

**California State University, Fullerton**  
**Religious Studies Department**



***PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEW***

***SELF-STUDY***  
***January 25, 2019***

***2018-2019***

# PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REVIEW SELF-STUDY

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# Program Performance Review Self-Study

## I. Department Mission, Goals and Environment

***A. Briefly describe the mission and goals of the unit and identify any changes since the last program review. Review the goals in relation to the university mission, goals and strategies.***

*A. 1. Description of the mission and goals of the department.*

The last time Religious Studies Department (RLST) underwent a program performance review (PPR) was in 2011. At that time, it was called Comparative Religion Department. The name change occurred in 2016 due to what we conceived as compelling circumstances. Although we still approach our teaching and research from comparative perspectives “Religious Studies” was the original name of the department, and the change to “Comparative Religion” reflected a concern with the identity and mission of the department related to local issues in the 1990s. Moreover, most departments engaged in the academic study of religion in state universities and colleges use the term “Religious Studies,” and returning to this designation brought the department into line with established terminology.

In addition, returning to “Religious Studies” brought the department name into correspondence with the CSU-designated title of the academic degree program in Religious Studies, thereby removing student and administrative confusion as to the names of the major and department, and identifying more clearly the nature of the discipline as part of the CSU system.

Prior to the last review, the department had approved the following mission and goals in 2007. Since then, the mission and the goals have not changed.

### Mission and Goals: Religious Studies Department

#### a. Mission

To describe and interpret the developments, worldviews, and practices of religious traditions in a non-sectarian, academic manner for the benefit of students, faculty from other fields, and the greater Orange County community.

b. Goals

1. To offer classes in the world’s religions within the General Education framework and for majors and minors;
2. To teach in a scholarly and non-sectarian manner
3. To conduct scholarly research that contributes to an understanding of the varieties of religious thought and experience;
4. To investigat in a scholarly manner the impact of the varieties of religious thought and experience on contemporary society.

A. 2. *Review of the goals in relation to the university mission, goals and strategies.*

To correspond to the university mission and goals (2018-2023), we have placed the department mission and goals on the right column of the table and included our review in the form of “comments.”

CSUF Mission Statement	RLST Department Mission + Review (Comments)
<p>California State University, Fullerton enriches the lives of students and inspires them to thrive in a global environment. We cultivate lifelong habits of scholarly inquiry, critical and creative thinking, dynamic inclusivity, and social responsibility. Rooted in the strength of our diversity and immersive experiences, we embolden Titans to become intellectual, community, and economic leaders who shape the future.</p>	<p>To describe and interpret the developments, worldviews, and practices of religious traditions in a non-sectarian, academic manner for the benefit of students, faculty from other fields, and the greater Orange County community.</p> <p><b>COMMENTS:</b>            The Religious Studies Mission Statement complements very well the overall intention and the spirit of CSUF Mission. By teaching students the worldviews and practices of diverse religions, we are enriching their lives <b>“to thrive in a global environment,”</b> where the impact of religious worldviews and practices is all-encompassing. By approaching our courses in a non-sectarian, academic manner, we are highlighting the university’s mission of <b>“scholarly inquiry, critical and creative thinking”</b> that are considered the sine qua non for any bona fide academic setting. Finally, the department’s drive to benefit the “students, faculty from other fields, and the greater Orange County community” reflects that of the University in terms of <b>“dynamic inclusivity and social responsibility.”</b></p>

CSUF Strategic Plan & Goals: 2018-2023	Corresponding RLST Goals + Comments
<p><b>I. Provide a transformative educational experience and environment for all students.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Identify, develop, and highlight university signature programs that provide a transformative experience for students.</li> <li>b. Develop and expand inter/multi-disciplinary curricular programs.</li> <li>c. Scale and institutionalize culturally responsive curricular/co-curricular High Impact Practices (HIPs).</li> <li>d. Enhance global competencies through increased access to and participation in immersive learning experiences, including those focused on internationalization and home and study abroad.</li> <li>e. Create, enhance, and communicate programs and policies to narrow gaps in basic student health and well-being.</li> <li>f. Enhance strategic enrollment management to increase outreach to underrepresented student populations.</li> <li>g. Increase existing outreach with community partners and alumni to connect faculty, students, and staff.</li> <li>h. Increase on-campus student employment, internships, and professional development opportunities.</li> <li>i. Expand faculty-student mentoring opportunities, particularly during the last year of the undergraduate experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To offer classes in the world’s religions within the General Education framework and for majors and minors;</b></li> <li>- <b>To teach in a scholarly and non-sectarian manner;</b></li> <li>- <b>To conduct scholarly research that contributes to an understanding of the varieties of religious thought and experience;</b></li> <li>- <b>To investigate in a scholarly manner the impact of the varieties of religious thought and experience on contemporary society.</b></li> </ul> <p>COMMENTS: Together, all of the goals of the department correspond neatly with the university Goal 1. <b>“Transformative”</b> education is achieved when a variety of courses, deliberately designed to offer a comprehensive and general education, are taught in a non-sectarian and scholarly fashion, by scholars who undertake research for the benefit of providing a meaningful experience to students and the society at large (<b>Goals 1-4</b>).</p> <p>We consider <b>“a transformative educational experience” (Goal I)</b> to be our overriding aim which we seek to accomplish by setting high standards in all of our classes. All upper-division courses require substantial research and writing, usually in the form of term papers, book reviews, and reports on field work. On a related note, we believe every member of our faculty uses an approach that-- in the words of the mission statement-- “enriches the lives of students and inspires them to thrive in a global environment” in light of their impressive scholarly training and output.</p> <p>A <b>“transformative educational experience”</b> is also achieved by the way we incorporate critical thinking and writing skills into our courses. To study religions comparatively demands much of students, for all of them have taken a position (even if they are atheists or</p>

	<p>agnostics) regarding religion. It requires, for example, intellectual honesty, open-mindedness, and empathy—virtues which, in turn, require careful and critical thinking. Moreover, the academic study of religion demands a certain “posture of suspicion” both towards the apologetic representations of religious devotees and the popular polemics of their opponents. All of our courses demand that students think carefully about world views other than their own. To accomplish these intellectual goals, as already noted we require substantial research and writing in our courses.</p>
<p><b>II. Strengthen opportunities for student completion and graduation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Engage in the deep inter-divisional and cross-divisional collaboration essential to holistic student advisement and support.</li> <li>b. Develop and implement course schedules aligned with road maps that support an average of 15 units per semester load.</li> <li>c. Accelerate the identification of and response to program bottlenecks and barriers.</li> <li>d. Implement 15 credits per semester campaign. Provide support to increase the percentage of students who achieve these benchmarks and improve the average unit load for the campus.</li> <li>e. Design and implement a mandatory in-person orientation experience, including for transfer students.</li> <li>f. Increase interventions to support retention efforts, including focus on equity and opportunity gaps.</li> <li>g. Promote and support the critical roles of faculty and staff in collaborative student success efforts.</li> <li>h. Implement a graduate studies task force to identify and articulate benchmarks and recommendations for graduate education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To offer classes in the world’s religions within the General Education framework and for majors and minors;</b></li> <li>- <b>To teach in a scholarly and non-sectarian manner;</b></li> </ul> <p>COMMENTS:  We feel these two department goals correspond well with the university <b>Goal II</b>. We think that a department dedicated to the academic study of religion, offering a variety of courses each semester with clear pathways to graduation is well situated to “<b>strengthen opportunities for student completion and graduation</b>” in a timely manner. The study of the world’s religions has never been more important, as events of the past quarter century so clearly demonstrate. These include the emergence of certain extremist elements among Muslims as major factors in international affairs; the increasing political influence of the Religious Right in U.S. politics; increasing hate crimes in the U.S. against religious minorities such as Sikhs; ethnic conflicts around the world in which differing religious affiliations play a part; the increasing multiculturalism and consequent multi-religionism of American society; and highly passionate debates in the U.S. over issues such as morality of abortion, gay marriage, and assisted suicide.</p> <p>Our Department possesses the expertise to present courses to students and lectures to the community that analyze these events and controversies. For instance, students in our major and minors or in general education framework get to take courses such as “Issues in</p>

	<p>Contemporary Islam,” “Political Islam,” Religion and Violence,” “Religion and Sexuality,” or “Religion and Politics in the U.S.” We also serve as a resource on these issues for our CSUF colleagues, the media and the general community. Since 9/11, in particular, our faculty have presented lectures on religious extremism and related issues and op-ed articles in the <i>Los Angeles Times</i> and <i>Orange County Register</i>, as well as editorial pieces in the <i>American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences</i>.</p> <p>The department’s deliberate efforts in scheduling classes every semester to satisfy the graduation timetable of our majors and minors are in keeping with the university <b>Goal II. b.</b> which seeks to “<b>develop and implement course schedules aligned with road maps that support an average of 15 units per semester load.</b>”</p> <p>In line with our class offering to “<b>strengthen opportunities for student completion and graduation,</b>” we designed new courses that were specifically meant to accelerate that goal and recruited high quality faculty to teach those classes. For example, in an effort to help students fulfil the university requirement for GE category D1: Introduction to the Social Sciences, we designed and offered a new online class that is being taught every semester, “Introduction to Study of Religion.” This has been taught every semester (except this Spring of 2019) in the past three years, with high student interest.</p>
<p><b>III. Recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct campus climate surveys and aggregate data on a regular basis. Report findings to the campus community.</li> <li>b. Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion in all assessment and annual goals for divisions, colleges, departments, and programs.</li> <li>c. Develop, support, and promote an inclusive campus culture for the</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To offer classes in the world’s religions within the General Education framework and for majors and minors;</b></li> <li>- <b>To teach in a scholarly and non-sectarian manner;</b></li> <li>- <b>To conduct scholarly research that contributes to an understanding of the varieties of religious thought and experience;</b></li> <li>- <b>To investigate in a scholarly manner the impact of the varieties of religious thought and experience on contemporary society.</b></li> </ul>

- professional success of historically underrepresented staff and faculty.
- d. Develop and enhance campus-wide data driven recruitment processes.
  - e. Build and support programs that enhance a sense of belonging and community.
  - f. Establish diversity programming, education, and strategies throughout the recruitment and hiring cycle that promote the recruitment of diverse faculty and staff.
  - g. Develop and implement leadership training for faculty and staff professional development.
  - h. Diversify and grow opportunities to promote faculty teaching, scholarly and creative activities, and support services to enhance the professional lives of faculty.

