

# Fostering Authenticity and Spirituality: From Research to Action

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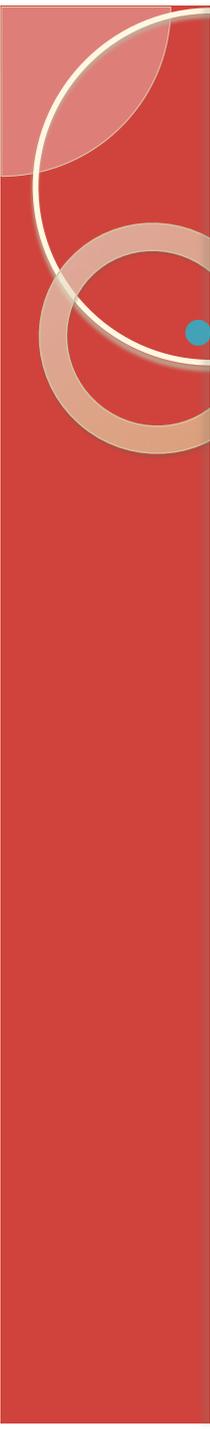
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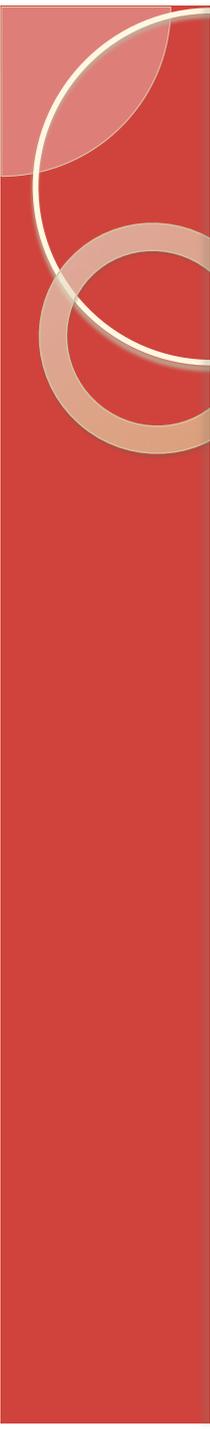


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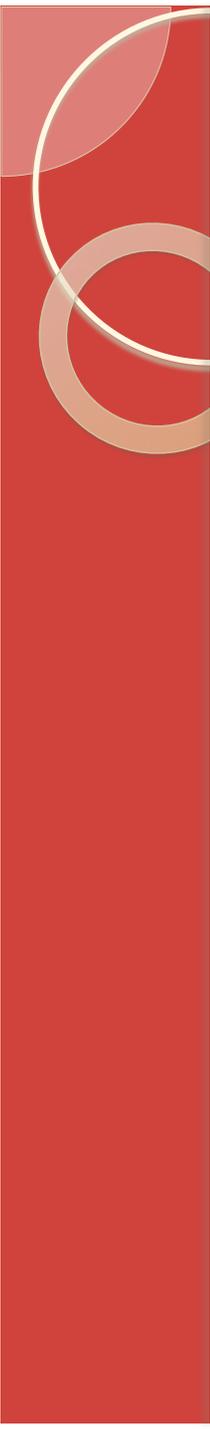
*“...at colleges and universities around the country, an expanding and increasingly vigorous dialogue has begun, centered on examining personal values, meaning and purpose—including religious and spiritual values--as part of the educational experience,”*

**(Chickering, Dalton and Stamm, 2006, pg. 2)**



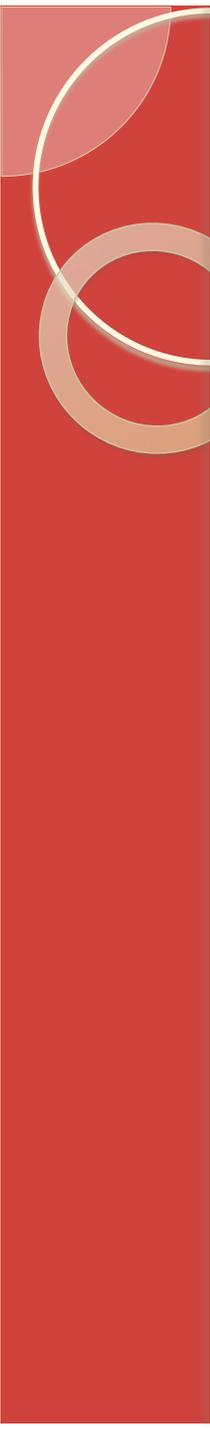
# Question

- What is happening in your programs or on your campuses around the topic of faith and spirituality?
  - Index card



