

**Oberlin College Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL)**  
**Interfaith Student Council (ISC)**  
**(Incorporated Fall 2011)**

**Mission Statement**

The Oberlin College Interfaith Student Council (ISC) is a student advisory and programming board that works with the Director of the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (DORSL). In cooperation with the DORSL, the ISC engages in interfaith dialogue and organizes interfaith programming for the campus. It is composed of student religious and philosophical leaders of diverse identities who are committed to fostering religious and philosophical pluralism\* and interfaith engagement at Oberlin and beyond. The Council seeks to connect with, respond to, and advise on the religious and philosophical interests and needs of the student body as a whole. Applications are available each spring and members are appointed annually by the DORSL and the Dean of Students. The main functions of the ISC are to:

- Increase the visibility of religious, spiritual, philosophical, and ethical life on campus;
- Actively work to identify, challenge, and transform religious and philosophical prejudice, discrimination, and violence on campus and beyond;
- Work to increase the religious and philosophical literacy of the campus and provide balanced education about religious and ethical life in our society and world;
- Organize opportunities for interfaith dialogue, service, and celebration (e.g., forums and panels, Interfaith Service Days, Multifaith Thanksgiving Celebration, etc.);
- Respond to significant global, national, or local events that would benefit from an interfaith response (e.g., 9/11, Qur'an burning and violence, natural disasters, etc.);
- Provide opportunities to highlight the connection of religious and philosophical communities and practices to wellness, mental health, community wellbeing, etc.;
- Promote communication, dialogue, and collaboration among campus religious and philosophical communities, with special attention to marginalized communities;
- Help connect ORSL with various student communities (e.g., Conservatory and Arts and Sciences academic departments, Multicultural Resource Center, Bonner Center for Service and Learning, Oberlin College Dialogue Center, Friendship Initiative, etc.);
- Provide a student voice and advice to the DORSL on matters of religious and spiritual life policy and program; and
- Provide a formal student connection to interfaith activities locally, regionally, nationally, and globally (e.g., Oberlin Area Cooperating Ministries, Interfaith Youth Core, Coming Together Conference, Parliament of the World's Religions, etc.).

\* Religious and philosophical pluralism was defined by Harvard University Professor Diana L. Eck, director of the Harvard Pluralism Project, in her article "Neighboring Faiths: How Will Americans Cope with Increasing Religious Diversity" (*Harvard Magazine*, September-October 1996). Eck says that religious and philosophical diversity is a fact but pluralism is an activity. First, pluralism is not mere diversity but the active engagement with diversity. Second, pluralism is not mere tolerance but the active seeking of understanding. Third, pluralism is not relativism but the encounter of deep commitments. Pluralism involves building relationships, mutual learning, and dialogue, and it moves toward identifying common interests and taking common action for the common good.