COMMENTS:

Together, all of the department goals fit neatly with the university **Goal III**. The nature and types of the classes we teach, the manner and methods with which we conduct our courses, the contribution we make with our research and how we share that with the contemporary society for maximum impact (**Goals 1-4**) require that we **“recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.”**

Without recruiting and retaining high-caliber faculty we would be unable to offer a variety of courses in a comprehensive manner. Nor would we be able to teach in a non-sectarian and scholarly fashion. We had just recruited Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim prior to the last program performance review, who is an expert in Islamic studies, with a degree from the renowned McGill University, Canada. Between 2008 and 2016, he was the main substantive editor of the respected journal published in America: *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*. Up till today, he remains part of the International Editorial Board for four journals. Currently, a full professor and chair of the department, Dr. Ibrahim is originally from Ghana, West Africa. This, to us, is a perfect example of deliberately recruiting and retaining high-quality and diverse faculty.

This academic year, 2018-19, we were proud to recruit another high-caliber, highly-sought-after scholar in the person of Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar. With two Bachelor’s degrees and two Masters, she earned her Ph.D. from the Arizona State University. She took a post-doc and a couple of teaching positions in the US, including Loyola Marymount University, in Los Angeles before joining California State University, Fullerton. Dr. Yeolekar’s expertise is in Hindu traditions; living religions of India; women and religion; and religious reading. In fact, she was distinguished quite prominently from the more than 60 applicants to our position. Based on the initial review of applications, she was easily and quickly the department’s first choice due to her exceptional qualifications and research agenda. She has, in fact, attended and presented in conferences in the first semester, and championed the designing of a new course in Jain Studies that has already been approved by the university. Dr. Yeolekar is originally from India. Once



	<p>again, a clear testament to the department’s efforts to <b>“recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff.”</b></p> <p>The department, like the university, highlights our desire to recruit diverse faculty because of the increasingly diverse nature of the university student body, as well as the diversity embedded in world religions that we teach. We believe our department is one of the few departments uniquely fit and rightly expected to better achieve the diversity aspect of this university goal.</p>
<p><b>IV. Expand and strengthen our financial and physical capacity.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Align appropriate resources to create capacity and build infrastructure to meet the goals of the comprehensive fundraising campaign.</li> <li>b. Build greater alumni affinity for the institution and strengthen alumni advocacy and financial support.</li> <li>c. Embrace marketing communications as a core university function that supports the long-term advancement of the institution.</li> <li>d. Foster university-wide community engagement efforts that develop a deep, meaningful CSUF presence throughout Orange County.</li> <li>e. Implement routine multi-stage research and tracking of post-graduation employment, further study, satisfaction with the CSUF experience, perceptions of degree equity, and other appropriate metrics to advance the mission of the university.</li> <li>f. Complete the final draft of the Campus Master Plan in February 2020 for approval and adoption by June 30, 2020.</li> <li>g. Enlist the concurrent support of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consultant to monitor and anticipate any environmental impacts of recommended Campus Master Plan projects both to</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>To conduct scholarly research that contributes to an understanding of the varieties of religious thought and experience;</b></li> <li>- <b>To investigate in a scholarly manner the impact of the varieties of religious thought and experience on contemporary society.</b></li> </ul> <p>COMMENTS:</p> <p>These two department goals fit well with this university goal to <b>“expand and strengthen our financial and physical capacity”</b> as far as the sources of funds for research are concerned. Without the financial support and physical capacity of the university, we would be unable to conduct our desired research, let alone investigate the impact of religious thought and experiences on people. In other words, our goal to conduct research is inextricably linked to the university goal to expand and strengthen its financial and physical capacity.</p> <p>Each year, our faculty are offered funds through the Dean’s office to travel for research and conferences that are vital to the research we conduct. We are also provided with funds for professional development that we use for books and professional undertakings.</p> <p>At the same time, the department is always looking for funding sources to compliment what the university provides. Several years ago, a generous donor gave about \$60,000 to support Islamic Studies in the department.</p>

<p>expedite plan approval and to ensure a sustainable campus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>h. Incorporate formal milestone meetings with key stakeholders in any major construction and renovation schedule to improve communication, stakeholder satisfaction, and timely completion of projects.</li> <li>i. Increase connectivity with alumni to promote ambassadorship for awareness, advocacy, and contributions.</li> <li>j. Define an overall university goal for revenue from self-support /entrepreneurial activities.</li> <li>k. Develop appropriate financial models and business plans in each self-support/entrepreneurial program to realize net revenue targets.</li> </ul>	<p>Part of the annual interest generated from this amount is dedicated to support student’s activities and scholarships in Islamic Studies minor. Part of that is also used for research activities, including travel, for the faculty teaching Islamic courses.</p> <p>In 2018, the department also received a generous donation from the members of the Jain community in Orange County, CA, to support the activities in the department with regards to teaching and promoting Jain Studies. With \$30,000 for this academic year (2018-19) to support an adjunct scholar and his/her activities in teaching and organizing symposium, they made a commitment to continue that for five years (\$150,000).</p> <p>There are other sources of funds from other generous donors, such as \$6,000 for Jewish Studies (begun in Spring 2011) or the modest running donation (less than \$100 per month) from a generous donor to the department’s general account that may be tapped to support our research endeavors. These donations do not only help the university raise the needed capital, but the university also benefit immensely from the interest being generated. Hence, the university can achieve its goal to <b>“expand and strengthen our financial and physical capacity,”</b> while the department can continue to support the faculty in the conduct of their research.</p>
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***B. Briefly describe changes and trends in the discipline and the response of the unit to such changes. Identify if there have been external factors that impact the program, e.g., community/regional needs, placement, and graduate/professional school.***

*B.1. Changes and trends in the discipline and the response of the unit to such changes.*

Some of the trends in the discipline of religious studies (as witnessed at the annual conferences of the American Academy of Religion and by numerous scholarly journal articles) are to engage in comparative and phenomenological study of religion. The study of comparative religion is viewed as a significant part of contemporary education. In the 1960's, Secularization Theory was the dominant approach to religion, predicting the continual decline of religious expression, institutions, and activities in the industrialized nations. Now, religious scholars are engaged in interpreting the meaning of the growth of religious expression; for example, the influence of religion is readily apparent in our nation, from popular culture and the media, to politics and science.

The comparative method includes understanding the relationships between various religious traditions from new contexts. For example, the global relationship between Islam and Christianity has changed within the last couple of decades, and continues to evolve; ongoing conflicts and consultations between Muslims, Jews, Hindus, and Sikhs persist on the global stage; and as the insights of Buddhism blend with Western traditions, the political aspirations of Tibetan Buddhism remain a challenge to international diplomacy.

The comparative study of religion asserts that religion can no longer be addressed from only a European perspective. Post-colonial insights and realities have been given voice across the continents as migration presents new confrontations and opportunities in response to social changes. The expansion of Latin American Christianities in North America, and the growth of a unique interpretation of Christianity in the Global South are two well-documented examples of this phenomenon.

We believe that phenomenological approach comes natural with how we teach our courses in the Religious Studies Department. So we have actively responded more manifestly to the changes and trends in the discipline with regards to comparative approach; from our systematic articulation of these methodologies in RLST 300 (Methods of Studying Religion), to our embedded examination of these realities in courses that meet the General Education cultural diversity requirements. (RLST 300 was previously required only of majors, and is now also required of all minors.) Our department has specific topical courses with comparative focuses: Religion, the Media, and Contemporary Culture (RLST 400); Religion and Film (RLST 411); Religion and Politics in the U.S.A. (RLST 381); Religion and Science (RLST 397); and New Religious Movements in the U.S.A. (RLST 370).

The changing contexts between religious traditions on a global scale are directly addressed in: RLST 335 Judaism, Christianity, and Islam Compared; RLST 306 Contemporary Practices of the World's Religions (number changed from 305, to allow for another course to be cross-listed: ANTH/RLST 305 Anthropology of Religion); and RLST 380 Religion and Violence, which has been renamed from "The Religious Roots of Non-Violence," revised in description and assignments, and successfully placed within the GE Categories

of Lifelong Learning and Cultural Diversity; under the direction of Dr. Starr, this course has proven to be attractive to students.

Almost all courses seek to address post-colonial realities. In this context, particular mention should be made of two courses taught by Dr. Solano, viz., RLST 485T Religion and Immigration, and RLST 367 Religion in Latino/a Life – renamed from Latino/a Religion and Spirituality in an attempt to attract a wider audience.

Other comparative courses include: RLST 105 Religion and the Quest for Meaning; RLST 110 Religions of the World; RLST 270T Introduction to Asian Religions (Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar was recently hired to teach this course, among others); RLST 325 African-American Religions & Spirituality; RLST 374 Issues in Contemporary Islam (a new course designed by Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim to address the diverse voices in Islam); RLST 375 Conceptions of the Afterlife – a new course with GE status taught by Dr. Jim Santucci.

