

## **Dartmouth Faith and Action Recognition Status Rees-Jones Foundation Briefing**

The Dartmouth Faith and Action (DFA) student organization associated with Christian Union at Dartmouth has been denied recognition twice by the Council of Student Organizations (COSO).

### **Reasons why recognition is being sought through COSO**

1. As a student-led group at Dartmouth College, DFA students desire the same freedom of speech, freedom of association, and equal access and standing that is promised by Dartmouth and is provided to over 160 student groups through COSO.
2. DFA students desire to organize and associate as a student-led group within a student-led umbrella organization (COSO) instead of the Tucker Foundation United Campus Ministers' (UCM) Guidelines, which regulate an adult-led and supervised organization.
3. The Tucker requirement that Christian Union faculty be under the authority of the foundation automatically places the students under that same authority. This creates a burden on these students that does not exist for the students in COSO.
4. The UCM Guidelines of the Tucker Foundation are discriminatory because they do not provide equal standing and equal freedoms of expression and speech compared to Dartmouth student organizations recognized in COSO. The DFA students want the same freedoms as all other expressive groups on campus.

It is worth noting that there is an historical example of the Tucker Foundation's onerous authority structure that was used to suppress the activities of students.

In 1998, Campus Crusade for Christ students were prohibited from distributing C.S. Lewis's classic book, *Mere Christianity*. The ministry director went to local newspapers which reported the incident and the Tucker Foundation reversed their order not to distribute the book. The Tucker Foundation has since reversed this freedom and requires book distributions to be approved by the College Chaplain. No COSO organizations have to endure this kind of burden and suppression of free speech.

### **Bottom Line:**

Under the authority of the Tucker Foundation, religious life and the open sharing of ideas and activities are suppressed because of the level of control with which it exercises over religious groups and the culture of fear that is propagated that is not present for other expressive groups on campus.

The students of DFA want equal standing with all other students and to not be discriminated against by having to adhere to different policies and procedures for recognition or for their ongoing group activities.

## Timeline

### Summer 2011

- Christian Union begins outreach efforts to incoming Dartmouth freshmen to gauge interest in creating a student-initiated group focused on Christian leadership development at Dartmouth College.
- Kevin Collins, CU ministry director, meets with Tucker Foundation Director and Dartmouth College Chaplain, Dr. Richard Crocker. The meeting is cordial but Kevin is notified by Dr. Crocker that “it will be very difficult for you to be recognized as another Christian group through the Tucker Foundation.”

### Fall 2011

- September – Over fifty freshmen express interest in creating their own group focusing on Christian leadership development. They will seek recognition under the name **Dartmouth Faith and Action (DFA)** and voluntarily choose to be associated with Christian Union.
- November – After reviewing the recognition processes of COSO (The Council of Student Organizations) and the Tucker Foundation,<sup>1</sup> the DFA students decide to seek membership in COSO as a student-run organization, like 160 other student groups including For His Glory (a Christian dance group) and the Atheist, Humanist, and Agnostics (AHA) group.

