World Interfaith Harmony Week

University of Rochester Interfaith Chapel

Interfaith Café Conversations – God vs. Gay? LGBTQIA Identity and Religion

On February 5, 2015 the Student Association for Interfaith Cooperation (SAIC) hosted a Interfaith Café Conversation evening, co-sponsored with the University’s student Pride Network, where the students discussed issues of religious identity and sexual identity and how the two at times cause conflict for those who do not fit the heteronormative expectations of society. There were 15 students at the café, many of whom do not usually come to the Interfaith Chapel and who are somewhat suspicious of religions and people of faith. The SAIC students are a mixture of Jewish, Christian, Muslim and Atheist/Agnostic/Secular Humanist students and they engaged the students from the Pride Network in very meaningful conversations. We use the World Café method of dialogue, where the students sit in small groups at café tables for several rounds of conversation, switching tables and dialogue partners with each round. At the end of the evening there is a wrap up session. This was a wonderful opportunity for students to engage in interfaith dialogue on a topic that is often avoided in interfaith settings because of its controversial nature. The students enjoyed pizza, hummus, guacamole, chips and salsa and beverages as they engaged in lively and open conversation.