

Yale University Library
Yale Divinity Library

Guide to the Association for College and University Religious Affairs Records

RG 327



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2022

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Yale Divinity Library
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New Haven, CT 06511
(203) 432-5301
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<http://web.library.yale.edu/divinity/special-collections>

CALL NUMBER: RG 327

CREATOR: Association for College and University Religious Affairs

TITLE: Association for College and University Religious Affairs Records

DATES: 1958-2008

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 4.7 linear feet (11 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English (Latin script)

SUMMARY: Administrative records, correspondence, reports, and publications document the Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA) primarily from its founding in 1959 through the 1980s. ACURA was an organization for college and university staff tasked with caring for the religious affairs of multi-faith student bodies. It merged with the National Association of College and University Chaplains to form the Association for Chaplaincy and Spiritual Life in Higher Education (ACSLHE) in 2020.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.327>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use on site, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/divinity.327>.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Transferred from Syracuse University Library Archives by request of the Association for Chaplaincy and Spiritual Life in Higher Education (ACSLHE), 2022.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research.

Preferred Citation

Association for College and University Religious Affairs Records (RG 327), Special Collections, Yale Divinity School Library.

Biographical / Historical

The Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA), formerly known as the Association for the Coordination of University Religious Affairs, was founded in 1959 as an organization for university staff tasked with caring for the religious affairs of multi-faith student bodies. Funded until 1966 by the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ), ACURA initially focused on state universities in the Midwest. ACURA later expanded nationally and to private universities.

Beyond general questions around secularism and pluralism in the public sphere, ACURA continually responded to the shifting landscape of American religious life through research and discussion. ACURA's tenure in the twentieth century witnessed the growth of student affairs, the decline of funded chaplaincy, a shifting student body without denominational affiliation, the development of new religious movements, and the rise of the field of religious studies throughout American universities. Notable within the collection, in 1970s and 1980s ACURA legally addressed first amendment rights and the use of state-owned buildings for religious purposes, and in the 1980s and 1990s ACURA studied and responded to the growth of "New Religious Movements" and contemporaneous worries about cults.

Working closely with both NACUC (National Association of College and University Chaplains and Directors of Religious Life) and COSPA (Council of Student Personnel Associations in Higher Education), ACURA saw religious life—and the moral commitments it entails—as an essential part of wholistic education which the university could not provide alone. In 1981 president and longtime Executive Committee member George Jones wrote, "we seek to maintain an atmosphere of openness and respect within our institutions for personnel and programs deployed by any religious body," which would create an environment for students where, "in the forum of a free university, what is true will commend itself to the sincere seeker."

In 2020, ACURA merged with NACUC (collection RG 167 at Yale Divinity Special Collections) to become the Association for Chaplaincy and Spiritual Life in Higher Education (ACSLHE). Already in 1974, internal discussions within ACURA recommended the eventual merger—leading to decades of joint conferences and cooperation around the shared mission of placing religion thoughtfully and adequately within the life of the student body.

Scope and Contents

This collection contains materials related to the functioning of the Association for College and University Religious Affairs (ACURA) from its inception in 1959 until 2008. ACURA, formerly the Association for the Coordination of University Religious Affairs, was founded as an organization of university staff tasked with caring for the religious affairs of multi-faith student bodies. The bulk of the material dates from the late twentieth century and covers issues ACURA addressed in annual meetings and through conferences related to religious life and inter-faith experiences on campuses throughout the United States.

Series I, Administration and Governance, begins with the foundational documents which describe ACURA's mission and structure as well as legal files related to the use of buildings on state-owned campuses for religious purposes. The bulk of Series I consists of extensive Executive Committee correspondence and files relating to the annual meetings of the Executive Committee from 1961 until 1993 (with addition of 2008), which often contain further meeting minutes. The final folders in Series I pertain to membership and financial records.

Series II, Correspondence, contains general correspondence arranged chronologically and correspondence arranged by topic or individual—including letters regarding J affiliations with other professional

organizations, letters addressed to college and university presidents, and the limited correspondence of Franklin H. Littell, Jack W. Lewis, and Lloyd W. Putnam. For further correspondence, see the Executive Committee correspondence in Series I. For more on Franklin H. Littell, a founding member and longtime consultant for ACURA active in the NCCJ (National Council for Christians and Jews), see Series IV Publications Box 10, folder 15 "Inventing the Holocaust: A Christian's Retrospect."

Series III, Conferences, contains material related to conferences dating from 1958 to 1988. The conferences addressed relevant topics concerning the interaction between religion and the state, new religious movements, and the future of religious counseling and chaplaincy on American campuses.

