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**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
BETWEEN**

**Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue (CISD) at Nazareth College, Rochester, NY  
and**

**The Fairfax Institute (TFI) at International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT), Herndon, VA**

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**Mission Statement:** CISD and TFI seek together to understand and develop research tools, knowledge and skills to benefit our common humanity. Our mission is:

1. To teach individuals, communities, and institutions how to live and communicate more effectively with those from other religions and faiths.
2. To provide educational resources to aid in establishing an environment of peace and justice.
3. To communicate the skills necessary for people of diverse faiths to live together in peace and justice.
4. To establish an environment conducive to understanding the diversity of faiths in our community and the world at large.

***Educational Programs and Research:***

To create the above environment we share a mutual interest in developing the following programs:

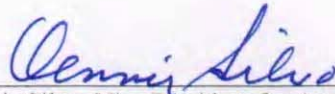
1. *Religions and Prisons:* A day-long workshop for prison chaplains and administrators in world religions to help them build better work relations and learn communication skills. A Religions and Prisons program for NY State will be held at Nazareth College and the same type for Virginia State will be held at the Fairfax Institute. The program for NY State will be held in the spring and the other one in the fall at TFI for VA State. Later similar programs will be added for other states through mutual cooperation. The certificates given to the participants will carry the names of both institutions.
2. *Teaching and Learning about World Religions:* A half-day seminar for social and global studies teachers. Teachers are the vanguard of the future civilization. Their understanding of world religions is essential in the teaching of global and social studies to our future generations. Together we will offer seminars for teachers on different topics such as faith and belief in the world religions or worship, rituals and holidays in world religions to help them better understand religions and to teach more effectively about religion. Together we will offer such seminars in both places. CISD has conducted such seminars successfully and there is an increasing demand in the area.
3. *A Week Long Certificate Program in World Religions:* Registration for this course is open to all and is intended for lay people. The course will cover an overview of all world religions along with evening visits to places of worship of major world religions. The course objective is to broaden the knowledge of the participants concerning world religions, and to help them understand and respect people of different faiths and religions.
4. *Seminars on Current Religious Issues in Our Country and the World:* This will include seminars on violence, terrorism and religions; seminars on misunderstandings of Islam in America; religions, science and stem cell research; Christian-Muslim relations; Jewish, Christian and Muslim relations, and many other topics. These seminars shall be conducted jointly in different places.
5. *Research* is essential to provide accurate information and guidelines on issues confronting the religious communities. Examples of such projects would include:
  - a. Construction of a data base tracking the impact of interfaith work on religious understanding in selected cities;
  - b. Development of a handbook of interfaith guidelines. E.g., a manual of interfaith guidelines for Muslims (none is available for Muslims to our knowledge);

- c. Research into teaching religion in seminaries and its impact on religious societies. Research would compare the Muslim Medrassa system with American religious seminaries to see how the curriculum and teaching are similar and different.

The CISD Executive Director would be a liaison officer in coordinating the activities in both places in cooperation with TFI. TFI will annually contribute thirty thousand dollars to Nazareth College to help in paying the Executive Director of CISD. These payments shall cover the period of January 1 through December 31 of each year and shall be received before January 1.

It is understood and agreed that this project is a joint and voluntary effort between TFI and CISD, which can be terminated by either party at any time without affecting the then existing program.

Signatures:



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Dennis Silva, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Nazareth College  
Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue at Nazareth College



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The Fairfax Institute at International Institute of Islamic Thought

01/13/06  
Date

Herndon, VA  
Place