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Report of the Task Force to Study the Effects of Cult Activities on Public Senior Higher Education Institutions

To:

Hon. Parris N. Glendening

Governor of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Hon. Thomas V. Mike Miller

President, Senate of Maryland
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Hon. Casper R. Taylor, Jr.

Speaker, Maryland House of Delegates
State House
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Maryland Department of Legislative Support Services

Legislative Services Building
90 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

FROM:

William T. Wood, Esquire, Chair

Del. Emmett C. Burns, Jr., Ms. Araceli G. Carrigan, Ms. Maitland W. Dade, Staff, Del. Sharon Grosfeld, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Mr. Warren Kelley, Dr. Eric P. Kafka, Ms. Joan Marionni, Ms. Sowmya Murthy, Sen. Paul G. Pinsky, Ms. Patricia Rausch, Mr. Andrew A. Rittler, Sen. Ida Ruben, Hon. Charles B. Saunders, Jr., Ms. Roberta J. Thomas (resigned June 7, 1999), Mr. Franz C. Wilson

Background

Joint House Resolution 22 established this Task Force to Study the Effects of Cult Activities on Public Senior Higher Education Institutions. According to JHR 22, recent tragedies occurring in California, Mississippi and Florida, an incident in Japan and other information gathered by the General Assembly of Maryland prompted the passage of this Resolution. The Task Force was directed to "communicate with and obtain information from "cult" awareness organizations, former cult members, college administrators, campus security personnel, campus ministers, families of "cult" members, and other interested parties regarding the recruitment and organizational practices of "cults", the extent of "cult" activities within the University System of Maryland, St. Mary's College and Morgan State University, the response of college administrators in Maryland and around the nation to "cult" activities and the effect of "cult" activity on students

and to report no later than September 30, 1999 on its findings and recommendations to the Governor, and pursuant to Section 2-1246 of the State Government Article, to the General Assembly." (Quotation marks supplied.)

The term "cult" is a difficult and divisive term to define. Several witnesses, including Mr. Ronald Loomis, American Family Foundation and Dr. William T. Stuart, Professor of Anthropology and Director of Undergraduate Studies, IJMCP, have offered definitions.

The members of the Task Force were appointed on or about February 15, 1999 and the Chairman was appointed on or about April 5, 1999. The members are William T. Wood, Esq., Chair, Member, Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland; Hon. Emmett C. Burns, Jr., Maryland House of Delegates; Hon. Sharon Grosfeld, Maryland House of Delegates; Hon. Ida Ruben, Maryland Senate; Hon. Paul G. Pinsky, Maryland Senate; Ms. Joan Marionni, University System of Maryland; Mr. Warren Kelley, University of Maryland College Park; Ms. Nina Hopkins, Morgan State University; Dr. Eric P. Kafka, St. Mary's College; Hon. Charles B. Saunders, Jr., Maryland Higher Education Commission; Ms. Araceli G. Carrigan, Parent Association; Ms. Roberta J. Thomas, Parent Association; Ms. Patricia Rausch, Parent; Mr. Franz C. Wilson, Parent; Ms. Sowmya Murthy, Student, Towson University; and Mr. Andrew A. Rittler, Student, Salisbury State University. Ms. Maitland Dade was appointed staff to the Task Force.

On May 11, 1999, the members of the Task Force met each other at University System Headquarters and scheduled the Task Force's first meeting for Monday, May 25, 1999, from 10:00 am to 4:45 pm at the same location. It was decided that the May 25, 1999 meeting and all subsequent meetings would be open to the public and conducted in conformity with the Maryland Open Meetings Act and all relevant amendments. Although the Maryland Open Meetings Act permits closed executive sessions, the Task Force agreed that there would be no closed sessions of any kind, and that all proceedings would be subject to public scrutiny. The Chairman also directed staff to schedule on the agenda for the May 25, 1999 meeting time to consider a definition of the term "cult".

It was further agreed that all proceedings before the Task Force would be recorded and that the tapes and all written materials considered by the Task Force would be made available at USM Headquarters to be reviewed and duplicated by any interested person upon request and at reasonable times. Upon completion of the mission of the Task Force, all documents and audiotapes of recorded Task Force proceedings will be delivered to the Maryland General Assembly Library and Information Services, 90 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401 and may also be reviewed in accordance with applicable policy.

Proceedings Before The Task Force

On May 2, 1999, Mr. Kelley traveled to Salisbury State University to question the students in attendance. Students were present from eight USM institutions. A copy of the transcript of his questions and the students answers are included with the tapes of this meeting and are available for review at University System Headquarters.

On May 25, 1999, the Task Force held its first meeting. Mark Davis, Esq., Assistant Attorney General of Maryland, outlined the requirements of the Open Meetings Law and other legal issues pertaining to the mission of the Task Force. Task Force members and others in attendance in the audience were invited to question him. Mr. Franz Wilson, Chair of the Subcommittee on Outside Resources of the Task Force, was asked to describe the efforts

of his Subcommittee to identify individuals who could provide information to the Task Force. It is noted that the Chairman established the Subcommittee on Outside Resources and appointed its members to insure that information available outside the University System and its campuses was not overlooked and that relevant information from such individuals was considered by the Task Force in arriving at its findings and recommendations.

One of the first items the Task Force undertook was to define the word "cult". During this meeting, several witnesses, including Mr. Ronald Loomis, American Family Foundation and Dr. William T. Stuart, Professor of Anthropology and Director of Undergraduate Studies, UMCP, offered definitions. Other attendees, including Task Force members, expressed their views as to what the term "cult" meant. The Task Force determined that it should consider the legislative history behind JHR 22 first before deciding whether or not to define the term "cult". It was noted that Task Force member Del. Sharon Grosfeld was involved in the legislative process, and that she would provide an excellent resource to determine legislative intent since the word "cult" is contained in the caption and body of JHR 22. The Task Force then decided to ask Del. Grosfeld to bring to a subsequent Task Force meeting, the information necessary for the Task Force to determine the legislative history as stated.

The Task Force also heard from Ms. Doris Quelet, Baltimore Cult Awareness Network; Rev. Elizabeth Platz, Chaplain, UMCP; Dr. Sidney "Denny" L. Gulick, Professor of Mathematics, UMCP; Mr. Edwin Rodriguez, an honor student, UMCP; Ms. Laura White, a former student of the Maryland Institute College of Art (not a USM institution)*; and Ms. Shelita Clayton, a graduate student at Bowie State University.

The legislatively mandated mission of the Task Force concerns investigating 'cult' activities within the USM, St. Mary's College and Morgan State University. However, the Task Force heard from Ms. White as she had valuable testimony to offer regarding the vulnerability of students approaching graduation from colleges as well as other relevant observations.

Documents were submitted by the speakers and are on file. All subsequently received documents will also be on file.

This report will not attempt to summarize the testimony or the written materials received by the Task Force now or in the future, as all of this testimony and all of the documents may be reviewed at USM Headquarters by any interested party. Additionally, in light of the importance of the issues under consideration, and the divergent views presented in the testimony, the Task Force has concluded that the best and most accurate way for the Task Force and all interested persons to assess the testimony and documents is by direct review rather than by summary presented in this Report.