Series IV, Publications, contains issues of the quarterly ACURA newsletter Dialogue on Campus from 1961 until 1981 (with addition of 1993), which disseminated administrative information and articles written by ACURA members, and correspondence related to Dialogue on Campus. Further publications within Series IV include, A University at Prayer by Alfred C. Payne, E Pluribus Fides et Mores: A Handbook for Religious Life Educators, and "Inventing the Holocaust: A Christian's Retrospect," by Franklin H. Littell.

Series V, Projects and Surveys, consists of gathered documents related to the planning and execution of publications and research projects, including surveys on the coordination of religious affairs in colleges and universities, minority religious groups, current issues, and the subsequent produced reports.

Series VI, Subjects, holds the information gathered in relation to the American Conference on Religious Movements, including documents on the reception of religions such as Hare Krishna and Scientology in the 1980s and 1990s. A further subject file addresses the controversy surrounding the American Family Foundation's 1985 conference on cults and sects and the concern that psychiatric approaches to religious movements infringed upon religious liberty.

Arrangement

I. Administration and Governance, 1961-2008

II. Correspondence, 1967-1986

III. Conferences, 1958-1988

IV. Publications, 1961-1994

V. Projects and Surveys, 1966-1972

VI. Subjects, 1975-1994

Collection Contents

Series I: Administration and Governance

Subseries 1: Legal and Founding Documents

b. 1, f. 1	Constitution and Bylaws	
b. 1, f. 2	Legal Files	1970–1980

Subseries 2: Reports and Statements

b. 1, f. 3	Annual Reports	1977–1978
b. 1, f. 4	Reports	
b. 1, f. 5	Position Statements	
b. 1, f. 6	Mission	

Subseries 3: Executive Committee

Subseries 1: Minutes

b. 1, f. 7	Executive Committee Minutes	1964–1982
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Subseries 2: Correspondence

b. 1, f. 8	Executive Committee Correspondence	1963–1965
b. 1, f. 9	Executive Committee Correspondence	1966
b. 1, f. 10	Executive Committee Correspondence	1967
b. 1, f. 11	Executive Committee Correspondence	1968
b. 1, f. 12	Executive Committee Correspondence	1969
b. 1, f. 13	Executive Committee Correspondence	1970
b. 1, f. 14	Executive Committee Correspondence	1971
b. 1, f. 15	Executive Committee Correspondence	1972
b. 1, f. 16	Executive Committee Correspondence	1973
b. 1, f. 17	Executive Committee Correspondence	1974
b. 2, f. 1	Executive Committee Correspondence	1975
b. 2, f. 2	Executive Committee Correspondence	1976
b. 2, f. 3	Executive Committee Correspondence	1977
b. 2, f. 4	Executive Committee Correspondence	1978
b. 2, f. 5	Executive Committee Correspondence	1979
b. 2, f. 6	Executive Committee Correspondence	1980

Subseries 3: Executive Committee > Subseries 2: Correspondence (continued)

b. 2, f. 7	Executive Committee Correspondence	1981
b. 2, f. 8	Executive Committee Correspondence	1982
b. 2, f. 9	Executive Committee Correspondence	1983
b. 2, f. 10	Executive Committee Correspondence	1984
b. 2, f. 11	Executive Committee Correspondence	1985
b. 3, f. 1	Executive Committee Correspondence	1986
b. 3, f. 2	Executive Committee Correspondence	1987
b. 3, f. 3	Executive Committee Correspondence	1988
b. 3, f. 4	Executive Committee Correspondence	1989
b. 3, f. 5	Executive Committee Correspondence	1990
b. 3, f. 6	Executive Committee Correspondence	1991
b. 3, f. 7	Executive Committee Correspondence	1992
b. 3, f. 8	Executive Committee Correspondence	1993
b. 3, f. 9	Executive Committee Correspondence	1994

Subseries 4: Annual Meetings

b. 3, f. 10	Annual Meeting, Kansas City, MO, University of Kansas City	1961 November 9-1961 November 11
b. 3, f. 11	Annual Meeting, Lexington, KY, University of Kentucky	1962 October 31-1962 November 3
b. 3, f. 12	Annual Meeting, Columbus, OH, Ohio State University	1963 November 6-1963 November 8
b. 4, f. 1	Annual Meeting, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University	1965 April 5- 1965 April 8
b. 4, f. 2	Annual Meeting, Iowa City, IA, University of Iowa	1965 November 1-1965 November 3
b. 4, f. 3	Annual Meeting, University Park, PA, Pennsylvania State University	1966 October 24-1966 October 26
b. 4, f. 4	Annual Meeting, Detroit, MI, Wayne State University	1967 October 22-1967 October 24

