University Policies and Procedures

06-07.00 – POLICY ON CAMPUS MINISTRIES

I. **Policy Statement:** Towson University encourages a broad range of religious traditions represented by campus Ministers. Individually and collectively, these Ministers offer many services and programs that include worship, counseling, personal growth and empowerment, and opportunities for service involvement. Campus Ministers serve as faculty advisors to religious student organizations and as key participants regarding religious and spiritual wellness for the University campus community.

II. **Reason for Policy:** To establish a procedure for campus Ministers to be assigned to the University, in accordance with USM Policy VI-7.00.

III. **Definitions:**

A. CMC means Campus Ministry Center.

B. ICMA means the Interfaith Campus Ministers Association.

C. Minister means a representative of a religious organization who has been recognized by the University in accordance with this policy.

D. RSCC means the Religious Staff Coordinating Council.

E. University means Towson University.

F. USM means the University System of Maryland.

IV. **Responsible Executive and Office:**

Responsible Executive: Vice President of Student Affairs

Responsible Office: Center for Student Diversity

V. **Entities Affected by this Policy:** Representatives of religious organizations serving the University’s campus community.
VI. Procedures:

A. Official Structure. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity serves as the primary liaison between campus Ministers and the University. The University recognizes ministries on a two-tier system:

1. The RSCC is composed of Ministers who have been recognized in accordance with this policy, and the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity. Membership in this council enables Ministers to receive University privileges, as established by the University in its sole discretion, that may include: University identification cards, University email addresses, parking passes at the lowest faculty/staff rate, authority to reserve space on campus for student activities, and others as determined by the Vice President of Student Affairs.

2. The ICMA, a subcommittee of the RSCC whose membership is determined by the RSCC, is made up of members of the RSCC who advise and liaise with the University. ICMA members promote a broader dialogue and connection to faith and spirituality on campus. They are the University’s primary contact with the faith-based community and carry the status of Campus Chaplains. The ICMA advises the University on policies and/or procedures for interacting with the various religious communities on campus, promotes the University at official events, and works to promote the spiritual and physical well-being of the entire campus community. ICMA members may be invited to attend Division of Student Affairs Staff Development activities.

B. Appointment of Ministers. The nature of religious activity of Ministers is determined by their respective denominations. Ministers are assigned to the campus by outside religious organizations, which remove or reassign their representatives at will. The sponsoring religious organization shall notify the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity in writing when a minister has been appointed to serve at the University; the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity will notify the Chair of the RSCC as a courtesy. The assigned minister must be professionally qualified to represent the denomination, and shall be provided with official credentials to be presented to the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity, or a designated representative, when a new appointment is made. The minister’s credentials must be acceptable to the University insofar as extending campus privileges and the use of University facilities are concerned.

Any religious organization wishing to establish a new ministry at the University must apply to do so in writing to the Assistant Vice President
of Student Affairs for Diversity, who may, in his/her discretion, consult informally with the Chair of RSCC. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity shall review the application and gather any additional information necessary to determine:

1. whether the national religious organization is willing and able to financially support the ministry; and

2. whether there is a demand among the members of the campus community for such services.

In addition, all representatives of the religious organization working on campus must sign and agree to abide by the RSCC Code of Ethics and the RSCC Covenant, as those may be amended from time to time, before assuming duties at the University. Copies of the current versions of the RSCC Code of Ethics and the RSCC Covenant are attached hereto as Exhibit A and Exhibit B, respectively. The RSCC Code of Ethics and the RSCC Covenant may be amended by the RSCC, with the approval of the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity.

Once a Minister has met the qualifications described above, he or she will be a probationary (non-voting) member of the RSCC for the University’s next (fall or spring) academic semester. The Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity will notify the Chair of RSCC when he/she has determined that a Minister has met the qualifications described above. If he/she complies with the RSCC Code of Ethics and/or the RSCC Covenant during the probationary semester, he/she will receive full (voting) membership in the RSCC.

The membership of an RSCC member who is found to have violated the RSCC Code of Ethics or RSCC Covenant will immediately be terminated. Termination of RSCC membership also means that the University will automatically revoke its recognition of the Minister whose membership is terminated. The chairperson of the RSCC will notify any member whose membership has been terminated of the termination. Any privileges granted by the University, as described in section VI.A.1, will be revoked immediately upon termination of the membership.

A Minister whose membership in the RSCC is terminated may appeal the termination of RSCC membership by filing a written request for an appeal with the chair of the RSCC within five working days after his/her membership is terminated. The chairperson of the RSCC will schedule a meeting with himself/herself, the Minister, and the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity. After the meeting, the chairperson of the RSCC and the Assistant Vice President of Student
Affairs for Diversity will make a recommendation to the Vice President of Student Affairs, whose decision will be final.