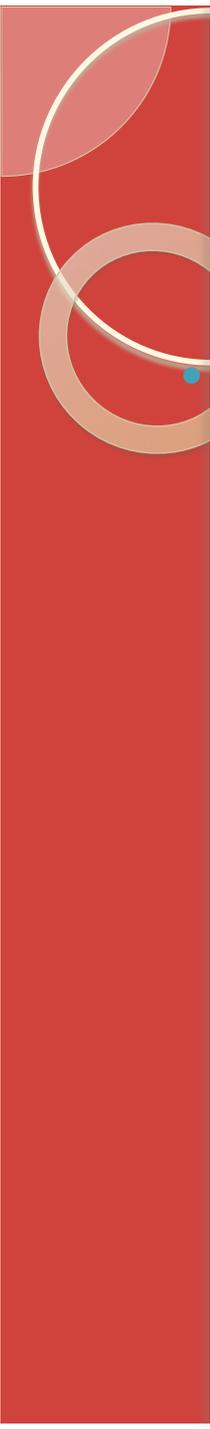
# Purpose of the Session

- Overview of key findings from research
- Strategies to create environments and practices that encourage students to explore questions of meaning and purpose



# Terms Defined

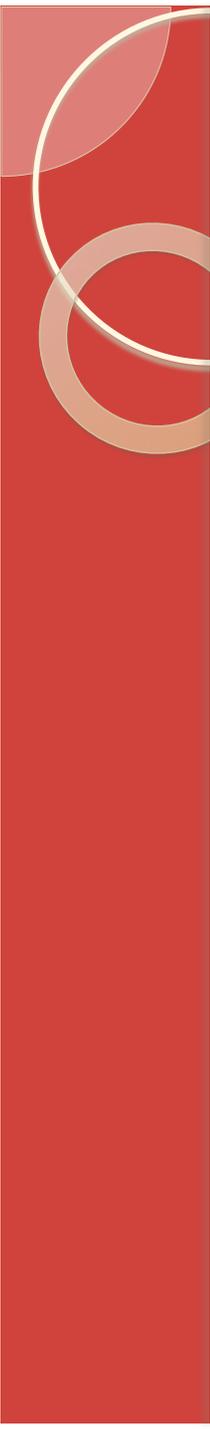
- Religion:
  - Engaging in the traditional beliefs, dogma, practice and ceremonies of a church or religious organization
- Spirituality:
  - A transcendental personal notion of meaning and purpose; living with the highest values possible and moving toward an authentic self
  - *Adopted from: Diamond, M. (2008). Encountering faith in the classroom. Sterling: Stylus Publishing*



# Related Research

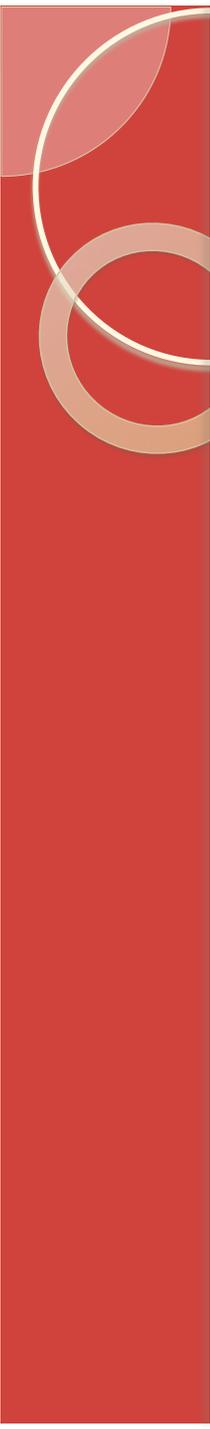
- **Spiritual Development Theories:**

- Fowler's (1999) model of faith development highlights the young adult years and the college experience as catalytic elements of faith development.
- Parks (2000) identifies the college years as critical for development of an authentic and meaningful approach to spirituality, arguing that mentoring such development is vitally important.