It should also be noted that our courses that address one particular religious tradition, do so by comparing various sub-branches from within the larger tradition. There is no one voice for, for example, Christianity, but a plethora of Christianities. This observation is also true of Islamic courses where most of the contents reflect diverse voices on multiple matters. For instance, in Political Islam (RLST 480T) class, perspectives of Sunnis and Shi`a are not only presented with regards to Islamic theory of leadership, but medieval and contemporary perspectives for both sects are also considered. Additionally, we highlight how these theories are applied across the landscape of contemporary Islamists groups.

*B. 2. Identify if there have been external factors that impact the program, e.g., community/regional needs, placement, and graduate/professional school.*

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some significant factors that, due to their impact on the department, we would like to designate as the main themes for this Program Performance Review, and for which we seek serious input from the review committee as well as all levels of the university administrators. Namely, University recruitment and graduation initiatives; and the Department major graduation requirements.

**University Recruitment and Graduation Initiatives/Policies**

As a small department, we are constantly deliberating and strategizing on how to increase the numbers in our major and minors, as well as in our semester enrollments. Some of the strategies we took include marketing the department to outside constituencies and campus-wide student bodies. This include staging high impact activities that would not only involve audience from outside the university, but also attract students from other departments on campus. In 2016-17 AY, with the leadership of Dr. Jeanette Solano, we brought Reverend Father Greg Boyle and his “Home Boys” group to campus to interact with students and share their experiences. This event attracted more than 300 participants, almost half of who were from outside of the university. Last semester Fall 2018, she also led another event that saw a CSUF alumnus author, Flor Edwards, share her experiences

living as a child in one of the religious sects. This also brought participants from the outside as well as students from other departments and colleges. All this is to maintain a much needed publicity for the department and courses we teach, in order to maximize our recruitment potential.

Each semester, we try to attract enrollments internally from students from other departments and colleges by sending personal emails to students, especially, those who have taken a course from the department before. Most students who enroll in Religious Studies courses do so to fulfil one or more university GE or other requirements. Therefore, if we contact students ahead of registration deadline, they usually take a class again from the department, and some end up signing up as double majors or minors.

So under these circumstances we get alarmed and worried when the university adopts any policy that adversely affects the numbers of new recruits (applications/admissions) or our majors/minors and enrollments, even if such policy is well-intentioned for the greater good.

With regards to a university policy that we feel was well-intentioned for a greater good, but which adversely affects the department, an example is the CSUF “campus-wide impaction.” This “campus-wide impaction,” as opposed to “selected impaction,” has a far ranging and lasting devastation to our efforts to recruit more incoming fresh students. For our understanding is that campus-wide impaction uniformly and across the board raises the standard so high that applications and admissions into some smaller and less known departments are drastically reduced. As a matter of fact, the department stands ready to accept applicants who may have lower CGPA and do not meet the CGPA threshold set by the university. That would mean a “selected impaction” in favor of the department and an exception to the “campus-wide” impaction policy. We suggest the university would consider this “selected impaction” and include that information in the application process. We are confident that we can help any student who is admitted (with any grades) to graduate successfully. Afterall, we have a track record of graduating students who changed to our major because they have been unsuccessful in other departments.

Another sad dimension to this policy is that, with the expectation of higher CGPA (where lower grade earners are already eliminated) the qualified applicants may also qualify to apply to Religious Studies in other popular and larger universities, which have more opportunities and potential with their huge endowments. With the possibility of our department being the least favorable one to these high achieving applicants, they may either not care to invest time and resources to complete their CSUF application or when completed and accepted, they decline from accepting our offer but go to join other universities (See Appendix I, Tables 1-A & 1-B).

We understand that some CSU campuses have no impactions. Others, on the other hand, have “selected impaction.” We also acknowledge that CSUF “campus-wide impaction” was a necessity due to academic (admission) and financial (space) considerations unique to CSUF as opposed to other CSU campuses. But that is why we suggest that CSUF should considers “selected impaction” based on consultation with individual departments

or programs, by allowing them the option to lower their CGPA as an application requirement. This would not necessarily diminish the high standards the university carved for its overall reputation. Without this possibility, some smaller departments like Religious Studies may end up not having any applicants or majors at all, effectively eliminating them, even though what they teach is vital to the healthy status of the university and a significant service to the larger community.

Another suggestion we have, considering the entrenched nature of this “campus-wide impaction,” is for the university Outreach, Recruitment and Orientation office to be briefed on this negative impact of near total elimination of certain smaller, less known departments, either by the Dean’s office or the members of the department. This way, as the officials of this office make efforts to recruit students, departments like Religious Studies would be given certain level of priority when it comes to suggestions and advisement to potential students.

Finally, we believe that a university-wide policy that is negatively affecting the department is EO1100r which is related to double-counting of GE requirement. As stated above, most students enrolling in religious studies courses do so to fulfil some GE requirements. Now that they may be able to double-count using the courses from their home department, there is less incentive to take a course from another department. Not only would this minimize the chances for our semester enrollment, it may eliminate our opportunities to pick up more double-major or minor students, as they usually make such decisions after they have taken one or two GE classes from the department.

We acknowledge that this policy has just gone into effect, but we are already feeling its effects and have cancelled a class under GE Category D.1 Introduction to Social Sciences (RLST 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion) for this Spring 2019, that was previously very popular among students from Communications and Sociology (enrolled 35-40 each semester) due to the fact that students don’t have to take it anymore. We also noticed a sharp decline in several of our in-class (none-online) lower level sections that fulfil GE Category C.2 Introduction to Humanities.

We have no suggestion for the university to change or modify this, as it is a done deal from the Chancellor’s Office. But we are hoping the College of Humanities and Social Sciences can come up with a remedy, either as a college or through departments, to mitigate the impact of this GE double-counting on smaller, less known departments.

### **Department Major Requirements**

For some time now the department has been deliberating about the viability of its graduating requirements, and how far their structure and number go to improve or hinder a successful graduation of our students. We hope the review committee would be able to provide us with some thoughts and suggestions that would inform our future deliberations and possibly help us make a final decision on this matter. At this point, we are not adamant about making any changes, but we are seriously searching for possibilities.

Currently, to graduate in Religious Studies, a student is required to complete 36 units, which we consider to be an adequate number. But the 36 units are divided into eight categories (see below). Again, we feel these categories are important to produce a holistic, well-rounded graduates in Religious Studies, especially, since we are dealing with multiple religious traditions.

Based on the wisdom that “the simpler the better,” we thought that consolidating these eight categories into three or four, would not only help us streamline our course offerings, but also make graduation smoother and quicker. At the same time, we could not ignore the fact that these categories are significant to inculcate in students the sense of broader knowledge that we aspire to impart to them, for which the categories were initially construed in the first place. So eliminating some of them may betray our efforts to adequately educate our students.

And then there is a practical aspect of dealing with students for whom the courses in these categories were designed to take. Consolidating these categories would also mean that each could house more courses than they currently have. And many courses would have to compete with each other, leading to the possibility that some courses may lose to others and may never be taken by some students, for a variety of reasons, thereby, possibly defeating the purpose of holistically educating our students.

As intimated above, we are in the process of deliberating our options, and no decisions are made so far about what we should do. Although we may ultimately retain this current structure of the requirements, we would welcome suggestions or thoughts from the review committee that would inform our discussion before we agree on what to do next.

### **Other factors**

Two external factors have positively impacted our program in the past years, namely: 1) the community’s constant need for scholars to direct discussions on religion, and 2) the growth in the local availability of graduate schools in religious studies.

The first factor has been addressed by our faculty engagement with the community, through lectures, newspaper columns, and blog editorials. In high demand has been our Islamic scholar, Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim. As a Muslim, Dr. Ibrahim has given numerous lectures and sermons at the mosque of Islamic Society of Corona Norco. In fact, even though they wanted him to be one of the regular Friday Imams, he accepted to be an emergency Friday Imam (stand-by Imam), whenever a scheduled Imam is unable to attend for whatever reason (being late due to traffic, or out of town, which occurred a number of times). He also delivered Friday sermons at the mosque in Garden Grove at the Islamic Society of Orange County.

With regards to his service to other religious communities in Orange County, Dr. Ibrahim has been delivering lectures, including on two occasions to the Jewish Congregation Shir Ha-Ma’alot in Irvine, OC. In 2016 he presented a lecture on Islam in Medieval Spain, in

preparation for their trip to Spain. And in 2017, he made a presentation on the common themes between Islam and Judaism at the same congregation. Also in 2016 he gave a lecture to the La Habra United Methodist Church in Orange County on Islam in general and specifically on women in Islam.

Another way this factor has been addressed is manifested in the department hiring of a scholar to cater for the intellectual needs of the religious communities of South Asian origins; namely, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Although we had an expert in these areas in the person of Dr. Jim Santucci, he is in the early retirement process. So Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar was hired not only to assume this mantle gradually and smoothly, but to possibly bring new perspectives and energy in dealing with these communities in Southern California. Dr. Yeolekar has been involved with the community in Los Angeles County. She has been invited to deliver a lecture on South Asian religions at the Pacific Lutheran Church in Palos Verdes in April 2019. In addition, she will be involved in the teacher-training program of Department of Education at CSUF. In particular, she will be training teachers-in-training about Hinduism at the Sanatan Dharma Temple in Norwalk and about Buddhism at the Hsi Lai Temple in Hacienda in Spring 2019.

