

## A Research Symposium:

### Spirituality in Higher Education Project at UCLA

An invitation-only research symposium will be hosted by the Spirituality in Higher Education Project on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> and Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>, at UCLA's Faculty Center. The symposium offers a forum for the presentation of a series of research projects made possible through cash awards granted by the Spirituality in Higher Education Project to 12 scholars from across the country.

Moderated by Spirituality in Higher Education Project Principal Investigators Alexander W. Astin and Helen S. Astin, along with Project Director Jennifer A. Lindholm, the symposium will open with a blessing offered by Scotty McLennan, Dean of Religious Life at Stanford University, before the dinner on Sunday evening. National Advisory Board member David Scott will open the paper sessions on Monday morning, and Board Chair Claire Gaudiani will offer closing remarks following the final presentation on Monday afternoon.

Brief highlights of the book, "Cultivating the Spirit: How College Can Enhance Students Inner Lives," will be given by authors Alexander W. Astin, Helen S. Astin, and Jennifer A. Lindholm. The forthcoming book, to be published by Harvard University Press in 2010, coalesces findings drawn from the Spirituality in Higher Education Project.

Housed at the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA and generously supported by the John Templeton Foundation, the Spirituality in Higher Education Project assembled a database culled from an examination of students' spiritual and religious development during the first three years of college. The longitudinal database, which includes 14,257 undergraduates attending 136 institutions of all types, offers a unique opportunity to study a wide range of issues relating to students' beliefs, values, and spiritual life.

In the spring of 2009, a call for proposals was made by the Spirituality in Higher Education Project to reach scholars with an interest in conducting original research using this unique national database. The competition aimed to stimulate and encourage the study of students' spiritual development in higher education by engaging other scholars in original research that utilizes these same data.

With approximately 60 proposals submitted in March of 2009, awards to 12 recipients, primarily young scholars and new career faculty, were made in April. Proposals were reviewed by a panel of experts in the field, who considered originality and likelihood of contributing to knowledge in the field, among other qualifying criteria. By offering the research awards, the Spirituality in Higher Education Project looked to deepen and expand the conversation on spirituality in higher education by engaging other scholars from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines in systematic studies utilizing this unique and comprehensive database.

“We were delighted with the response we received from the field when we solicited proposals last Spring, and we are especially pleased with the originality and diversity of topics that our award recipients are pursuing,” said Alexander W. Astin, Co-principal Investigator.

The proposals, which will be presented and discussed by the Awardees on the second day of the Symposium, include:

“Spirituality and Well-being Among Religiously Privileged and Religiously Marginalized College Students,” by Nicholas A. Bowman and Jenny L. Small.

- Nicholas A. Bowman is a postdoctoral research associate in the Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame, and Jenny L. Small is a recent graduate of the University of Michigan, receiving a Ph.D. from the Center of the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education. Their study explores three types of religious minority status: being in the minority on a majority campus (e.g., Muslims at the University of Michigan); the minority on a minority campus (e.g., Christians at Brigham Young University); and the majority on a minority campus (e.g., Jews at Brandeis University).

“Pathways to Pro-social Development: Spirituality, Religion, and Higher Education,” by Jay W. Brandenberger and Nicholas A. Bowman.

- Jay W. Brandenberger serves as the Director of Research and Assessment at the Center for Social Concerns, and is a Concurrent Associate Professor Psychology at the University of Notre Dame. Nicholas A. Bowman is a postdoctoral research associate in the Center for Social Concerns at the University of Notre Dame; their study examines the influence of religion and spirituality on pro-social development in the context of higher education.

“The Impact of Campus Context, College Encounters, and Religious/Spiritual Struggle on Ecumenical Worldview Development by Gender, Race, and Worldview,” by Alyssa Bryant.

- Allyssa Bryant is Assistant Professor of Higher Education at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina; her study analyzes how students develop an ecumenical worldview.

“Longitudinal Relationships Between Spirituality, Religiousness, and Social Justice in the Development of Young Adults: Educational Implications for the Helping Professions,” by David Chenot and Hansung Kim.

- David Chenot is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at California State University, Fullerton, and Hansung Kim is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Social Work at the California State University, Fullerton; their study examines the causal effects of spirituality and religiousness on students’ attitudes and behaviors towards several aspects of social justice, i.e., compassionate self-perceptions, an ethic of caring, and charitable involvement.

“Identifying Mediators in the Relationship Between Spiritual Struggles and Substance Use in College Students,” by Carol Ann Faigin.

- Carol Ann Faigin, M.A., is a clinical psychology graduate student at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio; her study investigates the nature of the relationship between spiritual struggle and an increase in substance use by college students.

“Student – Faculty Interaction and the Development of an Ethic of Caring,” by James J. Fleming and Jennie Purnell.

