



COMISS Network -The Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings

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Dear COMISS Network Member,

As we write this letter, we hope that you are well and that you are in the midst of planning observances and celebrations of one of the COMISS Network initiatives: [Pastoral Care Week](#).

The Annual Forum of the COMISS Network will be held January 7 and 8, 2018, at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center, in Alexandria, VA. This is the same hotel we have used the last several years. The room rate for this year's meeting is \$119.00 single or double. National/Reagan Airport and Dulles International are the nearest airports to the meeting location. By far, National/Reagan Airport (DCA) is the closest to the hotel.

Please make your plans **now** to attend. The number for the hotel (direct) is 703.845.1010 or you can call 1-800-HILTONS. You **must** make your reservations before **Wednesday, December 6, 2017**. Please ask for the **"COMISS Network Forum 2018" group rate**. Also, we know that many of the Religious Endorsing Body representatives will be staying at the hotel for the NCMAF/ECVAC meetings. So that the COMISS Network can get credit for your stay, please book your time with us under our room block. It saves us money!

The Registration Form for the COMISS Network Forum is also enclosed. You will note that the registration fee is \$185.00. This covers all expenses for the Forum (speakers, lunch, two breakfasts, meeting rooms, etc.) **Please remember that there will be a continental breakfast on Sunday morning and a plated breakfast on Monday morning of the Forum.**

This year's theme is: **"Beyond the Status Quo: Advocating for the Future of Chaplaincy."** Plenary speakers include Wendy Cadge, author of *Paging God*, and Mary Kate Cunningham, Senior Manager of Public Policy, American Society of Association Executives. We will also have a plenary session on COMISS Strategic Planning led by Russell Davis, Pat Appelhans, and Trace Haythorn. We will seek your feedback both before and during the Forum. Watch for an invitation to participate in an online survey using Survey Monkey.

At this year's business session, we will be reviewing and discussing proposed updates to the *Guidelines*, located at www.comissnetwork.org. Additionally, your organization will want to report on the events of the past year that you are pleased to announce during one of our "Celebration Reports" sessions.

We hope that the 2018 COMISS Network Forum will be a significant time of discovering new and classic resources for professional spiritual and pastoral care. Please plan to be with for this important time of communication, learning, and sharing together.

The COMISS Network Forum Planning Team



COMISS Network: The Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings

REGISTRATION FORM

COMISS NETWORK ANNUAL FORUM MEETING January 7-8, 2018

RESERVATIONS: A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center in Alexandria, Virginia. When making your reservations, please indicate you are with **The COMISS Network Forum 2018**. All reservations are handled directly with the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center 703-845-1010 or 877-783-8258.

The deadline for hotel reservations is Wednesday, December 6, 2017. After the deadline, any reservations will be taken on a space available basis and the room rate is subject to change. The check-in time is 3:00 p.m. and the check-out time is 12:00 noon. The special room rates are valid for three days prior and three days after the meeting. Please remember that in the event you need to check out prior to the reserved checkout date, the hotel will charge an early checkout fee in the amount of \$75.00. To avoid an early checkout fee of \$75.00 you should advise the Hotel at or before check-in of any change in planned length of stay. To avoid any cancellation charges on individual rooms, please cancel if necessary, 12 hours prior to your arrival date.

RATES: Single and double occupancy: \$119.00

REGISTRATION: \$185.00 — included: Breakfast on Sunday and Monday mornings January 7th and 8th and Lunch on Sunday, January 7th.

Please complete this registration form. Return it with the registration fee of \$185.00 (make checks payable to **The COMISS Network** by **Friday, December 8, 2017** to:

**The COMISS Network
1802 Green Trail
Keller, TX 76248-5397**

Name: _____

Title: _____

Preferred name on badge: _____

Association Representing: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Email Address: _____

Special Meal Requirements: (The registration fee includes the standard meals and breaks, including vegetarian. Some special meals may incur an additional expense to be billed to the attendee.)

