

Date: June 20, 2017

To: Ms. Brande Smith, Senior Assistant University Counsel, University of Florida

From: Dr. Angela S. Lindner, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs, University of Florida

Subject: Response to the Freedom From Religion Foundation Letter Dated June 6, 2017

Enclosed is my response to the claims made by Ryan D. Jayne, Esq. of the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) in his letter concerning the UF Quest Program to Amy M. Hass, Interim Director of UF Office of General Counsel. I am responding, in part, because of my role of guiding development of this program in collaboration with numerous UF administrators, faculty, staff, and students and because of the specific allegations Mr. Jayne has made about me. I hope that my response proves helpful in preparing the formal response from UF to Mr. Jayne. After a detailed summary of the history, efforts, and philosophy of the UF Quest program, I have listed each of Mr. Jayne's complaints and recommendations and my response to each complaint and recommendation, followed by a concluding statement.

BACKGROUND OF THE UF QUEST PROGRAM

As an introduction, I would like to provide a background of UF Quest, its origin, the efforts of faculty, staff, and students in the past 1.5 years in shaping its current framework, and its overall goal in enhancing the educational experience for all first-time-in-college students at the University of Florida. [Please note that transfer students are not required to pursue the UF Quest components, thus countering Mr. Jayne's statement that the program "will be mandatory for all undergraduate students".] I provide this detailed background because the concerned UF community member who filed the complaint to FFRF may not be aware of the extensive efforts exerted by many faculty, staff, and students in the past seven months to refine the UF Quest model to what it is today.

As I began my role as Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs in 2015, I was charged to bring what was then referred to as the "UF Core Program" to life. The existing model for this core program, developed under the leadership of former UF president, Dr. Bernard Machen, would require all FTIC students to complete three courses, IUF1000 (What Is the Good Life?), IUF2100 (Climate Change Science and Solutions), and IDS4930 (People and Data). IUF1000 has been required of all FTIC students since 2012, whereas IUF2100 and IDS4930 have been piloted on a smaller scale in the past two years. The underlying goal of this core program was to provide a signature experience to all FTIC students while also inspiring them to appreciate the value of liberal education as an essential component in their growth during and after their college experience. We at UF strongly believe that the liberal arts and sciences are critical elements in accomplishing the three purposes of a university education as described by Dr. Machen, in 2015:

“Whatever happened to the recognition that a university education has at least three purposes: helping one understand who they are and what excites and motivates them; helping understand one’s relationship to the greater world; and, also, becoming prepared for a job.”
(Source: <https://newrepublic.com/article/121308/what-purpose-do-humanities-serve>).

After engaging in much listening about the three-course model of the core program in the Fall of 2015, I translated the concerns and suggestions expressed to me into a draft framework from which, through continued, guided conversation, would emerge a final model for the core program. The new model proposed in the Spring semester of 2016 offered for consideration a sequential model with experiences offered during each year of the undergraduate year, thus accompanying the student as the student grows into a deeper understanding of who they are and what their relationship is to the greater world. The overall theme of the proposed program was expressed using the terms, “meaning-making” and “purpose exploration”. Both terms encapsulate the over-arching goal for any grounded and effective undergraduate educational experience: to guide all students, regardless of background, into a deeper understanding of what it means to be human (meaning) and how this meaning translates directly to them (purpose) as they choose their major and their career path.

More specifically, and as outlined by a report on the new proposed model I released to campus, the first year would retain the requirement that all FTIC students complete IUF1000, thus serving as a gateway course into the Humanities and exposing students to how individuals and communities define a “good life” and guiding them to begin to understand how they define a “good life”. [Please refer to <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/uf-core.aspx> for links to all reports and presentations directly related to UF Quest development.]

In the second year, students would choose one course focusing on “grand challenges” in the natural sciences or social sciences. Regardless of the course the student selected, the student would be introduced to a greater need in the world and would reflect on how their skills might be able to meet that greater need. Here, IUF2100 and IDS4930 would be two of a number of courses from which the student would choose one. As a final component of the required portion of this proposed program, students would engage meaningfully in the world through experiential learning in the form of an internship or co-op, community service project, study abroad, public service, or design class and competition. Students would thread reflection assignments throughout these three stages of the program using an electronic portfolio, which would provide them a personal space to consider their learning and growth throughout their college experience while also intentionally connecting their learning towards a life’s “vocation” (as defined as, “vehicle for one’s voice in the world”).

As is evident upon reading the report, religion as required content in the courses or other experiences of this core program was not “preferred”, as Mr. Jayne claims, nor even included. One of the many publications referenced in the report is a book (The Purposeful Graduate, University of Chicago Press, 2015) by Sociology professor at the University of New Jersey, Dr.

