

Policies for Spiritual Registered Student Organization

Role of Spirituality on UT's Campus

The University of Tampa supports spiritual life on campus. Spiritual Registered Student Organizations (SRSO) offer students the opportunity to grow in their faith and/or explore their spirituality to gain a deeper understanding of life's meaning and purpose. In addition, students are encouraged to seek enhanced self-awareness and identity through reflection and contemplation within their chosen spiritual/secular tradition. Furthermore, spiritual organizations broaden the educational experience of UT's students.

The process for all new SRSOs seeking official University recognition must be initiated by current undergraduate University of Tampa students and approved by the Office of Student Leadership and Engagement (OSLE), and the Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality, (RTFVS). The Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality was formed in 2009 and was tasked with creating the mission, vision, and learning outcomes for a new interfaith program at UT, in conjunction with the construction of the Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values.

Interfaith Model at UT

"In a society whose identity is largely rooted in its pluralistic ideals, and whose population has grown more diverse through its history, engagement between worldviews plays a role in nearly every major chapter of social change. Interfaith cooperation is a way of moving America closer to its ideals, but it is also an act of citizenship. When you work to bring people into relationships, even when forging that link is difficult, you actively strengthen the bonds that hold our society together. In divided times, citizenship is more important than ever." ([Interfaith Youth Core](#))*

Sharing one's belief system provides educational opportunities for others, as students prepare themselves to work and live in a diverse and inclusive work environment to be effective citizens.

Therefore, it is important to maintain respect for all spiritual traditions represented on campus and recruit or present programs in such a way that the integrity and legitimacy of the person who holds a given faith (or meaning-making perspective) is not disparaged.

All SRSOs are bound by the University of Tampa's [Student Code of Conduct and this handbook](#). SRSOs should pay close attention and adhere to the following University policies: [RSO Policy Regarding the Consumption of Alcohol](#), [Anti-hazing](#) and [Nondiscrimination Notice](#).

Agreement of Understanding and Participation

As a member of the Interfaith Youth Core, UT advocates for interfaith sharing and learning. This means that The University of Tampa encourages its spiritual and secular communities to engage in thoughtful and meaningful conversations seeking to understand similarities and differences in spiritual topics.

SRSOs on campus will be invited to be part of the Interfaith Council. This council works to promote spiritual life at The University of Tampa. As a member of this council, each SRSO will have the opportunity to promote and highlight their programs/events/holy days. All SRSOs will have the opportunity to participate in organizing events for the entire campus such as Semester Kick-Off Events, Interfaith Harmony Week, the Interfaith Retreat, and the Interfaith Graduation Celebration.

As an SRSO on this campus, it is important to know the operating procedures for promoting the organization on campus. Students are encouraged to host programs and may promote their organization through tabling in the Vaughn Center, posting flyers, chalking, social media outlets and casual conversations with friends. Please see the [RSO handbook](#) for more information.

SRSOs and/or related affiliates **may not engage** in proselytizing on campus. Specifically, there is no engagement of students that are not known to the members through means other than the approved promotions listed above. Understand that proselytizing is defined as an unwanted attempt to influence or convert an individual from one religious belief to another.

In addition to the annual registration requirements through OSLE, SRSO representatives and their on-campus advisor will be required to meet on an annual basis with the RTFVS or 2 members of the RTFVS to share accomplishments, request assistance or suggest changes. This will enable the SRSO to maintain recognized organizational status, foster collaboration and communication, ensure the groups understand the context for SRSOs at The University of Tampa, and comply with UT's student organizational policies and procedures.

Policies, Procedures and Guidelines for SRSOs

The University of Tampa supports spiritual life on campus. SRSOs offer students the opportunity to grow in their faith and/or explore their spirituality to gain deeper understanding of life's meaning and purpose. In addition, students are encouraged to share their traditions and practices with those who are of the same belief or different from their own. Sharing of one's belief system provides educational opportunities for others, as students, prepare themselves to work in a diverse and inclusive work environment to be effective citizens.

Special consideration may be granted to students who are absent from classes on religious holidays where the University is still in session. As stated in the university catalog, care will be given to schedule required classes and examinations in view of customarily observed religious holy days. Students must provide written notice to their instructors at the beginning of each academic term if they expect to be absent from a class or a scheduled examination for the observance of religious holy days. No student shall be compelled to attend class or sit for an examination at a day or time when such activity is prohibited by his or her religious belief, as long as the student has provided timely notice. Please refer to the complete policy for further details, [General Attendance Policy](#).

