The two-day conference explored the multi-dimensional nature of compassion: its philosophical, psychological, and spiritual roots; its cultivation and expression; its importance, relevance, and application in our everyday lives. Thirty different disciplines were represented at the conference: Anthropology, Communication, Contemplative Practices, Criminology & Criminal Justice, Education, Health Sciences, Honors Program, Legal Issues, Communication, Contemplative Practices, Criminal Justice, Environmental Science, Film, Health Interventions, Hopi Culture, Humanities, Industrial/Organizational Psychology, Listening Skills, Literature, Medicine, Meditation, Neuroscience, Nursing, Philosophy, Politics and International Affairs, Psychology, Reconciliation Practices, Religion, and Sustainability.

LIVING COMPASSION CONFERENCE SUMMARY
NAU Flagstaff Campus, October 26 & 27, 2012

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Financial Support: The SBS Dean’s Office (SBS Deans: Michael Stevenson & Stephen Wright), Jean & James Friedland, the NAU Student Activities Council (STAC), NAU Psychology Department, the Office of the President, the NAU Faculty Development Program, the NAU Office of the Provost, The NAU Martin-Springer Institute, the NAU Center for International Education, the NAU College of Nursing, the NAU Departments of Philosophy, Anthropology, Politics and International Affairs, Criminology and Criminal Justice, Sociology and Social Work, the NAU School of Communication, Flagstaff Medical Center, the Northern Arizona Psychological Society, and the Flagstaff Mindfulness Institute.

Organizers: Members of the organizing committee included Heidi Wayment (coordinator), James & Jean Friedland (founders of the SBS Compassion Project), Dorothy Dunn (Nursing), and Lisa Cohen (Martin-Springer Institute, pictured below, third from left). Thanks also to Bob Trotter (Anthropology), Andrea Houchar (Philosophy), and Lisa Dogoncil (Anthropology) for their participation and work on the committee. Other important contributors: Zoe Lanetti, Carlene Klein, and Diane Hog of the SBS Dean’s Office, and Delfina Rodriguez (pictured below, far right). Julie Lambert, Janina Burton, Mara Rodriguez, and Brianna Bergey from the Department of Psychology. Thanks also to Linda Shadow and Ed Cahill from NAU Faculty Development for their work in bringing Laura Rendon to the conference. In addition, eighteen first year NAU students (FYS 141 The Open-Hearted Self) and four PSY 485 (senior psychology majors: Ivy Long, Sarah Rande, Ashton Dunphy, and Drew Felton) participated in the conference organization by serving as student representatives in each symposium and program (introduce speakers, time-keepers, registration table help).

Plenary Addresses
Kirk Warren Brown (upper left; Virginia Commonwealth University Psychology), Loving What Is: The Kindness of Mindful Presence (Friday).
George Rudebusch (upper right; NAU Philosophy) on Confucius on Compassion (Friday) and Socrates on Compassion (Saturday).
Kristin Neff (left; UT Austin, Educational Psychology) on Self-Compassion and Well-Being.
Laura Rendon (lower left, UT San Antonio, Education) Contemplative Education and Engagement.
Mary Gordon shared her widely acclaimed school program Roots of Empathy (right) and local folk singer Chuck Cheesean on social consciousness (bottom right).
The conference also included:

**Sixteen symposia sessions** (32 presenters from NAU, CCC, Flagstaff, Sedona, and northern Arizona communities) which included faculty, graduate & undergraduate students, community professionals.

**Student Poster Session** on compassion-related topics.

**Student Research Roundtable** on compassion-focused research.

**Four Saturday Workshops** (Tai Chi, Mindful Meditation, Yoga, and Self-Compassion)

Over 450 students, representing 24 different majors, attended one or more events. 41 students responded to a survey. Nearly half reported being “extremely satisfied” (average = 4.24 on a 5-point scale) and 56% reported that the conference was a “great learning experience” (average = 4.44 on a 5-point scale).

**Student Comments:**

Everything about the conference was fantastic! I love that the floor was open for discussion after each presentation; I love that there was usually two experts presenting information from two different perspectives on the same topic; I love that there was a presentation over lunch!, and that we were supplied with food and beverage to keep the momentum up; I love that there were books for sale (even looking over those got my noodle jogging!); I love how friendly everyone was; I love that it was free!!

I loved how inviting and educational it was. It was great. Please do it again. The multidisciplinary approach was important to me. THANKS!

I really enjoyed listening to the various compassion projects, and learning new ways that compassion can be applied. It was a gift! Thank you- also the lunch, including the speaker during lunch was amazing!

**Attendee Comments:**

“I give the Compassion Conference a five star plus rating. NAU took what could be considered an intangible topic, a value, a personality attribute and grounded it in our personal lives, our learning process, our multicultural environment, our community and region, and, yes, the world. It seems possible that there is a factor that could cross all our divides, our self interest, our nationalism and unite us...it heralds the best of an institution of higher learning can offer. It gave me a clear picture of the work that the NAU professional community is doing.”

“EXCELLENT: Especially the cross-disciplinary approach as well as including practitioners with researchers. Good Balance. Good student involvement.”

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(left to right) Bjorn Krondorfer (NAU Martin-Springer Institute), Holley Hodgins (Skidmore College Psychology), Georgia Rudabusch (NAU Philosophy)

Enjoying Lunch and Conversation

(above) Dr. Laura Rendon talks about contemplative education in her plenary address on Saturday.

(below) Tiana Tallant (center; NAU Psychology grad student) leads a yoga workshop Ahimsa: The Spirit of Compassion