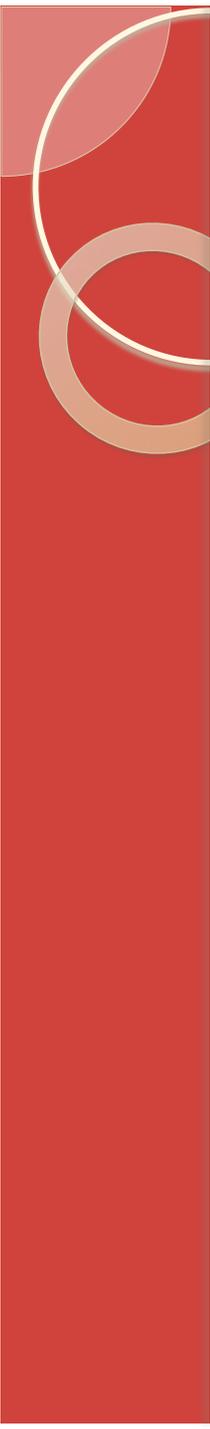
## Broader Trends

- Higher education's focus on the exterior elements of students' lives has overshadowed its attention to the student's inner life.
- Higher education's as a contributor to individual gain rather than to foster deep, reflective thinking issues of meaning and purpose in life.



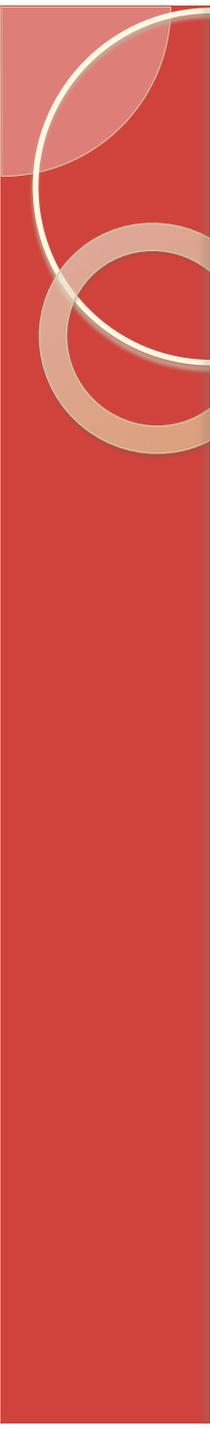
## Research Evidence

- Students eager for more opportunity for engagement with others around issues of spirituality (Bryant, 2006).
  - Interaction occurs primarily within their families
- Especially true for students who fear negative stereotypes about their background.
  - Muslim students report the highest levels of discomfort (Bryant).



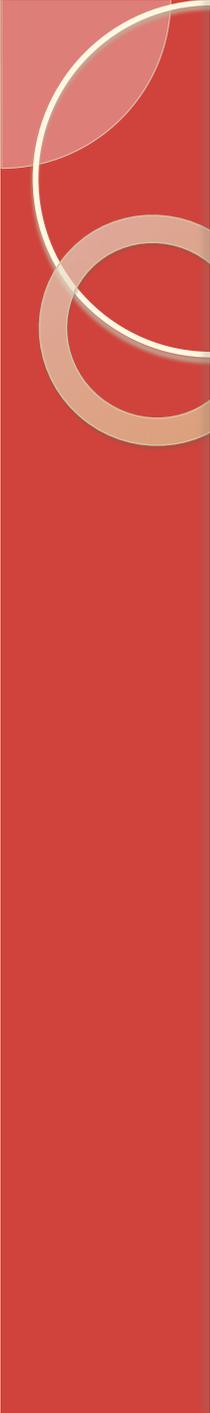
## Research Evidence

- Nearly half (44%) of the students in their sample faced at least some spiritual struggle during the college years (Johnson and Hayes, 2003).
- Students become more productive as they engage with others in conversations about religion or spirituality (Bryant & Astin, 2008).



