

# Statement of Understanding of the Campus Ministry Association at George Mason University and Its relation to the University

Update from 01/31/1991 Revision  
Adopted Spring Semester, 2002

## CAMPUS MINISTRY ASSOCIATION AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY<sup>1</sup>

### Part 1

#### I. Nature and Purpose of the Campus Ministry Association (CMA<sup>2</sup>)

Campus ministry at George Mason University is a cooperative endeavor of various religious organizations with one another through the Campus Ministry Association for the enrichment of life at the University. The Campus Ministry Association is committed to the holistic development of persons---spiritual, physical, intellectual, and social. The Campus Ministry Association affirms the beauty and value of individual religious traditions and individual styles of ministry. The Campus Ministry Association nourishes the intellectual dimensions of faith as well as the spiritual dimensions of education. The Campus Ministry Association encourages the service of others, both within the University family and in the larger community. The Campus Ministry Association fosters spiritual values in a climate of open inquiry. Believing that religious concern is as broad as human need, the Campus Ministry Association seeks to enhance the quality of community and personal life.

#### II. Fundamental Principles

Recognizing the value of the Campus Ministry Association's contribution to the members of the University community and to the fulfillment of the University's mission, the University seeks, insofar as it is legally permitted, to integrate the Association into the University's life and mission.

The Campus Ministry Association and the University recognize that each participant in the Association operates out of a particular religious commitment and is ultimately responsible to its governing body. The Association and the University pledge to respect those commitments and that primary accountability. The University agrees to be sensitive to holy days in scheduling examinations and activities, and to weigh them against other factors in making scheduling decisions. It is expected that there may continue to be situations where exams or other activities will be scheduled on religious holidays, but religious holidays will have been identified and taken into account in the decision—making process. The Campus Ministry Association agrees to provide annually to University scheduling offices and the faculty senate a comprehensive five-year projection of holy days for the various religious denominations. The Campus Ministry liaison will also provide this list to the Associate Dean for Student Services by

---

<sup>1</sup> A description of (1) the Campus Ministry Association's relationship with George Mason University and (2) the understanding among the ministries of their relationships with one another through the Campus Ministry Association. This document supplements the "Standards and Guidelines for Religious Programs" developed by the Council for the Advancement of Standards. The term "campus ministry" is used throughout to refer to the work of all religious bodies participating in the Campus Ministry Association.

<sup>2</sup> CMA stands for "The Campus Ministry Association".

April 1 of each year.

The Campus Ministry Association and its participants acknowledge their additional accountability to the University by pledging to serve the entire University community, to respect varied individual religious perspectives, to honor the academic integrity of the institution and its commitment to the principles of college student development, to abide by all University regulations, to cooperate with one another, and to abide by the Code of Ethics contained herein (Part 2).

### III. Acceptance to Membership in the Campus Ministry Association

#### **A. Application of Ministries for Membership**

New campus ministries seeking membership in the Campus Ministry Association will be expected to comply with the following guidelines.

1. Subscribe to the "Nature and Purpose of Campus Ministry" stated above (see Section I).
2. Agree to follow the "Fundamental Principles" and Code of Ethics contained herein (Section II and Part 2).
3. Participate in the meetings and activities of the Campus Ministry Association (Section C).
4. Follow the procedure specified in Section B and C.

The procedure for acceptance of a new ministry into the Campus Ministry Association is as follows:

1. The sponsoring religious body submits to the Campus Ministry Association (through the Campus Ministry Liaison) an application for membership which describes the sponsoring religious body and its governance structure and which pledges compliance with the guidelines stated above.
2. The Campus Ministry Association invites representatives of the sponsoring religious body to meet with it to discuss its participation in the Association. If membership is deemed appropriate, the Campus Ministry Liaison sends a letter to the sponsoring religious body designating it a member of the Campus Ministry Association and inviting its designation of a minister.
3. If membership is not deemed appropriate, the Campus Ministry Liaison sends a letter to the sponsoring religious body so informing it and giving the reasons for denial of membership.

