



## Religious and Spiritual Services

February 2003

### Purpose

The goals of this survey were to learn more about the religious and spiritual needs of students and services they would like to see in the newly expanded Center for Ethics and Religious Affairs.

### Implications/Highlights

Respondents were more likely to describe themselves as spiritual rather than religious. Approximately a third saw a relationship between their religious or spiritual values and daily decisions or personal behaviors. Most (92%) said their current religious affiliation is the same as it was before coming to college. A half (51%) hope the expanded Center will provide space for meditation.

### Participation Rate

N = 902

Phone: N = 475 of 814 contacted (58%)

Web: N = 427 of 2000 contacted (21%)

### Findings

Two-fifths of the respondents described themselves as spiritual and one-third said they were religious.

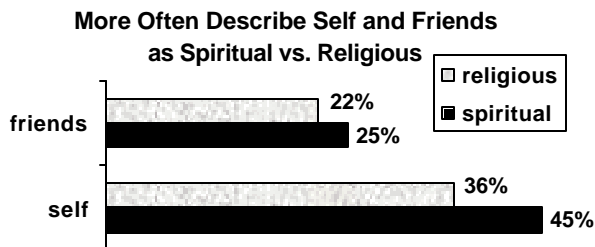


Figure 1. More students described themselves and their friends as spiritual than as religious

More of the graduate students (59%) than of the undergraduate students (44%) considered themselves to be spiritual persons.\* Women were more likely than men to describe their close friends as spiritual\* and religious.\*

One example of a student response describing the difference between spiritual and religious follows:

“Spiritual is to be in contact with oneself, one’s universe, and possibly some greater entity. To be religious is to subscribe to a particular set of shared beliefs, sometimes including particular rules and rituals.”

\*Statistically significant at the .05 level

Students were asked to what extent their religion and/or spirituality impacted their daily decisions, personal behaviors, choice of activities and friends, future significant other, and exclusion of relationships with those whose lifestyles were different from their own.

### Impact of Own Religion or Spirituality

	some or great impact
daily decisions	32%
personal behaviors	40%
choice of activities	25%
choice of friends	13%
future significant other	39%
exclusion of others	10%

A majority of respondents indicated feeling more knowledgeable since coming to college about their own and other religious and spiritual affiliations.

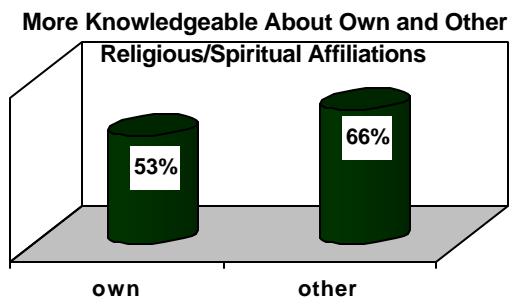


Figure 2. Students felt more knowledgeable since coming to college about their own and other religious/spiritual affiliations

Seniors and juniors were more likely than sophomores and first year students to say they were ‘far more knowledgeable’ about their own religious/spiritual affiliation\* and about other religious/spiritual affiliations\* since coming to college.

When asked, most students said their current religious affiliation was the same as it was before coming to college.

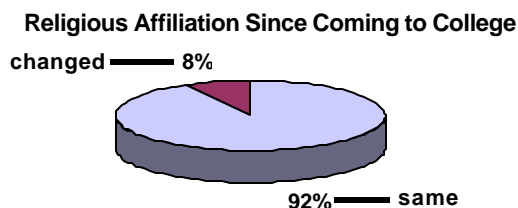


Figure 3. Most students did not change religious affiliation

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Division of Student Affairs

Nearly half of respondents felt there was local community and campus support for religious and spiritual groups and a third felt the student climate was supportive.

**Supportive Climate for Religious and Spiritual Groups**

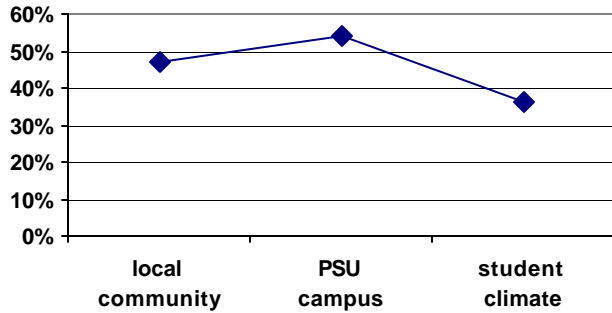


Figure 4. Students were asked how supportive they felt the climate was for religious and spiritual groups

A small number of students reported that the presence of their religious/spiritual group contributed to their decision to come to Penn State (2%) or to remain enrolled (3%). Eight percent said they are currently involved as a member of a religious or spiritual student organization.