Tim Clydesdale, whom Mr. Jayne references. Dr. Clydesdale describes purpose exploration programs funded by a Lilly Endowment grant at a mix of 88 faith-based and public higher education institutions. Naturally, the faith-based institutions included religion in their respective purpose exploration programs; however, the public institutions did not. Regardless of institution type, all purpose-exploration programs, as intended in the proposed model for the UF Core program, seek for higher education to “retain its higher cultural role”, as stated in the book’s description, in order for students to gain “a true sense of purpose—of personal, cultural, and intellectual value that cannot be measured by a wage” (Source: <http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo19658087.html>).

Another book referenced in the report is Helping College Students Find Purpose: The Campus Guide to Meaning-Making by Drs. Michele Murray and Robert Nash (Jossey-Bass, 2010). Dr. Murray, the Associate Vice President for Student Development at Seattle University and practicing Catholic, and Dr. Nash, a Professor at the University of Vermont and Secular Humanist, provide a balanced case for including meaning-making on all college campuses. Simply because the words “meaning” and “purpose” are the basis for a program does not indicate that the program prefers religion. Both authors were invited to serve as keynote speakers in a UF Quest Conference in November 2016 (as mentioned below); however, Dr. Nash was not able to participate because of critical health concerns.

After releasing this report in the Spring 2016 semester and providing substantial opportunity for feedback in the Fall 2016 semester through multiple meetings and a campus-wide UF Quest Conference that included campus leaders, faculty, staff, and students, this past Spring 2017 semester served as a crucible of campus-wide efforts from which the current model of UF Quest was synthesized. A visual of this new model, which has been further vetted by many different groups, including all UF deans and UF Faculty Senate, is provided in Appendix 1. As can be observed, the overall structure of the program did not change from the original model. However, the combined working group of faculty refined elements within each component of the program.

The differences between the new model and the original one released in the Spring 2016 report are as follows. Not all of these changes are relevant to Mr. Jayne’s complaints; however, I list them all to be complete.

- **Removal of the taglines of “meaning-making” and “purpose exploration”**
 - After the UF Quest Conference on early November, I met with a campus leader, who was a participant in the conference and a vocal opponent of use of these terms. (This campus leader had also participated in a sub-group of College of Liberal Arts and Sciences leaders who convened in the Fall 2016 semester to galvanize around their shared concerns that UF Quest would introduce required religious elements. This one participant expressed a willingness to meet with me to discuss his concerns after the conference in November 2016.)

- In a very productive conversation in December 2016, this campus leader and I agreed that, because the words “meaning” and “purpose” are so frequently connected with faith traditions and because I reference Dr. Tim Clydesdale’s book in my Spring 2016 report, UF Quest would no longer be described as a “meaning-making” or “purpose exploration” program.
- Rather than using “meaning” or “purpose” in reference to UF Quest, we both agreed that a more universally accepted substitute might be “an education that matters.”
- As one can observe in the visual of the new UF Quest framework, the words, “meaning” and “purpose”, are not included in any description of the components. Rather, emphasis is placed on “questions”—essential questions of the Humanities and pressing questions of the natural and social sciences—in all, guiding students in asking questions and seeking answers and clearly communicating their understanding, as any successful general education course accomplishes.
- **Greater selection of courses in the first two UF Quest experiences**
 - No longer will IUF1000 be the only course FTIC students will take in the first experience. Rather, as many as 25-30 Humanities courses will be offered fitting into one of five themes (The Examined Life, Identities, Justice and Power, Nature and Culture, War and Peace). An additional category will group courses that do not fit into any of these five categories, thus providing flexibility in our course selection.
 - IUF1000 will still be offered as one course in the “The Examined Life” category.
 - The second experience will continue to offer a selection of natural and social science courses, including IUF2100 and IDS4930, as originally proposed; however, students will select from a larger number of courses in the new model.
 - The second experience will not require that all courses be approved for International General Education credit; however, some courses may offer this credit.
 - The increase in number of courses offered in the first two experiences will afford smaller class sizes and, thus, increased opportunity for faculty-student engagement and student-mentor engagement, both of which are well understood as highly effective in retention and graduation.
- **Inclusion of either multi-discipline- or single-discipline-administered courses**
 - While the original design of the program required each course be developed and taught by multiple colleges within UF, the new model allows that a single discipline may offer a course.
 - Regardless of the number of disciplines involved, every course must offer a multidisciplinary focus on the course topic. Those submitting proposals for a

course in UF Quest must present how the course is intended to provide a multidisciplinary view of the topic.

At the time of this writing in June 2017, the new model has been the focus of campus-wide communications to offer even more opportunity for additional feedback on the model. Examples of such opportunities included a brain-storming retreat of 50 UF faculty invited from every UF college, a student town hall meeting, a survey sent out to all UF faculty, and three Faculty Senate meetings in March, April, and May 2017. Presentations and video of some of these events are available at <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/uf-core.aspx> and <http://fora.aa.ufl.edu/FacultySenate/Pages/Faculty-Senate/AgendasMinutes2016-2017>, and all will show the refined model of UF Quest as described above, without reference to the terms “meaning-making” and “purpose exploration”, without any implication of preference for religion, and clearly reflecting the strength of UF’s liberal arts and sciences programs.

