Interfaith Leadership:
Self-Reflection Tool for Higher Education Professionals

The purpose of this resource is to provide educators a tool for self-reflection and assessment of their interfaith leadership skills. The questions in the tool are based upon the competencies for engaging religious identity, outlined by the American College Personnel Association's Commission for Spirituality, Faith, Religion and Meaning,[1] which contribute to interfaith cooperation and religious pluralism.

There are several ways educators can utilize this tool in their work.

- Use it as a tool to help staff orient themselves to their strengths and challenges regarding interfaith engagement.
- Use it as a way to determine individual professional development efforts in the coming semester or year.
- Use it as a pre- and post-test for evaluating interfaith training programs.
- Use a selection of the questions in student and/or paraprofessional assessment.

It is important to note that this reflection is subjective, and focuses chiefly on helping individuals process and critically evaluate their experiences with religious and worldview engagement. This tool can be a useful starting point for interfaith reflection or a way to assess what areas of interfaith work should be given deeper attention.

	On a scale from 1–4, with 1 being the least and 4 being the most, rank your confidence in (or agreement with) the following statements:				
1.	I am aware of current national and global events that involve religion and religious diversity[2]	1	2	3	4
2.	I know what faiths and philosophies are represented in the student body of my institution	1	2	3	4
3.	I know how the students I work with most closely identify religiously/spiritually/non-religiously	1	2	3	4
4.	I understand the religious needs (observance practices, dietary restrictions, holidays) of my students and the institutional policies for accommodating those needs	1	2	3	4
5.	I know where to find resources to enhance my own knowledge or to support my students in their religious/spiritual/secular needs	1	2	3	4
6.	I am aware of topics and issues that may be divisive among religious/spiritual/secular groups	1	2	3	4
7.	I can articulate my own religious, spiritual, and secular beliefs and values	1	2	3	4

8.	I can communicate why interfaith cooperation is important from the vantage point of those values	1	2	3	4
9.	I can facilitate relationship building between students from different spiritual, intentionally secular, and religious communities	1	2	3	4
10.	I can plan interactive programs, events, and/or projects focused on interfaith cooperation	1	2	3	4
11.	I feel I can confidently guide students through more difficult aspects of dialogue—deep disagreement, clashes between ideas, etc.	1	2	3	4
12.	I am aware of the groups/belief systems/religions I am **most** comfortable engaging	1	2	3	4
13.	I am aware of the groups/belief systems/religions I am **least** comfortable engaging	1	2	3	4
14.	I believe that building relationships with people of different beliefs is important to building a diverse and peaceful society	1	2	3	4
15.	I have the desire to make the case for interfaith cooperation as a civic imperative, an element of multicultural competency, and a crucial element of a well-rounded education	1	2	3	4

Reflection

Review your responses to each question:

1. What themes or patterns do you see in your responses? For example, do you tend to rank yourself higher in areas regarding knowledge and lower in areas regarding engagement (or vice versa)?

2. What implications do these patterns have for your work?

3. What opportunities could you seek out to build on your existing strengths, and to develop the areas where you feel less confident?

References

[1] Kocet, M. and Stewart, D-L. (2011) The Role of Student Affairs in Promoting Religious and Secular Pluralism and Interfaith Cooperation. *Journal of College and Character*, Volume 12, No 1.

[2] Note that "religious diversity" includes the non-religious, spiritual, and unaffiliated.