At the conclusion of the May 25, 1999 proceedings, members of the Task Force were provided an opportunity to offer their observations and requests for further action. Mr. Saunders requested more specifics with respect to activities on the campuses and that UMCP provide the Task Force with its view for potential solutions if a problem is found. Mr. Wilson expressed the desire to hear from Dr. Bud Thomas and requested that UMCP present someone at the next meeting to address possible solutions. Ms. Rausch expressed the hope that Del. Grosfeld would provide the Task Force with the legislative history behind JHR 22**.

It is noted that Del. Grosfeld brought the entire legislative file to the May 25, 1999 Task Force meeting to be reviewed by the Task Force. It will be presented at the next Task Force meeting.

Dr. Kafka expressed the thought that it would be impossible for the Task Force to determine the numbers of destructive groups present on any of the campuses because none of the speakers would identify the names of destructive groups. It was an activity that cannot be subject to specifics and the Task Force should focus on the education of students. Ms. Hopkins stated that the testimony had opened her eyes, that the campuses need to address these issues for students and parents and that the campuses should consider legal liability issues. Ms. Marionni expressed the desire for more information on the law governing any policies that the Task Force might establish and stated that it does not appear easy to find a remedy for such problems***.

John Anderson, Esq., and Mark Davis, Esq., Assistant Attorneys General for the State of Maryland, have been asked to be prepared to address the Task Force on the legal issues faced by all concerned parties at a forthcoming meeting and they have consented.

Mr. Kelley stated that he was struck by the complexity of the issue, that it was very difficult to even find a definition of a cult, that the campuses would be better off with education rather than trying to control organizational activity and that the Task Force should try to determine the types of education strategy employed by other colleges and universities around the country. Ms. Murthy wondered how the Task Force could make a difference in this area. Ms. Charlotte Davis, speaking for Sen. Ruben, who was required to leave early due to an unavoidable scheduling conflict, stated that she would like to see more testimony on recruiting techniques and how to stop or control such activity. The Task Force concluded by scheduling additional public meetings and agreeing to issue its findings and recommendations only after all testimony and written materials had been received and considered in public sessions.

The next meeting of the Task Force was held from 10:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. June 7, 1999 at the Plant Science Building, Critique Room, UMCP. The Task Force heard from Dr. William S. Bainbridge, Science Advisor to the National Science Foundation Directorate for Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences; Dr. William "Bud" Thomas, Vice President for Student Affairs, UMCP; and Gary Pavela, Esq., Director of Judicial Programs and Student Ethical Development, UMCP. Dr. Thomas brought with him a team of resource persons who were questioned, including Officer Paul Dillon, UMCP Police Department; Dr. Vivian Boyd, UMCP Counseling Center; Mr. Jan Davidson, UMCP Resident Life; Dr. Gerry Strumpf, UMCP Orientation; Dr. Valerie Woolston, UMCP International Education Services; and Dr. Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, UMCP Union and Campus Programs. This testimony was tape recorded and is available to be reviewed. The team of resource persons was asked questions by the Task Force and the audience and this testimony was also recorded and is available for review.

Additionally, the Task Force approved the minutes of the meeting of May 25, 1999, adopted Robert's Rules of Order for conduct of its meetings, and established an "open forum" to be a part of all Task Force meetings. Although not required by the Open Meetings Act, the Chairman recommended and moved to create a one-hour segment of this and all subsequent meetings for all interested persons to address the Task Force, so long as their testimony is "reasonable and relevant", in order to allow the public to participate in the process. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. The Chairman also moved and it was seconded that all meetings will continue to be open to the public. Additionally, a procedure was established by the Task Force that all documents for distribution to the Task Force are to be submitted to the Chair who will admit them if they are deemed to be "reasonable and relevant". A majority vote of the Task Force can overrule the Chair's preliminary

decision. Additionally, the Chair requested that the Attorney General provide an opinion concerning the privacy of e-mail, letters, faxes and other written documents as an inquiry was made by Task Force member Ms. Patricia Rausch about this issue.

The Task Force established a new sub-committee called the Subcommittee on Surveys. Mr. Warren Kelley was appointed Chair and Ms. Joan Marionni was appointed Vice Chair. The mission of this Subcommittee was to create survey questions to be submitted to institution representatives who have personal knowledge of this subject matter in order to satisfy the mandate of JHR 22.

The Chairman acknowledged that Ms. Roberta J. Thomas, Task Force member, announced her resignation from the Task Force due to her mother being ill. Ms. Thomas's resignation was accepted.

The Chairman reported that inquiry was made of the Attorney General with respect to whether individuals wishing to give anonymous testimony, or testimony not open to the public, may do so. A copy of the opinion of the Attorney General was admitted to the record stating that the Task Force meetings must be open in accordance with the Open Meetings Act and that no basis has been demonstrated for conducting any proceedings in closed sessions. However, the Attorney General advises that individuals wishing to give anonymous testimony may do so by speaker telephone or in person concealed behind a screen. The Attorney General's opinion also states that unsigned written testimony may be received by the Task Force anonymously and that the Task Force can maintain confidentiality of the anonymous presenters so long as their names were not made a part of the record nor communicated to any Task Force member. If a Task Force member should coincidentally know who the speaker is, the Task Force member is not required to reveal that fact. A motion was approved that the Task Force will receive unsigned written testimony from witnesses who have either experienced a Task Force related issue at a USM campus, St. Mary's College or Morgan State College or who have personal knowledge of such experience so long as it is reasonable and relevant.

The Task Force agreed to forward questions, prepared by the Subcommittee on Surveys and reviewed by the Task Force, to the 14 professional counselors at the Counseling Center, 15 Resident Directors in Resident Life, and 14 Chaplains in order to assess the extent of relevant activity on the College Park campus. Mr. Kelley and Ms. Marionni prepared the survey questions which were presented at the June 18, 1999 meeting.

The Task Force heard from Mr. David Bardin; Mr. Don Sweat; Mr. Alex Colvin; Ms. Hana Colvin; Mr. Dan Fefferman; Mr. Carl Nobile; and Mr. Douglas Jacoby during the "open session". Mr. Lloyd Eby was deferred to June 18, 1999. This testimony was also recorded and the tapes are with the record at the Maryland General Assembly Library and Information Services, 90 State Circle, Annapolis, Maryland 21401 and are available for review.

Del. Sharon Grosfeld reported on the legislative history of JHR 22. She brought the entire legislative file with her from the General Assembly of Maryland, which was available for examination by Task Force members. Del. Grosfeld stated that it appeared by the legislative history that the word "cult" was used in drafting the bill in its broadest terms without recognition by the drafters that it carried such varying definitions and was so divisive. She stated that it would be acceptable for the Task Force to use the term "destructive groups" in lieu of the term "cult" or any other term consistent with the mission of the Task Force and that this would be consistent with the legislative intent behind JHR 22. It was Del. Grosfeld's view of the legislative history of JHR 22 that the focus of the legislature was to determine if there were groups, irrespective of the underlying

nature of such groups, causing problems with students and their parents and if so, whether the Task Force should consider appropriate recommendations. The Task Force deferred the definition issue to the June 18, 1999 hearing.