When a Minister severs his/her relationship with the University, it is the responsibility of the sponsoring religious organization to notify the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity and the Chair of the RSCC.

C. Conduct of Ministers. When accepted officially by the RSCC and confirmed by the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity, campus Ministers become part of the University community, and persons from whom the University expects reasonable conduct. Should lapses occur, the University asserts the right to consult with the RSCC to investigate and determine appropriate action and/or to request the governing body of the Minister’s religious organization to consider its complaint and to take such action as may be appropriate.

Should a disagreement arise between the University and an individual Minister regarding the Minister’s conduct that may be in violation of University or USM policies or procedures, the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs shall:

1. Notify the Minister, and the proper representative of the religious organization, of the disagreement in writing.

2. Should the disagreement not be resolved, a meeting among all concerned parties should be arranged within a reasonable period of time to resolve the matter(s).

3. If the issues are not resolved by discussion, the University reserves the right to withdraw its recognition and any campus privileges extended to the Minister and shall notify the Minister’s sponsoring religious organization of its intention.

D. Campus Ministry Center. The University provides the CMC for use by all the RSCC member groups at the University. The CMC is managed by the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity. The RSCC coordinates room reservations and policies for the CMC, with the approval of the Assistant Vice President of Student Affairs for Diversity.

Related Policies: None.

Approval Date: 08/10/2011

Effective Date: 08/26/2011
Approved by: President’s Council 08/10/2011
CODE OF ETHICS
Religious Staff Coordinating Council (RSCC) at Towson University

In our relationship with students:
   a. We accept the TU Code of Conduct and affirm the integrity, judgment and contribution of the individual student.

   b. We affirm that any coercive efforts or attempts to manipulate that restrict a student’s freedom are unethical.

   c. We will give priority to the academic responsibilities of students in planning and promoting our student activities.

   d. When promoting our ministry, we will clearly identify ourselves and our affiliation. All advertising will clearly identify our sponsoring religious organization.

In our relationship with the University:
   a. We view ourselves as cooperative members of the university community and will act as a part of it and encourage our students to do so as well.

   b. When exercising our freedom to question or dispute programs or policies, we will do so in a peaceful and professional manner.

   c. We will encourage our religious student organizations to know and follow procedures and policies as stated in the TU Code of Conduct.

In our relationship with each other:
   a. We affirm the value of a collegial relationship between RSCC members.

   b. The RSCC will assume the sincerity and good will of its members. In case of reported misunderstandings, we will assume proper motives and investigate with such expectations. We will grant one another the benefit of the doubt.

   c. We will create dialogue among RSCC members in order to increase understanding and mutual support of common mission to serve the university community.

   d. We will seek to represent the beliefs of other faiths accurately.

   e. Overall, we will seek cooperation whenever possible. We will respect the agenda of each campus ministry. We will treat one another as we would like to be treated.

I……………………………………. hereby agree to abide by the RSCC Code of Ethics as stated above.

Sign……………………………………………………….   Date………………………………….
The Towson University
Religious Staff Coordinating Council
Covenant

PREAMBLE

It is the right of any religious organization to send a representative (ordained or unordained) to work on the campus of Towson University (TU), and we respect the right of that representative to minister on this campus. However, we, the members of the TU Religious Staff Coordinating Council (RSCC), deem it necessary to make this covenant with any religious staff at TU who wishes to participate as a member of the TU RSCC.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the TU RSCC is to gather into a cohesive, communicating, professional body all those who minister in the name of religion at TU and who wish to participate in a council as colleagues. We organize to better serve the campus community as well as the religious institutions we serve as an official link with TU.

BENEFITS

Membership carries benefits in the personal, professional, and logistical areas. If one chooses not to participate, he/she will not receive the benefits of membership. Benefits include the chance to meet and interact with other religious staff and to be officially recognized by the University through the Division of Student Affairs. Other benefits include parking privileges, TU One card, reservation of facilities and other university privileges to better function on campus.

MEMBERSHIP

We are guests of the University, our relationship with the University guided by the agreement of August, 1993. We are accountable to each other and need to hold each other accountable. We are accountable to our appointing body.

1. Application for membership must:
   A. be made in writing to the current chair expressing the desire to be a member;
   B. provide address, phone number and social security number of the applicant;
   C. be accompanied by a letter of appointment from an appointing body to whom the applicant is accountable. Lacking the former, a letter of request from a recognized SGA affiliated religious group may be considered. Lacking either of the above, in rare circumstances, the RSCC may consider accepting someone for membership.
   D. include a pledge to abide by the RSCC’s Code of Ethics and Covenant;
E. promise to keep the chair informed of any changes in the individual’s mailing address or phone number; and,
F. be submitted to the chair one month in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting so that this information may be disseminated to the RSCC members.
G. Any of the above requirements may be waived by a 2/3rds majority of those present provided there is a quorum.