Please check here if this is your first time attending a **COMISS Network** meeting.

Credit Card Information – MasterCard – Visa – Discover - American Express

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Card Type: MasterCard Visa Discover American Express

Card Number: _____

Card Verification Number (3 or 4 digit number): _____

Expiration Date: Day ____ Month ____ Year _____

Amount: \$ _____

Authorizing Signature: _____

2018 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

“Beyond the Status Quo: Advocating for the Future of Chaplaincy”

January 7-8, 2018
Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hotel
Alexandria, Virginia

Sunday, January 7, 2018

8:00 AM	Continental Breakfast and Forum Registration
9:00 - 9:10	Welcome
9:10 - 9:15	Opening Meditation:
9:15 - 9:30	Introductions of Attendees, New Members & Overview of Agenda
9:30 – 9:45	Election Information and Nominating Committee Ballot for Officers Serving 2018-2019
9:45 -10:35	Celebration Reports
10:35 -11:00	Break
11:00-Noon	Plenary 1: COMISS Strategic Planning Patricia F. Appelhans, JD, CEO, APC Russell H. Davis, Ph.D, Chair, COMISS Trace Haythorn, Ph.D, CEO, ACPE
Noon -1:15PM	Lunch
1:15 - 2:20	Plenary 2: Advocacy: Why, How, When and Where Mary Kate Cunningham, Senior Manager of Public Policy, ASAE
2:20 – 2:50	Break - Refreshments on your own
2:20 – 4:10	Plenary 3: Chaplaincy Advocacy Practicum Ms. Cunningham
4:10 - 4:30	Celebration Reports
4:30	Break
5:00	Reception for COMISS Network Members, Guests & Leadership

Monday, January 8, 2018

8:00 - 9:00 AM Plated Breakfast

9:00 - 9:05 Opening Meditation: Rabbi Dr. Sandra Katz, BCC
President-Elect, NAJC

9:05 -10:00 Business Session

- . Minutes of Forum 2017
- . Report of Chair
- . Report of Budget & Finance -Treasurer
- . Report of CCAPS
- . Report of Joint Commission Meeting
- . Pastoral Care Week Report
- . Action on New Member Applications
- . New Business: COMISS Guidelines, Changes
- . Election of Leadership
- . Election of Nominating Committee

10:00 -10:10 Break

10:10 - 10:15 Presentation of the COMISS Medal

10:15-11:45 Plenary 4: **"Making the Case for Professional Chaplains: Content and Strategy"**
Wendy Cadge, MA, PhD.
Professor, Brandeis University

11:45-12:00 Closing Remarks

Noon Adjourn

Mary Kate Cunningham, CAE serves as Director of Public Policy at ASAE. In this role she advocates on behalf of ASAE's more than 39,000 association executives and industry partners on state and federal policy issues. She also manages The Power of A program and American Associations Day, the legislative fly-in for association professionals.

Prior to this role, she worked at the Federation of American Scientists as the Special Advisor to the President. From 2009-2011, Cunningham worked for the House Armed Services Committee serving in the Communications Office and the Seapower Subcommittee. Cunningham graduated with her Masters in Strategic Security Studies from the National Defense University. She received her Bachelor's degree from The Catholic University of America where she studied Political Science. She serves as a member of the Tax Coalition and the Truman National Security Project. In 2013 she received the "Up and Coming Practitioner" award from the Professional Women in Advocacy Conference. Cunningham was awarded the Certified Association Executive (CAE) designation from ASAE in July of 2017.

From 2014- 2016 Cunningham served as the Director of Communications for No Exceptions, a nationwide coalition of post-9/11 generation military veterans and national security leaders who support a military-wide policy of full combat inclusion, regardless of gender.

Cunningham lives in Washington, DC with her husband Matt Ogren, a public opinion research strategist at APCO Worldwide.