### Winter-Spring 2012

- March 9, 2012 – A DFA constitution is sent to COSO board members for a preliminary decision by the student board (via Anna Hall, the COSO Chair and Associate Director for Student Involvement).
- March 14 – DFA officers are given notice by COSO members through Ms. Hall that their request for recognition through COSO may be challenged.
  - Ms. Hall states that “The students on the committee do not think that your group belongs in COSO...While you may frame your group as issue-oriented, they felt as though your group had a strong religious component, thereby belonging more in Tucker.” She continues, “At this point, you can, of course still try to propose your group to COSO.”
- April 1 – DFA officers request a preliminary meeting with a COSO board member.
  - His response was “I would be happy to speak with you, but as COSO indicated from reviewing your proposal, it appears that the substance of your organization is fundamentally rooted in a religious framework and so cannot fall under COSO (as Tucker is the only recognizing body for faith-based organizations).”
- April 5 – DFA officers meet with COSO board members in preparation for their presentation.
  - The COSO student board members state: “COSO cannot accept religious groups because we would get in trouble with the administration. They must go through Tucker. It is an unwritten rule.” Groups are sent to Tucker for recognition if they have “worship sessions or proselytize.”
- April 6 – Kevin Collins meets with Dr. Crocker, Dean of the Tucker Foundation and Chaplain of Dartmouth College, who states that a group cannot be denied recognition in COSO because of religious elements. He further shares that “it makes sense to try to go through COSO...you will get more money in COSO.” This information is given to the students for their presentation.
- The following week, the DFA officers request clarification from Ms. Hall on the recognition of religious groups within COSO. After repeated email requests for clarification (five), Ms. Hall finally responds with the answer: “All you need to know is that you are fine to present before the COSO board tomorrow.”
- May 9 – DFA leaders make their presentation before COSO. After 30 minutes of very contentious questioning and 30 minutes of closed-door deliberating, they are voted down 5-4 and denied recognition.
  - The reason given for the denial is that the group is seen as too exclusive with membership restrictions and a requirement that leaders of the group be Christians.
- May 10 – A COSO board member asks for a private meeting with DFA leaders to apologize for the inappropriate conduct of fellow board members during their presentation, stating:
  - “Personally I want to apologize on behalf of COSO because of the hard-headedness of the people there....It was adversarial and I apologize.”

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<sup>1</sup> Key differences between COSO and the Tucker Foundation can be found in Appendix A.

- “It puts a bad light on Dartmouth. It was subjective and disorganized. The fact that a group of 60 people wanted to join this group and they can’t astounds me!”
- “I think you guys should try again and I think you’ll be able to get it by the end of this term. It was split 4-5 and a very difficult decision after an unusually long debate.”

### Fall 2012

- DFA leaders make changes to the student group’s constitution as suggested by the COSO board and continue to pursue relationships with COSO board members in order to present another request for recognition.

### Winter 2013

- February 27, 2013 – DFA officers appear before COSO a second time with a new constitution including the requested COSO changes. COSO denies recognition after a one-hour meeting that is hostile at times.
  - The COSO board presents new information and reasons for denial that they did not present before or mention in preliminary conversations. DFA student leaders requesting recognition report that COSO (a supposed student-led and managed organization) was influenced by the Dartmouth administration and that denial of recognition appeared to be a pre-determined ruling. A collusive inference is derived because the reasons given by the COSO board were the same as those given to Kevin Collins via conversations with administrators before the meeting.
  - The main reason given for denial is DFA’s affiliation with Christian Union. Other points of contention include: not offering transgender Bible courses to students, having separate men’s and women’s Bible courses and retreats, and knowing the vote of the previous year’s COSO presentation.

### Spring 2013

- DFA students continue to pursue recognition as a student-led group in COSO amidst continued confusion. The COSO process appears to be random and coached by administrators instead of being “an open debate of ideas” as Dartmouth’s core values profess. So far, DFA leaders have been told the following reasons why they cannot be in COSO:
  - They have too many limits on membership.
    - Even though DFA officers looked at five other COSO group constitutions and four of them had similar membership restrictions.
  - They have worship sessions.
    - Even though there is a Christian singing group X.adon in COSO that is founded on worship.
  - They might proselytize.
    - Even though every group in COSO is organized around an interest, passion or belief that they want to share with others including the Atheists/Agnostics/Humanists group.
  - They have limits on who can be a leader in their organization.
    - Even though many COSO groups are making decisions on leadership based on certain limits: a singing group holds auditions to have quality singers leading, a Christian journal only allows their own published Christian writers to be leaders, College Democrats are sifting out possible leaders based on their passion for the Democratic party ideology and not the Republican party platform.
  - DFA is not student-led because the group voluntarily chooses to work with an outside organization.
    - Even though this impedes the right of freedom of association and forces students to only associate with people under the control of Dartmouth. Most other student organizations have some kind of influences on them outside of the University. It is random and discriminatory to only prohibit religious groups from this kind of freedom of association.
    - Also, the COSO affiliated group, Atheist, Humanists, and Agnostics (AHA) has paid staff not affiliated with the university.
  - They do not have transgender Bible courses.

