

THE TANDEM PROJECT

UNITED NATIONS, HUMAN RIGHTS, FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

*UN NGO in Special Consultative Status with the
Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

Separation of Religion or Belief and State

PROPOSAL

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY FORUM

HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION OR BELIEF

Following is a proposal for a Brigham Young University led community-wide Forum on Human Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief. This proposal is in response to the University of Minnesota website to seek responsive engagement in the local community.

OBJECTIVE: to open a multi-disciplinary dialogue at Brigham Young University for Study, Research and Engagement on Human Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief in collaboration with the World Programme for Human Rights Education Phase 2 (2010-2014) Higher Education.

World Programme for Human Rights Education Phase 2 (2010-2014)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/secondphase.htm>

Unique Opportunity: work in partnership with NGOs and civil society in a multi-disciplinary program on human rights and freedom of religion or belief.

Obstacles: we are aware that budget constraints are hurdles for all organizations today but believe this is an opportunity to create an international model and impact the escalating conflicts worldwide.

RATIONALE

A vision for academia offered by Mark C. Taylor

End of the University as We Know It – Collaboration Rather than Specialization, New York Times Op-Ed, April 29, 2007, Mark C. Taylor, Chairman of the Religion Department, Columbia University, New York.

“For many years, I have told students, “Do not do what I do; rather, take whatever I have to offer and do with it what I could never imagine doing and then come back and tell me about it.” My hope is that colleges and universities will be shaken out of their complacency and will open academia to a future we cannot conceive.

There can be no adequate understanding of the most important issues we face when disciplines are cloistered from one another and operate on their own premises. It would be far more effective to bring together people working on questions of religion, politics, history, economics, anthropology, sociology, literature, art, religion and philosophy to engage in comparative analysis of common problems. As the curriculum is restructured, fields of inquiry and methods of investigation will be transformed.

In my own religion department, for example, we have 10 faculty members, working in eight subfields, with little overlap. And as departments fragment, research and publication become more and more about less and less. Each academic becomes the trustee not of a branch of the sciences, but of limited knowledge that all too often is irrelevant for genuinely important problems.”

World Programme for Human Rights Education Phase 2 (2010-2014)
<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/secondphase.htm>

UN Human Rights Education Database
<http://hre.ohchr.org/hret/ProgrammeList01.aspx?lng=en>

PROPOSED AGENDA

Keynote Speaker, (proposed, not confirmed)
by Cecil O. Samuelson
President
Brigham Young University

Keynote Speaker, (proposed, not confirmed)
Professor W. Cole Durham, Jr. Director,
International Center for Law and Religion Studies
Brigham Young University

OPENING QUESTION

Addressed by Keynote speakers

Can a program be implemented on Human Rights and Freedom of Religion or Belief for Study, Research and Engagement from Multidisciplinary Perspectives at Brigham Young University, looking beyond the classroom and the higher-education institution to civil society; building partnerships between different members of the academic community and the community beyond? What are the benefits and obstacles?

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Response to the Question

Academic Faculty (proposed invitation list)

- Colleges & Departments: J. Reuben Clark Law School, David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies, Religion and Law Consortium, Marriott School of Business Management, David O. McKay School of Education, Ira A. Fulton College of Engineering and Technology, International Center for Law and Religion Studies, Strasbourg Consortium, Humanities; Philosophy, Humanities, Classics, Linguistics and English Language, Family, Home and Social Sciences; Anthropology, Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Women's Studies, Fine Arts and Communications; Visual Arts, Music, Life Sciences; Chemistry and Biochemistry, Computer Science, Statistics, Religious Education; Ancient Scripture, Church History and Doctrine, BYU Missionary Training Center.

Governments & Civil Society (proposed invitation list)

- Provo Mayor's Office, Provo Municipal Council, Provo Police Department, Provo School District, Chamber of Commerce, Planning Commission, Mayor's Ad-Hoc Multi-cultural Center, City Attorney, Utah County Offices, Provo Daily Herald, Salt Lake City Tribune, Provo Arts Council, Covey Center for the Arts, United Way of Utah County, State of Utah Offices, Terra Nova Gallery, Provo Arts Council, Provo and Salt Lake City Radio Stations, Salt Lake City Offices and Departments,

World Programme for Human Rights Education (2010-2014) Second Phase Action Plan for Higher Education: Page 13, footnote 20 *

<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/education/training/secondphase.htm>

(b) Teaching and learning processes and tools

27. Introducing or improving human rights education in the higher education system requires adopting a holistic approach to teaching and learning, by integrating programme objectives and content, resources, methodologies, assessment and evaluation; by looking beyond the classroom and the higher-education institution to society; and by building partnerships between different members of the academic community and beyond.