Subseries 4: Annual Meetings (continued)

b. 4, f. 5	Annual Meeting, Tallahassee, FL, Florida State University	1968 November 11–1968 November 12
b. 4, f. 6	Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN, University of Minnesota	1969 November 10–1969 November 11
b. 4, f. 7	Annual Meeting, University, MS, University of Mississippi	1970 November 2–1970 November 3
b. 4, f. 8	Annual Meeting, Muncie, IN, Ball State University	1971 October 25–1971 October 27
b. 4, f. 9	Annual Meeting, Johnson City, TN, Broadway Motel	1972 October 23–1972 October 25
b. 11, f. 9	Annual Meeting, Audiotape	1972 October 23 – 1972 October 25
b. 4, f. 10	Annual Meeting, Ann Arbor, MI, University of Michigan	1974 February 19–1974 February 21
b. 5, f. 1	Annual Meeting, New Haven, CT, Yale University	1975 April 7–1975 April 10
b. 5, f. 2	Annual Meeting, Raleigh, NC, North Carolina State University	1976 January 27–1976 January 29
b. 5, f. 3	Annual Meeting, Berea, KY, Berea College	1977 August 2–1977 August 6
b. 5, f. 4	Annual Meeting, Memphis, TN, Memphis State University	1978 November 1–1978 November 3
b. 5, f. 5	Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, Holiday Inn	1980 March 5–1980 March 8
b. 5, f. 6	Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, Highland Hotel	1981 March 3–1981 March 4
b. 5, f. 7	Annual Meeting, Cincinnati, OH, Mercy Center	1981 November 15–1981 November 16
b. 5, f. 8	Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, College of Preachers	1982 November 15–1982 November 16
b. 5, f. 9	Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, College of Preachers	1983 November 14–1983 November 15

Subseries 4: Annual Meetings (continued)

b. 5, f. 10	Annual Meeting, Madison, NJ, Xavier Retreat Center	1985 February 25–1985 February 27
b. 5, f. 11	Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, CA, UCLA	1986 March 9–1986 March 12
b. 5, f. 12	Annual Meeting, Nashville, TN, Vanderbilt University	1987 February 21–1987 February 24
b. 5, f. 13	Annual Meeting, Dallas, TX, Southern Methodist University	1988 March 6–1988 March 8
b. 5, f. 14	Annual Meeting, Ithaca, NY, Cornell University	1989 October 15–1989 October 17
b. 5, f. 15	Annual Meeting, Boston, MA, First Church of Christ Scientist	1990 October 28–1990 October 30
b. 5, f. 16	Annual Meeting, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago	1991 October 27–1991 October 29
b. 6, f. 1	Annual Meeting, Providence, RI, Brown University	1992 November 1–1992 November 3
b. 6, f. 2	Annual Meeting, Indianapolis, IN, Marian College	1993 October 31–1993 November 2
b. 6, f. 3	Annual Meeting, Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University	2008 October 26–2008 October 28

Subseries 5: Membership Records

b. 6, f. 4	Mailing Lists	1966–1992
b. 6, f. 5	Membership Lists, Officers	1966–1993
b. 6, f. 6	Membership Lists, General	1968–1994
b. 6, f. 7	Membership Lists, Life Members	n.d.
b. 6, f. 8	Membership Forms	1978–1995

Subseries 6: Finance Records

b. 6, f. 9	Budget	1972–1992
b. 6, f. 10	Financial Statements	1982–1991

Series II: Correspondence

Subseries 1: General - Chronological

b. 6, f. 11	General Correspondence	1967-1968
b. 6, f. 12	General Correspondence	1969
b. 6, f. 13	General Correspondence	1970
b. 6, f. 14	General Correspondence	1971
b. 7, f. 1	General Correspondence	1972
b. 7, f. 2	General Correspondence	1973
b. 7, f. 3	General Correspondence	1974
b. 7, f. 4	General Correspondence	1975
b. 7, f. 5	General Correspondence	1976
b. 7, f. 6	General Correspondence	1977
b. 7, f. 7	General Correspondence	1978
b. 7, f. 8	General Correspondence	1979
b. 7, f. 9	General Correspondence	1980
b. 7, f. 10	General Correspondence	1981
b. 7, f. 11	General Correspondence	1982

Subseries 2: Individual or Topic

b. 7, f. 12	Correspondence - Professional Affiliations	1967-1968
b. 7, f. 13	Correspondence - Franklin H. Littell	1967-1975
b. 7, f. 14	Correspondence - Jack W. Lewis	1970-1972
b. 7, f. 15	Correspondence - Lloyd W. Putnam	1973-1982
b. 7, f. 16	Correspondence - Presidents	1984-1986

