

# POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL LIFE AT MARY BALDWIN UNIVERSITY

Approved by Executive Staff, October 2024

## Pledge of Inclusivity

“We, the community of Mary Baldwin University, strive to celebrate humanity in all its wondrous and complex variation. Because we value diversity, it is our mission to sustain a community where all may flourish. We are safe to embrace our shared experiences and our differences. To this end, we treat all with respect and compassion.”

## Introduction

The spiritual flourishing of all members of the Mary Baldwin community remains the priority of the Office of the Chaplain, which oversees the university’s religious and spiritual life. The Office of Chaplain facilitates private space for prayer and maintains a lounge for multifaith use; supports the formation and sustainability of student clubs for religious and spiritual identities; and consults and connects with the community in celebration of religious diversity. The University Chaplain holds advanced training and experience in interfaith leadership and maintains religious and non-religious inclusivity as the standard for life together in the community. The university atmosphere upholds a diversity of religious faiths and spiritual expressions, a multifaith environment, in which practices and beliefs are productively engaged with the dignity and worth of all persons respected.

Any student, staff member, faculty, or community member seeking to engage in ongoing ministry, religious fellowship, or spiritually oriented gatherings at Mary Baldwin must consult with the University Chaplain regarding religious and spiritual life policies and standards. We place great value in partnerships with individuals from religious and spiritual communities who want to provide religious and spiritual care for students. This document is to ensure that affiliate partnerships will adhere to university norms and expectations so that relationships may continue with consistency and mutuality.

## Solicitation, Proselytization, Conversion, or Recruitment

Because we value embracing shared differences and experiences, no outside person or group can target or approach students on any Mary Baldwin campus or on MBU’s official social platforms. No outside person or group can knock on doors, hand out literature or unsolicited flyers, refuse to accept “no” as an answer, physically touch, denigrate or de-legitimize a person’s identity, religion, philosophy, or lack thereof. For the entire community, we expect no activity that pressures, coerces, or judges on the bases of religious affiliation or non-affiliation; any such unsolicited attempt inside the classroom or on any campus—Staunton or Murphy Deming or

online—is not acceptable in order that all may flourish. Any invitation for conversion must be made in an openly advertised context, and be purely invitational in nature, with recipients free to answer honestly. If any person or group wishes to recruit students, they are welcome to post an invitation on Mary Baldwin’s public announcement forum so that students can “opt in” and feel undisturbed by external solicitors.

## Classification of Groups

### *Student Clubs and University Sanctioned Groups*

Student clubs are recognized through the Office of Student Engagement and fully comply with the Inter-club Council policies and procedures. University groups and organizations are staff-led programs. For instance, the Office of the Chaplain houses the university group known as Quest. Religious and spiritual student clubs and groups may not require a student to affirm any statement of faith. Student clubs and university groups may invite guest speakers.

### *Religious Affiliates: Non-University Groups, Ministers, and Other Religious Organizations*

Religious affiliates are professionals who are authorized representatives of diverse religious and spiritual traditions, who are not employed by the university, to participate in and nurture spiritual life at the university. Religious affiliates, such as missionaries, campus ministers, or other religious representatives, remain valuable for the role they fill in supporting students. Because students lead the way at Mary Baldwin, the best way for a religious affiliate to engage is through the sponsorship of an existing student club. If a religious affiliate does not have the endorsement of an existing student club or university group, they must work with at least one student leader and have the sponsorship of at least one faculty or staff member. The student leader may or may not be a member of any student club or university group. The student or faculty/staff sponsor will reserve space and publicize on campus through the proper channels.

## Policies for Religious Affiliates

### *Approval Process*

The Office of the Chaplain, in consultation with the Vice President of Student Engagement, must approve all community affiliates before they begin working with students. The Office of the Chaplain requires a registration process. Before beginning any activity at the university, any affiliate group must register with the Office of the Chaplain, with final approval provided in consultation with the Vice President of Student Engagement. Employees of the university who wish to act on campus as a religious affiliate—and therefore outside of their usual roles as employees—must also register with the Office of the Chaplain in the spirit of transparency and accountability. Affiliates must present credentials, such as an official appointment letter from

their representative organizations and agencies, and those not employed by the university must demonstrate proof of insurance.

### *Expectations*

No affiliate may use or have access to the student activity funds. Student clubs and university groups may use the Mary Baldwin University name as part of the organization's name, but an affiliate may not. Missionaries, campus ministers, and other volunteers who are not employed by the university should not publish on any outside website or communication that they work "for" or even "at" Mary Baldwin. Rather, they should state that they work on behalf of their organization to support Mary Baldwin. The sponsoring organization's identity must clearly be noted in all publications and at all interactions. Affiliates may not share contact information of any student unless they have written permission from the student. Affiliates may not hold any programming in residential housing. We recognize that many affiliates raise funds to cover salaries and expenses. Any development work with students and their families must be approved beforehand by the University Chaplain and University Advancement.

Approved affiliates are expected to abide by all university policies and standards. Affiliates must comply with the non-discriminatory policies of the university. Transparency in the missions and visions of the organizations is necessary, as is full disclosure that those missions and visions may not align with those of the university. For instance, if an organization holds missions and by-laws that suggest LGBTQ people need conversion, those missions and by-laws cannot be enforced or sustained at the university. Another example is that affiliates may represent denominations that do not grant people of other religions as full affirming partners in faith.

The affiliates are subject to annual review, must update contact information at least once a year, and attend an annual meeting with the University Chaplain. The University Chaplain and the Vice President of Student Engagement reserve the right to revoke an affiliate's status at will and at any time.

### Reporting and Support

We are committed to respecting and supporting the religious and spiritual traditions represented at the university. The multifaith atmosphere means that religious and spiritual life activities are designed to create a safe place for students to grow, encounter new traditions, and even ask questions about their own worldviews. For anything related to faith sharing, or religious and spiritual support, contact the Office of the Chaplain: (540) 887-7044 or [Chaplain@marybaldwin.edu](mailto:Chaplain@marybaldwin.edu). Incidences in which bias or prejudices are present should be reported through our bias reporting system: <https://marybaldwin.edu/meet-mbu/dei/reporting-bias/> Students are also encouraged to seek out support from the Chief Diversity Officer, the Office of Inclusive Excellence (OIE), and LGBTQ Resources in the Office of Student Engagement.