Significantly, in 2018, the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) and the Jain Temple of Los Angeles (JTLA) committed to contribute \$150,000 to the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation for the benefit of California State University, Fullerton to support the **Bhagwan Shantinath Program** in Jain Studies program in the Department of Religious Studies. The Donors agreed to fulfill this gift by the following schedule:

- \* \$30,000 on or before August 30, 2018
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2019
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2020
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2021
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2022

This amount would support an adjunct instructor in Jain Studies who would teach one course and organize a symposium each academic year. It would also provide scholarships to students interested in Jain Studies courses and study abroad programs related to Jain Studies. If adjudged a success at the end of the five years, a permanent chair position may be created in Jain Studies in the department. We consider this donation and its impact to be a well-deserved service for CSUF, H&SS College and Religious Studies, for which the university should appreciate the department and its role in the community, even though it remains one of the smaller departments on campus.

Although it occurred a while ago, prior to our last two PPR, worth repeating for its impact on our department and the community was the Dalai Lama's visit to CSUF on June 28, 2000. His Holiness the Dalai Lama spoke to more than 1100 people about the values of



love and compassion. During the speech entitled “Cherishing Harmony with Diversity: Education in the New Millennium,” the spiritual leader emphasized “embracing dialogue, shunning violence and nurturing the concept of community in cities and villages around the globe.” His message was a powerful one for many in attendance. Our senior faculty members who were in attendance still remember it fondly.

The second external factor that has impacted the program is the growth in the local availability of graduate schools in religious studies. A few years ago, a Graduate Program in Religion Studies (M.A. and Ph.D.) was added at UC Riverside. At least four of our graduates have entered the Ph.D. program. Alumni of our department also continue to enroll in the M.A. program in Religious Studies at CSULB. Additional graduates have attended the Claremont School of Theology and Claremont School of Religion, Loyola Marymount University and the University of the West. The Claremont School of Theology has added new master’s degree concentrations and a Ph.D. in Religion. Other graduates got accepted in to graduate schools at McGill University, Canada, University of North Texas, University of Denver and Mount St. Mary’s University. We seek to prepare graduates who are well-qualified for these programs, and we look forward to cooperative endeavors between our department and these graduate programs.

In past years, our connection with the University of the West has been strong, through the efforts of Dr. James Santucci, who served for a time as co-chair of the U West’s Religious Studies Department. Prof. Santucci taught a Sanskrit course at U West that was cross-listed with our department and attracted some CSUF students. In the past, two U West Chinese Buddhist graduate students took Prof. Ben Hubbard’s RLST 400 Religion, the Media, and Contemporary Culture, and made a valuable contribution to the course. We do not currently have a connection to U West, but may rekindle it in the future.

An additional benefit of these local graduate programs has been the availability of persons to hire as temporary part-time instructors whose supervisors were colleagues of our own Dr. Brad Starr. Before we hired Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar, who is now teaching RLST 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion (with social sciences emphasis), two adjunct instructors who taught this class in the last three years were from the Claremont School of Theology. In 2011-12 we offered for the first time, a course in Mormonism (RLST 350T Major Christian Traditions, with the topic: Mormonism). We hired a well-qualified candidate from the Claremont School of Theology due to their new program in Mormon Studies.

Lastly, in conjunction with the Religious Studies Student Association, a number of on-campus lectures were presented and were open to the public. These included Father Greg Boyle and the Home Boys, which Dr. Jeanette Solano helped bring to fruition in Spring of 2017.

Joining a National Honor Society of Religious Studies and Theology, Theta Alpha Kappa, was one of the department’s priorities in the last PPR. We are happy to report that we were able to join it, sharing in all the responsibilities and privileges. Our students are inducted every year for the past five six years.

### *C. Identify the unit's priorities for the future.*

#### I. Departmental Mission & Vision

- Revisit the Department mission and goals to align them closely with those of CSUF
- Effort to increase the number of majors, minors, and students taking our GE courses
- Two new Tenure-Track faculty hires in the next two to three years
- Find ways to elicit more donors for our specific minors in Christian Studies, Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies Funds
- Create a minor in Asian Religions
- Intensify outreach to Alumni
- Offer greater personalized advising and attention to majors and minors
- Monitor and promote high graduation rates
- Collaborate with the office of Outreach, Recruitment, and Orientation
- Organize regular workshops with the Academic Advisement Center for undeclared students
- Stage more high-impact activities (i.e. Symposia, lectures), for visibility on campus

#### II. Pedagogy

- Ongoing Assessment and improvement of assessment instruments
- Expand our online course offerings
- Explore the possibility of an online certificate
- Continue to create new, topic courses, e.g., additional courses in South Asian Religions, and a course on religion, sex, and love

## II. Department Description and Analysis

### *A. Identify substantial curricular changes in existing programs, new programs (degrees, majors, minors) developed since the last program review. Have any programs been discontinued?*

As stated above, in 2018, the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) and the Jain Temple of Los Angeles (JTLA) committed to contribute \$150,000 to the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation to support the Bhagwan Shantinath Program in Jain Studies program in the Department of Religious Studies. We have therefore created a new course (RLST 307 Studies in Jain Religion; approved in Fall 2018) to specifically cater to

this program. We intend to design more courses related to Jainism and Sikhism to both support this program and possibly augment our future minor in Asian Religions. Religious communities originally from Asia, especially, the Indian sub-continent have been important and visible communities in the Southern California. This program is a welcome attempt to serve this important segment of the population.

We are seriously planning to create a new minor in Asian Religions. Considering the vitality and vibrancy of traditions and philosophies of Asian communities in Southern California, the department believes that our curriculum needs upgrading to include a minor in Asian Religions that would parallel our existing four minors (Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies). This would address the intellectual and religious needs of these communities and greatly enhance cooperation between them and the university.

Two years prior to the last PPR, a new Minor in Islamic Studies was approved. That was to complement the then existing minors in Christian Studies, Jewish Studies, and Religious Studies. For years, in its drive to fulfill its mission and goals, the department had offered three minors. Since the attacks on 9/11, there have been innumerable observations in newspaper columns, articles, and books that attempted to understand both the motivations of the attackers, and the actual teachings of Islam. There is a great need to explain Islam to the college population because of the impact that Islam is having on Southern California (home to one of the largest Muslim communities in the country), the nation, Europe, and the world. Thus, the minor in Islamic studies became an important and necessary addition to the curriculum.

Specifically, we had added the following new courses to our curriculum since the last PPR:

- RLST 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion
- RLST 302 Religion and Ecology
- RLST 307 Studies in Jain Religion
- RLST 311 Religion and Film
- RLST 320 End of the World
- RLST 321 Psychology of Religion
- RLST 332 Islamic Scriptural Studies
- RLST 333 Religion and Sexuality
- RLST 346 Vietnamese Buddhism
- RLST 373 Women in Islam
- RLST 374 Issues in Contemporary Islam

- B. Describe the structure of the degree program (e.g. identify required courses, how many units of electives) and identify the logic underlying the organization of the requirements.*

The requirements for the B.A. in Religious Studies are listed below: The B.A. degree requires a total of 36 units, including nine units of lower division courses and 27 units of upper division courses. Students must take courses in eight specific areas. In all areas, except one, students are able to choose from a sub-list of courses. In the lower division requirement (where nine units are required), there are three categories, from which students have several options to choose one course (3 units). For example, in category 1, “Introduction to the Study of Religion” students may select either RLST 100, RLST 105 or 110. In category 2, “Introduction to Western Religious Traditions” students select one course from a list of four courses (RLST 200, RLST 201, RLST 210 or RLST 250). In category 3, “Introduction to Non-western Religious Traditions” students may pick one of two courses: RLST 270 or RLST 280.

These nine units of lower division course work provide an introduction to the basic concepts of religion and religious traditions. The 27 units of upper division course work build this knowledge with specialized courses in Western and Eastern traditions, as well as thematic courses, and a course in textual studies. One A course in methods and concepts provides an introduction to the upper division study (RLST 300), and a second course in this category serves as a senior capstone course (RLST 485T).

For a few years now the department has been deliberating about the viability of our graduation requirements. We have been reflecting on the issue of correlation between the structure or the number of courses and the successful graduation of our students. We hope the review committee would be able to suggest to us some ways to address this matter in our future deliberations. Please see above **(I.B.2)** our thoughts on this matter, under **“Department Major Requirements.”**

### **Lower Division Requirements (9 units):**

#### ***1. Introduction to the Study of Religion (3 units)***

***(Two courses are usually offered every semester)***

RLST 100 Introduction to the Study of Religion (3)

RLST 105 Religion and the Quest for Meaning (3) or

RLST 110 Religions of the World (3)

#### ***2. Introduction to Western Religious Traditions (3 units)***

***(At least one course is usually offered every semester – random rotation)***

RLST 200 Introduction to Christianity (3) or

RLST 201 Introduction to the New Testament (3) or

RLST 210 Introduction to Judaism (3) or

RLST 250 Introduction to Islam (3)

#### ***3. Introduction to Non-Western Religious Traditions (3 units)***

***(One course is usually offered every semester – rotated every semester)***

RLST 270T Introduction to the Asian Religions (3) or

RLST 280 Introduction to Buddhism (3)

**Upper Division Requirements (27 units):**

***4. Methods & Concepts (6 units)***

RLST 300 Methods of Studying Religion (3) AND  
*(offered every fall)*

RLST 485T Major Religious Thinkers and Concepts (3)  
*(offered every spring)*

***5. The Development of Western Religious Thought (6 units/2 courses from):  
(At least two courses are usually offered every semester – random rotation)***

RLST 350 Major Religious Traditions (3)

RLST 351 Hist. & Dev. of Early Christian Thought (3)

RLST 352 Hist. & Dev. of Modern Christian Thought (3)

RLST 361 Hist. & Dev. of Jewish Tht: Biblical & Rabbinical Eras (3)

RLST 362 Hist. & Dev. of Jewish Tht: Medieval & Modern Eras (3)

RLST 371 Hist. & Dev. of Islamic Thought: The Beginning to 1258 (3)

