

Educational Learning Community Proposal Form
Office of Research and Faculty Development

Upper Stanley Nelson Centre, Contact Person: Dr. Bill Strom,
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Name of Proposed ELC: Spiritual Vitality at TWU

Proposed by: Bill Strom, Associate Director of Faculty Development (ORFD)
Please send your application to strom@twu.ca.

Duration: September 2008 – March 2009

Schedule and Meeting Place: Academic Meeting Room (Upper Stanley Nelson Centre); weekly, at least initially. One hour. Time TBA.

Facilitator / leader: To be discerned among interested faculty and student life staff. Membership is open to faculty, student life staff, staff, and students.

Purpose/Goal: To investigate the current means by which spirituality is practiced and expressed at TWU among students, faculty, and staff across the university. To assess and describe the current spiritual climate at TWU, provide alternative models of spirituality on campus, and provide recommendations to the administration as to how campus spiritual life may be developed.

Rationale / Need: The President's call to envision and strive toward educational vitality necessarily includes a vision for spiritual vitality on a campus where we espouse Christian living and faith expression. To date, however, we have not examined spirituality among students, staff, and faculty nor are we able to make recommendations based on credible data. A few facts signal the need for such a study, namely, 1) the seeming decreased biblical and theological knowledge student appear to hold upon entering the university, 2) the diversity of denominational roots (or lack thereof) among students, staff, and faculty, 3) current diverse expressions of spirituality on campus (in the classroom, in chapel, in service learning opportunities, etc.), and 4) the increased number of international students for whom Christian faith and expression are either new or non-existent, to name a few. Moreover, the 2007 edition of the Mars Hill titled "The Great Divide" indicated that, among students, great discrepancy exists in student religious worldviews at TWU. These facts indicate that a thorough study of spirituality on our campus would give us a starting point for future discussion and action.

Resources: (suggested reading list; open for revision)

(1) Foster, Richard. *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of the Christian Faith*. HarperSanFrancisco, 1998.

(2) Henry, Douglas V.; and Michael D. Beaty (eds.) *Christianity and the Soul of the University*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006

(3) TWU Faculty Retreat feedback on the five questions prepared by Dr. Tony Cummins, namely: (15 pages)

1. Historically the Church and its academic institutions have been shaped and sustained by various fruitful traditions of Christian spirituality. In what ways do these traditions inform your own vocation – e.g., as a teacher, scholar, professional - and to what extent are they collectively represented at Trinity Western University.
2. “The Christian university must be a university of a particular kind; that is, it should provide a foundational and formative education rooted in Jesus and the gospel, and in the rich Christian spiritual and intellectual tradition, with its commitment to faith seeking understanding and to wisdom broadly conceived.” To what extent should this be true of TWU?
3. On student spirituality at TWU: (a) overall, currently what does it look like; (b) in particular, how is it manifest in the classroom context; and (c) how does the academic discipline(s) being studied engage and develop the students spiritually?
4. What role – if any - should Christian Scripture and theology play in relation to the intelligibility and integration of the academic disciplines within TWU, and thereby to the spiritual and intellectual formation of its students?
5. After considering the above questions, and by way of brain-storming (only), what steps might be taken to cultivate an all the more deep-seated spiritual vitality on our academic campus at TWU?

(4) On-campus research among faculty and student life staff as to how they conceptualize and practice spirituality and Christian integrative thinking and formation in the classroom and their research.

(5) On-campus research among students as to how they practice and perceive spirituality and Christian integrative thinking and living at TWU.

March 1, 2008