

**Cornell College**  
**Departmental / Program Assessment Plan & Progress Report**

Department / Program:	Chaplain & Spiritual Life
Person Submitting this Form:	Catherine Quehl-Engel
Date:	November 16, 2011 (revised from 6/11)

Brief Overview of the Assessment Project:

Chaplain & Spiritual Life departmental goals listed at the end of this document,<sup>1</sup> along with the student learning outcomes being assessed, connect with Cornell College Learning Objectives #3 (inter-cultural knowledge), #4 (integration and transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to the next), and #5 (being cognizant of responsibility for individual, civic, and social choices).

This department's Program Assessment Plan focuses upon these particular student learning outcomes:

- Students have explored, expanded, and/or clarified understanding of their spiritual lives. The term 'spiritual lives' as well as 'spirituality'\* are defined here as:
  - One's quest for meaning, purpose, and direction;
  - a contemplative attitude, and/or disposition to a life of depth;
  - self-transcendence on an individual and collective level which may include an awareness of interconnection/oneness between self, others, and world.

For theists, all of these aspects of spirituality integrate/connect with the Life Force Energy or Ground of Being which numerous people refer to as God.

\* This definition integrates descriptions offered by Teasdale, Chickering, Dalton, and Stamm in Encouraging Authenticity & Spirituality in Higher Education (2006, Jossey-Bass), as well as academic study of spirituality scholar, Sandra Schneiders, in The Blackwell Companion to Christian Spirituality (2005, Blackwell Publishing).

- Students (and participating faculty and staff) have at least an introductory knowledge of how Eastern and Western contemplative wisdom traditions--and related formal and informal spiritual practices, assist with:
  - Greater skill in relating to anxiety, sadness, suffering, failure, uncertainty, impulsiveness, etc.
  - Non-attachment to ever shifting thoughts and feelings; not biting the hook.
  - Expanded consciousness; if desired, expanded God consciousness.
  - Greater compassion toward self, others, those we struggle to love; inner/outer healing peace.
  - Self-transcendence; sensing oneness and interconnection with all beings/Ground of Being/God.
  - Energy healing/Tonglan (loving kindness)/healing prayer.
  - Living from True Self/Divine Within vs. surface-level self/ego-mind's grasping at desires and fleeing/fighting aversions; living in the flow of grace.
  - Peace and healing through letting go/relinquishment/self-surrender (different from giving up or giving in).

Brief Project Update on what has been accomplished on the assessment project to date:

Evidence gathering. See methods named in next section.

Evidence Gathered: *Though all of the following assessment tools have been used, I may only focus on*

1. Survey Monkey instrument sent to students, faculty, and staff who participated in programs related to East-West meditation, mind training, stress reduction, and contemplative practices.
2. Self-assessment instruments used at the end of the monastic retreat and other spiritual retreats incorporating contemplative attitudes, wisdom traditions, and practices.
3. Buddhist eye-gazing encounter in order to learn how contemplative practices decrease monkey mind/anxious thoughts and feelings, and expand a sense of peacefulness and heightened sense of oneness and compassion. Measurement: Students record thoughts which occurred during the eye-gazing exercise (students typically say that the close physical proximity and gazing stirs self-consciousness, judging, etc). Then, after undergoing a loving kindness meditation /mindfulness awareness practice, they repeat the eye-gazing exercise and record their thoughts. They then compare their own before/after experiences and share with each other what they learned with the larger group. They end by stating what they will take away from the experience to apply for everyday wisdom on perceiving what is real/non-real and how one's inner life, intention, and spiritual practices like meditation and contemplative prayer (same thing; just different names) shapes one's consciousness/perception of reality.
4. Growth & Review Reflection Instrument for diverse members of The Spiritual Life Leadership Team. Using an end of year summary of 2010-11 offerings, student circle events which they participated in and/or helped lead, then wrote and discussed short answers to these questions:
  - In what, if any way, did two or three of these experiences help you explore, deepen, or clarify your relationship with self, others, world, and/or the Sacred?
  - What might circled items say about your gifts, values, sense of purpose, and spirituality type (i.e. mystic, thinker, bridge builder/peace maker, feeler, social justice advocate)?
  - What area of your spiritual life would you like to explore and/or grow? How can The Office of Chaplain & Spiritual Life better support that?
5. Record REL 368:
  - A. A class reunion reflection conversation three months after our return from India. A student documented the conversation on how the course continues to influence their lives.
  - B. An assessment question was also directly enfolded within the class take-home final.

Year Three - Interpreting Evidence / Crafting a Plan:

*The goal for Year Three of the College's assessment cycle is to analyze and interpret the evidence gathered for purposes of enhancing educational practice. Plans for the coming year include*

- Analyze/interpret Survey Monkey data.
- Analyze/interpret results from Eye-Gazing exercise and spirituality retreats
- Maybe include instrument used with Spiritual Life team though it seems I've got too many instruments to draw from; wanting to keep this simple.
- Continue annual assessment methods.
- Make adaptations as needed to programs based on results. In areas with strong feedback, continue use of those methods and content.

Involvement:

Students, faculty, and staff have been involved in the assessment.  
Institutional Research was consulted for wisely crafting the Survey Monkey instrument.

Challenges / Assistance:

Learning curve on using technology/Survey Monkey but pushed pass fear of that. It was enjoyable.

Catherine Quehl-Engel	Nov. 16, 2011
_____ Your Signature	_____ Date
Catherine Quehl-Engel	Nov. 16, 2011
_____ Department Chair Signature	_____ Date

<sup>i</sup> DEPARTMENTAL GOALS:

GOAL#1: As students undergo adversity, acquire and analyze knowledge, and expand awareness of diverse and often conflicting theological and socio-political perspectives, the Chaplain & Spiritual Life Office provides support, spiritual guidance, mentoring, and educational exploration through the often disorienting human and faith development journey as they question,

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deconstruct, quest, and recompose their sense of meaning, beliefs, values, and relationship with others, world, and the Sacred (God/Higher Power/Ultimate Reality).

GOAL#2: Deepen awareness of the connection between faith and social justice, personal responsibility, and what it means to be servant leaders for a more humane world.

GOAL#3: Cultivate global citizenship, inter-spiritual and cross-cultural competency, and peacemaking skills through inter-faith understanding and exploration.

GOAL #4: Provide pastoral wisdom, care, spiritual healing, and devotional opportunities.

GOAL #5: Assist students, faculty, and staff in contemplative practices East and West which foster:

- Greater skill in relating to anxiety, sadness, suffering, failure, uncertainty, impulsiveness, etc.
- Non-attachment to ever shifting thoughts and feelings; not biting the hook.
- Expanded consciousness; if desired, expanded God-consciousness including the Divine Within.
- Greater compassion toward self, others, those we struggle to love; inner/outer healing peace.
- Self-transcendence; sensing oneness and interconnection with all beings/Ground of Being/God
- Energy healing/Tonglan (loving kindness)/healing prayer.
- Living from True Self/Divine within vs. surface-level self/ego-mind's grasping at desires and fleeing/fighting aversions; living in the flow of grace.
- Peace and healing through letting go/relinquishment/self-surrender (different from giving up or giving in).

GOAL #7: Students have more deeply experienced and explored the meaning of forgiveness, love, humility, resilience, trust, and hope.