RESPONSES TO MR. JAYNE’S COMPLAINTS

Complaint 1: *“Angela Lindner, Associate Provost of Undergraduate Affairs, explained the purpose of UF Quest by saying that ‘all students will engage in mindfulness practices in this program, from learning how to meditate to encouragement in practicing their spiritual tradition to reflecting on what brings their lives meaning, what they believe to be their purpose of life.. Students will be invited to bring their mind, body, and spirit with them into the classroom....’ In the same presentation, Lindner equated mindfulness with prayer, referred to students’ lives as having a ‘higher purpose,’*

This presentation was on UF Mindfulness Day in the Fall 2016. The audience included members of UF Mindfulness (<https://mindfulness.ufl.edu>), faculty, staff, and students who promote mindfulness practices throughout UF, including in the classroom. This group is a good example of how both believers and non-believers in God have joined in seeking understanding towards a shared goal of creating a “more mindful UF campus” (<https://mindfulness.ufl.edu>).

I disagree with Mr. Jayne that I defined the “purpose” of UF Quest to be engagement in mindfulness practices. However, I do agree that each student will be encouraged to engage in mindfulness practice as it relates to their own growth during their undergraduate study. Let me explain.

Mindfulness, as defined as “attentiveness to what is happening around you in a non-judgmental way”, can be translated into many different forms. Personal forms may take the shape of meditation or prayer. An example of a pedagogical form of mindfulness is settling a class into lecture by one minute of quiet in the beginning. In this space of quiet, a student can choose how to center, be it by prayer, mindful breathing, or mantra. Certainly, the instructor would not discourage or encourage one form over another but rather offer the space for the students to choose for themselves. Mindfulness takes shape in the classroom in

other ways, including having students draw a visual as an answer to a problem rather than using words; journaling their experience about their learning throughout a class; or compiling their reflections into a portfolio that documents their discovery and alignment of their gifts, their major, and, by their junior year, their choice of career. With unlimited access to cell phones and other electronics and the many applications that accompany these devices, students arrive to college campuses more and more distracted and less and less equipped with habits of attentiveness and thoughtfulness. Mindfulness in the context of pedagogical methods, therefore, expands from the common definition of personal meditation (which, too, has many forms) and provides instructors a means of building these essential, life-long habits in their students.

As I mentioned above, UF Quest will encourage students to build a personalized e-portfolio as a form of mindfulness practice. An example of an assignment that they may post in their e-portfolio might be a homework assignment in their first-year Humanities course that asks them to reflect on their view of war; of a specific issue related to social justice; or of whether they should consciously decide what has meaning and what does not in the context of a reading that may present a particular point of view. As in any successful Humanities course, the student is allowed to explore their value system while using the specific reading as a starting point of reference, and, in this place that may be uncomfortable, the student begins to learn how to critically think, how to question effectively, and understand their place in the classroom, on campus, and, ultimately, in the world.

Another benefit of the course assignments and the e-portfolio is that the student will have an opportunity to look back on their assignments and to reflect on their own growth and clarification of their values as they progress through their study at UF. A current example of such an exercise is an audio-essay required in IUF1000. Assignments throughout the semester culminate in the students preparing a recording of themselves reading an essay they have written that identifies a value that guides them and explains how a course work has helped them better understand or appreciate that value. This is an excellent example of a mindfulness (attentiveness) practice. Our hope is that, once the student has reached their third year at UF, they will listen to their first-year essay and record a “bookend” to their first-year essay reflecting on how this value they identified has either changed or been solidified through their experiences at UF. I encourage Mr. Jayne to listen to some of the powerful essays that are now available on the UF Libraries web site at <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/goodlife/all> and better understand how mindfulness can be presented in active form.

Other forms of mindfulness that are planned for UF Quest include what we are calling “Horizons Courses”, one-credit-hour courses offered at each level of study that will encourage students to reflect on the practical considerations of their future, including what draws them to a specific major and career and how to best prepare within their major for the next steps they need to take towards their chosen horizon (applying for and taking the GRE, LSAT, or

MCAT; finding an internship; applying to graduate school, law school, medical school; interviewing for a job; etc.).

Inevitably, when students self-reflect, they will draw out and clarify their own personal beliefs and values to make sense of what is happening around them. UF and all higher education institutions reflect the religious demographics of our U.S. culture. A 2015 survey of 9,861 UF students revealed that 76% of the respondents identify with a specific faith tradition or as believing in God but not affiliated with a religion or having no preference for any one faith tradition. The remainder of the respondents distributed across categories of “not particularly spiritual”, “agnostic”, or “atheist”. Of the students identifying as theists, 65% agree or strongly agree that they feel free to express their religious beliefs on campus at UF. Given the high percentage of students who feel comfortable expressing their religious beliefs at UF, I believe that a majority of our UF faculty fulfill our UF mission as a public and land-grant institution by providing hospitality in their classrooms that allows all students to express their beliefs and values in the context of the class discussion topic, without disparaging their belief system, be it non-theist- or theist-based. This is the meaning of my stating that all students will be encouraged to “practice their spiritual tradition”, which they bring with them to campus and into the classrooms and within every difficult class discussion that encourages them to expand and grow and begin to question what is held as norms in society.