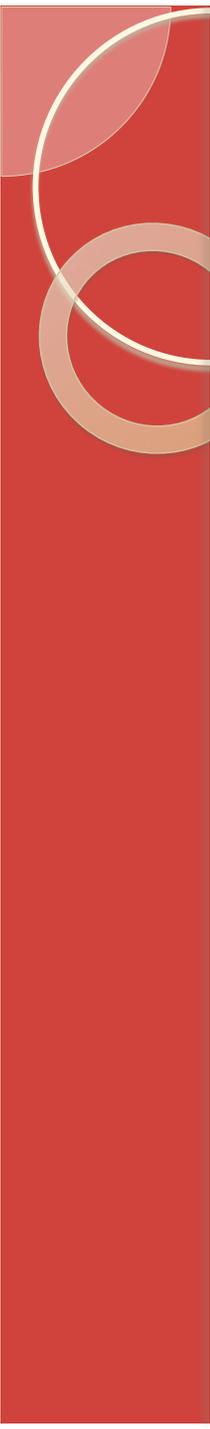
## Effective Practices

- Interfaith Youth Corp (McKim, 2010): Diverse groups working together on practical projects that promote mutual understanding with those whose religious views are different;
- Winding Road intervention (Gear, Krumrei, Pargament, 2009): Designed to help students in their spiritual struggles more productively in a non-denominational framework.



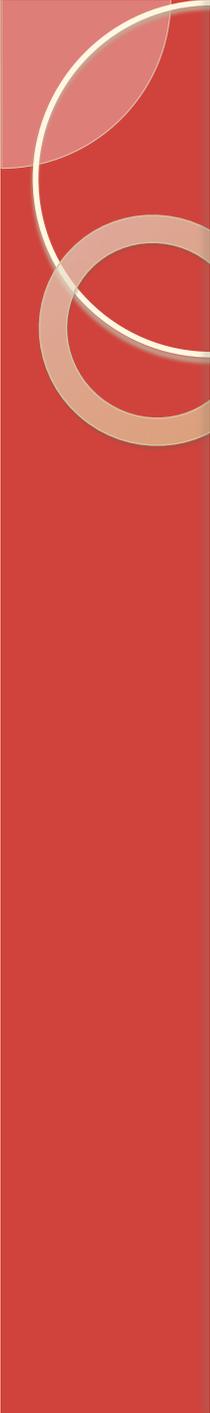
# Vignettes of Spiritual Struggle

- In small group discussion:
  - What is the setting of the vignette?
  - Who is involved?
  - What are the key issues?

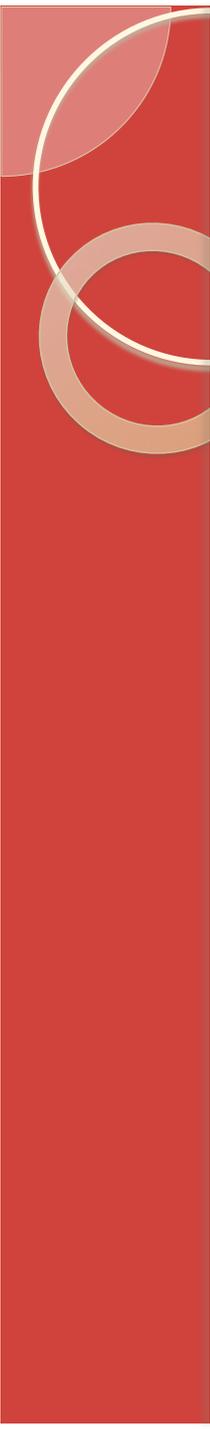


# Vignettes

- In large group:
  - What are the issues?
  - What is common among the stories?
  - What is different between the stories?
- What dynamics enhance your own feeling of safety around discussing spirituality with students?

