THE PRESIDENT’S INTERFAITH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE CAMPUS CHALLENGE

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http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/presidents-interfaith-challenge/
PART I: PRESIDENT’S CHALLENGE PARTNERS

UNIVERSITY OFFICES & CENTERS:

- Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs
- Catholic Studies Department
- Center for Contemporary Arab Studies
- Center for Minority Educational Affairs
- Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding
- Center for Social Justice Research, Teaching and Service
- Center for Student Programs
- Chaplains and Jesuits in Residence
- The College
- Faith in Action DC
- Faith Leaders for Community Change
- Film Studies Department
- The Gelardin New Media Center
- Government Department
- Georgetown Public Policy Institute
- GUWellness
- History Department
- Human Resources
- Kalmanovitz Initiative
- McDonough School of Business
- Mission and Ministry
- Mortara Center
- Office of Campus Ministry
- Office of Communications
- Office of the President
- Philosophy Department
- Program for Jewish Civilization
- Program in Education, Inquiry and Justice
- Program on Justice and Peace
- Psychology Department
- Residence Life
- School of Continuing Studies
- School of Foreign Service
- School of Nursing and Health Studies
- Theology Department
- Women’s Center
- Woodstock Theological Center

STUDENT PARTNERS:

- Alternative Spring Breaks
- Armenian Students Association
- ASK Coordinator
- Blanket New Orleans
- Catholic Daughters
- Catholic Graduate Student Fellowship
- Catholic Student Association
- The Corp
- Cristo Rey Tutoring
- DC Reads Coordinator
- DCSP Coordinator
- Education and Social Justice Project
- The Gathering
- Georgetown First Book
- Georgetown Friends of Turning the Page
- Georgetown Israel Alliance (GIA)
- Georgetown Jewish Sisterhood
- Georgetown University Buddhist Meditation Sangha
- Georgetown University Young Scholars (GUYS)
- The Georgetown Voice
- Girl Talk
- Graduate Student Council
- GU Brothers for Christ
- GU Sisters for Christ
- GU Students Association
- GU Urban Debate League Alliance
- Georgetown University Student Association (GUSA)
- Georgetown Habitat For Humanity
- Hindu Student Association
- The Hoya
- Hoya Outreach Programs and Education (H.O.P.E)
- International Relations Club
- Jewish Student Association (JSA)
- JUHAN
- Justice and Diversity in Action Living-Learning Community
- Kino Border Immersion Student Leader
- Knights of Columbus
- Latter-day Saint Students Association (LDSSA)
- Magis Immersion
- Georgetown University Math and Science Hands-On Enrichment
- Georgetown University Native American Experience
- Muslim Interest Living Community
- Muslim Student Association
- Orthodox Christian Fellowship
- Patrick Healy Fellows
- Georgetown University Prison Outreach
- Project Hilltop
- The Protestant Student Forum
- Social Innovation and Public Service Project
- Bring on the Books Initiative
- Students of Georgetown, Inc.
- Student Interfaith Council
- Sursum Corda Literacy Program
- Thai Society
- UNICEF – Georgetown
- Georgetown University Urban Debate League
- Georgetown University Young Scholars

We would like to recognize the support of the Doyle Engaging Difference Initiative.

http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/presidents-interfaith-challenge/
COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- 826DC
- A-SPAN
- Alexandria County Detention Facility
- L'Arche
- Arlington County Detention Facility
- Arlington-Alexandria Coalition for the Homeless
- Barbara Chambers Children's Center
- Best Buddies of Northern Virginia
- Boys and Girls Club of Greater Washington
- Boy Scouts of America
- Buxton Initiative
- Capital Area Food Bank
- Capitol City Public Charter School
- Carver 2000 Senior Center
- Cesar Chavez Public Charter School for Public Policy
- Cristo Rey Don Bosco High School
- Damien Ministries
- DC Central Kitchen
- DC Court Social Services
- DC Public Schools (various)
- DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative
- DC Reviving Baseball in Inner-Cities
- Deanwood Recreation Center
- Downtown Cluster
- Eastland Gardens Community Center
- Elder Buddies
- Faith in Action DC
- Fishing School
- First Book
- Food and Friends
- Fr. McKenna Center
- Girl Scouts of America
- Habitat for Humanity of Washington, DC
- Ideal Public Charter School
- Kenilworth Community Center
- Kid Power DC
- KIPP DC Charter Schools
- Little Light Urban Ministries
- Martha's Table
- Mary Mcleod Public Charter School
- National Coalition for the Homeless
- New Beginnings
- Office of DC Councilmember Yvette Alexander
- Paradise/Parkside Community Center
- Paul Public Charter School
- Perry School
- Rosemount Center
- Sasha Bruce Youthwork
- Spanish Education Center
- St. Elizabeth Hospital
- Thurgood Marshall Academy
- Tony Blair Faith Acts Fellows
- Tunnels to Towers Foundation
- Turning the Page
- Urban Debate League of Greater Washington
- We Are Family
- Washington Animal Rescue League
- Washington Literacy Council
- Washington Parks and People
- Weatherize DC
- A Wider Circle
- YMCA