RLST 372 Hist. & Dev. of Islamic Thought: 1259 to Modern Times (3)

HIST/RLST 412A, 412B, 412C, 417B, 425B, 435A, 466A, 466B, 483 (3)

HIST/RLST 420 The Byzantium Empire (3)

***6. The Development of Non-Western Religious Thought (6 units/2 courses from):  
(At least two courses are usually offered every semester – random rotation)***

AFRO/RLST 325 African-American Religions & Spirituality (3)

AFRO/RLST 337 American Indian Religions and Philosophy (3)

RLST 341 Hindu Tradition to 400 B.C.E. (3)

RLST 342 Hindu Tradition from 400 B.C.E. (3)

RLST 346 Vietnamese Buddhism (3)

PHIL 350 Asian Philosophy (3)

RLST 354T Topics in Buddhism (3)

RLST 370 New Religious Movements in the U.S.A. (3)

HIST/RLST 465A or 465B History of India (3)

***7. The Experience of Religion (6 units/2 courses from the following list):  
(At least two courses are usually offered every semester – random rotation)***

RLST 302 Religion and Ecology (3)

RLST 306 Contemporary Practices of the World's Religions (3)

RLST 311 Religion and Film (3)

RLST/CPLT 312 The Bible as Literature (3)

RLST 320 End of the World (3)

RLST/PSYC 321 Psychology of Religion (3)

RLST 333 Religion and Sexuality (3)

RLST 335 Judaism, Christianity, and Islam Compared (3)

RLST/PHIL 348 Philosophy of Religion (3)

RLST 358 Comparative Mysticism (3)  
RLST 367 Religion in Latino/a Life (3)  
RLST 373 Women in Islam (3)  
RLST 374 Issues in Contemporary Islam (3)  
RLST 375 Conceptions of the Afterlife (3)  
RLST 380 Religion and Violence (3)  
RLST/POSC 381 Religion and Politics in the U.S. (3)  
RLST 397 Religion and Science (3)  
RLST 400 Religion, the Media, and Contemporary Culture (3)  
RLST/SOCI 458 Sociology of Religious Behavior (3)

**8. Textual Studies (3 units/1 course from the following list):  
(One course is usually offered every spring – random rotation)**

RLST 330T Hebrew Scriptural Studies (3)  
RLST 331T New Testament Studies (3)  
RLST 332 Islamic Scriptural Studies (3)  
RLST 401T Studies in Religious Texts (3)

- C. *Using data provided by the office of Analytic Studies/Institutional Research discuss student demand for the unit's offerings; discuss topics such as over enrollment, under enrollment, (applications, admissions and enrollments) retention, (native and transfer) graduation rates for majors, time to degree. (See Appendix I)*

The Religious Studies Department does not have any admissions requirements in addition to those required by the university. Thus, the number and percentage of students admitted and enrolled (Appendix I, Table 1) is solely contingent upon university requirements. As intimated above, we wished the university had adopted a “selected impaction” policy, thereby allowing some departments like ours to set our own CGPA and other requirements to be lower than that of the university. It would be interesting to determine why relatively large number of students who are admitted into our program do not enroll in our department. Our own speculation is that the high admission requirements set by the university mean that only highly qualified candidates apply to CSUF. It is only natural that these high achievers would also be applying to other universities. Also natural is the possibility that when offered admission by all or most of the other universities, these candidates would likely choose to enroll in those institutions, rather than enroll with us. It is not a secret that CSUF cannot compete with other well-known, well-endowed Southern California universities for the high achievers’ prioritization, considering potential scholarships, fellowships and the perceived prestige and name associated with these other institutions.

We think if the Religious Studies department were to be open for candidates who were below the high achievers to apply, we would likely get more who would apply, be admitted and end up enrolling with us as their priority program, having been eliminated from applying to other institutions. We do not feel that it a defeatist attitude by hoping to have

this group of students, after all, we already have a track record of graduating students who have not been very successful in other CSUF departments, but decided to switch to our department. We do not deny the fact that CSUF remains in high demand for prospective students in Southern California, which necessitated the “campus-wide impactation” in the first place. That is why the “selected impactation” may be the middle ground (or the life line) for the small departments whose roles, nonetheless, remain very important in the university and the community at large.

From our records regarding degrees awarded, we conclude that there is interest more in Religious Studies program than what is reflected in the Table 1-A & B (enrollments). This is underscored by the fact that we always pick up and graduate majors and minors who were initially admitted for other departments, but ended up adding us as double-major or minor, or who completely switching their majors to Religious Department. For example, between 2013-14 and 2017-18, we had average enrollment of five students per year (Freshmen: 1; and transfers: 4). Yet, we have never awarded less than ten major degrees a year. This proves that we always pick up more students in addition to those who initially enrolled with us.

The data in Table 1-A indicate that relatively few freshmen applicants get admitted. Even fewer in this cohort get to enroll with us (averaging one student a year from 2013 to 2018). This is the same trend for Table 1-B with regards to transfer students, except that transfers’ numbers (Table 1-B) are more reassuring than Freshmen’s (Table 1-A), as more transfers get admitted and end up enrolling with us (averaging 4 students). Due to these numbers and adverse university policies mentioned above, we are not optimistic about the future trajectory of the department in terms of growth, even though we consistently exceed our FTES.

However, before admission, individual applicant information is not provided to the department, and so it is not possible to know what we could have done to attract these potential applicants to our department and possibly help them present complete and competitive application. Hopefully, in the near future, the university would do us well to supply us contact numbers of all applicants before admission to allow us to make appropriate outreach to them and either help them complete competitive dossiers, maximize their chances of admission, or potentially convince them to enroll with us. In quite a promising manner, in the recent past semesters, we received information about admitted candidates early enough to send them welcome messages and encouragements, with the hopes of attracting them to enroll with us. It is a bit early to know whether or not this new proactive approach is making any difference in those who decide to enroll with us.

Before the last PPR, the data indicated that more (60 %) of our yearly FTES enrollment (for all students, including non-majors) was in lower division courses. However, for this current review period, we see a different pattern with a slight uptick consistently in favor of upper courses (Table 2-A). Yet the actual yearly total FTES keep surpassing our FTES target of 122 in three of the five years (Table 9: fluctuating between 141.2 and 118.0 between 2013-14 and 2017-18), and we are on our way to exceeding the target again in 2018-19, according to the Fall 2018 census (104% target; Spring 2019: 105% tentative). This is a period in

which our tenured positions kept dwindling from 5.0 in 2013-14 to 3.0 in 2017-18, pegging our actual tenure FTEF at 60 % relative to our FTEF allocation of 5.2 (with a new hire in 2018-19 we came back up to 4.0 tenure FTEF bringing us up to 80% of 5.2 FTEF allocation). The reasons for this drastic reduction in our actual tenured FTEF included one promotion and two early retirements.

Dr. Paul Levesque, the current Associate Dean of H&SS was a full time faculty in Religious Studies when he moved to the Dean's Office cutting the tenure FTEF from 5 to 4. By 2016-17, Dr. James Santucci started the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), which further brought us down to 3.5. A year later in 2017-18, Dr. Brad Starr also joined the FERP pegging us at 3.0 (Table 9). Again, this is the period that saw us exceed our FTES targets of 122 regularly, especially, in the last six semesters (including 2018-19). All of this underscores the fact that students' interest in Religious Studies continue to grow, the demand for our courses is higher than anticipated, and importantly, we are being successful in meeting our goals, despite institutional obstacles with which we are confronted. Having hired a new full time tenure-track Assistant Professor, our tenure FTEF came back up to 4 in 2018-19 (80% of 5.2 FTEF allocation). This means that at 80% of 5.2 FTEF allocation, we would be unable to hire a new tenure track, which also means that we would be stuck at 4 tenure FTEF, short of where we were in 2013-14. We aspire to get back to 5 tenure FTEF, but that would require that our FTEF allocation be raised higher than 5.2.

The disparity between enrolled freshmen and transfers each year (Table 1-A & B) and the graduates (Table 4) also highlights the interest in our minors, even though the number of minors has not been consistent over the years. Due to the fact that Religious Studies has not been popularly taught in high schools as an area of specialization, nor is it a popular discipline in which many Americans aspire to specialize, fewer number of prospective applicants target our department during the application process, as shown in Tables 1-A & 2, in a relatively fewer applications and progressively decreasing numbers each year. This national tendency, to us, is an offshoot perception of how Humanities and Social Sciences in general have been perceived, compared to other colleges; albeit, that remains a misplaced but disappointing reality.

However, when many students take our courses for GE requirements or out of curiosity, they get attracted quickly and decide to take some more, and eventually either plan to add Religious Studies as a second major or a minor. Due to what some students perceive as promising prospects for Religious Studies minor, most students prefer to add that as their minor. The next preferred minor is Christian Studies. For majority of students on campus are Christians, mirroring exactly the American population. Therefore, when it comes to deciding on a minor in specific religious studies, Christianity becomes the preferred choice. The next choice for students is Islamic Studies, followed by Jewish Studies.

Given that many of the students who graduate with us as majors do not enter as Religious Studies majors (this applies to both first-time freshmen and transfer students), the data in Tables 3-A & B are not complete. We therefore argue that Tables 3-A & B do not capture an accurate picture of our graduating rates, thereby making it difficult to draw any statistically significant conclusions.



