Proselytizing Policy for Elon University
Overview for Website

The religious life staff and campus ministers worked together with the chaplains to produce a faith sharing policy for Elon University that applies to all religious groups, student members, and religious life staff.

Faith Sharing Statement
Some of our religions mandate evangelism and the sharing of faith. For others this is a foreign, surprising, and even disturbing notion. In order to live and work together in respectful and faithful authenticity, we advocate faith sharing as a way of being in conversation, as dialogue about the good news we discover and live towards in our faiths, perspectives, and traditions. These conversations should be initiated as invitation, with transparency as to their nature and intent. Ideally, they will occur organically between friends, in the context of relationship, friendship, and kindness. If an invitation to “conversion” is made, we trust that it will be in an openly advertised context, purely invitational in nature, that recipients will have the freedom to answer honestly, and that all relationships will be entered into with integrity and for the sake of friendship alone. **We affirm all faith sharing that is invited and welcomed.**

Safety and Choice
As in any relationship, students must be safe and have the choice to dissent or to discontinue a given conversation. We decry any form of pressure, coercion, judgment, diatribe, ganging up on, or other subversive means that call into question a person’s eternal standing or tradition, and relationships that objectify persons by making them targets or means to an evangelistic end. Our mission to be “a safe place for spiritual growth and interfaith exploration” is harmed by these actions.

Transparency of Intent
With all this in mind, we encourage transparency in publicity and relationship. Evangelistic events must be plainly identified as to purpose with the sponsoring group’s whole title and religious tradition: for instance, Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Outreach (Christian), Secular Society at Elon, MSA (Muslim Student Association), Hillel (Jewish), Iron Tree Blooming (Buddhist meditation), etc. When outside religious groups are part of evangelistic endeavors we expect those occasions to be transparently identified, and for all participating external groups to be noted, as well as the sponsoring campus groups, and to be clearly identified on all publicity. All external groups or speakers participating in campus programs must be registered with the Chaplain.

Pamphlet and Flyer Distribution
All flyers and publicity for religious organizations and events must be approved by the Chaplain. The student organization or department sponsoring the event must be clearly identified. Pamphlets for outreach to the campus must also be approved and follow the faith-sharing policy. Off campus advertising will not be approved for display. See Moseley Campus Center for additional information on Elon University’s policy for advertising, publicity, and flyer posting.

Reporting an Incident or Concern
In the unfortunate circumstance that a member of our community finds themself the target of high pressure or subversive faith sharing, or has any concerns related to faith sharing, please report the details immediately to the office of the Chaplain. Call 278-7729 or email Chaplain Jan Fuller.
Proselytizing Policy – Full Policy and Examples

In order to live and work together in respectful and faithful authenticity, to foster transparency, and to ensure the spiritual and emotional safety of members of our community, the Truitt Center for Religious and Spiritual Life has adopted the following guidelines for religious organizations and professionals on the Elon University campus.

Proselytizing, evangelizing, and faith sharing is welcome when it is invited.

In order for faith sharing to be invited, the intention to share one’s faith must be clearly indicated and expected. We hope that many will be sharing their beliefs and traditions. At the same time, when a “conversion” is hoped or expected, we expect members of our community to ask and receive permission to share on this level, and for their intentions to be clear.

- May I share my faith and beliefs with you?
- Would you be willing to attend an evangelistic meeting where we would invite you to become a ......? You can say yes or no.
- My religious community will present our tradition and faith. Would you be willing to attend?
- (standing at a religious table) May I give you a flyer? Would you like information about...?
- This service/meeting will include an invitation to become a.... You have a choice, and we hope you won’t feel pressure. Are you OK with that?

We abide by Elon’s flyer policies and the Truitt Center’s Policy for distribution of free religious material on campus, which pertains to internal and external groups.