Documents were submitted by the speakers. All of these documents are available for review.

The next meeting of the Task Force occurred June 18, 1999 at Bowie State University. The meeting was scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. and conclude at 4:00 p.m. The Chairman opened the proceedings noting that certain individuals were concerned that the Task Force was attempting to define religion, identify certain groups as being "cults" and equating "destructive groups" and "cults" with religion. The Chairman assured all persons present that the Task Force was not attempting to control religion or religious practices nor was it attempting to define or focus on religion or religious practices. Furthermore, the Task Force confirmed that it would not identify specific groups as "cults" or "destructive groups". The Chairman suggested that a Mission Statement would be appropriate for the Task Force to adopt in order to satisfy the legislative intent of JHR 22 and the legislative intent as articulated by Del. Sharon Grosfeld at the last meeting to maintain proper focus.

A proposed Mission Statement was placed on an overhead projector and viewed by all members of the Task Force as well as observers and copies were circulated. A discussion ensued. Task Force member Franz Wilson suggested that certain characteristic behaviors should be considered to assist the Task Force's inquiry. A preliminary list of these characteristics were identified as

1. absolute obedience to leaders;
2. charismatic, inspired and dogmatic leaders;
3. deceit;
4. threats;
5. coercive persuasions;
6. retention techniques;
7. alienation from family, friends and society;
8. physical and/or emotion abuse;
9. mind control;
10. exploitation;
11. world view denouncing current values and beliefs; and
12. blackmail.

This preliminary list was approved by a majority vote of the members of the Task Force and was placed in the record together with the proposed Mission Statement, both of which were to be discussed at a full meeting of the Task Force since a quorum was not present at this meeting.

The proposed Mission Statement in its entirety is:

"To determine the extent to which there are groups whose activities on the campuses of USM institutions, St. Mary's College, or Morgan State University are, intentionally or innocently, inappropriately:

- causing demonstrable physical, psychological or emotional harm to students;
- interfering substantially with the educational mission of the institution; and/or

- violating institutional policies and/or federal, state or local laws.

and to make recommendations concerning courses of action that might be pursued by individuals or institutions to assist in the prevention and/or resolution of those problems."

The Task Force then heard from Dr. Cleminie Solomon, Director of the Bowie State University Counseling Center, who welcomed the Task Force and testified concerning the experience of Bowie State University with the relevant issues. Pastor Richard Dowhower, All Saints Lutheran Church in Bowie, Maryland, testified as well.

Additional speakers were Douglas Jacoby, Esq., International Churches of Christ (I.C. of C.); Dr. Sidney L. Gulick; Dan Fefferman, Esq.; and Mr. Ron Loomis. There were numerous speakers who testified during the Open Forum section of the meeting. These speakers were Mr. Lloyd Ebby, I.C. of C. member; Douglas Jacoby, Esq., I.C. of C. member; Mr. Darren Ford, I.C. of C. member; Ms. Rebecca Mall, I.C. of C. member; Ms. Sonja Therakan, I.C. of C. member; Mr. Robert Schofield, I.C. of C. member; Mr. Phil Booker, I.C. of C. member; Mr. Mark Schunder, I.C. of C. member; and Mr. Ray Kabia, I.C. of C. member. It developed during testimony that Mr. Jacoby had recorded the testimony of Mr. Ron Loomis, in accordance with Task Force procedures at USMH, from an earlier Task Force meeting, had invited members of the I.C. of C. to his home to listen to the tapes and to testify during the open forum.

The Chairman also noted that the Task Force has publicly adopted a policy that all communications should be forwarded through Ms. Maitland Dade, Staff to the Task Force, for organizational purposes. It was noted that several communications had been made outside this procedure, which was designed to ensure fairness, integrity and openness in the proceedings of the Task Force. The Chairman requested that all future communications be through Ms. Dade and that any future documents flowing directly to Task Force members without going through the approved process would be so noted. It was reiterated by the Chairman and agreed by the Task Force that the procedure to handle incoming documentation was necessary in order for the Task Force to maintain accurate records of documents received, to properly rule upon the admissibility of these documents, and to otherwise maintain the proceedings in an open fashion so that all interested parties would know and understand what was occurring with the Task Force.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. and the next meeting was scheduled for June 29, 1999 at Bowie State University to commence at 10:00 am and to conclude at 4:00 pm.

The Task Force's next meeting was held on June 29, 1999 at Bowie State University from 10:00 am - 3:00 pm. The Task Force heard from Herbert Rosedale, Esq., President of American Family Foundation. Mr. Rosedale, an attorney, has represented numerous individuals who have been involved with what he characterizes as "destructive cults".

Dean David S. Bogen, Associate Dean, and T. Carroll Brown, Scholar and Professor of Law at the University of Maryland School of Law, also testified on the subject of JHR 22 and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and related Maryland law. Dean Bogen also reviewed a number of U.S. Supreme Court cases which define the First Amendment as applied to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment. These cases include *Wisconsin v. Yoder*, 406 U.S. 205 (1972), which involved an Amish family who refused to send their children to State public schools. The Supreme Court held that the State had no "compelling interest" to force public education beyond the 8th grade. Employment Division. Department of Human

Resources v. Smith, 494 U.S. 872 (1990), held that as long as legislation is neutral on religion, it is not constitutionally impinged. If legislation has a coincidental impact on religious groups, it is not constitutionally impinged. Church of Lukumi Babalu v. City of Hialeah, 508 U.S. 520 (1993), involved constitutional review of a statute prohibiting the sacrifice of animals during religious services. The statute was found to be unconstitutional because it was directed at religious activities. The Court held that this statute was unconstitutional because it was intended to be cast against a particular religious group. Sherbert v. Verner, 374 U.S. 398 (1963), was a decision holding that unemployment benefits cannot be denied for an individual who refuses to work on the Sabbath. The Court applied a balancing test that if a law substantially interfered with religion, it must have a compelling reason for its existence and it must be narrowly drawn. Any law directed specifically at a religious practice or belief is unconstitutional per se. U.S. v. Ballard, 322 U.S. 78 (1944), held that an indictment cannot be founded on the truthfulness or falsity of religious belief. These cases were carefully considered by the Task Force.

Mrs. Nora Baker and Mr. Les Baker, parents of a former University of Maryland, College Park, student testified. They related their family's experience at the College Park campus commencing in the Fall of 1993 and their response to these experiences which contributed in a great measure to the creation of the Task Force by the General Assembly of Maryland.

The open forum was held as usual and provided an opportunity for all interested persons to testify concerning relevant issues. Testifying were Mr. Lloyd Eby; Daniel Fefferman, Esq.; Ms. Jane Wright; Mr. Lawrence Baer; and Dr. William T. Stuart. At the recommendation of Dr. Stuart, the Task Force will invite Dr. Jeffrey Hadden, University of Virginia; Dr. David Bromley, Virginia Commonwealth University; and James Richardson, Esq., as speakers at future meetings of the Task Force. Pursuant to policies of the Task Force, all of the above noted testimony was recorded and is available for review.