*D. Discuss the unit's enrollment trends since the last program review, based on enrollment targets (FTES), faculty allocation, and student faculty ratios. (See Appendix IV)*

As stated above, our actual tenure FTEF has dwindled from a high of 5.0 to a low of 3.0 between 2013-14 and 2017-18. The reasons for this drastic reduction in our FTEF included one promotion and two early retirements. Dr. Paul Levesque, the current Associate Dean of H&SS was a full time faculty in Religious Studies when he moved to the Dean's Office cutting the actual tenure FTEF from 5 to 4. By 2016-17, Dr. James Santucci started the Faculty Early Retirement Program (FERP), which further brought down the actual FTEF to 3.5. A year later in 2017-18, Dr. Brad Starr also joined the FERP bringing down the number to 3.0 (Table 9).

On the other hand, our total yearly FTES keep surpassing our target of 122 in three of the five years (Table 9: fluctuating between 141.2 and 118.0 between 2013-14 and 2017-18), and we are on our way to exceeding the target again in 2018-19, according to the Fall 2018 census (104% target; Spring 2019: 105% tentative). This is a period in which our tenured positions kept dwindling from 5.0 in 2013-14 to 3.0 in 2017-18, pegging our actual tenure FTEF at 60 % relative to our FTEF allocation of 5.2 (with a new hire in 2018-19 we came back up to 4.0 tenure FTEF bringing us up to 80% of 5.2 FTEF allocation).. Our budgeted SFR has remained consistent between 23.9 and 24.7 (actual SFR 23.9-24.78). This consistent SFR indicates that our classes are manageable, and student get proper attention they need to achieve their learning goals.

The department has consistently met and exceeded our target, in three of the last five years, including the last five to six semesters. This suggests that the department is quite capable of growing, if we are allocated resources (especially, by raising FTEF allocation of 5.2 a bit higher) to accomplish this goal. One of the contributing factors to meeting and exceeding our FTES target is increasingly offering online classes. In the past years, the department offered more online classes than in-class ones (about 70% online; as opposed to 30% in-person classes).

Beside the attraction of our individual classes as GE requirements and our proactive efforts in publicizing our classes each semester, we believe students like the flexibility that online classes afford them. They have the impression that online classes are more manageable and easily handled on their own pace. Our experience is that lower level sections (e.g., RLST 110) offered online frequently fill up faster than in-class sections. We also noticed a surge in demand in our upper level classes that are online than in those that are not (e.g., RLST 351, RLST 352, RLST 371, RLST 373, RLST 375). We are considering the possibility of proposing and offering fully online program, where students have the option of meeting all the requirements through online courses. This would be relatively viable considering that we currently offer more online than in-class.

*E. Describe any plans for curricular changes in the short (three-year) and long (seven-year) term, such as expansions, contractions or discontinuances. Relate these plans to the priorities described above in section I. C.*

In the short-term, our curricular goals are to ensure the timely offering of all of our courses, including electives, in order to realize an effective and successful graduation for our students. We further wish to address the following curricular plans:

- Expand our online course offerings
- Continue to create new, topic courses, e.g., additional courses in Jainism, Sikhism, and a courses on religion, sex, and love; environment; and a religion and social media

In the long-term, we wish to address these priorities:

- Explore the possibility of an online certificate
- Effort to increase the number of majors and minors
- Effort to increase the number of students taking our GE courses

*F. Not Applicable.*

### III. Documentation of Student Academic Achievement and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

*A. Describe the department assessment plan (e.g. general approach, time table, etc.) and structure (e.g. committee, coordinator, etc.) and if applicable, how the plan and/ or structure have changed since last PPR.*

The Religious Studies Department has spent a good deal of time and energy to formulate and implement its Assessment Plan. We believe that it is a developed plan (see Appendix III), and like all assessment, is a work in progress.

In February of 2007, the full-time faculty developed three (3) student learning goals (SLG) and eight (8) student learning outcomes (SLO). Minor revisions have been made in December 2010 (when the eighth outcome was added). So these goals and outcomes remain the same since our last PPR. They are listed on our department website and are included in the University Catalog. We have also begun to include the applicable goals and outcomes on our all course syllabi.

Each year the department assesses one or two student learning outcomes. Initially, we scheduled the first round of our assessment cycle to end in 2015-16 AY. But we adjusted it to end with 2017-18 assessment cycle which would coincide with this PPR. This way, our assessment cycles would be in tandem with the PPR periods, where it would be easier to utilize data obtained from assessment to inform our PPR. The actual timetable to which we adhered is as follows:

2011-12: SLO 1, 2 & 3  
2012-13: SLO 4 & 5  
2013-14: SLO 4 & 5  
2014-15: SLO 6  
2015-16: SLO 7  
2016-17: SLO 8  
2017-18: SLO 8

Dr. Brad Starr, and Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim constitute the two member committee appointed by the department for assessment, with the latter designated as the assessment coordinator. The coordinator works with faculty members whose courses are identified to be utilized for the SLO under review. All materials needed for the assessment are requested in the beginning of the academic year. In the Spring, the committee collects the materials, makes evaluation and assessment in consultation with the entire faculty before the coordinator submits the assessment report, in due time, to the Office of Assessment and Educational Effectiveness via “Compliance Assist” (the online platform to submit assessment reports).

With the exception of the slight modification made in the timeline, neither the plan nor the structure has changed since the last PPR.

*B. For each degree program, provide the student learning outcomes (SLOs); describe the methods, direct or indirect, used to measure student learning; and summarize the assessment results of the SLOs.*

In developing our goals and outcomes, we utilized (from Bloom’s Taxonomy), knowledge verbs, such as “describe” and “identify”; comprehension verbs, such as “compare and contrast” and “interpret”; and higher order analysis and evaluation verbs, such as “analyze” and “critical.”

**Learning Goals & Student Learning Outcomes:**  
(2/2007; revised 12/14/10)

All students majoring in Religious Studies shall achieve competence in the following domains of skill and knowledge:

#### A. Skills

Learning Goal: Students possess the ability to perform research and interpret materials related to the study of religion.

Outcome 1: Students can analyze written materials related to the study of religion.

Outcome 2: Students have acquired information literacy in the study of religion.

Learning Goal: Students can effectively communicate in written and spoken mediums.

Outcome 3: Students are able to write well-organized critical and analytical research papers related to the study of religion.

Outcome 4: Students are able to speak clearly and effectively using relevant and adequate supporting evidence.

#### B. Knowledge

Learning Goal: Students can demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs, rituals, texts, and figures related to a variety of religious traditions.

Outcome 5: Students can describe the basic teachings and practices of major religious traditions and can compare and contrast the principal similarities and differences between them.

Outcome 6: Students are able to identify the history and development of specific religions and their contemporary relevance.

Outcome 7: Students can compare key theories and theorists in the study of religion.

Outcome 8: Students can interpret key thinkers and figures within religious traditions.

The following methods are used to measure the learning outcomes and assess the degree of correlation between pedagogy and student accomplishment.

#### A1. **Outcome 1:** Direct Assessment

For this component, a reading comprehension and knowledge assessment is conducted in RLST 300 (Methods of Studying Religion) and RLST 485T (Senior Seminar). Students are presented with brief scholarly passages in which a concept or event is being analyzed or an argument presented. Students are asked to answer a multiple-choice question related to each passage. The assessment committee compared the results from the two classes to determine the level of student improvement.

#### A2. **Outcomes 2 & 3:** Direct Assessment

The assessment committee asked the instructors of RLST 300 Methods of Studying Religion and RLST 485T Senior Seminar (capstone course) to tally the results of the quality of papers written by RLST Majors based upon the “**Direct Assessment of Research Skills**” rubric (see below). The assessment committee compared the results and considered what progress towards the achievement of program objectives these papers reveal.

#### A3. **Outcomes 4-8:** Direct Assessment

The courses identified for these SLOs are RLST 300, 371, 372, 485T. Beside the direct assessment used above, class assignments and final exams were also used in the direct assessment for these SLOs.

#### B. **Outcomes 4-8:** Indirect Assessment:

**Sources: Student Program Assessment Essay; National Survey on Religious Studies programs.**

In RLST 300, 371, 373, 485T. Senior Seminar, students are asked to complete a two-three-page self-evaluation of their experience as a Religious Studies major. They are asked to address such questions such as:

- What are the goals (as you understand them) of the Religious Studies major?
- What are your personal goals for majoring in this field?
- Are these goals being met?
- Are you acquiring an overall grasp of how the world’s religious traditions are distinct yet interrelated?
- Do you feel you are able to study worldviews other than your own comfortably and fairly?
- What have you found most (a) rewarding, (b) insightful, (c) difficult in religious studies thus far?

In addition, for **SLOs 7 & 8**, the results of a national survey on Religious Studies programs (in which our department took part) were utilized as indirect assessment tool. Parts of this survey are directly relevant to some of the outcomes we are assessing, and so we decided to use them as indirect assessment source. The survey clearly shows (albeit, in a long term consistent with the nature of the survey) that the SLO are being met, as the data relevant to our alumni was consistently and positively higher than the national average on almost all accounts. It is a comprehensive survey that spanned from the mid-1970s to 2014-15.

Based on the **criteria for success (steps 3)** laid out for the assessment of these outcomes, the general conclusions were that all the outcomes **were met (steps 4)**. However, improvements were needed in certain instances, as we made some recommendations to change or repeat certain approaches for the sake of either replicating or achieving better results. We are happy to report that the feedback for 2016-17 Assessment Report was “Excellent assessment practice: Keep up the good work!”

*C. Describe whether and how assessment results have been used to improve teaching and learning practices, and/or overall departmental effectiveness. Please cite specific examples.*

**Pedagogy of RLST 300 Methods of Studying Religion:**

Results of all assessment measures have been discussed at faculty meetings, along with ways to respond to these findings. For example, our direct assessment of outcome 1 (“Students can analyze written materials related to the study of religion”) via our assessment quiz, indicates that students have a harder time with technical theoretical texts (Appendix IX, question 6). One change in response to these findings has been to revisit the pedagogy of RLST 300 Methods of Studying Religion. Though it is clear that methodological interpretation is addressed throughout the course, additional assessment throughout the semester will be implemented to determine the degree to which students have mastered these concepts. It is also possible that the assessment instrument might be flawed, insofar as the most correct answer (B) may not be readily discernable from another possibly correct answer (D).

