Dear Friends,

As the wind howls and the snow flies it is hard to think spring but the Spring 2015 Semester is in full swing here at the University at Albany. We are excited to welcome in a new year and look forward to a semester filled with opportunities for interfaith experiences, partnerships and enrichment with members of the UAlbany community and the community at large. Here in the U.S. and around the world we are continually reminded by events of the importance of our mission to enhance religious/spiritual understanding, education, acceptance and tolerance.

This semester, a diverse schedule of programs is planned beginning with a lecture by nationally known author and speaker Donna Frietas, Ph.D. author of “Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance and Religion on America’s College Campuses”. Other highlights include, Shari Parslow who will share her knowledge and experience as a practicing Shaman and Dr. Paul Uppal, from Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple, who will speak about the Sikh faith tradition; both of these speakers are part of our Religion 101 Series. University at Albany Associate Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, Karin Reinhold, will share her personal spiritual journey as part of our ongoing Faith Journey Program. In addition, we will be hosting a program on spiritual healing, taking a field trip to St. George Greek Orthodox Church in Schenectady, NY, and providing a gathering spot for the Schenectady-to-Albany leg of the nationwide NPT Peace Walk led by Buddhist nun Jun-san from the Grafton Peace Pagoda. As always, student leaders and members of the UAlbany Interfaith Coalition have played an integral role in the planning and implementing of programs. All programs are free and open to the public and we encourage you to attend. A full calendar of events is located inside.

Recently, I received a phone call from someone that receives our newsletter and had received our annual appeal letter. He was inquiring about our relationship to the University at Albany because he didn’t understand why we were asking the public for financial assistance to cover building maintenance and repairs for a university building.

Continued on page 2...
I am thankful this gentleman took the time to contact me so I could clarify our relationship to the University. The Interfaith Center is a 501 (c) (3) that is owned and operated by the Albany Collegiate Interfaith Center, not the University at Albany. We are supported primarily by our three founding faith groups, Capital Area Council of Churches, Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY, and the Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany and an annual contribution from the University at Albany. The balance of our budget is comprised of donations from our board members, friends such as you, and small grants. Our 2015 Annual Budget is $66,750. These funds cover maintenance and upkeep of the building and property, programming expenses and staff compensation. The Interfaith Center was built in 1986 and many of its systems, equipment, appliances, and furnishings are original and in need of replacement and/or repairs. As we prepare for new programs and events, we continue to face financial challenges to sustain programs, staff, building and grounds. We are committed to the work we are doing and seek your support to secure a sustainable future. We welcome your thoughts, suggestions and donations.

Lastly, I want to remind you that we are here for you and we would love to hear from you! Why not plan to attend an event, stop by for a visit or a tour, borrow a book from our interfaith library or use our meditation room. Don’t forget to “LIKE” us on Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/TheInterfaithCenter](https://www.facebook.com/TheInterfaithCenter) and check out our website at [www.albanyinterfaithcenter.org](http://www.albanyinterfaithcenter.org)

Warm Regards,
Donna Crisafulli

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**Board Transitions**

In 2014, the Board of Directors thanked several board members for their reliable commitment, unwavering support, and hard work on behalf of the Interfaith Center as these members’ terms of service ended:

- Michael Atwell, Capital Area Council of Churches
- Christine Bouchard, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany
- Richard Gascoyne, Capital Area Council of Churches
- Ira Rubtchinsky, Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY
- Mary Anne Young, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany

At the start of 2015, the Board of Directors welcomed several new people who will continue working to enrich the community through the Interfaith Center:

- Barry Davis, Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY
- Olivia Fagan, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany
- Deborah Beth Medows, Jewish Federation of Northeastern NY
- Barbara Murin, Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany
Interfaith Center Spring Calendar of Events

All programs are at the Interfaith Center unless otherwise noted.

FEBRUARY
2, 9, 16, 23: Meditation Mondays 6-7pm
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

11: Sexuality Week Speaker 7-9pm
Donna Freitas, Ph.D. to discuss her book Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance and Religion on America’s College Campuses. This special lecture will take place in the Campus Center Ballroom.