Documents were submitted by the speakers. All documents are available for review.

The Mission Statement of the Task Force was reviewed and revised. Task Force member Joan Marionni agreed to circulate it by e-mail for a vote of all Task Force members since a quorum was not present. Proposed questionnaires to consulting psychologists, resident directors and community leaders, and chaplains were attached to the proposed Mission Statement. It was suggested that a questionnaire be developed for provosts. Task Force member Pat Rausch requested the opportunity to work on the list of behaviors considered objectionable by the Task Force at the last meeting proposed by Task Force member Franz Wilson. Ms. Rausch agreed to review these characteristics with Mr. Wilson and report back at the next Task Force meeting.

The Task Force adjourned at 3:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for July 14, 1999 at Morgan State University.

The Task Force convened on July 14, 1999 at Morgan State University. Present were Task Force members Sen. Ida Ruben, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Dr. Eric P. Kafka, Mr. Warren Kelley, Hon. Charles B. Saunders, Jr., Ms. Patricia Rausch, Mr. Franz C. Wilson, and the Chairman. Ms. Maitland Dade, stall; was also present. A quorum was present. Mr. A. Ricardo Perry, Vice President for student affairs, welcomed the Task Force on behalf of Morgan State University. The Chairman noted that the Sub-Committee on Characteristic Behaviors was working on the list of behaviors that it deemed characteristic of group activities that can cause problems with students. A discussion ensued as to whether the proceedings of the Subcommittee could be conducted by e-mail, facsimile or telephone

amongst the Subcommittee members.

The Task Force then heard from Dr. William Taft Stuart, Director, Undergraduate Studies in Anthropology, UMCP; Dr. 1. Gordon Melton, Director, Institute for the Study of American Religions; and Rev. Richard Dowhower, ELCA, All-Saints Lutheran Church, Bowie, Maryland. Ms. Nancy Roth, World Coalition for Religious Freedom, who was a scheduled speaker, did not remain to testify. As is the usual practice of the Task Force, all proceedings were recorded.

The open forum session was held as usual. Dan Fefferman, Esq.; Mr. Alex Colvin, previously identified; Prof. Denny Gulick, previously identified; Mr. David Clark, National Refocus Board Member; Dr. William Taft Stuart, previously identified; Mr. Ronald Loomis, previously identified; and Nick Miller, Esq., Council of Religious Freedom, addressed the Task Force. Their testimony was also recorded and is available for review as stated.

Further discussions ensued concerning the Subcommittee on Characteristic Behaviors. It was agreed that the Subcommittee will be unable to conclude its work prior to the July 27, 1999 Task Force hearing. A motion was made, seconded and approved that the Subcommittee would complete its work and turn in its final work product no later than prior to the August 9, 1999 Task Force meeting which will be held at the Lowe House Office Building, Room 318, Annapolis, Maryland. The Chairman appointed Ms. Rausch to chair all proceedings of this Subcommittee and Mr. Kelley was appointed to chair a special proceeding of this Subcommittee and it was agreed that public notice would be provided in advance and all proceedings pertaining to this Subcommittee would be recorded. All recordings are available for review.

It was also noted that there were only two remaining meetings scheduled for the Task Force and that there may not be sufficient time within these two meetings for the Task Force to complete its work by the legislatively mandated deadline of September 30, 1999. Therefore, a motion was made, seconded and approved that the Task Force meet for one additional public session in the event the time is needed in order to complete its work.

It was finally noted that the questionnaires containing the Task Force's Mission Statement, along with a letter from Chancellor Donald Langenberg, had been delivered to the Presidents of the 13 USM institutions, St. Mary's College and Morgan State University. The Presidents were requested to distribute the questionnaires to chaplains, sociologists at campus counseling centers, Residents Life staff, and Academic Advisors (both faculty and professional advisors with whom students might spend time discussing goals, aspirations, campus activities, etc.). Chancellor Langenberg requested that the Presidents review these questionnaires and distribute them to the offices most well equipped to put them into the hands of those able to respond directly to the questions posed. It was also suggested that electronic distribution of the questionnaires might be the simplest form of distribution and if any President and/or designee to respond would prefer that means of communication, appropriate contact could be made to Ms. Marionni at the Office of Academic Affairs at USM Headquarters. Chancellor Langenberg noted the goal of the Task Force is to obtain as much feedback/information as quickly as possible and it was requested that responses be provided by the end of July, 1999.

Documents were submitted by the speakers. All documents and testimony are available for review.

The Task Force was adjourned at 3:15 p.m. to reconvene July 27, 1999 at the Lowe House Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland.

The Task Force again convened on July 27 1999, at the Lowe House Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland. Present were Task Force members Hon.

Charles B. Saunders, Mr. Franz C. Wilson, Ms. Patricia Rausch, Mr. Eric P. Kafka, Mr. Warren Kelley, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Mr. Andrew Riffler, and Chairman William I. Wood. Also present was Ms. Maitland Dade, staff.

The Task Force then heard from Dr. James T. Richardson, Director, Master of Judicial Studies Program, and Professor of Sociology and Judicial Studies, University of Nevada-Reno; Professor Jeffrey K. Hadden, Department of Sociology, University of Virginia; Dan Fefferman, Esq., previous identified; Mr. Ronald N. Loomis, previous identified; Ms. Julie Brunder; Mr. Leo J. Ryan, Educational Foundation; Mr. Les Baker, parent and former International Church of Christ member; and Ms. Patricia Mielke, Director, Resident Life, University of Maryland, College Park.

As is the usual practice of the Task Force, all proceedings were recorded. The tapes are available for listening and/or copying.

The open forum session was held. Prof. Sidney Gulick, previous identified; Douglas Jacoby, Esq., previous identified; Mr. Chris Reed, International Church of Christ minister, Washington, D.C.; Ms. Julia Becker Moore, International Church of Christ; Dr. William Stuart, previous identified; Ms. Louise Beaugard Meyers, concerned citizen; Mr. David Clark, Refocus board member; and Mr. Alex Colvin, previous identified, testified. Their testimony was also recorded and is available for review as stated.

Documents were submitted by the speakers and are on file. All documents and testimony are available for review.

A motion was made by the Chairman to close the record in these proceedings no later than 12:00 pm, August 9, 1999. The motion was seconded and unanimously passed. It was further agreed that for the morning session of August 9, 1999, priority would be given to unheard witnesses but repetitive witnesses would not be excluded so long as their testimony was relevant, material and not repetitious.

The Task Force was adjourned at approximately 4:00 pm to reconvene Monday, August 9, 1999 at the Lowe House Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland.

The Task Force again convened on August 9, 1999 at the Lowe House Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland. Present were Task Force members Mr. Franz Wilson, Ms. Patricia Rausch, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Hon. Charles B. Saunders, Ms. Joan Marionni, Mr. Warren Kelley, and Mr. Eric P. Kafka. Also present was Ms. Maitland Dade, staff to the Task Force. Sen. Ida Ruben was represented by Ms. Charlotte Davis.

