

Summary of the Outside Review of the Religious Studies Program, Spring 2013

The outside reviewer's report commended the Religious Studies program for:

1. The consistent growth in the number of students who take Religious Studies courses, despite unsteady staffing and limited financial support (now nearly 600 students per year enrolled in RELS courses).
2. The robust program of public lectures and special events that have made Religious Studies visible on campus and in the community.
3. The enthusiasm, support, and participation of its affiliated faculty, who teach many cross-listed courses and help organization Religious Studies events.

The following are recommendations from the outside reviewers' report:

Staffing

1. Explore possibility of "Affiliated Faculty" or "Adjunct Professor of Religious Studies" title to recognize and reward faculty commitment to Religious Studies.
2. Rethink affiliated faculty's leadership roles in program (form new committees, etc.)
3. Create joint appointments with Religious Studies and other Departments/programs.
4. Increase courses on different world religions, and make sure major religious traditions are covered. Particularly needed are courses in Judaism, Buddhism, and sacred texts (Torah, New Testament, Koran)
5. Increase cross-listed courses and look for new affiliated faculty to draw into the program.
6. Seek adjunct faculty to teach online courses.

Curriculum

7. Comprehensive Religious Studies curriculum review. Are majors being adequately prepared for graduate school? Is the curriculum balanced in content and are the major world religions being adequately covered? Are the requirements clear and attractive for potential majors?
8. Rethink Religious Studies capstone course.
9. Increase online, outreach, and summer courses.
10. Conduct faculty-sponsored travel courses.
11. Develop new Religious Studies BHU and DHA courses.

Fostering Growth

12. Create a dedicated Religious Studies program budget
13. Attempt to make Religious Studies funding a priority for the development office.
14. Create joint appointments with Religious Studies and other Departments/programs.
15. Seek external sources of funding.
16. Link appropriate Religious Studies courses with International Studies, International Business, and other degree programs (e.g., include them on major elective lists).
17. Advertise Religious Studies courses during registration season.
18. Cooperate with other departments to put on Religious Studies events, such as a speaker in "Religion and Politics."
19. Redesign Religious Studies website