#### **B. Recognition of Ministry Professionals**

The appointment of a ministry professional is primarily the province of the sponsoring religious organization, which determines qualifications and employs personnel. However, since members of the Campus Ministry Association work together, its membership is appropriately involved in determining membership in the Association. Therefore, each campus ministry agrees to inform the C.M.A. (through the Campus Ministry Liaison) concerning appointment of a ministry professional. The University agrees normally to receive as ministry professionals those persons who are acceptable both to the sponsoring religious organization and to the Campus Ministry

Association. However, the University reserves the right to deny recognition to members of the Campus Ministry Association. The University also reserves the right to recognize non—members as ministry professionals.

The procedure for recognizing ministry professionals in the C.M.A. is as follows:

(a) The sponsoring religious body submits to the Campus Ministry Association (through the Campus Ministry Liaison) a completed credentials information form, a recent resume, and a letter of appointment from the sponsoring body. The letter of appointment should make specific reference to the nature of the assignment (full-time/part-time, duration, etc.), a statement of the sponsoring body's financial and supervisory responsibility for the APPLICANT, his/her anticipated role vis-à-vis specific student organizations on campus, and other responsibilities. The Campus Ministry Association may request additional information about the sponsoring body or applicant.

(b) If the applicant is clearly acceptable, the Campus Ministry Liaison sends a letter of acceptance to the applicant with a copy to the Associate Dean for Student Services. For those in intern positions, the membership would be contingent upon assurance of regular on-going supervision by the sponsoring body.

(c) If the applicant is not clearly acceptable, the Campus Ministry Liaison submits the application to the full Campus Ministry Association for its decision. Criteria to be applied in such a decision would include whether the person has been appointed by the sponsoring religious body of a recognized campus ministry as a campus ministry professional; financial responsibility for the appointee has been assumed by the sponsoring body; evidence is provided that there will be ongoing supervision, especially if the applicant is an intern; documentation is provided that the applicant also subscribes to the "Nature and Purpose of Campus Ministry" stated in Section I and already endorsed by the sponsoring body; and appropriate educational preparation as per sponsoring body.

### **C. Conditions of Membership in the Campus Ministry Association**

The Campus Ministry Association may withdraw membership in the Campus Ministry Association at any time for failure to comply with one or more of the "Fundamental Principles" contained herein (see Section II), namely:

- A. Refusing to serve the entire University community;
- B. Failing to respect the religious perspectives of others;
- C. Failing to honor the academic integrity of the University and its commitment to the principles of college student development;
- D. Violating a substantive University regulation; and
- E. Failing to cooperate with the other recognized campus ministries.

The procedure for withdrawal of membership in the Campus Ministry Association for reasons A, B, C, or D above is as follows:

1. Specific complaints against the particular campus ministry are submitted to the Campus Ministry Association (through the Campus Ministry Liaison).
2. The Campus Ministry Association consults with the campus ministry against which

complaints have been submitted before acting on the complaint.

3. The Campus Ministry Association may act on the complaint by:
  - (a) Finding the campus ministry not to be in violation of the “Fundamental Principles”;
  - (b) Finding the campus ministry to be in violation of the “Fundamental Principles” and placing it on probation for a specified period; or
  - (c) Finding the campus ministry to be in violation of the “Fundamental Principles” and withdrawing membership in the Campus Ministry Association.

The procedure for withdrawal of membership in the Campus Ministry Association for reason “E” above is as follows:

1. It is the expectation that (a) a recognized representative of each campus ministry fully attend and participate in the monthly Campus Ministry Association meetings, (b) each campus ministry share equally in the costs of the cooperative ministry, and (c) fully participate in Campus Ministry Association sponsored activities. This reflects the professional commitment to the spirit of collaboration as cited in Section III of this statement.
2. In order to safeguard the privileges of being a member in the Campus Ministry Association, (a) a recognized representative of each campus ministry is required to attend a minimum of five (5) monthly meetings per year, and (b) each campus ministry is expected to pay its pro rata share of the costs of the cooperative ministry within three (3) months after assessment.
3. If the minimum number of meetings is not attended or the pro rata share of the costs of the cooperative ministry is not paid within three (3) months after assessment, then the membership of that campus ministry may be placed on a probationary status by the Campus Ministry Association for a period of one year.
4. If the minimum number of meetings is not attended during the probationary year, or the costs of the cooperative ministry are not paid within three (3) months after assessment during the probationary year, then membership may be withdrawn by the Campus Ministry Association. Re-application for membership in the Campus Ministry Association, following the procedures outlined above for membership of new campus ministries, will be required for reinstatement.
5. The Campus Ministry Liaison will be responsible for the administration of this policy.