The Task Force then heard from Mr. Anuttama Dasa, Director of North America Communications, International Society for Krishna Consciousness; Dr. Pritam Singh Verma, Lt. Col., U.S. Army, and Assistant Professor, Howard University and a member of the Hare Krishna in Montgomery County, Maryland; Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein, President, University of Bridgeport and member of the Unification Church; Jonathan Abady, Esq., Emery, Cuiti, Brinckerhoff and Abady Law Firm, New York, New York; Dr. Karan Townsend, English Professor, Washington Bible College, Washington, DC; Miss Hana Colvin student; Mr. Michael Delp, former University of Maryland student; and Prof. Gulick, previous identified. In addition, the Task Force viewed a video tape offered by Miss Steffie Rausch, a University of Maryland, College Park graduate.

Documents were submitted by the speakers. All of the testimony and exhibits are available to be reviewed.

As earlier agreed, the Task Force closed the record to additional testimony and exhibits. The Chairman then solicited comments from all Task Force members as to their views of what process the Task Force should follow to complete its mission. It was agreed that the Task Force would recess early

to consider the testimony and evidence and would reconvene the following morning to attempt to arrive at a consensus based upon the testimony and exhibits and, if appropriate, make recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly of Maryland in accordance with JHR 22. The Task Force adjourned at approximately 2:15 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for the following morning.

The Task Force again convened on August 10, 1999 at USM Headquarters. Present were Task Force members Mr. Warren Kelley, Mr. Andy Rittler, Ms. Patricia Rausch, Hon. Charles B. Saunders, Dr. Eric P. Kafka, Mr. Franz Wilson, Del. Sharon Grosfeld, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Ms. Joan Marionni, and the Chairman. Ms. Charlotte Davis appeared for Sen. Ruben. Also present was Ms. Maitland Dade, staff to the Task Force. The record was closed the previous day and no testimony was taken. However, it was agreed that the Task Force would complete its assignment in three phases: phase one-fact finding; phase two-whether the facts justify recommendations; and phase three-recommendations, if needed.

The Chairman then asked each Task Force member to express his or her findings from the evidence and testimony of record. Mr. Kelley stated that the complexity of the issues are great, that the mission statement adopted by the Task Force requires demonstrable harm and that it is, and should be, an individual's choice to decide if they are harmed or not. He said that it is the interaction between groups and individuals that leads to the harm. He did not feel the Task Force had sufficient information to define groups or characteristic behaviors. Mr. Rittler stated that the facts are diluted, that there is no real way for us to put our finger on facts, that harm to the student should be the major crux of our concern, that a student has the privilege to make an educated decision on his or her own, but that each student needs sufficient background and knowledge to make an informed decision. He suggested that the Task Force should recommend that students be given information and then allowed to make their own decisions with respect to group involvement. Ms. Rausch stated that the Chairman of the Task Force was not appointed until April 5, 1999 and that by the time the Task Force was formed and underway, students were away on vacation, the questionnaires forwarded to the various institutions were incomplete because students were not available, the testimony has demonstrated that problems have been extremely harmful to students, and that there has been no definition of the word "cults which the Task Force should do.

Mr. Saunders stated that the complexity of the problem is enormous and that this needs to be reflected in the Task Force report. He found that the campus surveys resulting from the questionnaires forwarded to the various USM institutions are very important and are valid, the conclusions are easily reached which are that very few University of Maryland students have suffered serious problems. Only one or two or three or four serious problems have turned up at UMCP and the Task Force must make it clear in its report that there is no serious problem with destructive groups throughout the University System, although there are individual heartbreaking cases, and therefore all institutions have a responsibility to make sure that the staff interacting with students are sensitive to such problems. Mr. Saunders offered the comparison that in the event of suicides, a very infrequent but real occurrence, there would be quick reaction by the USM institutions to such a tragic event. He stated that the Task Force has evidence that counseling staff are not adequately trained to deal with destructive groups, and that 80% of students, according to information received by the Task Force, conclude that universities are not prepared to deal with such problems. Mr. Saunders also stated that there is a clear disconnect in that administrators and faculty are not aware of problems students are having with destructive groups but that chaplains and resident assistants say that it is happening all over some campuses.

He added that some students feel harassed and recommended that the campuses establish a forum where campuses get together to share information on the problems students are having with destructive groups and to look for solutions.

Ms. Marionni stated that there are a very small number of students being affected but it is extremely significant to the involved students when it occurs as well as to their parents. She stated that the university is the same as the society at large and that nothing different is happening on campuses than is happening in society. She stated that the USM does not do enough to encourage students to stay in touch with their families and she recommended against creation of a list of characteristic behaviors.

Mr. Kafka stated that problems do happen, according to the testimony, but the number of problems are very small. He felt that polarization is a worldwide phenomena and that the Task Force cannot judge the truth of individual complaints. He added that chaplains seem to be the best single source of information on this topic. He recommended that there be a central resource to receive complaints.

Mr. Wilson stated that he has had eighteen years experience with such related problems, that the Task Force may be designed in part to protect the USM and that it is a mistake to back off the use of the word "cults."

Del. Grosfeld testified that, to the people who are affected by such activity, it is a problem" and that the Task Force should be very careful in its use of the term "problem" because if an event affects a very small number of people, it is still a "problem" for the people so affected. She stated that it is important to recognize that timing is a challenge for the Task Force since the students are off for the summer and that it is unrealistic for an in-depth analysis not to extend the term of the Task Force.

Charlotte Davis stated on behalf of Senator Ruben that the Senator would like a list of characteristics produced by the Task Force and would like an additional meeting in September, 1999.*

The Task Force decided to meet on September 2, 1999. The Task Force subsequently added two more days, September 9, 1999 and September 15, 1999 to its agenda.

Ms. Hopkins agreed that the number of incidents is small but that there is a need to increase awareness of the problem on USM campuses. She stated that if 10 students were raped, committed suicide, suffered drug overdoses, etc., University staff would do something about it immediately. She also stated that international students are particularly vulnerable.

The Chairman reviewed the testimony of numerous witnesses and concluded by finding that the problem of destructive group activities was statistically small on some campuses and non-existent on other campuses included in the legislative mandate. He also found that there are intense efforts by certain groups to recruit and/or proselytize on several campuses which, in some instances have created serious problems for students, parents, faculty and administration. The Chairman also indicated this was a very difficult problem to measure because much of the proselytizing including recruitment and certain group activities are conducted in a covert manner secretly and are not therefore easily discernible.

A motion was made, seconded and passed that there were sufficient findings to justify recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly in accordance with JHR 22. Therefore, the Chairman asked each Task Force member to state his or her views on what recommendations should be included in the Task Force report.

Mr. Rittler suggested that there be sign-in sheets in the dorms for all

visitors.

Ms. Rausch stated that she liked the recommendations of Mr. Les Baker and further would adopt the recommendations of Mr. Saunders.