More than a quarter of the respondents (29%) said they had been in the Eisenhower Chapel Center. Most had been there for worship services or programs; others had been there for personal discussions and quiet meditation. One percent went to discuss wedding plans.

**Reasons for Visiting Eisenhower Chapel Center**

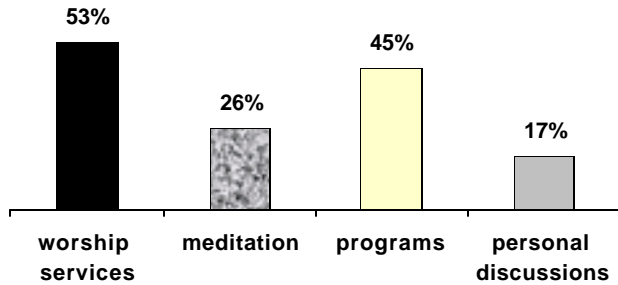


Figure 5. Students visited Eisenhower Chapel Center for worship services, programs, personal discussions and meditation

Minority students\* and students who lived off campus\* were more likely to be there for programs.

More of the sophomores (45%) than of the first year students (26%), juniors (23%) or seniors (19%) said they were there for quiet prayer or meditation.\*

A majority of students said that their current religious and spiritual needs were being met.

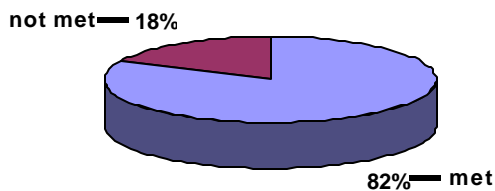


Figure 6. Most students said their religious/spiritual needs were being met

Twenty-one percent said they regularly attended religious services or events. Those who attended said they went to an average of 14 on campus and 12 off campus since last August.

**Attended Services/Events Since August**

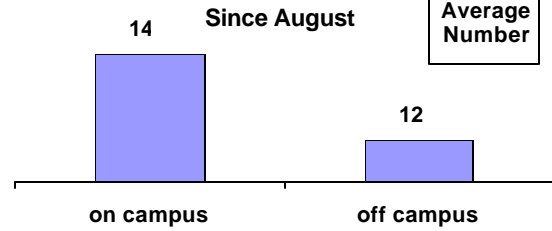


Figure 7. Attendance at religious services since August

Students were alerted to the anticipated opening of the expanded Eisenhower Chapel/Pasquerilla Center and asked what services they thought would be important to provide.

**Important Services for Expanded Center**

space for religious services	67%
space for individual meditation	51%
programs on religion and spirituality	55%
social and cultural programs	64%
campus discussions relating personal decisions and ethical values	53%
religious mentors for students	46%

When asked what factors would encourage respondents to feel comfortable approaching religious leaders, students were most likely to mention availability and having information on how to make contact.

**Factors That Encourage Approaching Religious Leaders**

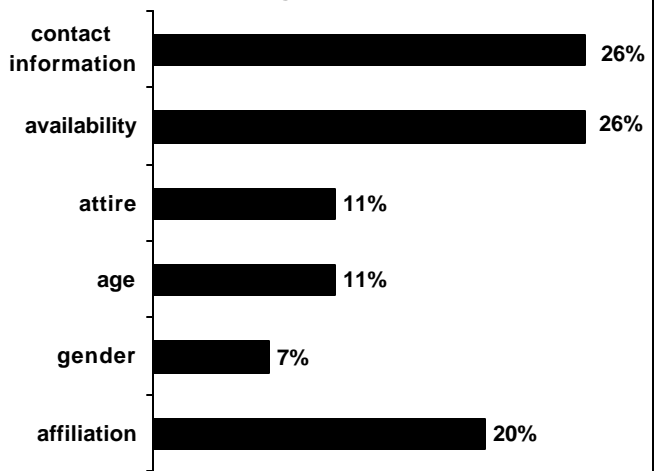


Figure 8. Students were asked what factors would make them more comfortable approaching religious leaders

Students indicated the effectiveness of various communication modes to inform them of what is offered by the Center.

**Effective Information Sources**

45%	posters/flyers	19%	Web Event calendar
33%	Collegian ads	17%	The Center Website

\*Statistically significant at the .05 level.