Wendy Cadge is a Professor in the Sociology Department at Brandeis University. She teaches and writes about religion in public institutions in the contemporary United States, especially as related to questions of diversity, immigration, sexuality, and healthcare. She is the author of *Paging God: Religion in the Halls of Medicine*, *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America* and is a co-editor of *Religion on the Edge: De-Centering and Re-Centering the Sociology of Religion*.

She is currently working on a series of projects about religion and spirituality in **public institutions** including deep-sea port and maritime contexts, airports, and the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. With Boston-based photographer **Randall Armor** and architectural historian **Alice Friedman**, she is collaborating on a project about **Hidden Sacred Spaces in Boston** which builds on earlier work about **sacred spaces in public settings**. With \$4.5M from The John Templeton Foundation, she is collaborating with George Fitchett at Rush University Medical Center on a four year project, "**Transforming Chaplaincy: Promoting Research Literacy for Improved Patient Outcomes**."

At Brandeis she is the chair of the **Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies Program** and a Faculty Representative to the Board of Trustees. During the 2016-17 academic year, Cadge is a Visiting Scholar with the **Work and Organization Studies Group** at the Sloan School of Management at MIT.

COMISS Network Guidelines

Revised at the January 2018 Annual Forum in Alexandria, VA.

I. Name, Purpose, Mission and Objectives

- a. The name of this group is COMISS Network; incorporated as a 501.c3 in Atlanta, Georgia.
- b. The purpose of the COMISS Network is to provide its membership with a unique forum for communication, networking, and advocacy beyond our common calling to pastoral ministry.
- c. The Mission of the COMISS Network is: We are a pre-eminent network of organizations committed to the preparation and practice of multi-faith spiritual care through chaplaincy and pastoral counseling in specialized settings and promotes and supports collaboration among its members.
- d. The Objectives of the COMISS Network are:
 - i. To provide a forum for dialogue among those who share a similar mission, nationally and internationally.
 - ii. To encourage shared programs/resources in order to increase collaboration and reduce duplication among members.
 - iii. To advocate professionalism in standards and service in the provision of multi-faith-based care and counseling.
 - iv. To educate our constituency and various publics regarding the value of professional, multi-faith-based care and counseling.
 - v. To propose and plan initiatives that furthers our purpose.
 - vi. To encourage research into experience-based pastoral care and counseling.

II. Membership:

- a. Membership is available to organizations which subscribe to the purpose, mission, and objectives of COMISS. Organizations applying for membership and those renewing current membership may self-select the organization's membership category. The characteristics of each category are recommended guidelines for assisting the organizations in selecting the most appropriate category for membership:
 - i. Professional Certifying or Accrediting Organization: These organizations certify individuals for the practice of and or training for professional pastoral care. A certifying organization will be able to demonstrate a process for certification of individuals which includes standards/categories in **compliance** with CCAPS (The COMISS Commission on Accreditation of Pastoral Services). They will also demonstrate how certified chaplains, pastoral counselors, or other pastoral care professionals conform to a code of ethics that prohibits proselytizing, conflicts of interest, and crossing of professional boundaries. Or, organizations in this category accredit institutions, facilities, centers, or systems for the

- practice, education, and training of chaplains, pastoral counselors, and/or other pastoral care professionals. An accrediting organization will be able to demonstrate a process for accreditation which includes standards/categories in *compliance* with CCAPS.
- ii. Religious Endorsing Bodies: These organizations include faith groups, denominations, or religious organizations which endorse individuals of their respective group for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, and/or other professional pastoral care ministries. A Religious Endorsing Body will be able to demonstrate a process of endorsement which includes on-going accountability between the endorser and the endorsed individual. Also, these organizations will be able to demonstrate recognition as a religious endorsing body. They will be able to demonstrate that they are recognized as a 501 (C) (3) religious organization and have primarily a lay constituency.
 - iii. Professional Membership Organizations: These organizations exist as groups of chaplains and/or other pastoral care professionals whose work focuses on ministry in specific specialized settings. These organizations may be for profit or not for profit.
 - iv. Chaplain and Pastoral Counselor Employing Organizations or Agencies: These organizations utilize the services of chaplains and/or pastoral counselors who are certified by one of the Certifying Organizations of the COMISS Network. These organizations may be for profit or not for profit, but they must demonstrate, via their mission statement and table of organization, that they operate in accordance with the purpose, mission, and objectives of the COMISS Network.
 - v. Academic and Educational Institutions: These institutions prepare students for chaplaincy/ specialized ministry through academic degree programs and/or conduct research related to ministry in specialized settings. These institutions are accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and/or the U.S. Department of Education.

