Charter of the Tertiary Chaplaincy Forum

1. Preamble

The South Australian Tertiary Chaplaincy Forum (TCF) offers a forum for discussion of tertiary chaplaincy.

It seeks to consult with and liaise between faith communities and tertiary education and training institutions about tertiary chaplaincy.

Based on these discussions TCF will promote a code of conduct and guidelines for chaplains in tertiary education and training institutions that will include the selection and quality assurance of people acting in a tertiary chaplaincy role.

The national professional body of tertiary chaplains is the Tertiary Campus Ministry Association (TCMA). The TCF will be a contact point with and for the TCMA in South Australia.

Origins of the TCF

The TCF has its origins in the disbanded Tertiary Chaplains Committee (TCC), a subcommittee of the South Australian Heads of Christian Churches Committee. As globalisation increasingly began to affect tertiary education, the TCC, as a Christian group, had limited ability to address issues arising from the culturally and religiously diverse setting of contemporary tertiary institutions.

Initiated by South Australian members of the TCMA, a working party was set up to establish the TCF. The TCMA members invited representatives from a number of faith communities involved in tertiary chaplaincy. It also invited representatives from the institutions themselves. This recognises the diversity of faiths found in tertiary institutions and the need to work cooperatively with the institutions themselves.

Religious representatives invited to be part of the working party or its processes included: Buddhist, Christian, Islamic, Jewish, Sikh and Pagan.

Each of these faith communities, including the churches represented on the earlier TCC, was invited to be represented on the working party by two representatives, one lay person and one chaplain or religious representative.

A representative was invited from each of the three universities with the Universities of Adelaide and South Australia actively participating.
2. Objects

The objects of the Tertiary Chaplaincy Forum are:

- Promoting tertiary chaplaincy
  - to faith communities and
  - to tertiary education and training institutions
- Supporting tertiary chaplaincy through dialogue with representatives of faith communities and tertiary education and training institutions
- Facilitating communication between faith communities and tertiary institutions.
- Developing tertiary chaplaincy
  - Advising and consulting faith communities and tertiary institutions about tertiary chaplaincy.
  - Developing and encouraging adherence to the code of practice and guidelines for tertiary chaplaincy.
  - Encouraging support and appraisal of tertiary chaplains, including accreditation.
- Reporting to tertiary chaplaincy stakeholders.

3. Definitions

Chaplain

For the purpose of this Charter, chaplaincy is used in an encompassing sense acknowledging a variety of roles. These roles include activities relating to

- faith development
- pastoral care
- support
- ministry

to people associated with tertiary education and training and their families.

Tasks may relate to

- counselling and referral
- ritual and sacrament
- teaching
- encouraging
- advocating
- developing networks
- exercising creative initiative

Chaplaincy provides a spiritual resource for tertiary institutions.

Chaplains provide pastoral care, responding to people's needs, caring for those who are vulnerable and where appropriate providing spiritual and liturgical support as a tangible part of ministry.

They work collaboratively within the institution with:

- individuals
- agencies and
- each other

to contribute to the supportive ethos of the institution, affirming that which is relationship enhancing and community building and giving courage for compassion and justice.

In advocating for the vulnerable, chaplains may also be advocates for change or for the development of new structures to support those in need as a result of changing situations.

Chaplains seek to minister to individuals and institutions in ways that enable questions of life and death, reality and meaning, fear and hope to be articulated and in a manner that encourages an exploration of such issues in an honest, caring environment.
**Faith communities**

Faith communities are groups of people who share common beliefs and practice, examples are: Baha’i, Buddhist, Christian (represented by various denominations, such as: Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox, Assemblies of God, Roman Catholic and Uniting), Hindu, Islamic, Pagan and Sikh.

**Multifaith**

The context of tertiary chaplaincy is the cultural diversity and diverse faiths found in tertiary education and training institutions. This diversity is usually greater in tertiary institutions than in the community given the presence of international students in tertiary education and the way tertiary institutions collaborate globally, providing off-shore teaching, collaborative research and exchange of staff.

While chaplains may have a primary focus on people of their own faith community their chaplaincy role is to all people involved in the institution. This includes those of their own faith, those of other faiths and those of no stated faith.

The multifaith perspective includes

- respecting those who hold different beliefs from their own and who come from different faith traditions
- being aware of the needs and practices of other faith traditions and
- developing supportive working relationships with people from those traditions.

**Tertiary education and training institutions**

Tertiary chaplaincy has in the past focused on universities. The tertiary education and training sector is undergoing change with the growth of private provision and focus on post-secondary study and training in the University and TAFE sectors.

The focus of the work of the TCF at the time of establishment was the three South Australian universities: the Flinders University of South Australia, the University of Adelaide and the University of South Australia. However, as tertiary education in South Australia develops, the TCF will monitor, promote and support chaplaincy to all tertiary education and training institutions.

**4. Membership**

The TCF will accept into membership those people invited or nominated for membership on a simple majority vote at a meeting.

Membership of the TCF will be open to:

- members of faith communities nominated by those faith communities. One chaplain and one non-chaplain may represent each faith community.
- people nominated by tertiary education and training institutions. One representative may represent each tertiary institution.
- coopted members of faith communities invited by the TCF who support the charter and code of practice.

Revocation of membership will be for serious cause and will need to be passed by a two thirds majority of voting members at a meeting of the TCF.

**5. Voting**

Members nominated by tertiary institutions and faith communities engaged in tertiary chaplaincy and coopted members will each have one vote.

Non-voting or observer status will be open to people nominated by institutions and faith communities interested in but not engaged in chaplaincy activities.
6. Office bearers
Chair: the Chair will convene the TCF and chair meetings. The Chair would normally be expected to represent the TCF to outside bodies as required.
Secretary: the Secretary will keep minutes of meetings and ensure their dissemination to members.

7. Executive
The Executive will comprise the Chair, Secretary and one person elected at the Annual General Meeting.

8. Meetings
There will be at least one meeting each year, the first meeting in any calendar year will be the Annual General Meeting.
Two weeks’ notice shall be given of any meeting.
One third of members shall constitute a quorum.
Meetings will be chaired by the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, by another member of the committee nominated by the Chair.
Generally decisions will be by consensus. However decisions on admittance to membership will be by simple majority and decisions on revocation of membership by two thirds majority.
Minutes of each meeting will be taken and distributed to members by the Secretary.
The Annual General Meeting will receive nominations of representatives for the TCF from faith communities and tertiary institutions.
A simple majority will elect the Chair, Secretary and Executive member at the Annual General Meeting.

9. Finances
The TCF will not administer any finances in its own name.

10. Amendment of the Charter
Members of the TCF may propose changes to this Charter.
Proposed amendments shall be circulated to members at least two clear weeks before the meeting at which they are to be considered.
The Charter may be changed by agreement of two thirds of the members present at the meeting.