Meditation practice in its many pedagogical forms, providing space in a classroom discussion for students to be comfortable to reflect on how their spiritual tradition relates to the class topic or describe what brings them meaning and clarifies their purpose, and allowing students to express their whole selves (as I define through my own personal faith tradition, “mind, body, and spirit”) are nothing more than good, solid pedagogical practices. These practices, along with many others honed by liberal arts educators, provide for all students a place to critically think, ask troubling questions, become comfortable with risk, even though the outcomes of their questioning might lead them to countering established cultural, political, and social norms, all under the guidance of an experienced instructor-mentor.

and finished the presentation by wishing “God’s peace and blessing to all of you.”

My final words delivered to the audience were derived from my belief and understanding of the deep peace and love of others that come from a connection with God. In the future, I will preface my expressions of this nature with, “I personally wish you...” in order to allay any concerns of non-theists that I am representing UF in my wishing them such peace and love.

To Lindner, promoting religious beliefs and practices is obviously one part of the UF Quest program.”

I hope my explanations above lead Mr. Jayne to reconsidering this conclusion.

Complaint 2: “We understand that UF Quest includes the designation of faculty and staff as ‘meaning mentors,’ who will partner with students and aim to help them develop ‘holy grit,’ a term coined by Tim Clydesdale to mean ‘exploration...ultimately involve[ing] service to God and humanity.’ Given this description, staff who are designated as ‘meaning mentors’ would reasonably understand that they are permitted, if not expected, to encourage students to believe in and serve God as part of their ‘meaning-making’ growth.”

I have experienced in my many years of service to the undergraduate student a belief that all who engage with our students (in whatever shape that engagement takes) should be mentors to them. The National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Engineering, organizations that guide my own disciplines of chemistry and engineering, define a “mentor” as a teacher, advisor, role model, and friend (<https://www.nap.edu/catalog/5789/adviser-teacher-role-model-friend-on-being-a-mentor-to>). Faculty, who serve as a focal point (or, more appropriately, a “focus point”) for all students, have the most important charge in embodying the spirit of mentoring with greatest integrity. How we faculty act in public, in the classroom, in our laboratories imprints on our students. Likewise, staff advisor-mentors are challenged to similar integrity (wholeness, authenticity).

As anyone who has mentored students can attest, conversations in the mentoring relationship open as students attempt to connect their personal and professional lives so that they can live with integrity. Mentoring differs from advising in that it is both a personal and a professional relationship and is based on caring and, thus, helping another person develop into a successful professional. While I do believe that all who work on a college campus should be mentors within the context of their work, universities—and UF is no exception—host many different mentoring programs administered outside the normal work of the university. In a large university such as UF, these mentoring programs are integral in achieving successful outcomes—resilience, retention, graduation—of its student (for examples, please refer to <http://www.leadershipandservice.ufl.edu/programs/mentoruf/>; <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/students/mentoring-programs/>; <http://warrington.ufl.edu/undergraduate/myheavener/career/bump/>; <https://multicultural.ufl.edu/programs/ummp/>; <https://www.advising.ufl.edu/transferstudents/peermentoringprogram/>).

In the many years I have served as a mentor to students, I have guided students towards the appropriate resources they need to sort through what they perceive as inconsistencies between their personal lives and their chosen profession. I have mentored students who were managing the aftermath of rape or self-mutilation; reconciling their sexuality with the the traditionally heterosexual, male-dominated field of engineering; feeling alienated from their discipline because of their ethnicity; and, yes, struggling with career decisions because of their faith value system or value system of which they had come to better understand through their growth in college. An example of the last circumstance was a Christian student who struggled with a lucrative offer in the nuclear engineering program offered by the U.S.

Navy. This student struggled to reconcile his value of nonviolence that he understood through his following Jesus Christ with his possible participation in creating nuclear weapons of war. Another student who did not clearly express religious values had come to understand her belief in environmental values. She struggled with the possibility of working at a large petro-chemical company as an engineer and needed the mentoring conversation to work through her final decision.

Mentors of students mainly listen attentively (yes, another form of mindfulness) to their mentees. If the student is struggling in an area in which the mentor is not equipped, the mentor guides the student towards the needed resource(s). At no point should a mentor encourage students to “believe in or serve God” as an initiating action (i.e., as a solution to a student’s problem that does not involve the student first voicing questions about their faith), and a mentor’s discussing beliefs about God must be restricted to their own personal experiences. Ultimately, the best interest of the student is served by referring them to resources, which may include clergy in the student’s faith tradition, other faculty who may have faced a similar struggle, and, in some cases, to a counselor in the Counseling and Wellness Center.