- James J. Fleming, Ph.D., is a Jesuit priest who serves as the Director of Mission Assessment and Evaluation in the Office of University Mission and Ministry at Boston College. Jennie Purnell, Ph.D., is the Founding Director of The Center for Student Formation at Boston College; their study examines how faculty, regardless of their own degree of personal spirituality or academic discipline, may have an impact on the moral and ethical lives of their students, through their pedagogical choices and mentoring relationships.

“Exploring Race and Pro-Social Involvement as Dynamics of College Student Spirituality,” by Sean Gehrke.

- Sean Gehrke is the Assistant Director of Residence Life & Housing at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Washington. His study analyzed differences in spiritual levels and spiritual change in college students, revealing that spiritual experience in college differs for students from four different racial/ethnic groups: African American/Black; Asian American/Pacific Islander; Latino/Hispanic; and White/Caucasian.

“Catholicism on Campus: Stability and Change in Student Faith by College Type,” by Mark M. Gray and Melissa A. Cidade.

- Mark M. Gray is the Director of CARA Catholic Polls and a Senior Research Associate at CARA. Melissa A. Cidade is the Director of Pastoral Assistance Surveys and Services at CARA; their study identifies the types of young adult Catholics who choose Catholic colleges and how these students are affected by their college experience, specifically their faith and worship.

“Authoritarianism, Altruism & Spirituality Among College Students,” by Debra Majeed, Greg Buchanan, and Bill Conover.

- Debra Majeed is Associate Professor and Chair of Philosophy & Religious Studies at Beloit College; Greg Buchanan is an Associate Professor at Beloit College; and Bill Conover is Director of Beloit College’s Spiritual Life Program. Their study explores the question, “Which is more powerful in determining helpfulness – being authoritarian, or being religious?”

“Spirituality as Inclusive: A Multi-Level Examination into the Role Colleges Play in Shaping the Development of Ecumenical Worldviews,” by Matthew J. Mayhew.

- Matthew J. Mayhew is an Assistant Professor of Higher Education at New York University; his study explores the institutional conditions and student experiences

that influence the development of ecumenical worldviews among undergraduate students.

“Pluralism, Provisionality, and Faith: A Postmodern Spirituality for Evangelical Colleges,” by P. Jesse Rine.

- P. Jesse Rine is a doctoral candidate at The Center for the Study of Higher Education in the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia. His study examined how a fallibilist spirituality (commitment to faith; provisionality of belief; and openness to pluralism) can empower Evangelical colleges to be responsive to the postmodern critique while remaining faithful to their core commitments.

“Does A Science Education Reduce Religiosity and/or Spirituality?” by Christopher P. Scheitle.

- Christopher P. Scheitle is a postdoctoral Research Associate in the Department of Sociology at Pennsylvania State University; his study examines whether undergraduates who acquire a natural science degree are any more likely to experience a decline in religiosity and/or spirituality than those who acquire other degrees.

To learn more about the research awards or the Spirituality in Higher Education Project, please visit: [www.spirituality.ucla.edu](http://www.spirituality.ucla.edu)

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Spirituality in Higher Education:  
A Research Symposium  
December 6-7<sup>th</sup> 2009  
UCLA Faculty Center



## AGENDA

### Sunday, December 6th

-6:30: Join us in the [Hacienda Room](#) at the UCLA Faculty Center (see map attached)

- Introductions
- Brief description of the competition/process
- Outline agenda for following day
- Blessings from Scotty McLennan, member of Technical Advisory Panel

-7:00: Dinner

### Monday, December 7<sup>th</sup>

-Symposium begins at 8:30 am (ending at 3:30 pm)

-[Sequoia Room](#) at the UCLA Faculty Center

- 8:30-8:45      Opening remarks from David Scott, member of the National Advisory Board
- 8:45-9:15      Highlights of findings from forthcoming book, *Cultivating the Spirit*
- 9:15-10:45     Session 1 presentations
  - Melissa Cidade, Jennie Purnell, P. Jesse Rine, Carol Ann Faigin
  - Discussant: Peter Hill, member of Technical Advisory Panel
  - Moderator: Jennifer Lindholm
- 10:45-11:00    Break
- 11:00-12:30    Session 2 presentations
  - David Chenot and Hansung Kim, Debra Majeed and Greg Buchanan, Christopher Scheitle, Jay Brandenberger
  - Discussant: Scotty McLennan, member of Technical Advisory Panel
  - Moderator: Sandy Astin
- 12:30-1:30     Lunch

➤ 1:15-3:15 Session 3 presentations

- Sean Gehrke, Nick Bowman and Jenny Small, Matt Mayhew, Alyssa Bryant
- Discussant: Ken Pargament, member of Technical Advisory Panel
- Moderator: Lena Astin

➤ 3:15-3:30 Closing remarks: Claire Gaudiani, Chair of National Advisory Board