

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RELIGIOUS LIFE

Mission Statement

Fostering a vibrant university community that encourages the pursuit of meaning through spiritual reflection and free inquiry, provides fair opportunities to participate in religious life, advances mutual understanding and respect among differing traditions – and in all these ways, strengthens us to actively engage in building a just and peaceful world.

The Ethical Framework

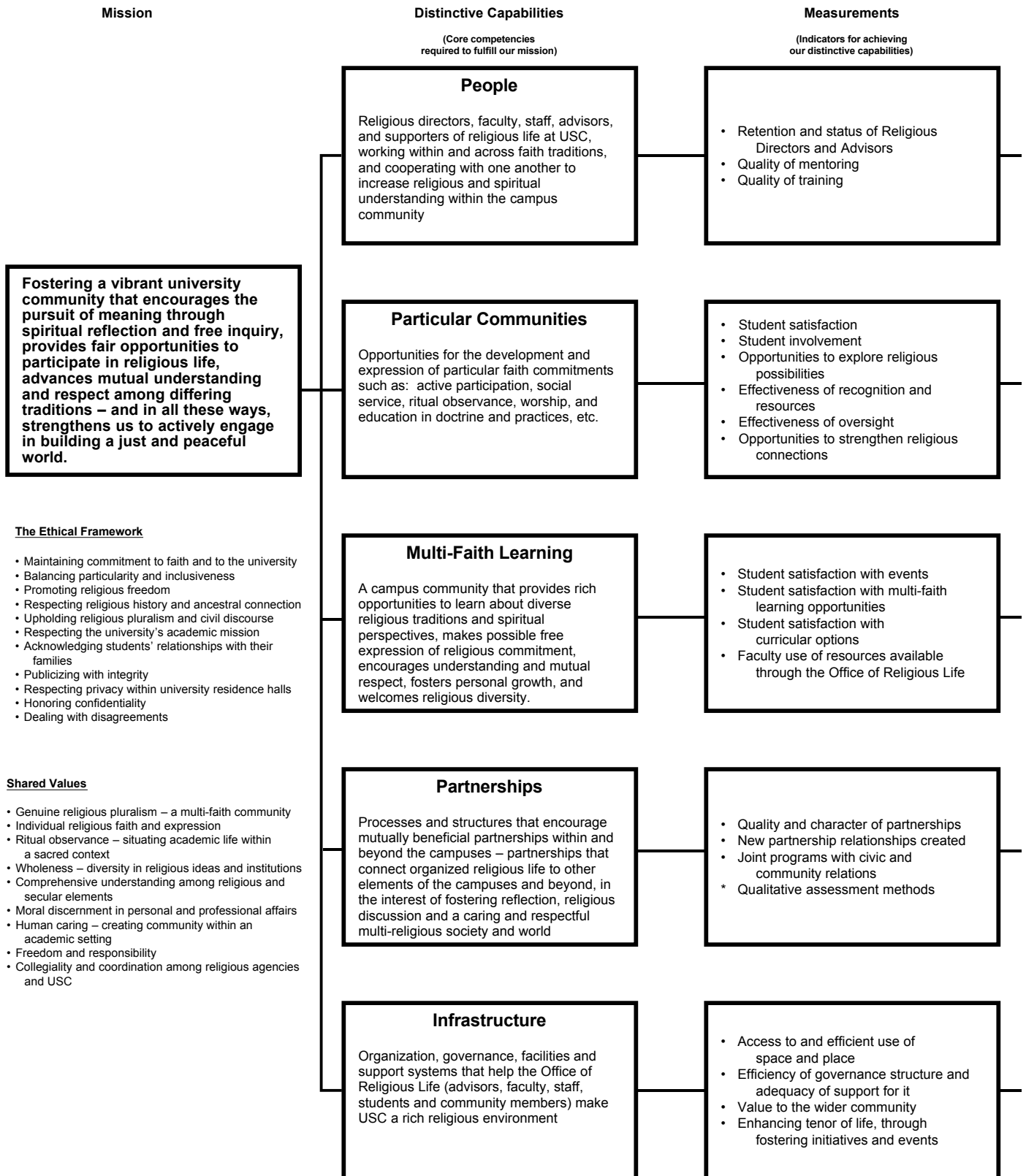
Religious directors and their staff, religious advisors, and recognized student religious groups function within *The Ethical Framework for Religious Life at USC*, which includes:

- **Maintaining commitment to faith and to the University**
- **Balancing particularity and inclusiveness**
- **Promoting religious freedom**
- **Respecting religious history and ancestral connection**
- **Upholding religious pluralism and civil discourse**
- **Respecting the University's academic mission**
- **Acknowledging students' relationships with their families**
- **Publicizing with integrity**
- **Respecting privacy within University residency halls**
- **Honoring confidentiality**
- **Dealing with disagreements**

University of Southern California

Religious Life

Strategic Framework



Strategies

(Critical things we must do to achieve our distinctive capabilities)

- Increase the human resources within the Office of Religious Life to serve as a capacity building resource for religious groups associated with USC.
- Recruit, retain, and enhance the status and presence of Religious Advisors and Directors on campus.

- Develop systems for facilitating participation in a particular faith commitment.
- Improve University recognition and resources (funding, space, encouragement, etc.) and oversight of particular faith commitments.
- Encourage and support the representation of world religions on campus.

- Develop co- and extra-curricular options that explore different religious and ethical approaches, and encourage dialogue and spiritual exploration within the USC community by building on the success of established programs and developing new programs.
- Develop curricular options that strengthen multi-faith learning on campus.

- Identify opportunities, build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships with relevant groups.
- Facilitate interactions among religious organization partners, including access to the campus community, enhancing opportunities for religious discussion.
- Build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships between Religious Directors and members of the Division of Student Affairs.
- Serve as a resource to faculty for assistance in teaching and research in religious subjects.

- Develop and maintain a governance infrastructure that facilitates religious life on the USC campus.
- Provide adequate access to space and place.
- Develop a fund raising plan for the near, mid, and long-term needs of the Office of Religious Life.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Shared Values

Genuine religious pluralism – a multi-faith community: In this pluralistic community, particular religious traditions and expressions of faith are celebrated. Dialogue about common religious and spiritual principles is nurtured. Religious differences are accommodated.

Individual religious faith and expression: Students and the campus community are encouraged to explore the contribution that religious commitment and perspectives can make to their educational and personal goals, their social connectedness, and their overall well-being.

Ritual observance – situating academic life within a sacred context: The University's calendar is coordinated with religious occasions and supports particular religious observances by members of the campus community, within the overall framework of the academic enterprise.

Wholeness – diversity in religious ideas and institutions: We strive to extend the arenas within which students, faculty, staff, and alumni can express and integrate their ethnic, national, religious and professional identities.

Comprehensive understanding among religious and secular elements: We search out ways of integrating religion and intellectual life, faith and reason, scientific and other ways of learning and knowing, strengthening the religious voice within the overall campus conversation.

Moral discernment in personal and professional affairs: Compelling moral forums and programs enable USC students to analyze social, political, and personal issues in a sophisticated and constructive manner, addressing ethical issues that arise within particular professions, as well as those of general human applicability.

Human caring – creating community within an academic setting: The University aims to strengthen the bonds connecting USC students, faculty, staff, and alumni as a caring community, serving as a focal point for painful and joyous news, and helping to provide meaningful structures for mourning and celebration.

Freedom and responsibility – a fair environment: We strive to sustain a fair campus environment that balances the rights and needs of both individuals and groups, monitoring the line between legitimate and destructive modes of expression.

Collegiality and coordination among religious agencies and USC: We strive to strengthen the mutually beneficial relationship between community religious agencies and the University through maintaining an updated, coherent structure for religious life on campus.

People Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Increase the human resources within the Office of Religious Life in to serve as a capacity building resource for religious groups associated with USC.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the Columbia University model in increasing the staffing of the ORL, adding two professional positions (ecumenical). Position titles are to be determined. The additional staff complement would address the following task areas: <i>(See Infrastructure Strategy #1.)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – An annual training program for Religious advisors and directors that would cover a variety of leadership and management areas such as: fundraising, developing student leaders, program planning and evaluation, budgeting, etc. – A significant mentoring and coaching initiative, which would utilize both peer mentoring as well as utilization of the professional staff within the ORL as assigned coaches/mentors – Professional growth, orientation to and support in working within the USC "system" – Support for religious directors/advisors who do not have a sponsoring institution – Development and distribution of a benefits directory 		

Particular Communities Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop systems for facilitating participation in a particular faith commitment.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a hard hitting short video spot (like the USC “University of the 21st Century” piece) to be shown during the formal orientation when parents and students are together. It should be geared toward college students and emphasize: the diversity of religious life on campus, the opportunities to explore, even the opportunity to “re-discover” one’s own particular faith commitment. • Develop a workable system for students to voluntarily identify their religious affiliation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop a CD similar to what is used for fraternity/sorority rush and/or transform the Religious Interest Card into an electronic format with links. – For the first month of each semester, run an ad in the Daily Trojan with a copy of the Religious Interest Card. – In the first month of the academic year, send a religious registration reminder via a broad email message (undergraduate and graduate students) with related materials. • Create a task force or structured conversation among religious directors in order to develop opportunities for faculty and staff to interact with students in their particular faith commitment. One idea would be to establish a Religious Mentoring Program, run by the Office of Religious Life that includes all the major faith traditions (but not all the groups). 	<p>Fall 2003</p>	

Particular Communities Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop systems for facilitating participation in a particular faith commitment. (Continued)

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a climate in Religious Life in which Religious Directors are willing to respect the students who decide to explore other religious opportunities, and where Religious Directors see one other as resources and team members in meeting the religious and spiritual needs of USC students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Continue to provide information to all students regarding all recognized religious groups, and opportunities to learn about them. – Encourage students to understand their own particular traditions more deeply in the course of learning about other traditions. – Develop ways for students to be offered more opportunities to connect with faculty/staff of their particular faith community. – Develop ways for particular faith communities to extend invitations and engage with faculty/staff commitments of particular faith communities other than their own. – Create a climate which helps students appreciate that along with the intense physical, intellectual, and emotional growth in college years, there is also a dynamic of spiritual and moral growth. 		

Particular Communities Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Improve University recognition and resources (funding, space, encouragement, etc.) and oversight of particular faith commitments. (Continued)

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with the Director of Campus Activities concerning the feasibility of a “streamlined” recognition process for student religious organizations. (Continued) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Clarify criteria and conditions for recognizing groups that are “sub-groups” or affiliated groups within a particular faith community. There may be good reasons for separate recognitions, and if these are well communicated and understood, needless proliferation or subdivision of groups might also be avoided. • Review the procedures for fund allocation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Review procedures for allocating funds in the Religious Life budget to be made available to religious groups for special events. Are current levels adequate to the amount of activity and the number of religious groups? – Review procedures for religious groups to apply for funds for special events. Are current practices perceived to be clear and fair? Should events involving two or more groups receive priority for funding? Why? Should two recognized groups that are essentially from the same particular community qualify for joint event funding? 	<p>Fall 2003</p>	