Such will be the mentors affiliated with UF Quest when this program is formed. As mentioned previously, the word “meaning” has been stripped from any description of UF Quest. These mentors would simply be considered “Quest Mentors”. The UF Quest Mentoring Program is envisioned to consist of mentors who are emeritus and current faculty, staff, and students and will seek the goal of increased academic engagement between students and caring Gators. Because the current and short-term focus of UF Quest is strictly on curriculum development, beginning a mentoring program affiliated with UF Quest is not anticipated until well after the Fall 2019 launch of the program.

“Further, we understand that the Campus Multi-Faith Cooperative will be expected to work toward ensuring that students’ ‘meaning-making’ exercises relate to their respective beliefs and traditions.”

“We also understand that the University has connected with local religious organizations toward the same goal. This further shows that the University intends ‘meaning-making’ exercises, and thus conversations between students and their ‘meaning mentors,’ to include religious beliefs and practices.”

While the original vision of this program was to engage the Campus Multi-Faith Cooperative in assisting students who reach out to this program with questions of faith as they grapple with meaning and purpose, to date, no development activities have involved this group.

I have, however, reached out to clergy in the community who serve in synagogues, churches, mosques, etc. that host our large population of UF students in services on the weekends and during weekdays for other gatherings. In fact, in order to give them a full understanding of

the UF Quest program and its goals of embarking the student in essential and pressing questions of life, several of these community leaders participated in the UF Quest Conference in November 2016, since the purpose of the conference was to unveil to the UF and surrounding community the proposed UF Quest framework. By including the religious organizations, the large percentage of UF students with a high level of religious commitment will have additional support in their seeking answers to essential and pressing questions of their lives sparked in the UF Quest courses and fully from the perspective of their faith tradition, which staff teaching in UF Quest will not provide.

Also, many of the religious organizations in Gainesville carry a substantial portion of the burden in serving the large poor and homeless populations, and Gainesville and Alachua County provide an excellent model of secular-religious collaborations to solve issues of poverty, illiteracy, and homelessness that inordinately plague this area (for examples of such collaborations, see <http://gracemarketplace.org/?gclid=CJSE-tStyNQCFZa3wAodaGwHWg> and <https://www.rahmamercyclinic.com>). We anticipate that many students will seek out local community service projects to satisfy the third requirement of UF Quest, and, naturally, many students will seek projects through religious organizations that provide food, clothing, shelter, and protection of the community's most vulnerable citizens.

We are, therefore, including religious and secular non-profit organizations in dialogue concerning UF Quest in order to prepare the Gainesville and surrounding communities for an in-flux of students willing to contribute their gifts towards solving local problems. Ample community service opportunities are available as well through secular non-profit organizations so any student who is uncomfortable connecting with a religious organization in this way will not be forced to do so. Likewise, we are engaging in similar dialogue with employers, NGOs, UF International Center, Foundations, etc. to clear pathways towards increased opportunities for students to fulfill the third requirement of UF Quest through internships, public service, study abroad, etc. (I encourage the FFRF to provide internships for our interested undergraduate students to fulfill this third requirement of UF Quest and am happy to speak with anyone in the FFRF concerning how to become part of this initiative.)

Complaint 3: *"...we understand that at least one course within the UF Quest program includes the book, "This is Water," which disparages non-theism:*

'Because here's something else that's true. In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually not such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship. And an outstanding reason for choosing some sort of God or spiritual-type thing to worship--be it J.C. or Allah, be it Yahweh or the Wicca mother-goddess or the Four Noble Truths or some infrangible set of ethical principles--is that pretty much anything else you worship will eat you alive.'

The course referred to in Mr. Jayne's complaint is IUF1000. The syllabi for each section offered are available at <http://undergrad.aa.ufl.edu/syllabi-from-past-semesters.aspx>. Because this course is required for all FTIC students, many sections are offered and taught by different faculty. Regardless of the section and instructor, all courses share the same course description, student learning outcomes, and a subset of readings. The course description of IUF1000 is as follows:

“Drawing on the cluster of disciplines that make up the Humanities and the considerable resources at UF in support of the Humanities, this course enquires into the very nature and experience of being human. Applying multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural approaches to explore what is a good life, students consider the cost of the good life, examine how people have chosen to live as members of local and global communities, and analyze conceptions and expressions of beauty, power, love, and health.”

Each instructor is allowed to include a subset of readings of their choice, and the online and hybrid (includes both on-campus and online components) have different readings to accommodate the online environment.

The online section and some on-campus sections include an excerpt from David Foster Wallace's book, This Is Water, cited by Mr. Jayne in this complaint. This book is a commencement speech that David Foster Wallace gave at Kenyon College in 2005. None of the IUF1000 sections that include Wallace's speech require that the students access and read the entire book. None of the IUF1000 sections require that students read the excerpt Mr. Jayne stripped from the book and included in his third complaint.

