Cooperation in a Pluralistic World: A National Study of College Students’ Engagement with Religious Diversity

The Interfaith Diversity Experiences and Attitudes Longitudinal Survey

IDEALS
Welcome & Introductions

IFYC's Partnership in Research

Cooperation in a Pluralistic World Study Design

Campus Religious & Spiritual Climate Survey Overview & Findings

Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey
Interfaith Triangle

Positive Behaviors/Relationships

Appreciative Knowledge

The Interfaith Triangle

Positive Attitudes

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IFYC Campus Partnerships

- **400** Campuses actively involved
- **300** Campus ILI delegations
- **350** President’s Challenge Reports
- **25** In-depth engagement partnerships
2013 administration (after multiple years of interfaith work)
- Compared favorably regarding Muslim acceptance and appreciative attitudes toward Muslims
- Ran focus groups to learn more about Muslim students’ experiences

2011 administration (when initiating more interfaith work)
- Found: non religious students did not experience climate as favorably as majority students
- Campus–wide conversation about inclusion; led to recognition of secular student organization
What Are the Study’s Guiding Questions?

• How do college students perceive and experience religious and spiritual diversity on campus?

• What campus experiences and educational practices foster behaviors and attitudes that are essential for interfaith cooperation in a pluralistic society?
CRSCS Pilot
- Campus Religious & Spiritual Climate Survey Pilot
- 2008–2011 (4 institutions)

CRSCS Full-Scale
- Campus Religious & Spiritual Climate Survey Full-Scale
- 2011–2014 (52 institutions)

IDEALS
- Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey
- 2014–2019 (120 institutions)
The “E”

Behavioral Dimension: How are students engaged?
E: Formal Interfaith Activities

Select Items

- Shared spiritual practice with people of other worldviews, such as participating in a joint prayer service
- Worked together with students from other worldviews on a service project
- Participated in/attended a service for a worldview that is not your own
- Participated in an on-campus interfaith dialogue
O: Pluralism Orientation

Select Items

- World religions share many common values.
- It’s important to understand the differences between world religions.
- I respect people who have worldviews that differ from my own.
- It is possible to have strong relationships with those of religiously diverse backgrounds and still strongly believe in my own worldview.
Measuring Interfaith Influences?

Inputs

Participation in Interfaith Activities

Pluralism Orientation
The Campus Religious & Spiritual Climate Survey (CRSCS)

Overview of Findings
Who is in the sample?

- 52 institutions of diverse types
- 13,776 students
  - 56% Worldview Majority
  - 26% Non-Religious
  - 12% Worldview Minority
  - 6% “Another Worldview”
Most students engage religiously diverse peers, but there is great potential to increase involvement in formal interfaith activities.
High Levels of Informal Interfaith Engagement

- Socialized with someone of a different worldview (97%)
- Studied with someone of a different worldview (93%)
- Worked on an academic project with someone of a different worldview (92%)
- Dined with someone of a different worldview (92%)
- Discussed religious or spiritual topics with other students outside of class (88%)
- Had conversations with students from diverse worldviews about shared values (81%)
What About Formal Interfaith Engagement?

Top 4 ways students are participating in interfaith work:

1. Working with others on service projects (67%)
2. Engaging in interfaith action and dialogue (58%)
3. Attending a religious service for a worldview other than own (53%)
4. Utilizing a multifaith space (51%)
### Who Is Engaged in Interfaith?

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<th>Hi</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worldview Majority</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worldview Minority</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Religious</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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Formal interfaith engagement shows promise in terms of shaping students’ attitudes and values
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Correlation with Pluralism Orientation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participated in multifaith celebration</td>
<td>0.19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worked together with students from other worldviews on a service project</td>
<td>0.18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in/attended a service for a worldview that is not your own</td>
<td>0.15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in interfaith action (e.g., on critical issues like hunger or poverty)</td>
<td>0.14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in interfaith dialogue</td>
<td>0.13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shared spiritual practice with people of other worldviews (e.g., joint prayer service)</td>
<td>0.12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in interfaith prayer vigil</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in worldview debate</td>
<td>0.10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participated in interfaith activity</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in campus interfaith group</td>
<td>0.08</td>
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Case Study:
Augustana College, Illinois
Kristen Glass Perez, Chaplain
Interfaith Diversity Experiences & Attitudes Longitudinal Survey (IDEALS)
Functional ontology shapes understanding of existent constructs related to interfaith engagement and outcomes related to interfaith learning.

- “Interfaith” experiences and learning outcomes can be measured.
  - Classroom and non-classroom-based practices can be assessed based on their respective efficacy in measuring interfaith learning.

This assumption has been, is currently, and will continue to be argued across any academic conference of any academic discipline until the end of time.
Co-construction as cornerstone for study’s approach, design, and execution

- Practice to Empiricism
- Empiricism to Practice
- And so on…
The Interfaith Triangle & Self-Authored Worldview

Appreciative Knowledge
I talked and listened to people with points of view different than my own before committing to my worldview.
I have thoughtfully considered other religious and spiritual perspectives before committing to my current worldview.

Attitudes Towards Others
My worldview commitment is based on integrating religious and spiritual perspectives different than my own. I integrated multiple points of view into my existing worldview before committing to it.
I have had to reconcile competing religious and spiritual perspectives before committing to my current worldview.

Positive Relationships
My worldview has been enhanced through constructive interactions with people of other worldviews. I talked and listened to people with points of view different than my own before committing to my worldview.
Understanding Interfaith Influence

Participation in Interfaith Activities

**PRETEST**
- Religious Literacy
- Appreciative Attitudes
- Self-authored Worldview Commitment
- Pluralistic Orientation

**POSTTEST**
- Religious Literacy
- Appreciative Attitudes
- Self-authored Worldview Commitment
- Pluralistic Orientation
How Will IDEALS Move Us Forward?

Research Questions

◦ What is the interfaith potential in this generation of college students?
  • Appreciative attitudes, knowledge, and behaviors

◦ How do students’ interfaith attitudes and behaviors change during college?

◦ Which educational interventions have the greatest impact on outcomes?
  • Are there differences by institutional type?
  • Are there differences by student characteristics?
IDEALS Research Design

- Fall 2015: 1st Year Students “I”
- Spring 2016: 1st Year Follow-Up “E” and “O”
- Spring 2019: 4th Year Follow-Up “E” and “O”

15 Case Studies
Helix Return: Empiricism

• Our Time Is Now
  • Federal initiatives (e.g., White House Initiative on Interfaith Dialogue)
  • Global conflict
  • Economic crisis

• Research Need
  • Outcomes
  • Between-group sensitivities
  • Distinctive campus environments
Helix Return: Practice

- Assessment needs
  - Accreditation
  - Strategic planning
  - Outcome to practice improvement
  - Minimal resources for religious/worldview offices
  - Longitudinal designs
  - Benchmarking ability
  - Assessment planning
  - Survey fatigue
  - Student interest
  - Cost considerations
How to Get Involved

• Chat with us after this presentation
• Visit www.ifyc.org/ideals and complete the interest form to:
  • Receive detailed participation expectations
  • Connect with appropriate stakeholders to ensure a successful administration
  • Explore how this survey might enhance other assessment work on your campus
  • Discuss next steps and registration