

***THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE AT SYRACUSE  
UNIVERSITY***

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and recognized student religious and spiritual life groups function within the Ethical Framework for Religious and Spiritual Life at Syracuse University and operate in alignment with the mission, vision, and values of Hendricks Chapel.

Each group's status at Syracuse University requires adherence to the specified conduct norms indicated in this document.

Violations of this Framework, or any other Syracuse University policies, place the person or group at risk of loss of status, as determined by the Dean of Hendricks Chapel. It is expected that all participants within the religious and spiritual life of the University will identify with the broad aspirations and spirit articulated below.

The Framework has been reviewed and endorsed by the Chaplains, Staff, and Dean of Hendricks Chapel, and stands in congruence with other University statements of mission, policy, and procedure. The ethical obligations and conduct norms set forth in this framework apply in addition to other University policies like the Code of Ethical Conduct and Code of Student Conduct.

**PROVISIONS OF THE ETHICAL FRAMEWORK**

**Maintaining Commitment to Faith and to the University**

When promoting their group to the campus community, all chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and staff must clearly identify themselves as an affiliated group of Hendricks Chapel.

When acting in the name of Hendricks Chapel, groups must do so in an inclusive manner from the acknowledged foundation of the religious or spiritual life group they represent.

Those professionals or volunteers who gain affiliation with Hendricks Chapel, whether as chaplains or religious or spiritual life group advisors, are encouraged to speak openly about their particular religious or spiritual life commitment under appropriate circumstances and to work actively to build their particular community on campus. Expressing doctrines, voicing opinions, and carrying on religious practice is considered an appropriate part of a group's behavior. It is understood that chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their affiliated staff and volunteers, will represent specific religious and spiritual life traditions and that their primary commitment is to serve the welfare of their own campus group, even while they are called upon simultaneously to serve the welfare of the entire Syracuse University community.

**Balancing Particularity and Inclusiveness**

Religious and Spiritual life groups must be open to general participation by any interested student. They may, however, specify preferences or requirements for holding a leadership position and/or participating in a particular religious ritual.

### **Following University Policies**

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and staff must ensure that their groups follow the Syracuse University Code of Student Conduct and any other applicable University policies.

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, students, and staff should oversee that their groups follow the Syracuse University Code of Student Conduct. Religious and spiritual life groups are expected to comply with all University policies, including but not limited to those that pertain to hazing, harassment, academic integrity, sexual and relationship violence, registration of student groups, use of campus facilities, and conduct of students. Other University policies are set forth at [policies.syr.edu](http://policies.syr.edu).

### **Promoting Religious Freedom**

A student must be able to freely participate in or leave a religious or spiritual life group without being subject to undue pressure or procedures that compromise the student's autonomy.

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, staff, and their student groups will support religious freedom on campus, enabling students to believe, or not, any particular teaching or idea. Syracuse University religious and spiritual life groups should strive for a campus climate that honors the individual autonomy of each person, encourages open exploration, stimulates intellectual as well as spiritual life inquiry, and supports the University's devotion to truthfulness and the search for knowledge.

### **Respecting Religious and Spiritual Life History and Ancestral Connection**

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, staff, and student groups should support the University's goal of making every student feel as much at home as possible, a goal which requires respect for the religious and spiritual life convictions and /or ancestral identification of each student.

The University supports the presence of a wide range of religious and spiritual life groups. Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their staff should inform themselves of the varieties of religious expression available on campus and within central New York, to help students learn about the religious setting of their heritage. Of course, students are free to explore religious or spiritual life options or embrace a religious tradition other than that in which they were raised, and chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors will generously facilitate their process of exploration.

### **Upholding Religious Diversity and Civil Discourse**

In public statements and activities, chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, staff, and student groups must avoid denigrating or de-legitimizing any religious group that has gained recognition at Syracuse University.

