# MORSL Multifaith Network Terms of Reference

Created: August 7, 2018
Last updated: August 8p, 2018
Author: Carlene Gardner, Director

# Background

As a proud member of Student Services, MORSL previously had an advisory board composed of students and staff, whose role was to provide feedback on MORSL's activities, policies and future direction. In addition to this advisory board, MORSL also maintained a committee of non-student 'chaplains' (volunteer clergy or elders from various faith traditions) who also had a role in providing feedback on MORSL's activity. To add to this structure, MORSL had additional categories of volunteers: a group of non-student faith liaisons (volunteer clergy or elders from various faith traditions) and a few student peer faith liaisons, recruited through MORSL or through Campus Life & Engagement. Finally, MORSL traditionally hired several work-study student casual employees each year, and the student staff were also a great source of input for MORSL.

With just two permanent staff at MORSL – a Director and an Administrative Coordinator – this heavily-layered structure required much administrative effort to convene and document meetings. Tracking outcomes was a complex task due to the slightly different types of meetings at each layer in the process. For a small unit, this structure represented a heavy burden. Furthermore, it was difficult to recruit 'statutory' student representatives from SSMU and PGSS. In fact, these representatives were often recruited from among the MORSL student staff, which did not allow for gathering a broader perspective. Finally, student-led faith clubs were not specifically invited to the table, nor were they explicitly part of any project or committee under MORSL. While at times some student employees were also involved with a faith club, we found that we were hearing the voices of the student faith clubs more by accident than by design.

In order to address these issues, **it has been decided to dissolve forthwith all such former committees and advisory boards and to create a new MORSL Multifaith Network**. This document outlines the purpose, composition and functioning of such a network.

# Purpose

The purpose of the MORSL Multifaith Network is to:
- Gather feedback on MORSL activities, policies and future direction, to be taken under advisement by MORSL staff;
- Provide a venue for sharing information about faith and spirituality projects on and off campus;
- Foster collaboration among faith-based groups on campus and our faith partners, on and off campus, whether MORSL is involved directly in the project or not.

Note that the MORSL Multifaith Network operates in an advisory capacity only. Feedback is gathered in order to enrich the data used by MORSL in planning and decision-making. The comments gathered from the Network do not in any way represent binding decisions.

# Composition

The membership of the MORSL Multifaith Network includes both students and non-students as follows:

### MORSL Staff

MORSL's incumbent Director is automatically part of the MORSL Multifaith Network, as is the Administrative Coordinator. Since MORSL intends to continue its practice of hiring student casual staff, these students shall be invited as appropriate, where the activity relates to their work area.

### Faith Volunteers (Non-Students)

MORSL is responsible for vetting non-student faith volunteers through its own internal processes. Faith volunteers may be clergy, elders, campus ministers, or other senior members of a religious or spiritual tradition who have been sponsored by their community and accepted by MORSL. Each faith volunteer shall be invited to participate in the MORSL Multifaith Network. Participation is optional but strongly recommended as there are great benefits and opportunities for the faith volunteers.

### Peer Faith Volunteers (Students)

MORSL is responsible for vetting student peer faith volunteers through its own internal processes. Student peer faith volunteers may be recruited by MORSL or through Campus Life & Engagement's volunteer programs. It has proven to be valuable for students to have a peer with whom they can discuss matters of faith, and MORSL hopes to continue to grow the peer faith volunteer roster. Once accepted by MORSL, each peer faith volunteer shall be invited to participate in the MORSL Multifaith Network. Participation is optional but strongly recommended as there are great benefits and opportunities for the faith volunteers.

### Campus Partners

In addition to the non-student faith volunteer team, MORSL may invite leadership from various campus partner services to participate in the MORSL Multifaith Network. Examples include but are not limited to administrative directors of faith-based institutions affiliated with McGill such as Hillel, Chabad house and the Newman Centre.

### Student Club Liaisons

Since our mission at MORSL is to serve students first and foremost, it is of utmost importance to gather feedback from our students. As such, each student-led faith club or association on campus shall be invited to designate a participant in the MORSL Multifaith Network. Student clubs that are officially accredited with SSMU or PGSS will be automatically invited. As there may be from time to time informal faith-based associations on campus operating without official accreditation due to low numbers, MORSL shall undertake to ascertain the existence of such groups and extend an invitation as appropriate.

### Student Associate Representatives

Since the Advisory Board structure is still in place for most Student Services units, MORSL may receive nominations from SSMU and/or PGSS. MORSL shall accept the designated representative and automatically extend an invitation to the nominee to participate in the MORSL Multifaith Network.

### Student Faculty Associations

The academic aspect of religious studies at McGill University allows MORSL to recruit potential members for the MORSL Multifaith Network from among the student faculty associations.

Examples include the Religious Studies undergraduate and graduate societies, the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies Student Council (MIISSC) and WIMESSA World Islamic and Middle Eastern Student Association, etc.

## Functioning

As noted in the Purpose section of this document, the MORSL Multifaith Network operates in an advisory capacity only. This means that there is no need to establish voting procedures, quorum, or other mechanisms that are typically used in groups charged with making binding decisions. Our purpose is to gather feedback and share information, which does not require formal mechanisms. This section outlines the general functioning of the MORSL Multifaith Network for the purpose of helping its Members understand what to expect.

### Meeting Frequency

The MORSL Multifaith Network shall meet at least once a year, with the goal of three in-person meetings: beginning of Fall, Winter, and Summer terms. Meetings shall take place on or close to the downtown McGill campus, depending on the number of participants and the space needed.

For each meeting, the Director shall set an agenda including:
- Key initiatives where MORSL is requesting feedback (activities, policies, future directions)
- Opportunity for Members to share news, events, plans with the group
- Opportunity for Members to solicit ad-hoc collaboration with MORSL or any/all Members of the Network

### Reporting

The Administrative Coordinator shall be responsible for capturing feedback (meeting minutes) and producing a summary report of each meeting. Feedback will be consolidated and presented in such a way as to be anonymous, i.e. the reader cannot identify the group or individual associated with the feedback. The report will be available to Members. MORSL will use the data in the report in its planning process. MORSL may share the content of report in part or in full, as well as other internal documents generated based on its content, with the Executive Director of Student Services.

### Ongoing Communications

In addition to in-person meetings, MORSL shall invite all members of the network to subscribe to its newsletter or other means of communication (e.g. social media, list serves, etc.) in order to maintain current knowledge of MORSL's activities, policies and future directions. When necessary, members of the MORSL Multifaith Network may receive specific emails or be contacted by telephone or other means in order to convey news or action items in the scope of the Network's activities.