 Students & Eboo Patel at Year-End Symposium: Adrian Prado (Georgetown), Shivam Gosai (George Washington University), Kyleen Burke (Gordon College), Azhar Ali (Syracuse University), Kieran Halloran (Georgetown), Eboo Patel, Aamir Hussain (Georgetown)
PART II: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of the many successful activities we engaged in this year, we would like to highlight the student-driven “25 Days of Service” initiative that took place in October 2011. This project is a successful example of our goal to promote sustainable, impactful work on Georgetown’s campus that widely engages our community in simultaneous interfaith dialogue and interfaith service work. Established by the student Patrick Healy Fellows, this initiative brought diverse student groups together in active service to our local community and active reflection for 25 consecutive days. The project concluded with an interfaith roundtable discussion to reflect on the importance of being ‘men and women for others.’ The successful initiative engaged 28 different student clubs along with faculty and staff, and set an ambitious goal for the rest of the year: to actively serve our community as a campus, while actively reflecting on the faith and/or ethical commitments that call us to this work.

PART III: ADVANCING INTERFAITH SERVICE

Through the Challenge, Georgetown continues to build upon a long tradition of commitment to service and community involvement. With a focus on education and poverty alleviation in the greater Washington area, thousands of students participated in regular and one-time service activities during the year. Below are some of the highlights:

- Over 500 students have participated in weekly tutoring and mentoring activities, working with underserved children and adults in schools, community centers, and homes.

- Over 600 total students participated in a day of service focused in Ward 7 at the beginning of each semester, serving alongside community members at 25 different locations, including neighborhood cleanups, the Deanwood Recreation Center, and Carver 2000 Senior Center. Interfaith reflections were held following the service work, focusing on subjects such as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s legacy as an interfaith leader and social justice advocate.

- During Georgetown’s “25 Days of Service” program, students focused their work on serving the homeless community and neighborhood cleanups. This program creates meaningful impact
in the community and important dialogue among diverse student organizations who do not traditionally join together, thus aligning with the spirit of the Challenge.

- Georgetown hosted over 1,000 school children on College Awareness Days from DC area schools, exposing them to college culture and interacting with them through field games and other activities.

- Georgetown expanded its alternative break programming and sent over 290 students, staff, and faculty for service and immersion experiences domestically and abroad. These experiences explored border communities, immigration, labor, education, housing, health, and urban renewal. An interfaith dialogue and reflection session followed the trips.

- We held numerous drives on campus to raise awareness of the link between our faith, values, and service commitments. We raised nearly 500 lbs of food for the Capital Area Foodbank in a joint can drive with Syracuse University. Relay For Life raised over $201,000, bringing Georgetown’s total raised for the American Cancer Society since 2006 to over $2 million. Bring on the Books, a new student-driven initiative, collected over 3,300 books for needy children.

Georgetown continued regular outreach programs to the homeless community in Washington.

- Each week, 10-15 students distributed food in Dupont Circle and engaged in conversations on faith and service.

- Twice a month, 6-10 students conducted a “mobile soup kitchen” to distribute meals in parks at Franklin Square, the World Bank, and other locations.

- Twice a month, 5-12 students participated in “Knit for the Needy” by knitting scarves, gloves, and other cold weather wear.

- Students collected over 300 dental care kits and information for distribution at DC General family homeless shelter.

- Students donated the dollar equivalent of remaining meals from their meal plans to support Martha’s Table.

- Georgetown planned a Hunger and Homelessness Week in November, in which over 100 students participated. Events included a solidarity sleepout to raise funds and awareness for the Covenant House; participation in the Fannie Mae Walk for the Homeless; stocking canned and dry goods at Capital Area Food Bank; and hosting homeless advocacy speakers.

- Students participated in weekly meals and meetings at Grace’s Table, a local homeless day shelter.

- Georgetown held its annual “Move Out Drive,” collecting reusable items to donate to Keys for the Homeless and other nonprofit organizations.

**PART IV: ADVANCING INTERFAITH ENGAGEMENT**

This year, Georgetown reached approximately 1000 students and 1500 total participants (faculty, staff, community members) through our interfaith engagement initiatives. We achieved this widespread community involvement and awareness through our events, community outreach, and online community.

