Provision of Spiritual and Pastoral Care at the University of Tasmania Policy

Responsible Officer
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education)

Approved by
Vice-Chancellor

Approved and commenced
December, 2014

Review by
December, 2015

Relevant Legislation, Ordinance, Rule and/or Governance Level
Marriage Act 1961
Privacy Act 2000
Telecommunications Act

Responsible Organisational Unit
Student Centre

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1 Objective

The objective(s) of this Policy is/are to:

- provide spiritual support and pastoral care to students and staff on its campuses as needed;
- formalise the access to university campuses for nominated Representative Chaplains from established religious groups within the local community.

2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- religious communities seeking to nominated a member of that community to provide spiritual support and pastoral care to students and staff at the University of Tasmania;
- students
- academic and professional staff
- Head – University Careers, Disability and Counselling
- Executive Director Commercial Services

3 Policy Provisions

3.1 General Principles

The University of Tasmania:

- is a community based on the principles of equal opportunity seeking to offer spiritual support and pastoral care by recognised and qualified individuals to students and staff as needed regardless of religion, race, gender or ethnicity.
- recognises and respects the spiritual diversity and experiences of its community members and acknowledges that pastoral care is an important aspect in the lives of a proportion of students and staff.
- is a secular organisation and its campuses are located in growing multicultural multi faith communities where spiritual and pastoral support is available for students and staff.
- promotes interfaith dialogue and interaction as essential to an agenda of internationalisation and development of respect and tolerance.

The University does not appoint official religious representatives of any specific religion or faith to the University, but draws on the religious communities in the cities and towns where campuses are located.

In some cases, there may be very limited local support for a particular religious group which is well represented on campus. For example University Muslim students may not have access to a mosque or suitable prayer space near their campus. In this case, it is appropriate for the University to consider providing essential facilities so that religious practices can be followed.
Wherever possible, the use of local community facilities will be encouraged. It is recognised, however, that Representative Chaplains may not always have access to such facilities and in order to promote accessibility for the University community, certain facilities may be required on campus. This may include appropriate meeting spaces that promote a multi faith environment.

The University recognises that there are times when spiritual support and pastoral care does have a specific role in the life of the University community (in a crisis e.g. the death of a student or staff member and the holding of a memorial service). In this instance, granting of casual access to space for groups or individuals for worship, prayer and support may be appropriate.

3.2 Nomination of Recognised Representatives

Nominated Representative Chaplains are responsible for delivering spiritual support and pastoral care to members of its community who seek it.

Interested members of recognised religious communities seeking to nominate to provide spiritual support and pastoral care on a University campus should submit a written statement to the Vice- Chancellor, through the Head, University Careers, Disability and Counselling that includes:

- a letter of endorsement from a Minister, Pastor, Senior Cleric or other accountable religious person/organisation registered under section 26 of the Commonwealth Marriages Act;
- formal evidence of long term commitment and growth within a religious community;
- a current National Police Certificate;
- evidence of relevant qualifications (e.g. possession of appropriate degree, award or completion of relevant and accredited study/pastoral care program);
- documented evidence of Pastoral experience (e.g. already holding a Pastoral position within a religious community would be advantageous);
- demonstrated ability to relate within a higher education environment, including an understanding of contemporary issues affecting students from diverse backgrounds of life experience, ethnicity and age;
- demonstrated interpersonal skills and relevant counselling skills with the ability to refer to relevant professional services within the University as needed and to maintain confidentiality as outlined by University policy;
- a commitment to fulfilling the role as described and compliance with University Policies, Procedures and Guidelines.

Nominations will be considered on the basis of the above criteria and the need and interest demonstrated by University community members. Once granted, nominations will be reviewed annually by the Head, University Careers, Disability and Counselling.

Notwithstanding the above, nominations can be considered by the Vice-Chancellor on a case by case basis.

