

## **Standards & Accountability for Muslim Chaplains**

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### *Abstract*

For many decades, chaplaincy training programs have shared a foundation in established principles of pastoral care which make room for individual and congregational care. Broad social changes in religious identities and sources of funding have created pressures on these programs, with some now putting less emphasis on community care, while placing more emphasis on a “spiritual care,” “wellness,” or therapeutic model of care. In these programs, the chaplain is held accountable primarily to principles and practices shared with other caring professions, and the religious identity of the chaplain becomes less significant to effective job performance. While these programs and chaplain services help support many individual Muslims, there remains a significant demand for chaplains who are capable of supporting congregations and communities. On the institutional level, correctional systems and military services, among other systems with ‘captive’ populations, are legally required to enable access to congregational services. And many North American and European Muslims expect to receive a model of care evidently grounded in a distinctive theological identity or school of thought. In such settings, there is always a need, and often a requirement, that the chaplain secure a form of endorsement from a Muslim religious organization. In some cases, the requirements for Islamic endorsement seem to conflict with the ethical demands of the profession.

In this presentation, Professor Mattson will explore the theological and ethical foundations of this apparent conflict and propose principles for reconciling perceived divergences in views about the role and identities of Muslim chaplains, and the standards to which they should be held accountable. This will include a discussion of the necessity for chaplaincy programs to give sufficient attention to the application of ethical principles in the context of specific cultural and religious communities. To further this goal, Dr. Mattson will identify key theological concepts and ethical practices from the Islamic tradition that should be understood by chaplaincy educators and supervisors for the improvement and integration of Muslim chaplains in the profession, and to ensure better and more professional service to their clients.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Ingrid Mattson has held numerous distinguished academic and leadership positions. From 1998 to 2012 she was Professor of Islamic Studies at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut where she developed and directed the first accredited graduate program for Muslim chaplains in North America and served as Director of the Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. Since 2012 she has held the London and Windsor Community Chair in Islamic Studies at Huron University College at Western University in London, Canada. From 2001-2010 Dr Mattson served as Vice-president, then as President of the Indiana-based Islamic Society of North America.