Particular Communities Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Encourage and support the representation of world religions on campus.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a system to identify the particular faith commitments of our current student population. Once this data is collected then we can identify some possible strategies to provide support for those religions that are not represented on campus. 	Fall 2003	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a mechanism (possibly a letter and survey for faculty and staff to complete and return to the appropriate Religious Director) to determine the particular faith commitment and interest of our faculty/staff. If the faculty and staff are willing to be notified, then the religious director / advisor can contact the faculty and staff in order to ascertain the amount of time and energy they are willing to give to that particular faith commitment 	Fall 2003	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a short video presentation that could be shown during the formal summer orientation program for both students and parents. This video could encourage students to have at least one religious interaction with a group other than their own. 	June 2004	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a protocol for the Dean of Religious Life to administer a “grant” for a particular world religion that is not represented at the university. These negotiations would also include dialogue with possible community resources. The grant would be for a specific period of time and would be deemed as “seed money” to get the group established on campus. 	Fall 2003	

Multi-Faith Learning Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop co- and extra-curricular options that explore different religious and ethical approaches, and encourage dialogue within the USC community by continuing the success of established programs and developing new programs.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the “What Matters to Me and Why” series. • Develop a series of roundtable discussions involving campus constituencies, on critical issues related to religion (i.e., religion and science, or politics, or art, or the media, etc.) • Bring high profile speakers to campus, perhaps as part of the President’s Distinguished Speakers series. • Continue the annual Multi-Faith Celebration. • Expand funding opportunities for events sponsored by different faith traditions. • Work with academic units and centers on an annual conference or colloquium on selected topics (e.g., Beyond Violence, Science and Religion, Religious Plurality, Sacred Music, etc.). • Encourage the Daily Trojan to continue its Religion and Ethics column. 		

Multi-Faith Learning Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop curricular options that strengthen multi-faith learning on campus.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose a new “Religious Perspectives on Culture and Society” class taught or co-taught by the Dean of Religious Life. • Collect and list existing course offerings across campus that address some major aspect of religion. • Bring together faculty from various departments to explore the possibility of developing an interdisciplinary minor on religion. • Serve as a resource to faculty for assistance in teaching and research in religious subjects: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Develop mode of communicating Religious Directors’ and Office of Religious Life’s expertise to the USC faculty. 	Spring 2004	Office of Religious Life Faculty Senate

Multi-Faith Learning Strategies and Actions

Measures of Success

Measurement Category	Operational Specifics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student satisfaction with events • Student satisfaction with multi-faith multi-faith learning opportunities • Student satisfaction with curricular options • Faculty use of resources available through the Office of Religious Life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep track of student and other attendance at events sponsored by the Office of Religious Life. • Collect student and other evaluations from events sponsored by the Office of Religious Life. • Add some religious/spiritual life questions to the freshman and graduate surveys. • Student evaluations for proposed class and year on year enrollment trends • Keep track of class visits and presentations by Religious Directors and members of the Office of Religious Life.

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Identify opportunities, build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships with relevant groups.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a systematic inventory of all those relevant groups, at the University Park and Health Science campuses and the surrounding communities, which are current and potential future partners. These include: Academic units, student organizations (religious and non-religious), external community religious groups, external community non-religious groups, USC administrative units, and Religious Directors and Advisors. The inventory should provide basic descriptive information about each organization (e.g. religious affiliation, location, leadership) as well as a description of the nature of the relationship, if any, with the Office of Religious Life. First year focus on partnerships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – External Relations – Admissions – Student Affairs – University Events – Auxiliary Services – Student Senate – Academic Cultural Initiative 	Fall 2003	Office of Religious Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare inventory results to its established priorities and goals in order to identify and prioritize needs for new or enhanced partnerships. This analysis should then become the foundation for an action plan to expand, sustain, nurture, or enhance partnerships as needed to foster religious discussion and caring community outreach. 	Fall 2003	Office of Religious Life

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

**Strategy: Identify opportunities, build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships with relevant groups.
(Continued)**

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the focus of the Office of Religious Life to beyond the campuses proper and develop fuller lines of communication with external partners. 	Spring 2004	Dean of Religious Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm the Office of Religious Life’s commitment to the Ethical Framework as the foundation for building or expanding partnerships. 	Fall 2003	Dean of Religious Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute periodic meetings, one-on-one or in small groups, with Religious Directors and Advisors to follow issues about partnerships and to ask, generally, “How are we doing together?” 	Spring 2004	Dean of Religious Life