2. The chair will verify items in the application by the next meeting. The chair then presents the applicant to the RSCC for voting into probationary membership at the next regular meeting. The applicant must be present to dialogue with the membership and will leave prior to the vote. The chair will advise the applicant of the decision immediately after the vote. If accepted he/she can immediately return to the meeting. Probationary membership is granted by a positive vote of the majority of those present, provided there is a quorum.

3. After one full year of competent and consistent service to the campus community, full membership will be considered by another vote.

4. Two tiers of membership exist in RSCC:
   A. Full membership:
      1) Must attend meetings
      2) Has seat, voice, and vote
   B. Associate membership:
      1) Need not attend meetings after the initial meeting
      2) Has seat and voice but not vote

5. There must be at least one full member for each individual ministry. All others associated with that ministry may be associate members. The full member is responsible for communicating information to the associate member(s) of the ministry and will be held accountable for the associate member’s behavior according to the Code of Ethics and the Covenant.

6. Absence policy:
   A. For full members, 3 consecutive excused absences will be the maximum allowed.
   B. When 3 consecutive meetings are missed, then disciplinary action up to and including removal and requiring resubmission for membership will be decided upon by the membership.

7. Full membership may be maintained by:
   A. attendance at the meetings;
   B. assuming an appropriate share of the responsibilities; and
   C. abiding by the Code of Ethics and Covenant.
8. Forfeiture of membership comes with failing to comply with any of the above. If the membership does not accept the given explanation for this failure, the member will be suspended. The chair will notify the member of the suspension in writing. If no written appeal is made or if the membership denies the appeal, the individual is removed from membership.

9. If someone, who has an organizational colleague already a member of the RSCC, applies for membership between meeting times, she/he will be admitted to provisional membership until the next regularly scheduled meeting.

10. The Assistant Vice President of Student Involvement & Transitions will be an ex officio, non-voting member of the RSCC.

MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

1. Three regular meetings a year will be scheduled - one near the beginning of each semester and one near the end of the spring semester. Special meetings may be called by the chair with one week's notice given to the membership. Only those items mentions as part of the official agenda can be acted upon at a special meeting.

2. A chair and a secretary will be elected at the meeting near the end of the spring semester to serve through the same meeting of the next school year. The goal is to rotate these responsibilities among the membership over time.

3. No official business shall be voted upon without the presence of a quorum. A quorum shall be more than fifty (50) per cent of the voting membership determined at the last regular meeting.

OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. General Privileges - All RSCC members are entitled to a parking privileges, TU One card, facility reservations and e-mail when available. The secretary will notify the Assistant Vice President of Student Involvement & Transitions of the current membership after each regular meeting. The Assistant Vice President will then inform the appropriate offices of the current membership.

2. University Listings - At the regular meeting near the beginning of the spring semester, the secretary, or someone appointed by him/her, will insure that the student religious organizations, RSCC membership, and local worship center listings are updated for publication in the various TU informational publications.

3. Special Events - When the RSCC agrees to sponsor an event, costs and responsibilities will be shared by the membership, decided upon the voting membership.
4. **Campus Ministry Center (CMC)** - The bulletin board calendar will serve as a reservation place for the CMC on a first come basis. If schedules conflict, the members involved should first try to resolve the conflict. Appeals may be made to the RSCC Chair. Office needs, including telephone calling, storage and counseling sessions are other main uses of the CMC. It sometimes serves as a lounge for students wishing to study and/or visit. Keeping these competing needs in mind, all members are requested to view the CMC as belonging to all RSCC members and to use immense consideration and compassion in its usage. The Bulletin Board in the main hallway is available for advertising special events.

5. **Religious Interest Cards** - At the regular meeting near the end of the spring semester, the responsibility will be assigned for the printing of the Religious Interest Cards. Any denominations or religious faiths represented by the membership may be listed and the student religious organizations served by the membership may be listed if:
   A. the members pay their group's appropriate equal share of the cost;
   B. the members pledge to share the card's information with all religious groups checked or circled on the card;
   C. the members pledge only to contact students indicating interest in their denomination/sponsoring religious body or student organization; and,
   D. the members share responsibility for distributing, collecting, and sorting of the cards.

The chair and secretary will supervise the above process.

**CHANGES**

Changes to this covenant may be made at any regularly scheduled meeting of the RSCC by the vote of a two/thirds of the membership present.

revised 5/1/01