#### IV. Relationships

##### **A. Relationships of Campus Ministries with One Another**

The Campus Ministry Association (CMA) is an association of independent campus ministries, and ministry professionals. They have established the Campus Ministry Association (composed of the various participating ministries) as a vehicle for communication, coordination, and cooperation.

The Campus Ministry Association meets regularly to share concerns, to provide for mutual support, to communicate and coordinate the plans of the separate ministries, to explore and respond to needs, and to propose, plan and implement joint programs.

In its internal operations, the Campus Ministry Association functions on the basis of (1) shared responsibility for leadership and (2) consensus in decision making.

## **B. Officers of the Campus Ministry Association**

The Campus Ministry Association shall yearly select from among its members three officers. The Officers shall be the Campus Ministry Liaison, Chair, and Treasurer. The duties of the Campus Ministry Liaison are described in Section IV C below. The Chair shall act as a convener and facilitator of the monthly meetings and, along with the Campus Ministry Liaison, shall set the agenda for the meetings. The Chair shall solicit items for the agenda from the members and send the agenda to the members prior to each monthly meeting. In addition, on the rare occasion when it is necessary, the Chair shall act as liaison between the Campus Ministry Association and the community outside of George Mason University. The Treasurer shall set and collect the yearly dues, keep the financial books, and pay the expenses of the Campus Ministry Association. Nothing in these By-Laws would prohibit one person from being elected to more than one officer position.

## **C. Relationship Between the University and the Campus Ministry Association**

The nature of the Campus Ministry Association presupposes a relationship to all parts of the University. Its purpose is to serve the entire University family, transcending divisions, ranks, classifications, disciplines, and ideologies. However, the Campus Ministry Association relates with the University through the Associate Dean for Student Services, for operational purposes.

By mutual agreement, the Campus Ministry Association annually selects one of its ministry professionals<sup>3</sup> to serve as Campus Ministry Liaison. The Liaison acts as a channel of information and concern from the Administration to the Campus Ministry, and from the Campus Ministry to the Administration. The Liaison will meet periodically with the Associate Dean for Student Services to facilitate communication between the Campus Ministry and the Administration. The Liaison will annually and where needed update the University Administration with the current CMA membership and its ministry professionals. However, the Campus Ministry Liaison does not have any special authority or decision-making power over the other ministry professionals. The individual campus ministries relate directly to the University regarding their separate programs.

The ministers participating in the Campus Ministry Association fulfill both 'secular' and 'religious' functions at the University. As 'religious' leaders, they are advocates for spiritual values. They may provide traditional religious services, such as public prayers, worship, weddings, memorial services, spiritual direction, religious counseling, study and service opportunities. They advise the University about religious groups, activities, and issues.

As "secular" resource persons, they make available to students, faculty, and staff their skills as program developers, counselors, facilitators, and consultants for enhancement of individual and

---

<sup>3</sup> The term "ministry professional" here and elsewhere refers to that person appointed by a campus ministry as its representative on campus, whether ordained or lay.

institutional life. They generate or assist others with programming in human values, peace and justice issues, and other programming of a “secular” nature. They interact with the student development staff, support the various student services, and may be invited to serve on University committees. They provide a vital link to the larger Northern Virginia community. They may, if invited, teach courses in areas of their academic expertise.

Since it recognizes the value of these ‘secular’ services and desires to realize their full benefit in campus life, the University provides certain privileges and services to the Campus Ministry Association. It is provided with appropriate space on campus as well as access to University facilities and services such as dining, telephone and copy services, and use of equipment. Members of the Campus Ministry Association are accorded certain privileges including use of the library and athletic facilities, eligibility to purchase a parking permit, access to University events, and issuance of a university identification card. The ministers receive no direct financial remuneration from the University except in instances in which they are specifically employed by the University.