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, staff, and student groups should cultivate respect for, and understanding of, the range of world religions, spiritual life perspectives, and secular thought. Such respect will be strengthened by open dialogue and discussion among two or more groups. Proselytizing by undermining another religious or spiritual life community is considered a violation of good practice, and even sincere conversation should not be sought through deprecating other groups.

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their student groups should share their perspectives and commitments with others in a manner that avoids harassing, demeaning, or disregarding the integrity and freedom of other persons in making their own decisions in matters of religious faith and identity. They should avoid language that foments hatred or prejudice, or which otherwise undermines the community of respect and trust which is essential to free academic discourse and to a democratic society.

### **Respecting the University's Academic Mission**

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life groups advisors, and staff must cultivate an environment that puts a student's academic life and success first, avoiding actions that place undue financial pressure or conflicting time commitments on students.

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their staff are expected to respect the goals and purposes of the University, avoiding programs or efforts that obstruct the achievement of those goals, especially regarding students. They should responsibly support the University's pursuit of the educational goals which form its foundation.

The overall programming calendar pursued by a religious or spiritual life group advisor, or followed by their student group, should not be so demanding as to make it difficult for students who are committed members of the group to meet the academic obligations that constitute the primary purpose for University enrollment. While attending to potential conflict of interest with the University on this overall level, chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their staff are also encouraged to inquire as to the academic status of, and current demands on, individual students involved with groups.

### **Acknowledging Students' Relationships with their Families**

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and their staff are encouraged to be sensitive to the relationship between students and their families, and to be as open as possible with concerned parents while respecting the confidentiality of communication and individual autonomy of students as adults.

In cases of uncertainty or conflict, the chaplain or religious or spiritual life group advisor will confer with the Dean of Hendricks Chapel.

### **Publicizing with Integrity**

In publicizing their group and its programs, chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, staff, and students must create and distribute materials that clearly convey their affiliation with Hendricks Chapel (either with text or use of the Chapel logo), who they are, the focus of their group or program, and any connections to off-campus organizations.

The name “Hendricks Chapel” or “Syracuse University” may not be used publicly without the knowledge and consent of the Dean. Groups will comply with all University branding guidelines for student organizations.

### **Honoring Confidentiality**

Chaplains, religious and spiritual life group advisors, and staff, whether clergy or lay, function as religious and spiritual life professionals and therefore must honor the confidentiality of students and others who they guide and counsel.

Such confidentiality governs unless specifically waived or as covered under specific legal provisions. Likewise, student religious groups should be educated to maintain an atmosphere where the personal communication encouraged by a religious setting is respected as confidential.

### **Dealing with Disagreements**

When chaplains, religious or spiritual life group advisors find themselves in disagreement with the University administration, fellow chaplains, or religious or spiritual life group advisors, they should resolve the disagreement within Hendricks Chapel.

In cases of conflict among chaplains, or religious groups or spiritual life group advisors, those involved will try to work with one another to achieve a resolution. If a solution is not reached at this level, those involved should seek counsel with the Dean of Hendricks Chapel, who may bring the matter to a meeting of the Hendricks Chapel Advisory Board, or other University personnel.

### **Conduct and Status**

The Dean of Hendricks Chapel has discretion to dismiss Chaplains and advisors from their service to the University at any time for any reason. Violations of the Ethical Framework, or other University policies may result in immediate dismissal, though the Dean will attempt to implement progressive disciplinary or corrective measures where possible.

The Dean can also revoke official recognition of religious and spiritual life groups, or dismiss group leaders from groups, if they violate this Framework or other University policies.

Conduct that damages the image and reputation of Syracuse University, Hendricks Chapel, or Sending Organization will result in immediate dismissal.

Any chaplain or religious group advisor who can no longer fulfill the University Code of Ethical Conduct or the Ethical Framework must immediately communicate a written resignation to the Dean of Hendricks Chapel.

Any chaplain or religious advisor who has been dismissed or who resigns will immediately lose their Hendricks Chapel privileges and must immediately return any University property to the Dean of Hendricks Chapel.

\*\* UPDATED: APRIL 12, 2022 \*\*