

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 one of the campus clergy listed below.

The Reverend David O'Leary
University Chaplain
Boston/Grafton/Medford
Goddard Chapel
X 73427
David.Oleary@tufts.edu

Lynn Cooper
Catholic Chaplain
The Interfaith Center at Tufts
58 Winthrop Street, Medford
x 72044
Lynn.Cooper@tufts.edu

Rachael Pettengill
Protestant Chaplain
The Interfaith Center
58 Winthrop Street
X 72097
rachael.pettengill@tufts.edu

Rabbi Jeffrey Summit
Jewish Chaplain
Granoff Family Hillel Center
x 73242
Jeffrey.Summit@tufts.edu

Naila Baloch
Muslim Chaplain
The Interfaith Center at Tufts
58 Winthrop Street, Medford
x 72065
Naila.Baloch@tufts.edu

Website: www.tufts.edu/chaplaincy

UNDERSTANDING CULTS

The Office of the University Chaplain 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 Office of the University Chaplain 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. One hundred thousand questions does not equal one denial.

Some Things to Look Out For

Religious Student Groups recognized by the Office of the University Chaplain

As of 2011-2012, the following are officially recognized by the Chaplain's Office as student religious organizations at Tufts:

- Baha'i Student Association
- Buddhist Sangha at Tufts
- The Catholic Community at Tufts
- Christian Scientists at Tufts
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Mormon)
- C.A.F.E. (Conversation, Action, Faith & Education)
- Eastern Orthodox Fellowship
- Hindu Students Council
- Muslim Students Association
- Protestant Students Association
- Tufts Athletes Christian Fellowship
- Tufts Campus Hope (Adventists)
- Tufts Christian Fellowship (Intervarsity)
- Tufts Free Thought Society
- Tufts Hillel (Jewish)
- Tufts University Unitarian Universalists

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.

Does the group seem too perfect? Do people agree and accept all orders cheerfully?

In the group, do you find yourself without enough private time? Enough nourishment? Enough sleep?

Does the group claim to have "all the answers" to your problems? Does the group make claims they cannot fulfill?

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?

Does the group say that your parents and friends cannot understand or help you with religious matters?

Is it unacceptable to have doubts about what the group teaches or does? Is doubt seen as a sign of weakness?

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?

Is it proper to deceive people for the sake of the group?

Are you uncomfortable with the group's attitude towards women or a particular racial or ethnic group?

Does the group encourage you to put their meetings before all other commitments, including studying?

Are you pressured to pay money to get to the "next level" or be a better person?