III. COMISS Network Forum

- a. Membership
 - i. Members in good standing are current in membership dues and have filed all reports required.
 - ii. Each member organization may be represented by up to three participants.
 - iii. There will be one vote per member organization in good standing.
- b. Annual Forum
 - i. The COMISS Network will gather for one or more meetings annually in Forum.

- ii. All Forum business will be presented for agenda approval to the COMISS Network Leaders no later than 24 hours prior to the opening of the Forum.
- iii. The conduct of business at the Annual Forum will include presentations, discussion and action on:
 - 1. Annual reports
 - 2. Financial report
 - 3. Presentation of a budget and its adoption
 - 4. Election of officers
 - 5. Election of nominating committee
 - 6. Presentation of new members
 - 7. Proposed new initiatives
- iv. All mailings pertaining to an upcoming Forum are to be sent to the voting member of record.

IV. COMISS Network Leadership (Officers and At-Large Members)

- a. Network Leadership shall be members of one of the member organizations of the COMISS Network in good standing.
- b. The COMISS Network Leadership annual elections shall take place at the Annual Forum.
- c. New COMISS Network Leaders will begin their terms of office at the conclusion of the Annual Forum.
- d. The officers of COMISS Network will be:
 - i. Chair
 - 1. Presides at all meetings of the COMISS Network Forum and the COMISS Network Leadership.
 - 2. Presents an annual report to the Forum.
 - ii. Chair-Elect
 - 1. Assumes the duties of the Chair in absence or disability of the Chair.
 - 2. Serves as chair of Forum Program Planning Task Force.
 - iii. Treasurer
 - 1. Is responsible for financial management.
 - 2. Provides financial reports to the COMISS Network Leadership and to the Annual Forum.
 - 3. Convenes a Finance Committee to be made up of the Chair of CCAPS, the Chair of **Spiritual Care Week**, and one member of the COMISS Network Leadership, to prepare an annual budget. The Executive Administrator will be an ex officio member of the Task Force.
 - 4. Schedules an audit every three years with an outside professional auditor.

- iv. Secretary
 - 1. Attends all sessions of the COMISS Network Leadership and Annual Forum and records all votes and minutes.
- e. The officers of the COMISS Network will serve as the officers of the corporation and as such are responsible for its business and direction as approved by the COMISS Network.
- f. At-Large Members: There shall be two at-large members elected at the Annual Forum by and from the membership groups to insure diversity.
- g. **Spiritual Care Week Committee Chair: The spiritual care week committee chair will be the liaison between the COMISS Network Leadership and the Spiritual Care Week Committee.**
- h. The COMISS Network Leadership will act on business responsibilities between meetings of the Forum. They will:
 - i. Contract services
 - ii. Hire and annually evaluate staff
 - iii. Implement decisions of the Forum
 - iv. Be responsible for the budget
 - v. Engage the membership in strategic planning
 - vi. Establish and appoint Task Forces as needed to support the mission and objectives.
- i. Terms of Service
 - i. The Chair and Chair-Elect will each serve one two-year term. The Chair-Elect succeeds the Chair. If the chair position is vacated before the end of the two year term the chair-elect will assume the position and fill the unexpired term (and afterwards, fulfilling the term to which s/he was elected.) An election will be held at the next Forum to elect a succeeding chair-elect.
 - ii. In the interest of continuity, a nominee for Chair-Elect is selected by and from the COMISS Network Leadership. Former COMISS Network Leadership members who have served within the last 5 years may also be nominated directly from the floor.
 - iii. The Secretary, Treasurer and two Members-at-Large of the COMISS Network Leadership will serve a two-year term and may be re-elected to one successive term.
 - iv. The Chair-Elect and Treasurer will be elected in odd-numbered years; the Secretary and two At-Large members will be elected in even-numbered years.
 - v. **Spiritual Care Week Committee** members will serve a four-year term. **The Chair will serve a three-year term and may be re-elected.**
 - vi. CCAPS Commissioners will serve three-year terms and may be re-appointed to one successive term.