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Facilitate interactions among religious organization partners, including access to the campus community, enhancing opportunities for religious discussion.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a web-based database and clearinghouse to (a) connect religious groups with each other, with the campuses, and with the communities surrounding the campuses, and (b) inform the campuses and surrounding communities about various aspects of religious life at USC. This site should be easily accessible and provide convenient “one-stop shopping” for users interested in events and holidays, organizations, contact people, and distinctive competencies of our partner individuals and organizations that are relevant to the purpose of the site. Responsibility for maintaining the clearinghouse should be shared among the involved groups. 	Spring 2004	USC and Religious Organization Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put on a fair or showcase through which religious groups can present themselves to USC, students, faculty and staff. Office of Religious Life and the Religious Center should be contact points but need to use all the connections they may have to maintain a variety of crosscutting networks to plug into. 	Fall 2003	USC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to enhance the fostering of religious discussion, including maintaining a list of seminars, courses and speakers that have religious dimensions or implications, and to help support caring community outreach. 	Fall 2003	Office of Religious Life Religious Center

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Build and maintain mutually beneficial partnerships between Religious Directors and members of the Division of Student Affairs.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble a team of four persons (two full-time Religious Directors and two persons from the Division of Student Affairs) to discuss how to facilitate fuller communication and coordination of activities related to students. 	Fall 2003	Office of Religious Life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene an event that brings together Religious Directors and each of the relevant division areas of responsibility (e.g. physical and mental health, residence halls, the Row, international students, leadership development and volunteerism, ethnicity, gender issues, student organizations, peer review). The goal of the event would be to establish specific strategies to enhance the communication and coordination between the Religious Directors and the Office of Student Affairs. 	Spring 2004	Four-person team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor the implementation of the strategies identified at the event. 	Spring 2004	Four-person team
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble a list of the relevant contacts within the Division of Student Affairs for the Office of Religious Life to use for facilitating communication and coordination with Religious Directors. Update the list on a periodic basis. 	Fall 2003	Four-person team

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Serve as a resource to faculty for assistance in teaching and research in religious subjects.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop mode of communicating Religious Director's and Office of Religious Life's expertise to the USC faculty.	Spring 2004	Office of Religious Life Faculty Senate

Partnerships Strategies and Actions

Measures of Success

Measurement Category	Operational Specifics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality and character of partnerships • New partnership relationships created • Joint programs with civic and community relations • Qualitative assessment methods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spring 2004 assessment by ORL • Spring 2004 evaluation by ORL • Spring 2004 review of joint programs by ORL • Utilize qualitative methods to assess the quality and character of partnerships, including in-depth interviews, focus groups, case studies survey questionnaires, and analyses of program records. (Spring '04 by ORL.) Questions to address include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do we have the strategic partners we set out to cultivate? – Have we implemented the kinds of partnerships we set out to realize? – Are our partnerships achieving their intended outcomes? – In what ways have our partnerships served the Office of Religious Life, the partnership organization, USC at large, and the broader communities surrounding our campuses? – To what extent do partnerships reflect the shared values and ethical framework of ORL? – What suggestions can partner organizations provide for enhancing or expanding their partnership to the mutual benefit of both partners?

