



New York University
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Chelsea Clinton
Assistant Vice Provost

February 19, 2013

Dear World Interfaith Harmony Week Prize Committee,

The Of Many (OM) Institute for Multifaith and Spiritual Leadership at New York University is an innovative initiative combining academic courses with service opportunities to build a more peaceful world. As an Assistant Vice Provost at NYU as well as a founder and Board Co-Chair of the Of Many Institute, I am proud to be a part of this holistic, path-breaking program that has already had a profound impact on interfaith peace-building locally and globally.

The Of Many Interfaith Celebration Week at New York University is a perfect example of the Institute's ability to encourage and educate young people to expand their religious literacy, learn to collaborate across faith lines, and solve social problems together. In my work around the world, I have seen how this direct engagement – both with the “other” and with the community – builds the strongest foundation for sustainable peace efforts and truly transforms the world.

While the Interfaith Week has had many notable events, I was particularly impressed with the launch of the Minor in Multifaith and Spiritual Leadership, which is the first academic program of its kind at any major research institution in the United States. This launch featured some of the most well known interfaith leaders in the country, including Eboo Patel of the Interfaith Youth Corps and Catharine Henderson, of Auburn Seminary, and allowed us all to brainstorm the way forward in the field of interfaith and multifaith studies in higher education.

I was also impressed with the event: “Multiple Perspectives: An Interfaith Discussion” held between students from New York University's New York City campus and scholars from Abu Dhabi. This event showcases OM's constant work with not only those of various faiths at its home base in New York but also those of various faiths globally. OM's dedication to working with students across their academic and non-academic lives mirrors the current research on, and best practices for, student health on college campuses. Students flourish when what they learn in the classroom reflects the contemplative questions they face in their daily lives, as well as when the community service and civic engagement work in which they partake is then debriefed and contextualized in classroom settings. This is particularly true when the subject they are studying is faith and spirituality, and their service partners are from diverse faith backgrounds.

The Of Many team has made an indelible mark on the New York University campus and beyond. The Institute's Directors, Dr. Marcella Runell Hall and Yael Shy, have been passionate administrators and educators in New York for the past five years, winning multiple awards and inspiring thousands of students. Rabbi Yehuda Sarna and Imam Khalid Latif, two of the founders and senior fellows of OM, have transformed a once hostile relationship between Muslims and Jews on campus into a healthy and active learning and growing partnership. The Advisory Board, on which I am honored to sit, includes many of the foremost leaders in the religious, interfaith, and business communities.

I have no doubt that the Of Many Institute will continue to have a profoundly transformative impact on our campus and in the community for many years to come, and I am thrilled to testify to the life-changing and culture-changing work that OM is doing through events like the Of Many Interfaith Celebration Week.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Chelsea Clinton