- DFA and the Bible courses are open to anyone who desires to be involved. Non-believers, Native Americans, Hindus, Muslims, atheists, homosexuals and heterosexuals have all participated in, and benefitted from, Bible courses.
- They have separate men's and women's Bible courses and retreats.
  - Single gender Bible courses have been shown to be a very effective way for students to learn and grow.
  - There are student organizations recognized by COSO that are entirely separated by gender. For example, athletic groups, singing groups, and social clubs like fraternities and sororities.
- They knew the result of the vote from last year's COSO presentation.

## **History**

Christian Union exists to come alongside bright and aspiring leaders and help them discover and fulfill their God-given destiny of growing into devout and powerful culture changers. Our aim is to find students who are interested in initiating a recognized campus group that voluntarily seeks support from Christian Union and its faculty members ("faculty" is the title we use for our leadership development staff).

Student groups that receive this kind of support are recognized at Princeton (2002), Harvard (2008), Yale (2010), and Columbia (2011). Each group on these campuses has gone through the same application process as any other student group, regardless of being religious in nature. It is alarming that Dartmouth does not allow the same freedom of expression and association of religious groups as non-religious groups when these other nationally ranked universities provide this kind of freedom and respect.

It should be noted that there are chaplains' offices on these campuses of which Christian Union faculty can become members, but chaplaincy membership is not required for student groups to seek a relationship with us, nor has Christian Union ever sought such recognition for its faculty. Most of the colleges require their chaplains to sign paperwork limiting the freedom for chaplains to talk openly about Jesus Christ and salvation. This would limit our faculty's abilities to teach and speak freely. CU's policy is to not have our faculty sign anything that would limit their abilities to help the student groups that voluntarily associate with Christian Union.

Even though Princeton took three years and a letter from the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE), a secular civil rights organization, the student-led group was recognized like any other at Princeton. The delays at Princeton were never explained to Princeton Faith and Action student leaders, but a simple letter from FIRE was the incentive needed for the administration to stop holding up the recognition process.

In her response to FIRE, Princeton's President Shirley Tilghman affirms that "...students at Princeton engaging in extracurricular activities on campus are free to form organizations devoted to a wide variety of objectives. We guarantee that University recognition will not be withheld from any group pursuing lawful objectives.... These policies are important to our educational community, and we welcome the opportunity to ensure that they are being fully implemented."

Columbia, Harvard, and Yale ministries were recognized as official student groups in their first year on campus after one application attempt. Cornell is in its first year and will make its first attempt at recognition in the spring of 2013.

This brings us to Dartmouth, where some religiously-oriented student groups gain access to the larger campus community by becoming members of COSO or the Tucker Foundation. The DFA students reviewed the recognition process and membership lists of the two organizations and decided they best fit as members of COSO, the organization created to support student-led groups on campus. This is because the arbitrary and discriminatory nature of the supervision of the Tucker Foundation leads to religious groups having an unequal standing on campus. As evidenced by the timeline, the recognition process for the students wanting to create a Christian leadership development group has been confusing, discouraging, confrontational, and delayed by Dartmouth officials and COSO board members.

All the currently recognized student groups on the above Ivy League campuses are recognized through a COSO-equivalent recognition body on each campus. There is no issue for these groups or other groups recognized on these campuses that associate with non-university individuals. These groups are student-led, as are the groups CU supports. Christian Union faculty can apply as campus ministers (chaplains) if they desire to, but such recognition or lack thereof does not hinder the recognition of the student-led group. DFA wants to have the same rights that are provided to these students on the other Ivy campuses and the same rights provided to the vast majority of student organizations at Dartmouth through COSO.

### **Membership in COSO**

COSO is a student-led and managed organization. The organization consists of over 160 student groups on campus, including the Christian affiliated groups Apologia, For Your Glory, Xado, as well as the Atheist, Humanists, and Agnostics (AHA), a group the Supreme Court has defined as a religion. AHA has actually offered to help the DFA students gain membership in COSO, a gesture of goodwill appreciated by the Christian students wishing to become a recognized group.