**RLST 485T capstone course:**

In addition, the hope was to see improvement from the Fall RLST 300 course, to the Spring RLST 485T capstone course. In general, the data from the assessment quiz illustrate that there was improvement in reading comprehension and analysis. This has affirmed the department’s overall approach. Of course, our data set is rather small, and the statistical significance of the results is limited.

**Rubrics for Papers:**

Our direct assessment of outcomes 2 and 3 (“Students has acquired information literacy in the study of religion” and “Students are able to write well-organized critical and analytical research papers related to the study of religion”) was conducted via a scoring rubric for the research papers in RLST 300 and RLST 485T (Appendix VI). There was general improvement from the Fall RLST 300 course, to the Spring RLST 485T capstone course. One change has been to intensify our efforts at improving these skills. For example, based upon our initial results with regard to outcomes 2 and 3, we have implemented grading rubrics for paper in a number of courses; (the rubric is shared with the students before the writing assignment is due, and is used to grade the paper, with a marked copy with comments given to each student). These rubrics have assisted students to understand the assignment requirements more clearly, and helped to improve their writing in subsequent writing assignments.

**Indirect measures:**

The department’s full-time faculty have extensively discussed the findings of our indirect measures. We observed that at least 90% of the students think that the department is doing a good job. The students view our courses as academic investigations, and not indoctrination.

These indirect measures confirm our perceptions that most majors in our department want to study religion from an objective, academic perspective, though a few want to try to prove one religion as superior to all others. Also, some majors seek some type of personal affirmation or

answers for their own spiritual quest. These findings have reaffirmed our commitment to present an objective, academic study of religion in our courses. We strive to respect the religious beliefs of our students, while recognizing that an academic approach may cause apprehension in the minds of some students. **One example of a change implemented as a result of these assessment findings is to offer a clear statement in our text-studies courses of the differences between spiritual reading and academic study. Another example is the care and reflection that is taken in creating the discussion posting questions for our online sections of RLST 110 Religions of the World.** Instead of asking, “What do you think of Buddhism?” students are asked, “In your opinion, what aspects of Buddhism are best categorized as religious, and what aspects are best categorized as philosophical? Why?” In addition, students are reminded: “please do not proselytize or make disparaging comments about specific religions.” They are also encouraged to be ‘polite and professional in their postings.’: “.

In addition, through the indirect assessment instrument, students have suggested the addition of courses, such as religion and sex, and religion and science. This confirmed our plans and led us to create a new course on religion, sex and love, as well as schedule our exiting Religion and Science course more frequently.

#### **Handling Students:**

Another changes that we agreed to make, as a result of the assessment have to do with SLOs 6, 7 and 8 (where we hope student identify relevance of religious history, compare key theories, and interpret key thinkers). We **agreed** that we should test students knowledge of the key theories and major thinkers both at the beginning of the classes (RLST 300; 272; 485T) as well as the end. This way, we could track and reliably assess these outcomes.

Since it is clear that the content of the classes are clearly to train students to interpret ideas of religious thinkers, students are bound to learn them and be acquainted with them. However, in order to maximize students' potential to achieve these SLOs by effectively interpreting ideas of key thinkers, we **agreed** that instructors in these courses should draw students' attention to these thinkers and their ideas in the beginning of the class. This way, students would be required to pick them early to research them, rather than leave it to their discretion as to whether they want to do their term papers on them or choose other topics. In other words, priority must be to guide students toward achievement of these SLOs by focusing students' attention to the thinkers and their ideas.

Finally, we also agreed that we should help students achieve their academic goals by offering them maximum opportunity to fulfil that. **For example, we agreed** that instructors should allow students who missed certain assignments and tests with unacceptable reasons to make them up, so long as there is enough time to do so. This should not be included anywhere in the course outlines in order to avoid students' abuse of that policy.

*D. Describe other quality indicators identified by the department as evidence of effectiveness/success other than student learning goals (e.g. graduation rate, number of students attending graduate or professional school, job placement rates, etc.)*

The department has no formal tracking system for our graduates' success. However, since all of us are usually asked for letters of recommendations for our graduates for the purposes of jobs and graduate schools, and since we have a Facebook platform where our alumni keep in touch with each other and with our faculty, we know of the outstanding achievements some of our graduates have attained in the past years.

In addition, in the national survey of Religious Studies departments carried out by the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in 2014 (going as far back as 1975), which included our department, we observed that our graduates have been successful, pointing to the effectiveness of the department and its curriculum. As indicated in the survey (**Appendix X**), the satisfactory rate of our graduates and the rate of their accomplishments in diverse professional careers have been higher than the national average, especially, relative to those from other departments and institutions.

With regards to graduate schools, most of our graduates have gone to do their Masters and Ph.D. degrees. A few years ago, a Graduate Program in Religion Studies (M.A. and Ph.D.) was added at UC Riverside. At least four of our graduates have entered the Ph.D. program and three have recently completed (two are tenure-track Assistant Professors:

- Daisy Vargas is tenure-track in Religious Studies at the University of Arizona.
- Harold Morales is tenure track at Morgan State University
- Corinne Knight is an adjunct Professor in CSUF and UCR.

Alumni of our department also continue to enroll in the M.A. program in Religious Studies at CSULB. Additional graduates have attended the Claremont School of Theology and Claremont School of Religion, Loyola Marymount University, the University of the West, McGill University, Canada, University of North Texas, University of Denver and Mount St. Mary's University (for more, see appendix X, under "Education").

A selected sample of our accomplished graduates have been chronicled on the department's publicity link called "spark" (<https://spark.adobe.com/page/bftbb/>) (different from our website: <http://religion.fullerton.edu/>). On spark, prospective students may go for more information about the department. Spark featured three of our accomplished alumni:

- **Gladys Maldoon** is the Chief of Operations to the **Provost, CSU Fullerton**
- **Ian Fowles** is a PhD. Student at Claremont Graduate University & Actor/Composer/ Musician
- **Samantha Santana** is a Paralegal, The Walt Disney Company



We feel strongly that our program has more potential than what people perceive or expect from it. And our curriculum, faculty and graduates are strong indicators of the effectiveness of the department.

*E. Many department are offering courses and programs via technology (e.g. online, etc.) or at off campus sites and in compressed schedules. How is student learning assessed in these formats/modalities?*

As stated above, in the past semesters, the department now offers more online courses than in-class ones. They enroll better and faster than the in-class ones. We have met and exceeded our FTES because of the online classes. That is why we are planning to create an entirely online certificate program. All of our online courses are 100%, and this means that lectures, videos, postings, exams and any evaluation in any course are online. Although 100% online may necessitate a different format of evaluating and assessing the courses, the contents are the same as in-class courses. Since we are assessing the SLOs, there is no difference between online and in-class courses. Finally, we currently do not offer any off-campus classes.

## IV. Faculty

*A. Describe changes since the last program review in the full-time equivalent faculty (FTEF) allocated to the department. Include information on tenured and tenure tract faculty lines (e.g. new hires, retirements, FERP's, resignations, and how these changes may have affected the department's academic offerings. Describe tenure density in the department and the distribution among academic rank (assistant, associate, professor). (See Appendix IV)*

During our last PPR in 2010-11, we had four tenured and one tenure-track faculty. The four tenured comprised of two full professors and two associate professors. Since the last PPR, one tenure-track faculty has received tenure and two became full professors. At the same time, one full professor has moved to the Dean's office as the Associate Dean (though we remain his home department), while two more full professors became part of the FERP (and are in their second and third years of the program respectively). This means that after the last PPR, our FTEF shrunk drastically from 5.0 to 3.0 ( $5-1-1/2-1/2=3$ ) in 2017-18 AY. In spite of

this reduction in the last few years, we have managed to exceed our yearly FTES targets of 122 (Table 9).

However, upon hiring a new tenure-track assistant professor with a specialization in Hindu traditions and living religions of India (2018-19; technically outside this PPR period), the FTEF increased to 4 (<http://religion.fullerton.edu/faculty/>). Again, this means that we remain smaller now than during and after the last PPR. This reality may be compounded further by the impending retirements of the two faculty who are now in FERP. So ideally, if we hope to grow back to 5 FTEF sooner rather than later, we need to hire two tenure-track positions in the next one to two years.

To help us meet our FTES, the department has relied heavily on part time adjunct instructors. Each semester, seven to eight (<http://religion.fullerton.edu/faculty/>) are hired to teach almost half of the courses. Some teach six units, while most teach only three units.

*B. Describe priorities for additional faculty hires. Explain how these priorities and future hiring plans relate to relevant changes in the discipline, the career objectives of students, the planning of the university, and regional, national or global developments.*

Upon hiring a new tenure-track faculty in 2018-19, our actual tenure FTEF came back up from 3.0 to 4.0. This is far short of what it was a few years ago (between 5.0 and 6.0). So in terms of hiring, our priority is increase our actual tenure FTEF to 5.0 in the next couple of years. As stated above, our FTEF allocation would have to be raised above 5.2 in order for our percentage to come down from the 80% (following the hiring of a new tenure-track in 2018-19). The department has been going through a transitional phase and shrinking through promotions and retirements since the last PPR, and is set to shrink even more in the next two to three years, when the two faculty members who are in FERP are due to finally retire. When both eventually retire, we would be back to 3.0 in actual tenure FTEF. We would need to hire more faculty in order to properly realign the department to meet our goals and FTES targets.

