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# National Interfaith Leader to Present Illinois Wesleyan Founders Day Address

Jan. 29, 2016

BLOOMINGTON, Ill.— A prominent leader in the movement for interfaith cooperation will present the Founders Day address Feb. 17 at Illinois Wesleyan University.

[Eboo Patel](#) is founder and president of [Interfaith Youth Core](#) (IFYC), a national nonprofit working to make interfaith cooperation a social norm. Named by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of America's Best Leaders in 2009, Patel served on President Barack Obama's Inaugural Faith Council. Chicago-based IFYC works with institutions of higher education to help realize a future where religion is a bridge of cooperation rather than a barrier of division.

Raised in the Chicago suburb of Glen Ellyn, Patel holds a doctorate in the sociology of religion from Oxford University, where he studied on a Rhodes scholarship. He is the author of *Acts of Faith* (Beacon Press, 2010), Patel's account of growing up Muslim in America and how he came to believe in religious pluralism. He also wrote *Sacred Ground: Pluralism, Prejudice, and the Promise of America* (Beacon Press, 2013) and the forthcoming *Interfaith Leadership: A Primer*.

Patel is a regular contributor to the public conversation about religion in America, including contributions to the *Washington Post*, *USA Today*, *Huffington Post*, *NPR* and *CNN*. He is a frequent speaker on the topic of religious pluralism, including the Clinton Global Initiative, the Nobel Peace Prize Forum and as a Young Global Leader at the World Economic Forum.

The interfaith leader's address at IWU is entitled "Interfaith Leadership: Engaging Faith and Philosophical Diversity in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" and will begin at 11 a.m. in Presser Hall's Westbrook Auditorium. The Founders Day Convocation is free and open to the public. Founders Day honors the 30 civic and religious leaders who came together in 1850 to establish "an Institution of learning of Collegiate grade."

Patel's address at IWU is a "[Nation\(s\) Divided?](#)" intellectual theme event.



Eboo Patel