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop and maintain a governance infrastructure that facilitates religious life on the USC campus.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<p>Short-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the Office of Religious Life to include one additional religious professional, and one additional staff person. <p>The role of the second religious professional would be determined by Rabbi Laemmle and that person, but would include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Spending significant time on the Health Sciences Campus – Carrying out recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee – Sharing oversight of Religious Directors and Advisors – Sharing oversight of ROC [Religious Organizations Council] – Initiating a mentoring program for new Religious Directors and Advisors – Sharing functions of counseling, advising, media work, interfaith programming – Performing liturgical functions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The second staff person would be administrative/clerical and her/his job description would include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Taking on some of the functions currently in Sherry Caudle’s position, including at the Health Sciences Campus – Assisting in carrying out the next phases of the Strategic Planning process – Supporting some of the program and publicity needs of the office – Assisting in management of scheduling and space needs of religious groups at the University Park and Health Sciences Campuses. 		Dean of Religious Life

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

**Strategy: Develop and maintain a governance infrastructure that facilitates religious life on the USC campus.
(Continued)**

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
----------------------	------	----------------

<p>Mid- and Long-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because the expansion of the Office of Religious Life has yet to be determined, we have not made set recommendations for mid- and long-term plans. However, we foresee that in the future there may be need for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Increased staffing proportional to the growth of the Office of Religious Life – Institution of an Advisory Council if a multifaith center is built, to be comprised of Directors/Advisors who through application commit a percentage of their time to multifaith programming for the University – Necessary staffing to manage the proposed multifaith center. 		
--	--	--

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Provide adequate access to space and place.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop recommendations for best and highest use of URC and UUC facilities as short term plan <i>(See supplemental report: Recommendation of UPC Facility Capacity.)</i> • Develop long term plan for a multi-faith center <i>(See supplemental report: Concept for the Multi-Faith Religious Center.)</i> • Develop a plan for contemplative spaces on the campuses. <i>(See supplemental report: Concept Overview for Campus as Spiritual Garden.)</i> 		

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

Strategy: Develop a fund raising plan for the near, mid, and long-term needs of the Office of Religious Life.

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<p><i>Perceived fund raising needs: Support for program, endowment, and capital construction.</i></p>		
<p>Near-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial needs are a USC budget line item to increase the budget of the Office of Religious Life to accommodate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The recommended two-person staff increase – To accommodate the rental of additional space for new staff and other critical new space, e.g., dedicated prayer space. • With the approval of the strategic plan, write the fund raising case statement. <p>Mid-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resolution of all outstanding issues on the URC gift agreement • Hire additional staff for fund raising. • Recruit a committee of high level community volunteers to assist in fund raising. 		

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

**Strategy: Develop a fund raising plan for the near, mid, and long-term needs of the Office of Religious Life.
(Continued)**

Action Step / Result	Date	Responsibility
<p><i>Perceived fund raising needs: Support for program, endowment, and capital construction.</i></p> <p>Mid-Term (Continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop overall fund raising strategy for the ORL, including materials, prospect lists, and solicitation strategy. • Submit proposals, as opportunities are discovered, for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Programs of the ORL, and – Endowment to support programs and operating costs of the ORL <p>Long-Term</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop plans for the Multi-Faith space, and associated fund raising plans. • Develop plan for contemplative spaces on both campuses and the associated fund raising plans. 		

Infrastructure Strategies and Actions

Measures of Success

Measurement Category	Operational Specifics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to and efficient use of space and place • Efficiency of governance structure and adequacy of support for it • Value to the wider community • Enhancing tenor of life, through fostering initiatives and events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious organizations have a sense of home on the USC campus. • Religious directors/advisors have access to appropriate administrative, operational, worship, meditation, and storage space with which to serve the USC community best. • Having adequate access to facilities to foster initiatives and events • An expanded Office of Religious Life supports the needs of Religious Directors, Advisors and students and produces an increasing number of substantial programs, positively enhancing USC’s tenor of community life. • There is appropriate communication among all members of the Office of Religious Life. • Community and religious leaders and USC alumni show their appreciation for the goals and activities of religious life on campus by increasing their support for and participation in USC religious life. • Development of fundraising strategy to support religious life • Through education, worship and shared service supported by the expanded ORL and within a multi-faith center, students, religious directors and advisors build understanding and tolerance that assist the campus community to weather times of national and global stress.