**Events & Community**

Numerous programs this year have encouraged personal spiritual growth along with active reflection on Georgetown’s interfaith environment. These events provided opportunities for the community to engage in meaningful dialogue across traditions.

Highlights included:

- **Faith and Service Roundtables**: At these monthly reflections that have become a new campus tradition, the university community joined together to contemplate a particular theme (9/11 Remembrance Through Service, 25 Days of Service, Thanksgiving, Vocation in Careers) as it relates to their community service and interfaith experiences. Each Roundtable hosted approximately 30 individuals, including White House representatives and community leaders.

- **Interfaith 9/11 Prayer Vigil and Service Projects**: To honor the tenth anniversary of September 11th, our university community joined together in remembrance.
Interfaith Service through Basketball Rivalry:  
A GU Student Reflects on Successful Partnership with Syracuse

Basketball and religion are often the most divisive issues among universities, but this year, Georgetown and Syracuse changed that narrative and integrated both of them into an exemplary, unprecedented, inter-collegiate partnership. Both campuses were strongly committed to interfaith cooperation through the White House Interfaith Challenge, and leading up to the Georgetown vs. Syracuse basketball game on February 8, 2012, we emphasized our common goal to combat hunger by holding a canned food drive. At Georgetown, we kicked off this can drive as part of our Jesuit Heritage Week, and reflected on the Jesuit ideals of “Men and Women for Others,” “Inter-religious Understanding,” and “Faith and Justice.” Not only did we collect over 500 lbs. of food, but we also motivated seemingly disparate Georgetown organizations such as The Corp (our student business), Residential Life, and Campus Ministry to collaborate.

-Aamir Hussain, President, Georgetown Interfaith Council

Student representatives from different religious traditions presented prayers and reflections to mark the day and participated in community service projects.

- **Interfaith Thanksgiving Prayer Service**: At this annual tradition with over 50 participants, student representatives from nine different spiritual backgrounds provided reflections on how their faith tradition calls them to be grateful.

- **Religious Services Open Houses**: A unique opportunity to learn about faith traditions through direct participation/observation, members of the Georgetown community opened their hearts and minds to the university's diverse spirituality by visiting eight worship services offered on campus during both the Fall and Spring semesters.

- **Faith in Conversation Series**: A program of sustained dialogue among students of nearly all faith or non-faith traditions at Georgetown, which is rooted in sharing personal experiences, appreciating differences, and asking the tough questions about faith/spirituality in small discussion groups.

Interfaith Service Online Community

Georgetown created a new online community where students, faculty, and staff share reflections on their personal commitments to faith, values, and service. This year our community contributed 62 blog posts, and we produced 27 videos pieces on our work, which can be viewed on the Berkley Center website. This website has become a valuable and prominent tool for advancing interfaith cooperation on campus. The site also hosts a set of resources on poverty and education in Washington, DC to inspire service work; on planning interfaith dialogue and service events; and on on mapping interfaith dialogue work on campus, in the community, and around the world.

- **The President’s Challenge Blog**: Students, faculty, and staff have written 62 blog posts on numerous topics related to faith and service. These excellent essays demonstrate a high level of reflective thoughtfulness and awareness of Challenge goals. They have been cross-posted on other websites, including IFYC, received attention on Facebook and Twitter, and serve as a campus forum for writing about faith and service.

- **Interview Series**: Students have interviewed leaders in the campus and DC communities who exemplify the values of faith and service, but whose stories are not often highlighted. The hope is for these interviews to serve as a resource and inspiration for others to serve their community through their faith and ethical commitments.

- **Media**: The Challenge website hosts 27 videos covering the year’s work. Our Facebook page is used daily with 150+ likes and hundreds of photos of our work. We actively use Twitter with hashtags #GUbettertogether and #WHinterfaith. Challenge events have received considerable coverage from campus media outlets, including the Georgetown University homepage and student newspapers *The Hoya* and *The Georgetown Voice.*

Campus Partner Events:
Over 150 events were sponsored by campus partners in the President’s Challenge over the past year. The list is available at:

http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/presidents-interfaith-challenge/events

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PART V: IMPLEMENTATION, DOCUMENTATION, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

Challenge events at Georgetown were actively tracked throughout the year. Participating campus organizations were surveyed so that events – including contact information and an event summary – could be posted on the President’s Challenge website in advance to maximize participation. Our active tracking efforts provided additional publicity and facilitated deeper communication among partner organizations.

