth.



Interfaith Youth Core

[Interfaith Youth Core](#) (IFYC), a Chicago-based non-profit organization, supports American colleges and universities as they seek to engage religious diversity and promote civic religious pluralism as a campus-wide priority. IFYC defines civic religious pluralism as respect for religious, spiritual, and secular identity, relationships across diverse religious communities, and common action for the common good. IFYC supports campuses across the country through training, grants, resources and research as they build bridges and advance interfaith learning in their unique environments.