DFA desires COSO membership because it is an organization led and managed by students, a core value and characteristic of the group these students have formed. They believe it is discriminatory and unequal treatment for them to be at an expressive disadvantage to most of the other student organizations on campus. One of the college's stated core values is "Dartmouth embraces diversity with the knowledge that it significantly enhances the quality of a Dartmouth education." The diversity of membership groups in COSO is the type of diversity that Dartmouth values and it is a value of this student group, a group seeking to enhance its education by being fellow members of COSO.

Some membership guidelines and benefits can be found at [www.dartmouth.edu/~coso/](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~coso/) and on the attached COSO application marked as Appendix D.

### **Membership in the Tucker Foundation**

The Tucker Foundation is an adult-led and managed organization. There are currently 24 religious groups with membership in the foundation. The process of gaining membership is done by adult religious organization staff and recognition is approved by the dean of the Tucker Foundation, a recognition that requires the organization staff to become campus ministers (chaplains) under the authority of the dean.

We have outlined the key differences of the adult-led Tucker Foundation and the student-led COSO in Appendix A. However, the key takeaway should be that the Tucker requirement that Christian Union faculty be under the authority of the foundation automatically places the students under that same authority. This creates a burden on these students that does not exist for the students in COSO. It is recognized that COSO groups have college faculty as advisors, but the relationship is not one of authority, only a relationship where student groups can seek wisdom from the advisors.

DFA students don't want to be governed under different processes and restrictions of the Tucker Foundation and feel like the requirement to be so is discriminatory in nature and provides unequal standing compared to the vast majority of the other student groups.

Not only that, but as explained later, there is a very real fear factor that permeates students organizations under the Tucker Foundation that COSO recognized student groups are not burdened by. Whether it is the intent or not of the Tucker Foundation, the inherent structure, with its obligations, requirements and enforcement serves as a clear intimidation factor for religious groups on campus.

### **University involvement and student antagonism**

DFA students reported that the university itself was clearly involved with coaching the 18-member student board of COSO. There were talking points the board used that were the same talking points that CU faculty member, Kevin Collins, heard from the university administration when he talked with them.

During the course of the one-hour hearing on membership (usually these hearings last 5-10 minutes) DFA students were attacked for a list of reasons that were arbitrary and irrelevant based upon the stated COSO guidelines. They were questioned and attacked for not having a transgender Bible course. They were attacked for having gender specific Bible courses for men and women. This line of attack was not in keeping with the freedom student groups have as members of COSO; a double standard had been established, but DFA is suspicious that the COSO board was not the one who created the standard.

### **Other problems that other Christian organizations are having**

In 1998, students of a campus ministry were prohibited from distributing *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis. The director went to local newspapers who reported the incident and the Tucker Foundation reversed their order not to distribute the book. The Tucker Foundation has since reversed this freedom and requires book distributions to be approved by the College Chaplain. No COSO organization has to go through this.

It should also be noted that because of the heavy and onerous authority structure of the Tucker Foundation, there is a very real climate of fear amongst religious groups at Dartmouth. Because of this climate of fear, another Christian organization has actually stated that they won't support DFA or CU because of the fear of what might happen to them if they did. Again, no COSO organization has to endure or worry about this.

### **Impact on Christian Union's work at Dartmouth**

Nearly 100 freshman and sophomores are now involved in DFA's Christian leadership development activities after only two years. While the impact of rejection is just starting to be felt, being an unrecognized group will become increasingly problematic as DFA continues to grow. Not having access to the Student Activities Fair will hinder group awareness and involvement. The use of meeting space is currently very limited and cumbersome. We are evaluating the feasibility of obtaining private property near campus that would meet many of the long-term needs of the students. However, the current student group deserves to be a part of the college campus as a student organization with the same rights and privileges as the 160 other student groups. Additionally, those 160 student groups would benefit by this group of amazing young men and women being a part of their membership.