The Vice-Chancellor will respond in writing to requests relating to nominations for Representative Chaplains, setting out:

- a decision whether or not to allow the request; and
• the reasons for any such decision.

The Vice-Chancellor’s decision in the matter will be final.

3.3 University Expectations

There is a diversity of faith and life experience within the University community and nominated Representative Chaplains will be required to relate to others within this context and by so doing contribute to the sense of community and enrichment of life within the University.

It is expected that Representative Chaplains when on campus will:

• respect the privacy of all students and staff. The role of the Representative Chaplain is to support and nurture the spiritual needs of students and staff, providing opportunities for reflection for those who seek it. Seeking to actively convert others to a particular belief, faith or religion (proselytise) is not considered appropriate.
• participate in an appropriate manner in debate on contemporary issues while helping to promote understanding between the diverse groups represented within the University community;
• be aware of and comply with all relevant University Policies, Procedures and Guidelines;
• work collegially with and respect other Representative Chaplains from across all faith traditions;
• work cooperatively with other University staff in the delivery of services to students and staff;
• participate in meetings as requested by the University; and
• identify as a visiting Representative Chaplain (from the nominated religious community);
• work towards the objectives as stated above.

3.4 Access to Space

The University recognises a need where possible to provide access to space for appropriate religious and pastoral activities. There is a range of factors that will influence the need for space and these will be considered on an ongoing basis as required. It is acknowledged that recognised space on campus encourages awareness of services and promotes accessibility for these services to the University community. Where possible, space will promote a multi faith acceptance which is non-denominational, harmonious and equitable. Where access to space is provided, it will be in a manner that is sensitive to cultural and practical issues. Responsibility for space allocation rests with the Director, Commercial Services and Development.

3.5 Facilities

Access to library and information technology facilities may be provided consistent with University policies on access by non-staff, the availability of resources and the requirements of the Telecommunications Act. Dependent upon the availability of
resources, casual office/room space may be available for the use of Representative Chaplains for student appointments. Responsibility for space and facility allocation rests with the Director, Commercial Services and Development.

Through its website the Student Centre maintains contact information for Representative Chaplains. Representative Chaplains will be expected to assist the Student Centre with regular updates of relevant contact details.

3.6 University Associate Status

Approved Representative Chaplains, if not already staff or students, may be accorded the status of University Associate for the purposes of access to email and information technology facilities. This will be administered through Human Resources and Information Technology Resources.

4 Responsibilities

The Student Centre is responsible for the receipt, checking and recommendations for Representative Chaplain requests which will then be forwarded to the Vice-Chancellor’s Office for final approval or decline. The Student Centre will assist with the orientation of new Representative Chaplains and provide some input to the direction of services as appropriate.

Commercial Services and Development is responsible for the allocation and up keep of space and facilities as used in support of religious and spiritual activities on campus.

Information Technology Resources is responsible for the provision of IT facilities as required.

Human Resources is responsible for managing the status of Representative Chaplains working in a voluntary capacity on campus.

Representative Chaplains are responsible for working with key University staff as required, to follow the agreements of this policy and to work with each other in developing an interfaith community which is respectful and engaged.

5 Definitions and Acronyms

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term/Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral care</td>
<td>Spiritual and emotional support within a religious framework and context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nominated Representative Chaplain</td>
<td>Under this policy, is a representative member of an established and recognised religious community authorised by the Vice-Chancellor to provide pastoral/spiritual care and religious support to University of Tasmania campuses.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Established</td>
<td>Established and recognised communities of faith in the wider</td>
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Religious Communities

6 Supporting Documentation

- Nomination form for Pastoral Carers

7 Versioning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Former Version(s)</th>
<th>Version 1 – Provision of Spiritual and Pastoral Care at UTAS Policy; approved March, 2009, reviewed December, 2014.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Current Version</td>
<td>Version 2 – Provision of Spiritual and Pastoral Care at the University of Tasmania Policy; approved December, 2014.</td>
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