To start a new organization or re-register a current SRSO, students should contact the [Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality](#), (RTFVS), for an informational interview. This meeting will be held with the [Chairperson of the RTFVS](#) or designee and one additional member of the RTFVS.

This one-time meeting is required to gain full rights of being an SRSO on campus and must be attended by **the student leader and their on-campus advisor**. An opportunity to complete this requirement will be offered during the Fall RSO Leadership Conference, L·E·A·D UT.

As part of the interview, the SRSO will be provided with information pertaining to the privileges and responsibilities they will have upon approval or re-registration as an SRSO.

In addition to privileges that SRSOs already receive, SRSOs who belong to the Better Together Interfaith Council, will receive additional support from the Wellness Center and Sykes Chapel and Center for Faith and Values listed below:

- marketing on a monthly calendar
- guidance navigating University procedures
- involvement with Better Together to promote the organization's involvement in interfaith activities on campus
- financial assistance as active members of the BT Executive Council (up to \$250/year)
- Cabinet space in the Chapel

The student leader and advisor from each SRSO are also required to attend one RTFVS meeting per calendar year to give an update on their SRSO. If an SRSO has a scheduling conflict and cannot attend an RTFVS meeting, they may meet with the chair of the RTFVS (or designee) and one other person from the RTFVS at a time that works for all to fulfill this requirement.

Role of the On-Campus Advisor

The role of the advisor for an SRSO is a fulfilling and meaningful one. The advisor will play an active role in supporting the members of the SRSO that can vary depending upon the needs of the organization. The requirements may include:

- support setting up a meeting/gathering;
 - program ideas
 - fundraising ideas

- support the discovery and discussion of values and ethical behaviors and choices
- communication with outside contacts
- be informed of outside relationships
- report concerns or direct questions to the [Chairperson of the RTFVS](#)

Advisor's Role with Outside Community Members

The advisor of an SRSO is encouraged to build relationships with external organizations that are integral to the SRSO. These may include local or national religious organizations and their employees or volunteers.

All outside members are considered invited guests on the campus and must always be in the presence of the members and/or advisor of the SRSO.

Per Human Resources, it is important to note that any outside community member that meets 1-on-1 with any University of Tampa student will be required to undergo a background check. In addition, if an outside community member is on campus more than 10 hours per month, they will also need to undergo a background check. If an outside community member does not meet the requirements for a background check, they will be required to be with a representative from the student organization while on campus. Advisors should remind the student group to follow through with requesting background checks as needed. Requests for background checks can be made at the [Wellness Center](#).

It is the responsibility of the advisor to report any concerns or communications of outside parties to the Chairperson of the Resource Team for Faith, Values and Spirituality.

If a grievance needs to be filed, please contact the [Chairperson of the RTFVS](#).

Role of Outside Community Members

Outside community members can play an important support role for an SRSO. These relationships can be with local religious organizations or larger formal organizations with staff and a set programmatic format.

It is important for community members to recognize that our SRSOs are student led and student driven. Community members are guests of the SRSO and are to be mindful that they are supporting the students' efforts to operate on campus. At all times, students must be leading and making decisions regarding operations of the organization. Community members should support the mission of the SRSO and not be self-promoting. It should be an altruistic endeavor for an outside person or organization when interfacing with the student organization. Please review [The University of Tampa Solicitation Policy](#).

Students can be invited off campus at the request of the community member, but students can decline this invitation at any time. SRSO affiliation with outside religious organizations is permitted solely for supporting student groups, not for establishing satellite, personal, or denominational ministries.

Community members can meet individually with students after they have been notified of being cleared through a secured background check with The University of Tampa. This can be accomplished by the advisor of the SRSO contacting the [Wellness Center Staff Assistant](#).

Disclaimer: If a grievance is filed against an outside community member or community organization, it could jeopardize the SRSO status, impede participation of the outside community member or organization with the SRSO, and/or restrict an outside community member or organization's physical presence on campus.

*Work Cited

"Interfaith Cooperation." IFYC, 19 Mar. 2018, www.ifyc.org/interfaith.