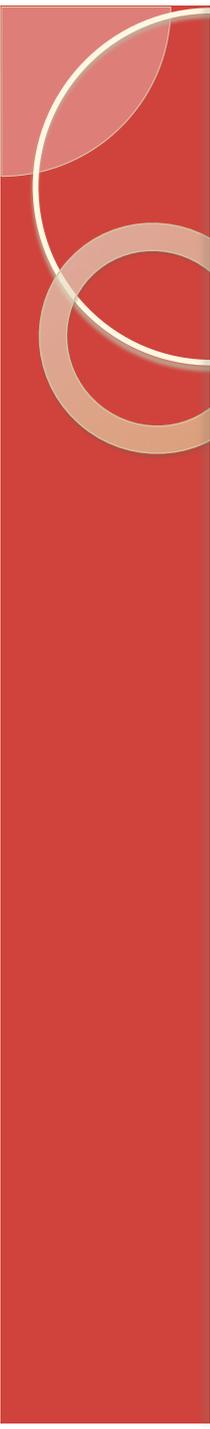


# Practices on Campus?



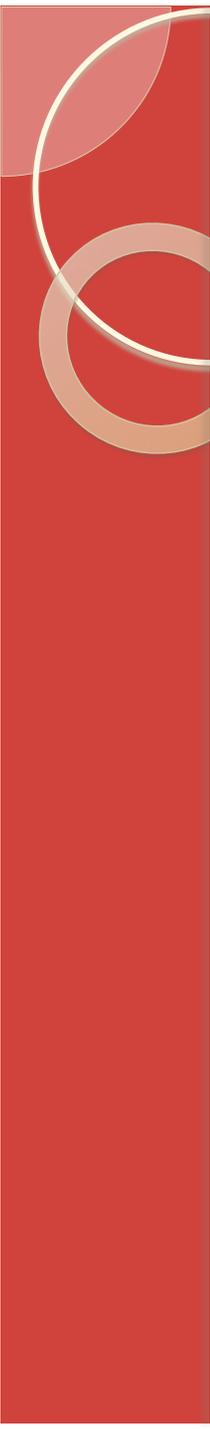
# Implications for Practice

- Support students as they form perceptions of themselves as spiritual beings;
- Provide programs and curriculum that allow opportunities for students to deeply reflect on life's big questions;
- Help students find resources (on or off campus) that meet their spiritual needs



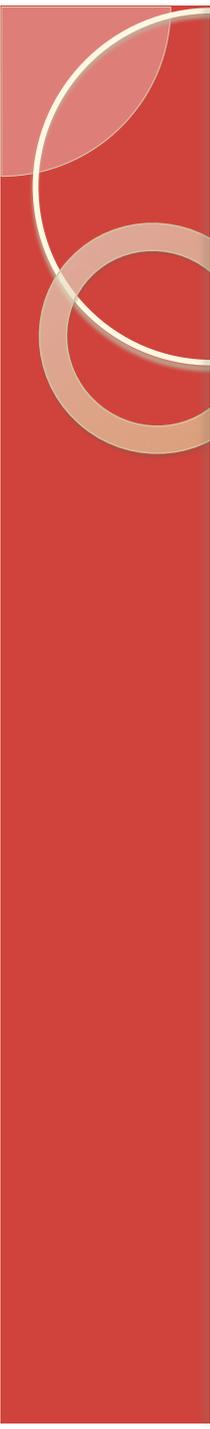
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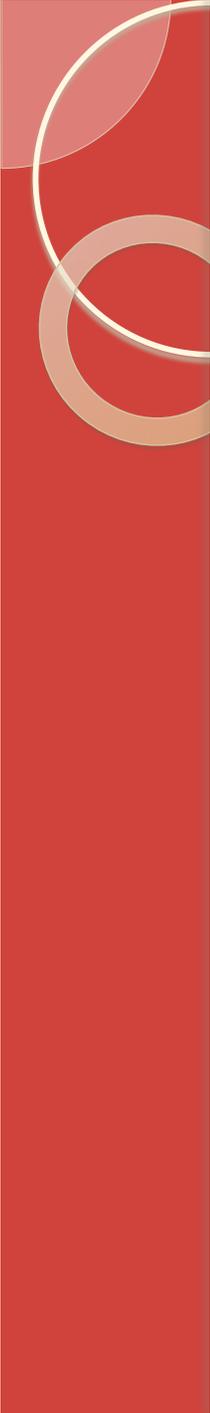
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# Contact Information

- College Counseling and Student Development
- Azusa Pacific University