Rather, those sections that do include Wallace's work require that the students listen to a video made with a portion of the Kenyon College commencement address. The video can be found at <https://dotsub.com/view/6b8cc93f-3b53-486b-a1ce-025ffe6c9c52>, and note that this video does not include the excerpt that Mr. Jayne included in his complaint. Even if students were to access the full speech that David Foster Wallace gave to Kenyon College, one can strongly argue that, taken as a whole, he is neither promoting theism or opposing atheism. As director of IUF1000, Dr. Andy Wolpert, adds, Wallace argued that “we should all choose to think deliberately, regardless of religious background. [In Wallace's words,] ‘You get to consciously decide what has meaning and what doesn't’”. “THAT is real freedom. THAT is being educated and understanding how to think”, Wallace continued.

This video serves as a entry point into IUF1000 as students begin the process of asking questions that will, in turn, challenge their beliefs and values. Humanities faculty who are committed to shepherding all students, regardless of their belief system, through these questions are equipped in finessing classroom conversations with full respect for the dignity of all students. For an example of how a student in IUF1000 was inspired by this video, please

refer to the UF Libraries repository site <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/goodlife/all>, and listen to the entry by Ms. Sierra Klein, entitled “Ease Their Suffering”, inspired by her watching the “This Is Water” video. She provides no indication that the instructor disparaged non-theism but rather guided her to her own deeper compassion for and desire to understand and, ultimately, learn from those who suffer.

Complaint 4: “...we understand that the UF Core External Advisory Board is predominantly composed of clergy, while there are no representatives of secular humanism or other nontheistic believe systems.”

No such UF Quest External Advisory Board exists to date. Given that all efforts have been focused on developing the framework and now are focused on convening a curriculum committee that will develop and release a call for course proposals and select courses associated with UF Quest, the program is not mature enough yet to convene either an internal or external advisory board. The original vision for an external board was not to include “predominantly” clergy, however, but a strong representation of our Gainesville community stakeholders. As I previously stated, the representatives from religious organizations provide a primary function of connection to Gainesville’s community service opportunities. As we develop our boards for UF Quest, I will gratefully accept the concerns expressed by Mr. Jayne and not compose any board with predominantly clergy. I also thank him for the suggestion to add a secular humanist on the board, as I will attempt to do for both our internal and external boards.

Mr. Jayne’s Final Requests:

“We request that the University make appropriate changes to the UF Quest program to ensure that it does not include religious activities or otherwise promote religion.”

Above, I have explained the new framework shown in Appendix 1. Envisioned courses in UF Quest will be Humanities, Social Sciences, and Natural Sciences courses, all of which must garner broad faculty approval through our existing UF curriculum processes (University Curriculum Committee, General Education Committee). The words “meaning” and “purpose” have been removed from any description of the program as requested by UF faculty. Mindfulness practices that may be incorporated by faculty teaching the courses will support the courses’ learning outcomes and will be a means of drawing the student into closer attention to their surrounding world.

All staff who will be involved in the program should be reminded that they may not endorse or promote religion to students.

I hope that my response above to Mr. Jayne’s concerns about mentors encouraging or promoting religion makes it clear that neither was there intention nor is there plan for any mentors affiliated with UF Quest to do such as part of their role in serving in this capacity. As

with all mentoring on our UF campus and elsewhere, UF Quest mentors will establish as a goal assistance of the student mentee in threading together their personal and professional lives.

To avoid any concerns with regard to mentors believing they are expected to “endorse or promote religion to students”, I will lead a group of faculty, staff, and students to establish guidelines for all UF Quest mentors. These guidelines will make clear that no mentor is should do such.

All curriculum promoting “meaning-making” and “purpose-exploration” must do so from an entirely secular perspective.

In all cases, faculty governance and autonomy of their classroom must be honored. No programmatic requirements across all courses will involve even the use of “meaning-making” and “purpose-exploration” terms as requested of UF faculty. Rather, the program will be showcased with the overall objective of guiding students in asking “essential questions in the Humanities” and “pressing questions in the Natural Sciences and Social Sciences”.

Reading materials critical of nontheism should not be included unless students are also assigned readings that are critical of theism in a similar manner.

With regard to the Wallace piece included in IUF1000, I hope that I have made clear that only the video reference above is used in this class. Courses planned for the UF Quest program will not engage with students in a way that would lead them to feel pressured to participate in religion or to not participate in religion.

Finally, the program, including the UF Core External Advisory Board, should represent the demographics of students, and include nontheistic representatives at a level that corresponds to Pew statistics.”

As I responded above, we will attempt to achieve this goal.

“We urge the University of Florida to follow UCF’s lead in supporting its increasingly nonreligious student body, rather than suggesting that nonreligious students lack meaning or purpose in their lives.”

A concern that I have held since making the decision to remove “meaning” and “purpose” from this program’s description is that some may believe that students who do not believe in God have a desire for neither in their lives. However, words do matter and have different meaning to different people. Since UF does not have a chaplain, hiring a Secular Humanist chaplain is not realistic.