Following each event, the sponsoring campus organization completed an evaluation form to report on the success of their event. The form tracked dates, number of participants, locations, descriptions, other details, and importantly, reflections from the organizers. This information was transferred into a chronological spreadsheet, cataloguing each event and its details. In total, more than 150 events were sponsored by campus partners as part of the President’s Challenge.

Monthly faith and service roundtable meetings and active social media use were instrumental in evaluating events and ensuring their sustainability. The roundtables hosted open dialogue between a broad cross-section of the university community on topics concerning the Challenge, and broadly the connections between service and interfaith dialogue. This helped to establish a campus-wide sense of support and investment in interfaith outreach work, which in turn helped secure the ongoing success of the program across our campus.

The creation of the President’s Challenge website and blog space strengthened our ability for community members to evaluate, reflect, and update others involved in the Challenge. This web presence helped develop a vibrant and strong interfaith service online community that includes more than 62 blog entries and 27 videos. Both the videos and blog posts enabled participants to share their experiences and reflections with our wider community.

Both the blog and monthly roundtable meetings will continue for Year 2 of the Challenge and beyond, as a natural part of Georgetown’s institutional support for continuing to sustain the productive dialogue initiated this year through Challenge events and programming.

The campus continues to be transformed by the lasting impact of the initiatives created as part of the Challenge. For example, the 25 Days of Service initiative, in partnership with the Patrick Healy Fellowship, brought student groups together to pursue a wide variety of community service. Other lasting initiatives include open houses throughout our faith communities, MLK Day of Service, Spring Break Services trips, and food drives.

Ensuring the continued success of interfaith service and dialogue are grassroots, student-led efforts. The Georgetown Student Interfaith Council created an initiative called “Faith in Conversation” (FIC). This program, created to deepen interreligious dialogue between students, is rooted in sharing personal experiences, appreciating differences, and asking thoughtful and thought-provoking questions. FIC offers an opportunity not only to learn about others and their faiths, but also to experience spiritual growth in one’s own tradition.

The strong cross-campus partnerships that were developed among many different campus groups will help to ensure that interfaith dialogue and service continue to evolve and grow to create real and positive change on our campus and in our community into the future.

http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/projects/presidents-interfaith-challenge/
PART VI: FEEDBACK

During the past year, we have:

- Deepened connections between campus faith communities and begun new anti-poverty and educational initiatives with an interfaith component.

- Integrated interfaith cooperation more strongly into the Georgetown culture by addressing the intersection of religion, service, and our Jesuit identity at all White House Challenge events.

- Furthered faculty-student-staff dialogue around interfaith and social justice issues through faculty-student exchanges and symposia.

- Strengthened Georgetown University’s ties with DC-based interfaith communities engaged with education and poverty issues.

The Challenge provided an opportunity to consciously deepen and capture the connections that our community forms through interfaith service to others. We realized our goal to capture the often unrecorded, yet meaningful and instructive conversations and reflections that happen when our community participates in interfaith dialogue and service work. This work is an intrinsic part of our campus identity and our individual faith and ethical commitments as “men and women for others.”

Through our events and online blog we were able to reach many community members who had never participated in interfaith activities before. The opportunity to connect over shared values of spirituality and service motivated our community to go beyond theology and resulted in many new students and community members joining in Challenge events as regular participants.

The stories told in our monthly roundtables and in the blog may have occurred even if the Challenge were not tracking them, but to have them gathered in one place, accessible by the whole community, gives these reflections a power they would not have on their own.

The Year-End Symposium we held in May 2012 provided a meaningful opportunity to reflect not only on the work we did at Georgetown over the past year, but also on how we can serve as facilitators and convenors to connect and promote the excellent work occurring on other campuses in our region. We strongly believe in the power of collaboration with other schools and interfaith leaders to multiply the impact of our efforts. At the closing Symposium, we invited student interfaith leaders from George Washington University, Syracuse University, Gordon College, and other local schools to join us to reflect on the year’s work. We held a roundtable with local faith, education, and community service leaders that allowed us to learn from each others’ successes and challenges, and we were motivated by an inspirational call to action by keynote speaker Eboo Patel. Building these supportive relationships with other schools is important on several levels: our students form lasting connections and share ideas, excitement is built around our different projects, and a strong sense of solidarity and common goals is formed that will persist long after the Challenge formally ends.

In the future we would like to strengthen this collaborative aspect of our participation in the Challenge by connecting more frequently with local and regional schools, serving as a convenor for reflections and service activities, and serving as a resource to the White House in hosting such gatherings and activities. As we have done over the past year, we plan to actively capture the results of this work through video, written reflection/analysis, and online social media, so that the benefits of interfaith dialogue and service reach far beyond our campus community and connect us with others, locally or globally, who are ready to join in this important work.

“Bring on the Books” Drive