It is expected that the usual procedure for using campus space and services will be through a recognized organization.

#### **D. Relationships to Student Religious Organizations**

The Director of Student Organizations Activities and Programs is responsible for recognition of student religious organizations. Usually members of the Campus Ministry Association relate to one or more student religious groups. Recognizing that not every religious group chooses to belong to the Campus Ministry Association, the University provides appropriate space and services to such groups through the usual procedure for recognized student organizations.

### IV. AMENDMENTS

This is an agreement between the University and the Campus Ministry Association. Amendments and modifications may be made only by mutual agreement between the two parties.

## **Part 2**

### **A CODE OF ETHICS CAMPUS MINISTRY ASSOCIATION GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

1. WE WILL RESPECT THE DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY OF PERSONS ON THE CAMPUS.
  - a. When dealing with university personnel, including students, faculty and staff, we will be sensitive to the permission the person is or is not giving us (overtly or covertly) to enter his or her life and have influence there. We will not violate the right of any person to make choices, even if we feel those choices are not in the best interest of the person. We will endeavor carefully to walk the narrow line

between the necessity of offering wise counsel or passionate persuasion and the injustice of usurping the individuality of another person.

- b. In general advertising and personal contact, we will always identify the sponsorship and agenda of our programming. We will not seek to mislead or covertly influence another for our cause. All information and conversation will be straightforward.
- c. We will be sensitive to and have respect for the religious history of all persons. We will endeavor to discover their allegiance to their background, and will counsel them in appropriate involvement. Our major concern will be to aid the others in making informed choices concerning their religious lives and not just to promote our own particular programming.
- d. We will be aware of the fact that religious zeal and a sense of duty before God can often desensitize us to the rights and needs of people as individuals. When in doubt as to any question of ethical behavior, we will remember the edict: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Program will never be more important than person.

2. WE WILL RESPECT THE DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY OF COLLEAGUES IN CAMPUS MINISTRY AS PROFESSIONALS AND AS PERSONS.

- a. We will respect the theological orientation of one another. As ours is a professional rather than a theological commitment to one another, we will agree to disagree on matters of faith and practice. We will not understand silence to signify consent, nor will we feel the need to defend our own positions to our peers. We will maintain an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual concern for the spiritual well-being of the university community.
- b. We will assume the sincerity and good will of other campus ministers. Should questions of violations of ethics or breach of trust occur, we will assume proper motives and investigate with such expectations. We will grant one another the benefit of the doubt.
- c. We will give each other permission to offer constructive criticism and suggestions concerning the fulfillment of this code. Respecting one another, we will listen when questions arise concerning relationships among us or the groups we represent. When it is necessary to offer such criticism, we will endeavor to do so from a concern for each other and the good of campus ministry at George Mason University.
- d. Overall, we will seek cooperation whenever possible; we will respect the agenda of each campus ministry; and we will treat one another as we would like to be treated.

3. WE WILL RESPECT THE DIGNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE PROGRAMS OF OTHER CAMPUS MINISTRIES AND THE STUDENTS INVOLVED IN THEM.

- a. Understanding that there are many students on campus with no religious affiliation or commitment, we will find our primary population of prospective members among that group, and not among those who have a sense of religious affiliation.
  - b. When visiting with students, we will make it a primary responsibility to discover any current religious involvement and seek to help the student learn of any opportunities for connection within his/her faith tradition, rather than solely to promote interest in our programs.
  - c. Understanding the rights and the development of the student as primary, we will view a student's voluntary approach as permission to share with him or her concerning our personal convictions and the programs of our particular ministry.
  - d. We will encourage cooperation among our students to create a unified spirit among the various campus ministries.
4. WE WILL RESPECT THE PROGRAM AND POLICIES OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY.
- a. We will have due regard for administrative policies on all levels concerning proper conduct toward students and proper behavior on campus.
  - b. We will understand ourselves to be cooperative members of the university community and will act as part of it rather than at odds with it.
  - c. We will conscientiously protect our freedom to protest or criticize with a dignity worthy of our office as religious leaders. We will endeavor to seek a peaceful solution to any conflict with the university system.