

Allegheny College. Wayne and Sally Merrick Historic Archival Center RG10 Office of Spiritual and Religious Life. 1919 - 2018 (Office of Religious Life; Religious Life)

Summary Information

Creator	Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (2010) (Creator)
Extent (quantity/size)	.33 box
Language	English
Media	Manuscripts

Subjects

religion

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access and Use	Record group is open for research use with limited exceptions indicated on the applicable folders.
Originals/Copies	All originals
Preferred Citation	When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Record Group 10 Office of Spiritual and Religious Life, Allegheny College Archives, Wayne and Sally Merrick Historic Archival Center, Pelletier Library, Allegheny College, Meadville, PA.

Administrative/Biographical History

Religious life on campus has been subject to shifts in religious attitudes and student demographics throughout Allegheny's history. It played an integral part in the founding of Allegheny College; the original Trustees felt that a college should enrich the soul as well as the mind, essentially acting as a second home to its students. To this end, mandatory attendance at chapel and organizations such as the Young Men's Christian Association and Young Women's Christian Association were established shortly after the college's founding in 1817 and continued to be a part of college life into the early 1950's. Student groups such as the Allegheny Christian Council planned and executed religious activities on campus until 1948. Different student religious organizations supervised religious life on campus, appearing and fading with student interest; the YMCA and YWCA for example, fell out of popularity as more organizations and clubs absorbed students' attention and time. Before 1948 faculty and administration had little to do with religious life beyond officiating at chapel services, which was usually done either by a faculty member or a local minister from a church in Meadville. Chapel services underwent their own changes between the 1920's and 1940's, such as attendance becoming voluntary in the 1920's, much to the relief of faculty and students.

In 1948, college president Louis Benezet hired Ralph Dunlap as the first college chaplain, an office that would gradually gain influence in religious life on campus. Until 1977, the chaplain's post had faculty status, with chaplains often teaching religion classes at Allegheny and continuing to do so after retiring from the chaplaincy. After 1977 the chaplain's post was given administrative status in order to prevent the Religious Studies department from being overloaded by former chaplains. Student organizations continued to organize religious life activities and sponsor chapel services on campus until 1955; after that students and faculty began to work together in overseeing religious life. From 1956-1994 the Religious Activities Committee, a committee consisting of students and faculty, advised the Campus Ministry about religious life on campus, while chapel services continued to be officiated by the college chaplain. A Catholic mass was added in the 1970's to serve the increasing number of Catholic students attending Allegheny. The Campus Ministry, consisting of the college chaplain and Catholic chaplain, became the first administrative supervising presence to oversee campus religious life in 1994. The Campus Ministry took on more responsibility for supervising student religious groups when Catholic groups, such as Newman, began reporting to the Catholic Chaplain. In 2000 the Campus Ministry consolidated with other religious organizations, such as Hillel, under the Office of Religious Life. The name was changed in 2011 to the Office of Spiritual and Religious Life to reflect the office's mission to guide students in developing their religious identities while learning about other systems of belief.

Chaplains serving the college

1948-1949: Ralph Dunlap
 1949-1950: Tyler Thompson (Acting Chaplain)
 1950-1955/56: Herb Picht
 1956-1957: Jim Day (interim chaplain)
 1957-1962: Charles Ketcham
 1963-1967: Richard Drevor
 1968-1969: Bruce Stephens
 1969-1983: Donald Hobson
 1983-1985: Steven MacArthur (interim Chaplain)
 1985-1993: Don Skinner

1993-1994: Timothy Solomon
1994-Ca. 2004: John Colatch
2004-2005: Aaron Kerr (interim Chaplain)
2005-2006: Don Skinner ("on call" and preached in Chapel)
2006-2022: Jane Ellen Nickell

Written by Laura Seifert, intern, March 2013

Archival Arrangement

Alpha by subject, then chronological

Item List

Box 1. Allegheny College Methodist Affiliation, 1983-2004
Box 1. Chapel Organ - concerts and performances, 1998-2001, 2015
Box 1. Chapel Organ - correspondence and Organ Committee records, 1980-2001
Box 1. Chapel Organ - specs, 1997
Box 1. Chapel Service Bulletin, 2014-2015
Box 1. Chapel Service Bulletin, 2009-2010
Box 1. Chapel Service Bulletin, 2008-2009
Box 1. Chapel Service Bulletin, 2007-2008
Box 1. Chapel Service Bulletin, 1920-2007, undated
Box 1. Chaplain's Office Correspondence, 1985-2014
Box 1. Chaplain's Office History, 2000
Box 1. "A Chronology and Critical Analysis of the Chaplaincy at Allegheny College" CONFIDENTIAL, 2007
Box 1. Department Brochures, 2001-2017, 1988
Box 1. Faith Week (Religious Awareness Week; SRL Week), 1941-2018
Box 1. Internship and Work Study Opportunities, 2018
Box 1. List of sponsored speakers, 1963 - 2020
Box 1. The Messenger (newsletter), 1995-1997
Box 1. Miscellaneous Publications, 2009-2015, undated
Box 1. Religious Activities Committee, 1977-1990
Box 1. Religious Holidays - Announcements and Calendars, 1980-2015
Box 1. Report of the Review of Allegheny College for the Univ. Senate of the United Methodist Church, 2014-2017
Box 1. Report of the Review of the AC Office of Spiritual and Religious Life, 2010
Box 1. Sample of Admissions folder used, 2011/2012 - 2016/2017
Box 1. Special Chapel Programs & Services, 1919-2019, bulk 2010-2019
Box 1. Special Chapel Programs & Services-Ash Wednesday Services, 1995-2018
Box 1. Special Chapel Programs & Services-Hanging of the Greens, 1993-2019
Box 1. Sponsored Events, 1953-2017, bulk 2007-2020
Box 1. Statement on Church Relatedness for Allegheny College by Don Covill Skinner
Box 1. Symposium on Church-College Relations, April 6, 1991
Box 1. Towns Visiting Preacher Series, 1986 - 2005
Box 1. Writings about John B. Ford (donor of Ford Chapel), 1940 and 1956
Box 2. Two Buddhist Speaking Engagements with Tempa Dukte Lama
Box 2. Lamppost Farm - Faith Week, 2015
Box 2. Passover Seder, 2017