MARCH
2, 9, 16, 23, 30: Meditation Mondays 6-7pm
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

4: Religion 101-Shamanism 7-8:30pm
Learn about Shamanism from Shari Parslow, a shamanic practitioner. Light refreshments will be served.

25: Faith Journey Program 6:30-8:30pm
Join us for kosher and non-kosher dinner and then hear Karin Reinhold, Associate Professor of Mathematics and Statistics, share her personal spiritual journey.

28: Interfaith Spring Celebration Potluck 5-8pm
Organized by the UA Interfaith Coalition, this is an opportunity for students from different faiths and spiritual traditions to get together socially. Learn more on our website.

APRIL
6, 13, 20, 27: Meditation Mondays 6-7pm
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

1: Religion 101-Sikh Faith Tradition 7-8:30pm
Learn about the Sikh faith tradition from Dr. Paul Uppal from Guru Nanak Darbar Sikh Temple. Light refreshments will be served.

15: Field Trip to Saint George Greek Orthodox Church 5-8:30pm
Join us as we head to Schenectady to visit Saint George Greek Orthodox Church. We will depart from the Interfaith Center at 5pm and return to campus around 8:30pm.

20: Interfaith Blessing for Peace Program and Reception 4-6:30pm
The Interfaith Center will be the end point for participants walking the Schenectady to Albany leg of the 2015 NPT (Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty) Cross Country Peace Walk led by Buddhist nun, Jun-san Yasuda of the Grafton Peace Pagoda. A reception will be held to welcome walkers when they arrive. For more information about participating in the walk or attending the reception, please check out our website or call the Interfaith Center.

29: Spiritual Healing Program 7-8:30pm
Reiki Master Derek Healey and others will discuss spiritual healing practices.

MAY
4, 11: Meditation Mondays 6-7pm
Learn and practice meditation in the company of other people and under the guidance of a trained facilitator.

6: Interfaith Cookout 5-8pm
Come enjoy free food at our closing cookout! Lots to eat (with Kosher and Halal options), games to play, and people to meet!

13: Feeding the Interfaith Spirit 6-8pm
Save the date! Please join us for our second annual spring fundraiser to help support programmatic costs at the Interfaith Center.

Stay up to date with all of the activities at the Interfaith Center by visiting www.albanyinterfaithcenter.org or following us on Facebook.
Featured Speaker
Sexuality Week 2015
Donna Freitas, PhD
Author of Sex and the Soul: Juggling Sexuality, Spirituality, Romance and Religion on America's College Campuses

Donna Freitas discussed the findings of her research about students’ attitudes regarding hookup culture, sex, romance, and dating on college campuses today, and how a pervasive interest in spirituality fits into this mix. She talked about the powerful—though often private—yearnings among men and women to find love during college despite the dominance of hookup culture, and the particular ways the religious/spiritual tradition can respond to this yearning, as well as the desire for something other than hooking up during the college experience.

Her visit to campus was made possible by The Interfaith Center with support from the Division of Student Success, University Auxiliary Services, Middle Earth and the Department of Residential Life. To learn more about Dr. Freitas, please visit www.donnafreitas.com.

Interfaith Center Experiences
By: Chelsea Baldwin (Class of 2015)
Chelsea is past President of the UAlbany Interfaith Coalition.

There is one place, in my opinion, that anyone at UA can go for comfort and guidance. That special place is the Interfaith Center. Without the Interfaith Center and the staff, my experience at UAlbany would never have been what it was—a wonderful one. When times were tough, when my class schedule and work load, not to mention personal life, were too much to handle, I walked down to the Interfaith Center to ease my mind and bring peace to my hectic life.

When you walk through those doors, the most warm-hearted person you’ll probably ever meet will greet you. Donna Crisafulli, and of course the other staff, are different than most I’ve ever met. They listen with open ears and hearts, and offer not only guidance but peace of mind that you’re not alone. That’s not just it either—the cozy library of different religious texts gave me spiritual guidance when I needed it the most. It helped me to understand that life is a journey and understanding differences in each of us is a wonderful thing—and no one should be judged based upon their beliefs. Events like Religion 101 and Spiritual Journey opened my mind to so many cultures and faiths that exist in this world. I learned that ignorance is not bliss, knowledge is bliss. Being open and kind to everyone no matter the path they are taking; that is what I learned and will cherish for the rest of my life.