Mr. Saunders submitted written recommendations and recommended adoption of six of the specific recommendations of Mr. Les Baker. These recommendations are:

1. commend the College Park administration for developing an effective training program for Resident Assistants and ask other institutions with reported problems to consider using its materials;
2. ask institutions to assess the training needs for campus security personnel, help and counseling officers, and academic advisors to heighten institutional awareness of potential problems of destructive groups. This should involve a regular forum for advisors, counselors, and dormitory residents, and chaplains to exchange information on student complaints about outside groups;
3. policies on secondary relationships for Resident Assistants should be clarified to clearly prohibit using their positions to recruit students. A summary of Resident Assistant responsibilities should be posted in dormitories together with a mechanism for reporting complaints;
4. parents and students should receive a concise description of resources available on campus for students with problems, with office titles and telephones;
5. the Office of Student Affairs should issue an annual report on complaints received and actions taken, and
6. the Board of Regents should review institutional policies for access to campuses from outside groups to determine if they should be strengthened.

Ms. Marionni stated that the USM campuses, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College should register all student groups and provide clear guidelines for their interaction on campus and that off-campus groups should be held to the same standard.

Mr. Kafka stated that educational awareness is appropriate, that USM institutions provide education for alcohol abuse, drug abuse, sexual abuse, etc., to assist students in making good choices, and that the same should be done for destructive groups. He also felt that complaints should be accumulated and made available to students wherein the names of the groups and the general nature of the complaints should be specified.

Mr. Wilson stated that there should be a program to coordinate between all resource persons at the various campuses, that a protocol for violation of the guidelines recommended by Mr. Kafka should be in place. Mr. Wilson suggested that the Chairman's recommendations should also be made to the Board of Regents.

Ms. Davis stated that Sen. Ruben supports the testimony of Mr. Les Baker and adoption of his recommendations.

Chairman Wood recommended that there be an increased level of education for incoming students, that this education process continue for students through their graduations, and that there be a resource in place for students, parents, faculty, administration, and the campus police department which face problems with destructive groups. He observed that each of the State's public four-year campuses is unique and has different needs and therefore there should be a committee of appropriate persons from each of the institutions to evaluate with an expert what education programs and resources would be appropriate for each institution. He

recommended that a reasonable deadline be established for each campus to accomplish this and that there be a follow up to make sure that it is actually accomplished. He finally recommended that there be an Oversight Committee to insure that the agreed upon programs are implemented and maintained and that there should be a program to ensure communications between chaplains, mental health resources, student affairs, etc., so that all concerned persons and departments are knowledgeable about events occurring on the respective campuses.

The Task Force then discussed each of the findings and recommendations by each of the Task Force members. The Chairman agreed to dictate the findings and recommendations into a draft report to be considered at the next Task Force meeting.

The proceeding was recorded and the tape is available for review as stated.

The Task Force again convened on September 2, 1999 at 10:00 am at USM Headquarters. Present were Task Force members Ms. Patricia Rausch, Mr. Andrew A. Rittler, Dr. Eric P. Kafka, Ms. Joan Marionni, Mr. Franz Wilson, Mr. Warren Kelley, Ms. Nina Hopkins, Ms. Sowmya Murthy, Sen. Ida Ruben who participated by speaker phone, and the Chairman. Also present were Ms. Maitland Dade, Staff to the Task Force and Ms. Charlotte Davis, staff to Sen. Ruben.

Minutes for the June 7, June 18, June 29 and July 14, 1999 meetings were read and approved by the Task Force. The Chairman then distributed copies of the draft Report, stamped "confidential", to each Task Force member. The drafts were carefully reviewed by all attendees and a discussion ensued where various changes, modifications and deletions were made to the draft Summary and Report. It was unanimously agreed that the resulting work product in draft form would be provided as earlier agreed to the Presidents of each of the USM institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College on September 7, 1999 for their review and written comment. It was further unanimously agreed that the Task Force would meet one last time on September 9, 1999 to consider the written comments made by the Presidents and for the Task Force to complete its work, including approval of the final proof of the Executive Summary and Report of the Task Force. The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm. Tapes of this meeting are available for review.

The Task Force met for the last time on September 15, 1999 at USM Headquarters. A quorum was present.

Minutes from the Task Force meetings of July 27, August 9, August 10, and September 2, 1999 were read and approved. Additionally, the Task Force reaffirmed the approval of all minutes of all Task Force meetings previously approved for the record. The Chairman noted that the draft Report had been presented, as agreed, to the USM Presidents at the Presidents Council Meeting held on September 7, 1999 and to the Presidents of Morgan State University and St. Mary's College. Comments from the Presidents were reviewed and the Task Force again discussed and reviewed each of the findings and recommendations in the draft Report. The Task Force then unanimously adopted the following findings of fact and recommendations:

Preliminary Statement

The Task Force held 11 public meetings, heard testimony from 56 witnesses, and received 91 exhibits. Meetings were held at the following locations: University of Maryland College Park, College Park, Maryland; USM Headquarters, Adelphi, Maryland; Bowie State University, Bowie, Maryland; Morgan State University, Baltimore, Maryland; and the Lowe House Office Building, Annapolis, Maryland. Additionally, the Task Force

forwarded questionnaires to all of the 13 USM institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College. These questionnaires were delivered directly to the Presidents who were requested to distribute them to chaplains, psychologists at campus counseling centers, Resident Life staff, and academic advisors (both faculty and professional advisors with whom students might spend time discussing goals, aspirations, campus activities, etc) and were distributed to all Task Force members. Chancellor Langenberg asked the Presidents to review the questionnaires and distribute them to other campus offices most well equipped to respond directly to the questions posed. Responses were received from all institutions and are a part of the record, except UMUC to which this report is not applicable.

Assimilating such a vast amount of information was not an easy task. However, as indicated above, the Task Force unanimously arrived at the below stated findings of fact and recommendations. The Task Force recognizes, however, that the subject matter is not easily measured since such group activity is hidden many times from view and is surreptitiously conducted outside the view of parents, faculty and administration.

Findings of Fact

1. The complexity of the problem is enormous, for example there is conflict in terminology, many divergent views, constitutional issues, and in some instances, the intervention can exacerbate the problem.

As indicated, there are approximately 300 groups registered on the UMCP campus alone. There were 11,000 freshmen in the USM system during the 1998-1999 school year. Destructive group activities are not always open and many times are covert. On large college campuses, it is difficult to regulate and/or identify destructive behavior. UMCP has created a training program, including reference materials, for its Resident Advisors who live in the dormitories which is a nationally recognized model and has been replicated by other colleges and universities. Expert testimony before the Task Force has indicated that this is an outstanding program. There was testimony before the Task Force that efforts to remove a student from a group further alienated the student from the parents and created greater stress on the student which interfered with the student's academic achievement. Compounding the challenge are the constitutional rights afforded every citizen, including students and groups.

2. The extent of group activities causing harm is statistically very small when considering the enormous number of students attending USM institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College. This is based upon a wide range of group activities causing harm reported from these institutions varying from no problems to some problems. However, when interaction with a group causes harm to a student, that harm can be very severe.

During the period 1989-1998 there were 604,106 student enrollments in the University of Maryland system. The average age of first time incoming freshmen in the Fall of 1998, including full and part-time students was 18.8 years of age. During the same school year, 13 students were 16 years of age and 281 students were 17 years of age out of 11,000 incoming first time freshmen in the system.

