

## Resources

If you are concerned about a friend who you think might be getting involved with a cult, if you have been approached personally and want to discuss it, or if you have questions or concerns about cults on campus, there are people you can talk to about it. Talk to the Dean of Students Office, the Counseling Center, or come and talk to one of the campus clergy listed below.

The Reverend David O’Leary  
University Chaplain  
Goddard Chapel  
X 73427  
[David.oleary@tufts.edu](mailto:David.oleary@tufts.edu)

The Catholic Chaplain  
To Be Announced  
Catholic Ministry  
The Interfaith Center at Tufts  
53 Winthrop Street, Medford  
x 73427

Jeff VonWald  
Chaplain  
Protestant Ministry  
The Interfaith Center  
58 Winthrop Street  
X 72097  
[Jeffrey.VonWald@tufts.edu](mailto:Jeffrey.VonWald@tufts.edu)

Rabbi Jeffrey Summit  
Chaplain  
Jewish Ministry  
Granoff Family Hillel Center  
x 73243  
[jsummit@tufts.edu](mailto:jsummit@tufts.edu)

Muslim Chaplain  
To Be Announced  
Islamic Ministry  
The Interfaith Center at Tufts  
58 Winthrop Street, Medford  
x 73427

## UNDERSTANDING CULTS

The University Chaplaincy at Tufts, united in the interfaith association of chaplains, is concerned about the tactics of high-pressure religious groups in dormitories and at other places on campus. These groups are often referred to as “cults.”

In response, we have designed this brochure to help you – as a Tufts student – understand better what a cult is and know what resources you can contact if you are approached or if you are concerned about a friend who you believe is becoming involved in a cult.

The united University Chaplaincy supports a variety of religious activities on campus. We rejoice in the religious plurality of Tufts. We are opposed to religious harassment, and we affirm the roles of personal freedom, open critical reflection and doubt in healthy religious growth.

## Religious Student Groups recognized by the Chaplaincy Office

As of 2008-2009, the following are officially recognized by the Chaplain's Office as student religious organizations at Tufts:

Asian Christian Fellowship

Baha'i Student Association

Buddhist Student Association

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon)

The Catholic Community at Tufts

Tufts Hillel (Jewish)

Hindu Student Council

Muslim Students at Tufts

Orthodox Christian Student Fellowship

Protestant Student Fellowship

Tufts Christian Fellowship (InterVarsity)

Tufts University Unitarian Universalisms

Protestant Ministry (and churches who welcome Tufts Students)  
Southern Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, Unitarian  
Universalist, United Church of Christ, and United Presbyterian.

### Some Things to Look Out For

Some religious groups attempt to pressure individuals to accept religious beliefs which they do not already practice. If you become concerned about a group you have joined, observe the group's responses to you and how you feel. If you are sometimes uncomfortable or find a number of

the following statements to be true about a group with which you are becoming involved, you should seek advice from a trusted person, outside of this group, and reconsider your involvement.

1. Does the group seem too perfect? Do people agree and accept all orders cheerfully?
2. In the group, do you find yourself without enough private time? Enough nourishment? Enough sleep?
3. Does the group claim to have "all the answers" to your problems? Does the group make claims they cannot fulfill?
4. Does the group make it difficult to place phone calls, receive letters, visit with old friends, or discuss your thoughts with people you trust that are not in the group?
5. Does the group say that your parents and friends cannot understand or help you with religious matters?
6. Is it unacceptable to have doubts about what the group teaches or does? Is doubt seen as a sign of weakness?
7. Does the group view all aspects of your former life as bad? Is the group reluctant to accept you as you are? Do you feel pressure to change?
8. Is it proper to deceive people for the sake of the group?
9. Are you uncomfortable with the group's attitude towards women or a particular racial or ethnic group?
10. Does the group encourage you to put their meetings before all other commitments, including studying?

Adapted from "Finding the Right Path," by Rabbi Richard J. Israel, and from *Ministries with Young Adults*, a publication of the Lutheran Church in America, with additions.