While Elon recognizes that appropriate expressions of evangelism may be integral to a group’s religious convictions and activities, the following behaviors are examples of actions that are not acceptable:

- Door to door or other organized campaigns within residence halls,
- Random or unsolicited visits to student rooms,
- “Cornering” a student in his/her room by several members of a religious group without a clear invitation or understanding of the purpose of the visit,
- Beginning one conversation as a “set up” for a move to proselytizing,
- Denigrating or de-legitimating a person’s religion or philosophy, or lack thereof,
- Blanketing campus rooms, sliding flyers under doors, filling mailboxes with unsolicited literature,
- Posting unsolicited religious statements on or around a student’s door,
- Literature or “witnessing” where individuals cannot easily or comfortably avoid being approached by those distributing the literature,
- Refusing to accept “no” as an answer to literature, conversation, or conversion,
- Persistence in personal invitations to a group meeting or activity after the invitee has clearly indicated a desire not to participate,
- Pressure and deception,
- Practices that discourage critical, independent thinking,
- Practices that ask students to sever ties with close friends and families who are not members of a group or religious perspective.

Students must be able to dissent or to leave a conversation at any time.

Students invited to attend any meeting hosted by a religious group or having a religious theme must be told the identity of the group hosting the event. They must further be given an accurate description of the content of any meeting, and promotional flyers must provide this information as well. An evangelistic or conversion event must be so marked.
All external groups, organizations, churches, and/or religious leaders who participate in campus programs must be registered—in advance—with the Chaplain, and their participation must be clearly identified in all publicity.

Students who accept an invitation and then indicate a desire to leave should be allowed to do so without the appropriateness of their departure being questioned. If the meeting takes place off campus, those hosting the meeting should assist the student in returning to campus immediately.

All marketing and publicity materials from religious life groups on Elon’s campus must clearly identify the sponsoring organization and the organization’s religious tradition: for instance, Inter Varsity Christian Fellowship, Campus Outreach (Christian), Secular Society at Elon, MSA (Muslim Student Association), Hillel (Jewish), Iron Tree Blooming (Buddhist meditation). This includes outside speakers, performers, and religious groups who come to Elon’s campus as the guests of campus religious organizations.

All forms of pressure, abuse of power dynamics, coercion, judgment, diatribe, ganging up on, or other subversive means that call into question a person’s eternal standing or tradition, and relationships that objectify persons by making them targets or means to an evangelistic end are unacceptable in a multi-faith environment. Our mission to be “a safe place for spiritual growth and interfaith exploration” is harmed by these actions.

Consequences for Violations

Religious organizations on Elon’s campus are subject to penalties as determined by the University Chaplain. These consequences might include budget restrictions, mandatory sensitivity training, additional oversight from the University Chaplain, limitations on room reservation access, or dismissal from Elon University’s campus.

Pamphlet and Flyer Distribution

All flyers and publicity for religious organizations and events must be approved by the Chaplain. The student organization or department sponsoring the event must be clearly identified. Pamphlets for outreach to the campus must also be approved and follow the faith-sharing policy. Off campus advertising will not be approved for display. See Moseley Campus Center for additional information on Elon University’s policy for advertising, publicity, and flyer posting. <http://www.elon.edu/e-web/students/campuscenter/fund.xhtml>

Reporting an Incident or Concern

In the unfortunate circumstance that a member of our community finds themself the target of high pressure or subversive faith sharing, or has any concerns related to faith sharing, please report the details immediately to the office of the Chaplain. Call 278-7729 or email Chaplain Jan Fuller.

Statement of Agreement for Religious Life Staff

All religious life staff, staff affiliates, and campus ministers agree to abide by Elon University’s Proselytizing Policy, to educate their students and student leaders about the policy, to ensure that students and any outside speakers or guests comply with the policy, and to work with the University Chaplain and appropriate Associate Chaplain, if applicable, when there are problems or concerns about faith sharing in their group

---

Religious Life Staff: Sign and Print Your Name
Organization
Date

Adopted 2.5.2014