(v) Develop multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary human rights academic programmes. 20

²⁰ Multidisciplinary programmes would include the study, research and engagement with human rights from different disciplinary perspectives, such as philosophy, sociology, languages, international and domestic law, etc. Interdisciplinary programmes would entail the crossing of boundaries between disciplines and the pooling of approaches and methodologies to study, research and engage with human rights with a new integrated perspective.

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

<http://home.byu.edu/home/>

The mission of Brigham Young University--founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. That assistance should provide a period of intensive learning in a stimulating setting where a commitment to excellence is expected and the full realization of human potential is pursued.

All instruction, programs, and services at BYU, including a wide variety of extracurricular experiences, should make their own contribution toward the balanced development of the total person. Such a broadly prepared individual will not only be capable of meeting personal challenge and change but will also bring strength to others in the tasks of home and family life, social relationships, civic duty, and service to mankind.

To succeed in this mission the university must provide an environment enlightened by living prophets and sustained by those moral virtues which characterize the life and teachings of the Son of God. In that environment these four major educational goals should prevail:

- All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved. Certainly all relationships within the BYU community should reflect devout love of God and a loving, genuine concern for the welfare of our neighbor.
- Because the gospel encourages the pursuit of all truth, students at BYU should receive a broad university education. The arts, letters, and sciences provide the core of such an education, which will help students think clearly, communicate effectively, understand important ideas in their own cultural tradition as well as that of others, and establish clear standards of intellectual integrity.
- In addition to a strong general education, students should also receive instruction in the special fields of their choice. The university cannot provide programs in all possible areas of professional or vocational work, but in those it does provide the preparation must be excellent. Students who graduate from BYU should be capable of competing with the best in their fields.
- Scholarly research and creative endeavor among both faculty and students, including those in selected graduate programs of real consequence, are essential and will be encouraged.

In meeting these objectives BYU's faculty, staff, students, and administrators should be anxious to make their service and scholarship available to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in furthering its work worldwide. In an era of limited enrollments, BYU can continue to expand its influence both by encouraging programs that are central to the Church's purposes and by making its resources available to the Church when called upon to do so.

We believe the earnest pursuit of this institutional mission can have a strong effect on the course of higher education and will greatly enlarge Brigham Young University's influence in a world we wish to improve.

--Approved by the BYU Board of Trustees
November 4, 1981

GOVERNMENTS & CIVIL SOCIETY

PROVO, UTAH

<http://www.provo.org/>

Currently estimated at 122,451 people in 2009, Provo is the third largest city in Utah and is located about 43 miles (69 km) south of Salt Lake City along the Wasatch Front. Provo is the county seat of Utah County and lies between the cities of Orem to the north and Springville to the south. Provo is also the principal city in the Provo-Orem metropolitan area, with an estimated population of 540,820 residents. It is the second largest metro area in the state behind Salt Lake City.

The city is home to Brigham Young University, one of the largest private higher education institutions in the United States, which is operated by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Provo is also home to the largest Missionary Training Center for the church. The city is a key operational center for Novell and has been a focus area for technology development in Utah. The city is also home to the Peaks Ice Arena, which served as a venue for the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics in 2002.

In 2009 Provo was listed in *Where to Retire* magazine as an "enticing city for new careers", Provo was also listed in *National Geographic Adventure Magazine's* "where to live and play" as a cultural hub.

The Tandem Project: Michael M. Roan, mroan@tandemproject.com; www.tandemproject.com

Links: [Highlights for Discussion](#); [Opportunities for Dialogue & Collaboration](#); [Exchange Views](#)

“The convention’s most fierce critics were the Soviet Union, other communist states, and several African and Asian States. Since the draft Convention’s definition of ‘religion or belief’ included theistic, non-theistic and atheistic beliefs; there was strong opposition from Islamic states, the Catholic Church, and other religious groups. At its twenty-third session, the General Assembly decided to defer consideration of the draft convention.” - <http://www.tandemproject.com/program/history.htm>

Until a core legally-binding human rights Convention on Freedom of Religion or Belief is adopted international human rights law, deferred since 1968, will be incomplete. Is it time for the UN to appoint an Open-Ended Working Group to bring all matters relating to freedom of religion or belief together in a core international human rights legally-binding treaty?