Series III: Conferences

b. 8, f. 1	Religious Counseling on the State University Campus, University of Michigan	1958 June 23– 1958 July 3
b. 8, f. 2	Religion and the State University, University of Michigan	1958 November 16–1958 November 19
b. 8, f. 3	Religion, the State and Education, Kansas State University	1964 April 13– 1964 April 14
b. 8, f. 4	Religion and the State University, University of Mississippi	1964 October 30–1964 October 31
b. 8, f. 5	National Project from the Cooperative Enlistment of the Church's Ministry, Chicago, IL	1966 November 7
b. 8, f. 6	Religion and the State University, University of Mississippi	1967 February 3– 1967 February 4
b. 8, f. 7	Beyond the Ivory Tower, Cornell University	1968 February 9– 1968 February 11
b. 8, f. 8	Institute on the Religious Welfare Program on the Catholic Campus, Rockhurst College	1968 June 10– 1968 June 12
b. 8, f. 9	New Orleans Workshop on the Campus Ministry	1969 July 7–1969 July 11
b. 8, f. 10	Indianapolis Exploratory Conference on the Campus Ministry	1970 May 20
b. 8, f. 11	Religious Affairs and the Commonwealth Campus, Pennsylvania State University	1972 May 11– 1972 May 12
b. 8, f. 12	Consultation on the Future Role of Professional Campus Ministry Organizations, Durham, NC	1973 February 19–1973 February 21
b. 8, f. 13	Study of Religious Presence, New York, NY	1975 June 18– 1975 June 20
b. 8, f. 14	AGPA Inter-Divisional Convention, Chicago, IL	1976 April 11– 1976 April 15
b. 8, f. 15	Midwestern Regional Workshop, Chicago, IL	1976 October 27
b. 8, f. 16	Values Education, Drake University	1977 February 24
b. 8, f. 17	AGPA Convention, Dallas, TX	1977 March 6– 1977 March 9
b. 8, f. 18	Pre-Conference Workshop, NASPA, Louisville, KY	1984 March 17
b. 9, f. 1	New Religious Movements	1986–1988
b. 9, f. 2	New Religious Movements	1986–1988

Series IV: Publications

Subseries 1: Brochures

b. 9, f. 3	Brochures	1964–1994
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Subseries 2: Newsletter

Subseries 1: Issues

b. 9, f. 4	Dialogue on Campus	1961–1965
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b. 9, f. 5	Dialogue on Campus	1966–1971
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b. 9, f. 6	Dialogue on Campus	1971–1975
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b. 9, f. 7	Dialogue on Campus	1976–1979
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b. 9, f. 8	Dialogue on Campus	1980–1981
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b. 9, f. 9	Dialogue on Campus	1993
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Subseries 2: Correspondence

b. 9, f. 10	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1972
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b. 9, f. 11	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1973
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b. 9, f. 12	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1974
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b. 9, f. 13	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1975
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b. 9, f. 14	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1976
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b. 9, f. 15	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1977
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b. 9, f. 16	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1978
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b. 10, f. 1	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1979
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b. 10, f. 2	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1980
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b. 10, f. 3	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1982
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b. 10, f. 4	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1983
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b. 10, f. 5	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1984
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b. 10, f. 6	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1985
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b. 10, f. 7	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1986
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b. 10, f. 8	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1987
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b. 10, f. 9	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1988
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b. 10, f. 10	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1989
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b. 10, f. 11	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1990
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Subseries 2: Newsletter > Subseries 2: Correspondence (continued)

b. 10, f. 12	Dialogue on Campus - Correspondence	1991
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Subseries 3: Other Publications

b. 10, f. 13	A University at Prayer, Alfred C. Payne	1986
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b. 10, f. 14	E Pluribus Fides et Mores: A Handbook for Religious Life Educators	1988
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b. 10, f. 15	Inventing the Holocaust: A Christian's Retrospect, Franklin H. Littell	1993
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Series V: Projects and Surveys

b. 10, f. 16	Research Projects	1966-1968
b. 10, f. 17	Publications Project	1967-1969
b. 10, f. 18	Taskforces	1969-1970
b. 10, f. 19	Surveys - Religious Coordination in Four-Year Public Colleges	1970
b. 11, f. 1	Residence Hall Ministry	1966-1967
b. 11, f. 2	Job Placement	1969-1971
b. 11, f. 3	Surveys - Role and Influence of Minority Groups on Campus	1972
b. 11, f. 4	Surveys - Current Issues	1972

Series VI: Subject Files

b. 11, f. 5	Buckley Amendment	1975–1977
b. 11, f. 6	Standards for Religious Programs	1980–1988
b. 11, f. 7	ACRM - American Conference for Religious Movements	1988
b. 11, f. 8	American Family Foundation	1983–1994

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Subjects

Universities and colleges -- Religion

Acquired From

Association for College and University
Religious Affairs