Interfaith Partners
The Interfaith Center works closely with the following groups. Please reach out to them if you would like to learn more!

Cornerstone Protestant Campus Ministry
Rev. Sandy J. Damhof, Campus Minister
(518) 489-8573 x 26
sdamhof@albany.edu
www.ualbanycornerstone.org

Muslim Student Association
Khalafalla Osman, President
kosman@albany.edu
https://sites.google.com/site/ualbanymsa/
facebook.com/ualbanymsa

Newman Catholic Association
Catherine Reid
(518) 489-8573 x 22
creid@albany.edu
www.albanynewman.com

UAlbany Hillel
Rabbi Nomi Manon, Executive Director
(518) 489-8573 x 24
nmanon@albany.edu
www.ualbanyhillel.org

UAlbany Interfaith Coalition
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Derek Healey, President
interfaithsg@gmail.com
https://myinvolvement.org/organization/ISG

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Meet Our Board

Amina Mahmood, PhD  Vice-President
NYS Licensed Psychologist,
Health Psychology Associates, PLLC in Albany, New York
UAlbany Alum 2001 (BA)

I first heard about the Interfaith Center when it was known as “Chapel House,” back in the days when I was an undergraduate student at UAlbany, and a member of the Muslim Student Association (MSA). At that time we assumed that the Chapel House was a space for Christian students and not a resource available to students of other faiths. My next experience with Chapel House was when I returned to UAlbany as a staff member in 2011. I was invited to present at a program called “Faith Journeys” and this marked the beginning of an active relationship with the Interfaith Center at UAlbany as a board member. I learned that the Interfaith Center is a resource available to all UAlbany students, and to the neighboring community.

Today, the Interfaith Center is in an exciting evolutionary and growth cycle. In the past few years the name has changed from ‘Chapel House’ to ”The Interfaith Center,” seen the beginning of an Interfaith Student Group, and increased diversity of the board members. All of these changes are aligned with the mission of the organization to increase interfaith understanding and collaboration. I have been pleased to see the utilization of the space by various student groups, and have witnessed interactions between students, staff, faculty, and community members of different faith and spiritual backgrounds in a safe and welcoming space. Although no longer a staff member at UAlbany, I continue to support the Interfaith Center as an alum, and community member. It is an organization whose services and programs are much needed in a world where too often we are polarized and unable to see the similarities between our rich and varied spiritual and religious beliefs and traditions.

Opportunities for Support

Giving Form

The Interfaith Center • 1400 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York 12222

Yes, I would like to donate to The Interfaith Center. My donation and selected method of support is checked below. I understand that The Interfaith Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and that my contribution is tax deductible.

- General Donation for Organization Support and Programs
- Specific Project or Program __________________________
- Building Fund

Name ____________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State ____________________________
ZIP ________________

Enclosed please find my support in the amount of $ _____________
- Check (Please make payable to ACIC)
- Credit Card Online (Go to our website and find the Just Give button.)

UAlbany Fund

Make your donation to the Interfaith Center through the UAlbany Fund!

ONLINE: Select “other” and specify “The Interfaith Center” in the comment box
OVER THE PHONE: Tell them you want it designated to The Interfaith Center
BY CHECK: Put “The Interfaith Center in the memo line
UNIVERSITY EMPLOYEE? Give through payroll deduction
University at Albany
1400 Washington Avenue
Albany, New York 12222

“Chapel House” alumni stopped by the Interfaith Center during Homecoming Weekend and shared their memories. Clare and Alan Minarcik were married at Chapel House by Frank Snow on May 14, 1966. October 2014

North Star Peace Walk
September 2014

Blood Drive Sponsored by Muslims for Life
September 2014

Fun Fall Photos!

Members of the Ukraine Delegation visited the Interfaith Center as part of the US Congressional Program of Citizen Exchange and Diplomacy entitled OPEN WORLD. Organized by the International Center of the Capital Region. November 2014

InSights