- vii. Individuals who are completing an unfulfilled term are eligible to serve a two-year term and be re-elected to one successive term.
- viii. The chair can appoint an individual for Secretary or Treasurer if the position is vacated prior to the Forum.

V. COMISS Network Staff

- a. The Executive Administrator
- b. The Bookkeeper

VI. Standing Committees and Commissions

- a. A Nominating Committee of four (4) will be nominated and elected annually from the membership categories at the Annual Forum. They will be responsible for the process of nominations and conducting the election.

- i. Solicit names from each of the membership groups.
- ii. Secure agreement to being nominated from the nominee.
- iii. Prepare the slate to be mailed to the membership with registrations packets for the Annual Forum.
- iv. Conduct the election at the Annual Forum.
- v. The Committee may receive nominations from the floor.
- vi. They are administratively accountable to the COMISS Network Leadership.

- b. The COMISS Commission for Accreditation of Pastoral Services consists of eight members.

- i. The Network Leadership will appoint three commissioners drawn from the Certifying or Accrediting category, two from the Religious Endorsing Bodies, one from one of the other two Network groups, and two at-large drawn from outside the COMISS Network. When there is a commissioner vacancy, CCAPS will receive applications from individuals representing the appropriate membership group. CCAPS will then make their recommendation to the National Leadership who will make the appointment.

ii. CCAPS will:

1. Propose and revise CCAPS standards
2. Conduct accreditation site visits of pastoral services
3. Represent the COMISS Network to external national accrediting bodies
4. Submit an annual report to the Network
5. Recommend nominees to the Network Leadership for the at-large commissioners from outside the Network.

iii. COMISS Network Leadership will:

1. Approve membership criteria for CCAPS

2. Appoint CCAPS commissioners. The commissioners will elect their own chair from among themselves.
3. Approve policies, procedures, and standards of CCAPS.
4. Approve CCAPS accreditation recommendations for pastoral services.

c. **Spiritual Care Week Committee**

- i. The purpose of the committee is to plan and implement the annual observance of **Spiritual Care Week**. A committee will be appointed by the COMISS Network Leadership from among the membership categories. The **Spiritual Care Week** observance is intended to raise awareness of the importance of pastoral/spiritual care. This includes, but is not limited to:
 1. Determination of a theme for a three-year cycle in advance.
 2. Promote and manage an opportunity for constituents to design and submit a graphic promoting a theme.
 3. Produce publicity and educational materials to support the theme.
 4. Contract with and supervise a manufacturer to supply materials
 5. Supervise sale and distribution of materials
- ii. The committee will **nominate** its own chair **with approval by the COMISS Network Leadership**.
- iii. The committee will present an annual report to the Annual Forum.

VII. Amendments and revisions to the Guidelines

- a. Will be developed as needed by the COMISS Network Leadership
- b. Will be sent to the voting member of record of each member organization 60 days prior to the Forum.
- c. Changes to the Guidelines shall be ratified by a simple majority of the voting members present at the annual Forum.

VIII. Required Quorum

- a. At the COMISS Network Leadership meetings, a simple majority (one more than half of the Network Leadership) is sufficient to take action.
- b. At the Annual Forum a simple majority of the voting members present is sufficient to take action.