A professor of anthropology at UMCP testified that during his many years employed at College Park, 20 or 25 students have come to him with problems with destructive groups. A private citizen located

in Baltimore, Maryland who operated what was formally known as the Cult Awareness Network testified that she operated a hot-line in the Baltimore area from approximately 1993-1997 to help people who did not know where to go for needed assistance or who were fearful of cults. She testified she received during this period of time 23 telephone calls from UMCP, 11 telephone calls from Towson University involving six groups, two telephone calls from University of Maryland, Baltimore involving two groups and one call from Morgan State University as well as calls from other students at other non-USM institutions. She said that some of these calls were from parents who did not know where to go for help. A Lutheran chaplain at UMCP employed there for 34 years testified that three to four chaplains have had four to six contacts during the 1998-1999 academic year at UMCP out of 10 full time and six part-time chaplains at UMCP. A professor of mathematics at UMCP testified that 50-100 students at UMCP are involved with destructive groups but no one knows the extent of the problem. The director of the counseling center at Bowie State University testified that there were no reported cult activities in residence halls, none in police reports for the last ten years and no reported activities related to cult activities out of 1,600 student contacts by counseling and student development activities. An attorney, who has been representing persons deeply involved with destructive cults and is president of the American Family Foundation, testified that there is a problem at every university campus with destructive groups. A particularly meaningful resource was a minister of a Lutheran church in Bowie, Maryland, who counsels people with group behavior problems. He testified that he has counseled approximately 80 people in the last 10 years of which approximately 30% were from USM campuses. This translates to 28 students counseled in this 10-year period. He then stated that 12% were sexual abuse victims, 35% percent shepherding/ disciplining variety and 12% psycho technology.

A careful reading of all of the responses to the questionnaires received by the above noted institutions, together with the testimony, clearly reveal the group activities causing harm are statistically very small but that there are isolated events that are very distressing. For example, a former student from a foreign country was admitted to UMCP in 1995 in its honors program with a triple major in marketing, business and transportation. He was awarded a full scholarship which required maintaining a 3.0 or better average. Both his mother and father were deceased. He had two siblings in his homeland to support so he also maintained a part-time job in the District of Columbia working for the Federal Government. He sent money home every pay period. In 1996, he met a non-student who set up a meeting first on campus and then meetings off campus with a group who tried to take over his life. He did not want to identify the group out of fear. His grades dropped from a 4.0 GPA during his freshmen year to a 2.1 GPA. He tried to exit the group but they put so much pressure on him that he developed severe psychological distress. His grades dropped to 1.4. His case captured the attention of the administration at UMCP and they helped him because they recognized that he was being victimized through no fault of his own. He was permitted to retain his scholarship notwithstanding his drop in grades. He ultimately graduated, is leading a successful and productive life, and is an ardent testifier as to the problems a group can cause to a vulnerable student. Another former student from Bowie State College said that she was raised in a cult, was approached but not recruited at Bowie State and that she knew enough not to get involved because she was educated about cults. Another female

student testified that her involvement in a cult was beneficial to her and she continued to be a member.

A careful reading of the questionnaire responses received from the institutions noted above reveal that groups are recruiting on a regular basis throughout the USM campuses and that those that appear unusual or destructive in nature are generally rejected by the student right away. The institution employees who are in direct contact with the students, i.e., resident advisors in the dormitories, chaplains, counseling personnel, etc., are the best resource for reported information.

At UMCP the recruitment efforts seem to primarily take place at the Stamp Student Union, the libraries and on the McKeldin Mall. Coppin State College reports no problems. Frostburg State University reports that one group in particular has an impact "...sufficient enough... to warrant concern...". A chaplain reports that over 100 students are members of this particular group. Recruitment by this group seems to focus in the dining hall and the freshman dormitories. There appear to be four to five incidents/year that are of sufficient concern that a student reports it as a problem. A student counselor reported that fraternities and sororities at Frostburg have created problems.

At UMBC, a psychologist reported one problem in five years from a student who felt pressure by a religious group to conform to their life style.

There were no reported incidents at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore other than a Director of Career Services testified that approximately eight years ago, there was cult activity on campus associated with some activity in a neighboring community but the activity was short lived and there has been no others to his knowledge.

There are no reported incidents at the University of Maryland Baltimore, including the schools of medicine, dental, nursing, pharmacy, social work, law and the graduate school as well as from the campus counseling and student affairs office. Of course, none of these institutions have resident students in dormitories, nor does UMUC.

There were no reported incidents at Bowie State University or St. Mary's College. The University of Baltimore reported no known "cult activities". Morgan State University reported several counselors counseled approximately 11 students, over a five year period, who had experienced problems with groups ranging from excessive pressure to join, excessive pressure (including threats) not to exit the groups, excessive focus on certain lifestyles as "sinful" and a group misrepresenting its intentions.

A Catholic Chaplain at Towson University reports that "TU has always been the target for cults." He reports one incident in the 1998-1999 academic year involving a female freshman. This chaplain testified that cult activity has waxed and waned on and off over his 20 years at the campus and during particularly intense times, he would encounter 20-30 students affected by these groups in one academic year. At slower times there would be zero to one as indicated for academic year 1998-1999. He observed that the degree of these problems are mostly annoyance or mild harassment resulting from the lack of students ability to say "no". Some of these groups have been very aggressive recently. Another Episcopal chaplain at TU reported four groups were active on TU's campus. One group would mislead students to think a meeting was a

crusade study group when in reality it was a recruitment effort. This chaplain related a conversation with a father of a young woman, formerly a TU student, who was subsumed by a group which operated on the TU campus for about four years and is now gone. She dropped out of school after her grades fell drastically and moved to their compound in the State of Georgia. Her father went to see her but was not allowed to meet with her alone and then only for a few minutes. He was then denied any further meetings with her. This chaplain also testified that she spent a lot of pastoral time with the sister of two young women who were both TU students who had been incorporated" into another group. One student had been encouraged to move out of her home (she was a commuter) into an apartment that the group rented. The apartment was shared by "three neophytes and one overseer". This young student was increasingly cut off from her family and experienced significant problems. Another group at TU repeatedly tried to get this chaplain and others to participate in forums, breakfasts, retreats and conferences sponsored by this organization. This chaplain stated that this group frequently changed its name and never clearly identified its sponsors. This chaplain stated that there are many stories like these and that this is only the tip of the iceberg.

A Salisbury State University psychologist reported 0-1 students experiencing problems associated with group activities over the past 5 years. One academic advisor from Salisbury State reported that attention needs to be given to the issue of cults in public high schools because there appears to be growing cult activity there.

3. There are a wide variety of groups involved on USM campuses, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College. Recruitment and approaches by all types of groups are a common place occurrence.

One of the difficulties in assessing problems caused by groups is the wide variety of groups involved in the USM campuses, Morgan State and St. Mary's College. For example, there are over 300 registered student groups at UMCP. UMCP policy requires that student groups must register in order to use campus facilities. This is supervised by the Campus Activities Office. A student can develop problems participating in legitimate recognized groups as well as with dangerous or unsavory groups. Problems can be incurred within a group if a student loses perspective and becomes too involved in any group to the detriment of his or her academic and/or student life. As indicated in Paragraph 1 above, recruitment and approaches occur on a regular basis, more so on the UMCP, Frostburg and TU campuses. Most students are able to resolve the issues presented but a very limited few are not.