UF does have an active student organization program. In order to provide a tangible sign of UF's continued support of all students, I will reach out to various Secular Humanist faculty at UF and encourage that they work with interested students in establishing an official Secular Humanist student organization to join the many religious student organizations on campus. Keep in mind that no organization at UF can restrict its membership to a single category, and the religious organizations must welcome any interested student's participation, regardless of their background, as would a Secular Humanist organization. Our goal is that, given ample student interest in forming such a Secular Humanist organization, UF will encourage civil discourse and intentional listening sessions between the various theist-/non-theist-based organizations, thus magnifying one of the objectives of UF Quest of teaching students to gain understanding of and communicate respectfully with "the other".

CONCLUSION

While the percentage of students who doubt or do not believe in God or who believe in God but do not affiliate with a religious tradition (the "nones") may be increasing, we do understand that the majority of our UF students still identify with a religious tradition. We also are aware that the students who do believe in God are highly tolerant of students who do not believe in God, with a majority believing that people who do not believe in God are just as moral and can grow spiritually without being religious (Astin and Astin, "The Spiritual Life of College Students", Higher Education Research Institute, 2010, http://spirituality.ucla.edu/docs/reports/Spiritual_Life_College_Students_Full_Report.pdf). Perhaps our students provide a better model of toleration than we adults have provided in the past, and perhaps they have led the way for UF to be ranked 6th in the nation by the Heterodox Academy ranking (<https://heterodoxacademy.org/resources/guide-to-colleges/>).

I would like to thank Mr. Jayne and the FFRF for expressing these concerns and for allowing UF the opportunity to further clarify the transformational educational goal of UF Quest. As a result, through this clarification process, I believe we are even better equipped to fulfill the responsibility that all who work in higher education and of all of us who are affiliated with UF Quest share: *to reach every student in their current circumstance and to offer them an educational experience that gives them not only the opportunity to reflect critically on the norms of our society, politics, and culture but also a place of guided questioning of their own agency, their relationships to other humans, and, ultimately, their relationship to the larger world.*

I encourage Mr. Jayne and others in FFRF to visit UF and to observe the collaborative, respectful efforts already taking place as we strive to meet our shared responsibility to our students. I also welcome direct contact from Mr. Jayne to clarify any concerns that he may still have about UF Quest.

Appendix 1: UF Quest Framework

UF QUEST 1 <i>H, 3 CREDIT HOURS</i>	UF QUEST 2 <i>B/P OR S, 3 CREDIT HOURS</i>			UF QUEST 3 <i>E, 0-3 CREDIT HOURS</i>	UF QUEST 4 <i>OPTIONAL</i>
Engagement with Essential Questions from the Humanities <i>(Choose one course.)</i>	Engagement with Pressing Questions in the Natural and Social <i>(Choose one course.)</i>			Engagement in the World <i>(Choose one experience.)</i>	Synthesis of UF Quest Experiences within Discipline
THE EXAMINED LIFE	BIOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL SCIENCES			<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> INTERNSHIP OR CO-OP STUDY ABROAD COMMUNITY SERVICE RESEARCH PUBLIC SERVICE DESIGN AND COMPETITION </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> SENIOR CAPSTONE COURSE </div>	
IDENTITIES	CLIMATE CHANGE	TBA	TBA		
JUSTICE AND POWER	TBA	TBA	TBA		
NATURE AND CULTURE		
WAR AND PEACE	SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES				
UF QUEST 1 WILDCARD	PEOPLE AND DATA	TBA	TBA		
	TBA	TBA	TBA		
▼		
OPTIONAL HORIZONS COURSES					
FIRST-YEAR FLORIDA <i>(Optional, 1CH)</i>	HORIZONS COURSE 2 <i>(Optional, 1CH)</i>	HORIZONS COURSE 3 <i>(Optional, 1CH)</i>	FINAL-YEAR FLORIDA <i>(Optional, 1CH)</i>		
E-PORTFOLIO					

Appendix 2: Excerpt from IUF 1000 (What Is the Good Life) Syllabus, Section taught by IUF1000 director, Dr. Andy Wolpert

Source: https://people.clas.ufl.edu/wolpert/files/1701_Wolpert_rev.pdf

PART 1: THE INDIVIDUAL Week 1 (January 4 - 6): Introduction

David Foster Wallace, "This Is Water," 2005 Commencement at Kenyon College. Kenyan College, Gambier, OH (speech), adapted by *Glossary*, available through the *Wall Street Journal*, 10 May 2013 (web).

Weeks 2-3 (January 9 - 20): Search for Meaning

1. Joel K. Kupperman, "Myth One: Pursuing Comfort and Pleasure Will Lead to the Best Possible Life," in *Six Myths about the Good Life: Thinking About What Has Value* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006), 1-21.
2. Roy Baumeister, "The Meanings of Life," *Aeon*, 16 Sept 2013 (web).
3. Hermann Hesse, *Siddhartha*, translated by Joachim Neugroschel (New York: Penguin Books, 2002).