## Appendix A

### Differences Between Student-Led COSO Groups and Adult-Led Tucker Foundation UCM Groups

COSO	Tucker
COSO Is More Student-Oriented, Tucker Is More Adult-Oriented	
<p>“As the <b>representative of student organizations</b> to the College, COSO advocates the interests of student groups in matters of policy and budgeting to appropriate College Officers and agencies.” (p. 1 COSO Structure and Guidelines)</p>	<p>“The Tucker Foundation Office of Religious and Spiritual Life (ORSL) exists to cultivate religious and spiritual life...and to coordinate and facilitate various ministries active on campus. The ORSL shall refer to the <b>collective efforts of the affiliated religious ...organizations with the term United Campus Ministers...</b>” (p.1 UCM Professional Guidelines)</p> <p>“Campus Minister applies <b>to an affiliated person who is not a College employee...</b>s/he is recognized by a religious or spiritual agency.” (p. 2 UCM Guidelines)</p>
The Tucker Foundation Recognition Process is More Complex and Difficult	
<p>“COSO will consider for recognition any organization initiated and sustained by <b>undergraduate students...</b>” (p.3 COSO Structure and Guidelines)</p> <p>“All questions before COSO shall be <b>decided by a majority of those members (students) present</b> and voting.” (p.3 COSO Structure and Guidelines)</p> <p>“The Petition for Recognition shall <b>be presented to COSO in person by at least seven of the undergraduate petitioners...</b>” (p.5 COSO Structure and Guidelines)</p>	<p>“To be considered for recognition as a UCM member, Campus Ministers...and any of their supporting staff must provide the Office of Religious and Spiritual Life with following written materials:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Documentation that confirms his/her ministry is <b>formally recognized by an ecclesiastical agency and that he/she is supported by a governing body or some type of advisory structure.</b></li> <li>2. Documentation that confirms he/she serves in a group or organization that has been properly recognized by the ORSL as an official campus ministry...</li> </ol> <p>Obtaining recognition...the potential <b>United Campus Minister must “attend</b> the next regularly scheduled monthly UCM meeting to present documents, <b>meet with the Campus Ministers and Advisors, and field questions that may arise.”</b> (Appendix A UCM Guidelines)</p>
The Tucker Foundation’s Oversight and Enforcement of Guidelines Is Restrictive and Onerous	
<p>“The Organizational Adjudication Committee, OAC, is responsible for adjudicating violation of College policy by COSO recognized <b>student organizations.</b>” (p.8 of COSO Structure and Guidelines)</p> <p>“The OAC shall be composed as follows: six members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences ...; twelve members who shall <b>be members of the sophomore, junior, or senior classes</b>, and who meet the same requirements for service established by the Committee on Standards, six elected annually by the student body and six selected by the Dean of the College; six members from the administration who shall be selected by the President.” (<a href="http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/oac.html">http://www.dartmouth.edu/~uja/oac.html</a>)</p>	<p>“When an <b>allegation of violation of the UCM Professional Guidelines by a UCM member or group is made by another UCM professional</b>, the following steps will be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The aggrieved party will communicate the specific alleged violation(s) to the campus minister responsible...</li> <li>2. If the matter cannot be resolved between the parties, the aggrieved party shall bring it to the attention of the College Chaplain...</li> <li>3. The College Chaplain will first attempt to resolve the matter with the parties involved...” (Appendix J UCM Guidelines)</li> </ol>