4. Group activities can escalate into a problem, for example, recruitment can lead to inappropriate immersion into the group.

As stated in paragraph one above, there are heartbreaking examples of students suffering needlessly from participating in group activities. The incidences reported are isolated but, nonetheless, a major problem to the students and parents.

5. Constitutional issues are extremely important, including freedom of religion, speech and assembly.

The Task Force received testimony from several lawyers and

academicians with expertise in the constitutional freedoms. See page eight of this report for a brief discussion of several U.S. Supreme Court cases that are pivotal on this issue.

6. The level of group activities on campus is known to students but is known to a much lesser degree by administrators.

It has been consistent throughout the testimony that the individuals on the specified campuses dealing directly with the students, such as psychologists, chaplains, and resident advisors, know about the nature and extent of problems created by groups and that the information does not find its way to the administration of the various campuses. One reason for the lack of information on the part of higher administration officials is due to the fact that the problems experienced from the students do not rise to this level due, for example, to chaplains' independence which results from clerical privileges and confidences. It also does not rise up the chain of command in many instances because there is no mechanism for this to occur.

7. Resources on the campuses are not always fully prepared or known to students or parents.

A Lutheran chaplain at UMCP testified that many times parents are confused and do not understand what is happening to their child. This chaplain indicated that she had recently met with counselors at UMCP on this subject, and that there is enough of a concern that they are going to get together to find a way to deal with this problem. The chaplain stated that parents need to know where to go for help and that the chaplains generally are not the best resource but mental health professionals are. This chaplain also stated that neither the chaplains nor the mental health professionals have training to deal with cult related problems and added that the "Friends are Everywhere" booklet provided to students at UMCP (on file with the Task Force exhibits) is an excellent resource but only one of many pieces that are necessary to deal with this problem. The chaplain added that the helping components at UMCP are not communicating well and there needs to be a mechanism to promote better communication. This testimony supported the suggestion that when a phone on campus rings with a student or parent having a cult related problem there needs to be a place for that individual to call that is a knowledgeable resource who will get involved and provide the necessary help. A mathematics professor at UMCP testified that cults have a hidden agenda which requires special training. A student at UMCP testified that he could not find a resource that could help him and that he needed someone to help him "get his confidence back". A Vice President of Student Affairs at UMCP testified that UMCP is under no illusions that College Park has the best and final solution and that his campus is open to suggestions. This witness added that chaplains are not connected in the line of hierarchy within the administration and their information is not communicated to the administration. Just about everyone testifying indicated that resource persons for parents and students are critical and that they need to be specially trained.

8. Education is the most promising solution to prevent harm to students.

Uniformly, the experts in the fields that deal with these problems indicate that education of the student is the solution to prevention.

There are experts in the field that have developed models for institutions to follow to provide education to incoming freshmen through to graduation.

Recommendations

1. Commend the University of Maryland, College Park administration for developing an effective training program for Resident Assistants and recommend that other institutions with reported problems consider using its program and materials as a model.
2. Require USM institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College to assess the training needed for heightened institutional awareness of potential problems of destructive groups. Each institution should have the responsibility and the authority to determine the definition of harm relevant to the activities of such groups. The Task Force wishes to emphasize that this recommendation is for each institution to assess its training needs. There should also be a regular forum for interested members of each campus community (advisors, counselors, residential staff and chaplains, etc.) to exchange information relating to student complaints about outside groups for those institutions where there are such complaints.
3. Policies for Resident Assistants and campus professionals regarding the recruitment of students and the consequences for violations of said policies should be clear. A summary of Resident Assistants responsibilities should be posted in dormitories together with a mechanism for reporting complaints.
4. Each institution should create and maintain a concise description of resources with office titles and telephone numbers and make them widely known and available on campus for students with problems regarding interaction with groups.
5. Provide a central resource on each USM campus, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College to accumulate complaints concerning group activities or actions and make the information available to students, parents, faculty and administration. Groups who are identified in such complaints should be named and clearly identified so concerned persons may evaluate the complaints themselves following their own individual standards. This entire program should be evaluated to insure compliance with all applicable laws and institution policies. The Attorney General's Office should provide general guidance and be consulted on specific applications of this provision.
6. On each campus, the Office of Student Affairs, or its equivalent, should issue an annual report documenting complaints received and actions taken, if any, taking into consideration the information received from these central resources. This report should be in the form of a summary of the number and nature of complaints and the reader referred to the central resource for remaining information available. The Attorney General's Office should provide general guidance and be consulted on specific applications of this provision.
7. The Board of Regents and governing boards of Morgan State University and St. Mary's College should review institutional policies dealing with access to campuses from outside groups to determine if they should be strengthened.
8. Require registration and clear guidelines for any and all groups not sponsored by an institutional agency or program coming onto campus involving themselves with students at USM institutions, Morgan State University and St. Mary's College.
9. Create an educational program for incoming students and ongoing

education programs thereafter through graduation as necessary to assist students in assessing their decisions whether to join groups and how to recognize destructive behavior that may be affecting them. In connection with this recommendation, the Task Force wishes to help students make informed choices in their decisions to participate in groups or activities. In the review of available literature, the following list of behavior characteristics were found to be often repeated. The Task Force cannot speak to the validity of these characteristics. They are simply offered as suggestion an individual may wish to keep in mind when considering involvement with a group. These characteristics are: Deception, Isolation and Alienation from Family, Time Commitment, Financial Commitment, Elimination of Competing Pursuits and Priorities, Manipulation, Harassment, Abandon Educational and/or Career Goals, Surrender of Personal Authority, Absolute Obedience to Leaders, Retention Techniques, Physical and/or Emotional Abuse, Exploitation, and Blackmail.

10. Require that each institution assess its own resources to satisfy these recommendations and to seek outside expertise on how to implement these recommendations where necessary.
11. Request that the Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland and the governing boards of Morgan State University and St. Mary's College each establish a policy to follow up to ensure that these recommendations are implemented and periodically monitored for compliance. This policy should include the establishment of one advisory committee for these institutions to verify compliance with these recommendations. The Board of Regents of the University System of Maryland and the governing boards of Morgan State University and St. Mary's College shall appoint this advisory committee and every effort should be made to appoint persons who have knowledge of the subject matter. This advisory committee should not attempt to direct or control institutional compliance, but instead, should advise each institution of any departure(s) from these recommendations and, where necessary, communicate such concerns to the institution's governing board.

Conclusion

It is noted that the Task Force unanimously agreed to forward this Report as directed by JHR 22. These findings and recommendations are made with the hope that they will be helpful to USM institutions, St. Mary's College and Morgan State University, will result in programs that will be meaningful in preventing harm from destructive group behavior and will provide a resource for students, parents, faculty and administration in the event a student should need professional assistance with dealing with problems created by any form or type of group involvement.

Respectfully submitted,

William T. Wood, Esq.
Chairman

Other contributions by author(s)

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