Week 4 (January 23 - 27): Self-Reflection and the Arts

1. Jeanne Winterson, *Art Objects* (New York: Knopf, 1996), 3-24.
2. "I Could Do That," *PBS*, 5 June 2015 (web).
3. Christopher Mele, "Is It Art? Eyeglasses on Museum Floor Began as Teenagers' Prank," *New York Times*, 30 May 2016 (web).
4. Jerry Saltz, "Art at Arm's Length: A History of the Selfie," *Vulture*, 1 January 2014 (web).
5. Honors Reading: Clifford Geertz, "Art as a Cultural System," *MLN* 91 (1976): 1473-99.

PART 2: SOCIETY

Week 5 (January 30 - February 3): Social Construction of Identity

1. Susan Bordo, "Reading the Slender Body," in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (Berkeley: University of California, 1993), 185-212.

2. Kevin Connolly, *Double Take: A Memoir* (New York: Harper, 2009), Chapter 3: “What If?” and Chapter 11: “Snapshot.”

3. Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo, “Socialization,” in *Is Everyone Really Equal?* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2012), 15-27.

4. Allan G. Johnson, “The Social Construction of Difference,” in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, 3rd ed., edited by Maurianne Adams et al. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 15- 21.

Week 6 (February 6 - 10): Social Justice

1. Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” (16 April 1963), *The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute*, n. d., web.

2. Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Vol. 2: 1962-1994 (London: Abacus, 1994), Chapter 115, 431-38.

3. Lee Anne Bell, “What is Social Justice?” in *Readings for Diversity and Social Justice*, 3rd ed., edited by Maurianne Adams et al. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 21-26.

4. Honors Reading: Martha Nussbaum, “Beyond Anger,” *Aeon*, 26 July 2016 (web).

Week 7 (February 13 - 17): Society and the Built Environment

1. Randy Hester, “Subconscious Landscapes of the Heart,” *Places* 2 (1985): 10-22.

2. Charles Jencks, *The Architecture of Hope* (London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2010), 11-43.

Week 8 (February 20 -24): Society and the Natural Environment

1. Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic,” from *A Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1948), 201-226.

2. Wangari Maathai, “Foresters without Diplomas,” in *Unbowed: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 119-138.

Week 9 (February 27 - March 3): Midterm

Review on Tuesday

Midterm on Thursday in lecture

PART 3: INTERSECTIONS (SPECIAL TOPIC) History, Memory, and Society

Purpose of Part 3: To explore in greater depth a topic discussed in either part 1 or part 2 so students can better understand the challenges that people face as they seek to achieve their own personal goals or as they come together to address the problems of the community.

Description of Special Topic for Wolpert's sections: How do people come together again as a group to heal past wounds after a traumatic event has torn apart the social fabric of the community and has created a residue of anger, fear, and distrust that threatens to produce a cycle of revenge and retribution? Students will examine how collective memories of past conflicts can either help people overcome the divisions that exist within society or exacerbate such divisions. In addition, they will consider the ways in which they are responsible for producing and circulating shared memories of the past that either promote reconciliation or create further social unrest.

Organization of Special Topic for Wolpert's sections: For Week 10, students will examine the various methods and theories that scholars have applied to the study of social and collective memory in order to better understand how groups construct memories of past events and how such memories are contested within the social arena. For Weeks 11-13, students will then examine Athens after the Peloponnesian War, as a case study, to understand the problems that arise as people attempt to work through troubling memories of past social conflicts.

Week 10 (March 13 - 17): Theories and Methods of Memory Studies

1. Kirk Savage, "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, edited by John Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University, 1994), 127-49.
2. Barry Schwartz, "Two Faces of Collective Memory," in *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 8-20.
3. Yael Zerubavel, "The Dynamics of Collective Remembering," in *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 1-12.

Week 11 (March 20 - 24): The Thirty of Athens (The Historical Event)

1. Sarah Pomeroy et al., *A Brief History of Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 200-27 (honors section), 225-27 (all other sections).
2. Aristotle, *Constitution of Athens* 34-41.

3. Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3-4.

4. Honors Reading: Andrew Wolpert, "The Violence of the Thirty," in *Ancient Tyranny*, edited by Sian Lewis (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 213-23.

Week 12-13 (March 27 - April 7): Memory of the Thirty Tyrants

1. Lysias, "Against Eratosthenes"

2. Honors Reading: Peter Krentz, "Aftermath," in *The Thirty at Athens* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982), 109-24.

Analytical Essay due by 8:00 am on April 7.

PART 4: SYNTHESIS (THIS I BELIEVE) Weeks 14-15 (April 10 - 19): Life's Purpose

1. Herodotus, *The History*, translated by David Greene (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1987), l.29-45, 85-87 (on Solon and Croesus).

2. Elizabeth Manwell, "Learning to Look at Death with Herodotus," *Eidolon*, 3 March 2016 (web).

3. Optional: Robert Waldinger, "What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study of Happiness," *TED*, November 2015 (web).

Final Version of the This I Believe Audio Essay due by 10:00 AM on April 24.