The Responsibilities of “Adult-Leadership” Within UCM is Different	
<p>COSO Application – “The Role of the Advisor”</p> <p>“The following is an attempt to expound upon each of the...aspects of an advisor’s role.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The role of an advisor is to provide stability and continuity to student organizations...Maintaining stability and promoting close cooperation among club members frequently requires that the <b>Advisor act as an arbiter and mediate disputes...</b></li> <li>The Advisor is to provide guidance to student organizations through advice and suggestions...<b>The Advisor is not the director of a club’s activities...the Advisor assists students in making their own decisions.</b></li> <li>The Advisor is to assist in fostering the prudent management of organizational funds...”</li> </ol>	<p>UCM Professional Guidelines Appendix B – “A Covenant of United Campus Ministers at Dartmouth”</p> <p>“As a member of the UCM, <b>I understand my ministry to be a part of a broader collective effort to support spiritual growth in the Dartmouth community and the educational process of the College.</b> To this end I pledge to uphold the highest standards for performance and professional conduct outline in the UCM guidelines. More specifically:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I understand that the UCM is an organization of the College. Thus, I am required to be cognizant of and comply with all College standards, procedures and policies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>I affirm that my ministry is formally recognized by an ecclesiastical agency and that I am supported by a governing body or some type of advisory structure.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>I pledge to play an integral role in the mission of the ORSL, which states:  <i>The Office of Religious and Spiritual Life exists to encourage, promote, and facilitate opportunities for religious and spiritual growth <b>for everyone at Dartmouth.</b></i> (Italics from document.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I support the freedom of intellectual discourse befitting a college community.</li> <li>I realize that when acting in an official capacity on behalf of the UCM, <b>I may explicitly acknowledge and express my own faith tradition, as long as this is done in a way that maintains proper recognition of and respect for the religious pluralism of the group as a whole.</b></li> <li><b>I agree to act in accordance with the definition and goals of the UCM, the role, rights, and responsibilities of UCM members, the conditions of membership, and the statement on proselytizing,</b> as outlined in the UCM Professional Guidelines.”</li> </ul> </li> </ol>



## Appendix B

### Guideline Discrepancies Between COSO and the Tucker Foundation

Below are requirements from the Tucker guidelines that are not included in the COSO guidelines and/or that are vague and open to arbitrary interpretations. These effectively put DFA and other recognized student organizations under the control of the university restricting their free speech rights that other student organizations don't have to abide by. Regardless of whether DFA students actually agree with some of the guidelines, they should not be placed under any such authority or restrictions that most other student groups are not under.

- On the Dartmouth web site under Principles of Community it states:
  - “In June of 1980, the Board of Trustees endorsed the following ‘Principle of Community’ for Dartmouth College: ...In all activities each student is expected to be sensitive to and respectful of the rights and interests of others and to be personally honest...Because the Principle of Community is a statement of aspirations and values and not a promulgation of rules, it cannot be the basis of a disciplinary hearing.”
- In the UCM Professional Guidelines the student group under the authority of the UCM and the Tucker Foundation can be brought to a disciplinary hearing under the Tucker Foundation for the behaviors that the Principles of Community say under Dartmouth College cannot be done.
- The UCM Guidelines for the adult-leader, and thus also for the students, forces them to agree to this statement, “I, signing this UCM Covenant, verify that I am fully aware of it and in agreement with the rights, responsibilities and conditions set forth in the United Campus Ministers Professional Guidelines. Moreover, I understand that a violation of these Professional Guidelines by an UCM member or group may result in the loss of UCM membership or the failure to have membership renewed with an attendant loss of privilege.” This clearly goes against the stated policy of Dartmouth College.
- Other statements that reflect a different posture towards students under UCM's recognition versus students under COSO's recognition are:<sup>2</sup>
  - “They shall carry out their ministries in a manner whereby no one will be intimidated, threatened, or coerced and whereby participants may freely express their values and beliefs.”
  - “Each member shall affirm and respect the rights of every religious group. No one shall seek conversions by harassing or deprecating the other groups.”
  - “Members of the UCM and their constituencies shall not:
    - Canvass an entire dorm or floor;
    - Randomly visit student rooms where no prior relationship has existed.”
  - “Members of the UCM and their constituencies may make witness of their religious commitments through personal relationships or through personal encounters in public places and may invite others to attend meetings of a religious nature. However, if the individual being approached indicates a desire to break off conversation, this desire shall be honored immediately and without question.”
  - “Literature may be distributed in public places on campus. It must be possible for the passerby to reject the offer. Individuals engaged in literature distribution in public campus places shall clearly identify the group with which they are affiliated.”
  - “All e-mails and advertisements published or posted must clearly identify the name of the group...and the religious affiliation.”
  - “Members of the UCM and their constituencies may utilize Hinman boxes for:
    - Mailings to those students, faculty, administrators and/or staff that have shown interest in the religious group...
    - General advertisements about upcoming public events.
    - Mailing other than those described above shall:
      - First be submitted to and approved by the college chaplain.”

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from Appendix I of the University Campus Ministers (UCM) Professional Guidelines.