Furthermore, we would need to hire, at least two tenure-track to compensate both the loss of manpower and expertise. Dr. Jim Santucci, who is slated to retire first has been, for the longest time, our expert in South Asian and South east Asian religions. We have already hired Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar who is an expert in Hindu traditions and living religions of India. But course offerings in this area is as large as the Asian Religions each semester. Besides several courses in Hindu traditions, we also offer several in Buddhism, all of which fulfil our graduation requirements listed above. Besides, we are expanding our curriculum to cover Jain and Sikh religions. This would also demand that we consider hiring.

Dr. Brad Starr would be next to retire. As our resident expert in Religion & Violence, Christianity, Religion & Sociological Analysis, his courses cannot be retired because of his own retirement. Apart from the significance of their contents of which, we feel, students should not be deprived; these courses are dynamic components of our graduation requirements. Violence in the name of religion is gaining prominence around the world, including here in the US. Explaining the nuances and the intricacies of these phenomena is crucial to what do in the department, both for our students' consumption and for the general public. We need to hire experts in that area to satisfy that need in our society.

The above is underscored by examples such as this email from LA Times reporter to one of our colleagues (Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim) in the past few days, who forwarded it to the other colleagues.

*"My name is ..... I am a reporter with LA Times OC. I am writing an article about a cult that arose in Huntington Beach in the 1960s called the Children of God. I'm looking to get a quote or two from an academic regarding this group or cults in general. Is there anyone within the department who would be able to speak about the group or cults as a whole?"*

Dr. Jeanette Solano ended up responding and attending to need of that reporter.

The department is also committed to hiring and retaining experts in all the great religious traditions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. As intimated above, we also teach a number of other religions, including Sikhism, Jainism, and a number of New Religious Movements. For now, we have full-time faculty members who specialize in each of the religions mentioned, except in Judaism. With the retirement of Ben Hubbard during the last PPR (summer 2010), we now have a gap in Jewish Studies. Though our courses in Judaism continue to be taught by Professor Emeritus Hubbard and other part-time faculty, in order to provide a full range of courses by our full-time faculty, a new hire in Jewish Studies is warranted. The career objectives of students, as well as local and global developments, call for a Jewish Studies professor who is able to situate the history of the local Jewish community, as well as the meaning of global conflicts. The expertise of our full-time faculty should express our department's—and the community's—expectation that we are committed to Jewish Studies.

*C. Describe the role of full-time or part-time faculty and student assistants in the program/department's curriculum and academic offerings. Indicate the number and percentage of courses taught by part-time faculty and student teaching assistants. Identify any parts of the curriculum that are the responsibility of part-time faculty or teaching assistants.*

The full-time faculty members teach courses in both our lower division and upper division course offerings. We are proud that our full-time faculty members teach all students interested in the study religions, including majors, minors, and general interest students.

The part-time faculty members also teach lower division and upper division courses, per individual qualifications. Even though we hired ABD or MA holders in the past, all but one of current adjunct instructors hold a Ph.D. in Religious Studies or related field.

The table provides example statistics from last four semesters of the PPR period.

Semester	PT faculty		FT faculty		Total of Courses FT & PT	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Fall 2016	12	52.17	11	47.82	23	100
Spring 2017	12	60	8	40	20	100
Fall 2017	15	71.42	6	28.57	21	100
Spring 2018	14	63.63	8	36.36	22	100

It is clear that majority of our classes were taught by part time faculty who represent between 52% and 71%. This high percentage is explained by a combination of factors such as FERP - that reduced the teaching load of two faculty to half – and transfer of teaching assignment to University Honors of Dr. Jeanette Solano (Fall 2017- Spring 2018). She came back full time to the department and is now teaching full load for us since Fall 2018.

We have not employed any student Teaching Associates, given that we do not have a graduate program at CSU Fullerton in Religious Studies. It is possible to use a “related discipline” such as history, but we have qualified full-time and part-time faculty to teach our courses. However, since the last PPR, we have been employing Instructional Student Assistants to help input grades or actually grade simple T/F, multiple choice or short answers, in some of our online RLST 110 and 352 classes. This is because some of the online classes require extensive weekly assignments where the instructors need an assistant regularly. Such assistance is provided to the full-time faculty by request, subject to budget.

*D. Include information on instructor participation in Special Sessions self-support programs offered by the department/program.*

Not applicable.

## V. Student Support and Advising

*A. Briefly describe how the department advises its majors and minors.*

Given our limited number of majors and minors, we are able to provide personalized advisement for all of our students. The department offers a four-fold approach to advisement.

First, all department advisement forms (listing requirements) are available for “self-service” inside the department main office (UH 313), on our department website (PDF) and outside our department office (on the board). Students also have access to their TDA. Second, two-three faculty members are available via email for advisement (with email addresses posted on our website and forms). Third, the same faculty members are available for in-person advisement. Fourth, advisement announcements and assistance is provided during the semester in RLST 300 and 485T.

In terms of graduating advice, one faculty member (Dr. Brad Starr) is designated for grad checks, who routinely does the grad check before he updates students, and is available to guide students through the process. Dr. Zakyi Ibrahim is the coordinator for students success, who coordinates with the Dean’s Office student’s success activities in general.

*B. Describe opportunities for students to participate in departmental honors programs, undergraduate research, collaborative research with faculty, service learning, internships, etc. How are these opportunities supported? List the faculty and students participating in each type of activity and indicate plans for the future.*

- The department offers a banquet each year in May for the graduating majors, award recipients, and their friends and family; all full-time faculty members join in the event. In the past, we offered a complimentary dinner to students receiving an award and their guest through a yearly grant from the Dean’s office. However, in the past few years, we have allocated department funds to offer a complimentary dinner to each of the graduates in attendance.

At the banquet, the department presents the following awards of \$300 each: 1) the Don Gard Award, open to non-graduating majors, for scholastic achievement and academic potential; 2) the James Parkes- Morton Fierman Award, open to all religious studies majors, for service to the university, department, and community; 3) the Robert and Althea McLaren Outstanding Essay Award, open to religious studies majors and minors, for an outstanding essay in Comparative Religion, judged by the full-time faculty on the quality of the essay, including its depth of analysis, coherence of style, and effective use of religious studies methodologies; 4) Outstanding Senior Award, open to graduating majors, for scholastic achievement, academic potential, and service to the department and university. In recent years, half of each award is supported by the CSUF Titan Bookshop, and half, from the scholarship funds.

- Since the last PPR, the department has become a member of Theta Alpha Kappa, the National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology. We allocate funds from the Miscellaneous Course Fund (MCF) to pay for the yearly dues and induction of our students.

- In the past four years, a handful of students assisted Dr. Solano in organizing end of semester gathering in her RLST 300 and 485T classes. They also staged high several impact activity of bring to campus some well-known personalities such as Father Greg Boyle and the Home Boys, which was attended by more than 300 participants from the university community as well as people all over southern California. The latter was sponsored by the department MCF.
- For several years since the last PPR, the Religious Studies Students Association (formally, Comparative Religion Students Association) was very active on campus under the supervision of Dr. Jeanette Solano. In addition, in 2014, the association published an academic journal, The Canopy, under the guidance of Dr. Brad Starr. In fact he did more than guide, he helped edit the journal. In the past year the association went into hiatus due to the dwindling numbers of our student and their lack of interest and activity. We hope to rekindle student's interest, especially, upon hiring a new faculty member (Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar) who plans to revive and encourage students to join and become active. Funding for the association's activities were and would be drawn from the department's resources.

## VI. Resources and Facilities

### A. *Itemize the state support and non-state resources received by the department during the last five years. (See Appendix V)*

The department has received a reasonable allocation of the state supported resources (faculty funding and OE&E) over the past five years. Of course, this allocation has fluctuated with the funding allocated by the state to the CSU. Given the data presented above and in the below appendices, if the department were provided a larger share of faculty funding, it would be able to meet a higher FTES target and manage its resources wisely.

The non-state resources can be divided into funding from University Extended Education (UEE) and fund-raising. Funding from UEE is provided as an augmentation to OE&E and comes from RLST offerings in the Summer Session. In recent years, RLST has been consistently offering RLST 110 WEB (but sometimes, a second upper level course RLST 352) during the summer, and has received UEE funds from Summer Session courses. The department has not attempted to offer Intersession courses in recent years. This additional OE&E money from UEE has been an important funding source for the department.

The department must strive to maintain a balance between having enough students for UEE courses to be viable, on the one hand, and on the other hand, not siphoning too many students into Summer Session from our Spring and Fall courses needed to reach our FTES targets.

The department's fund raising activities have been limited in the last seven years, yet our Foundation accounts (fund raising accounts) have seen modest growth. In the last four months, the department has made three significant changes to its Foundation accounts.

First, the purpose of the Islamic Studies Distribution account was out-of-date, as it was solely for the intent of funding a "second course in Islam." Given that the funds from this account had never been touched and continue to receive the interest from the Islamic Studies Endowment account, and given the addition of a full-time Islamic Studies scholar to our department in Fall 2007, the purpose of the distribution account was re-written to more broadly address the teaching and scholarship of Islamic Studies in our department.

Second, in December 2010 a new Jewish Studies Fund was established with an initial gift of \$5,000 and additional donations totaling over \$1,000. Third, a generous donor has consistently made a monthly contribution to the Donald Gard Student Achievement Award account. With a current balance of over \$2,500, this account is well funded. The McLaren Award also has its own account, but the two remaining annual awards have no specific funding. Thus, in the last few years, we created a General Award Fund to address the two under-funded awards. Graciously, the monthly donor to the Gard account has redirected funds to the new General account, for which the department is most grateful.

The department is making plans to utilize funds from the Islamic Studies Distribution fund to support professional activities of the Islamic Studies faculty and instructors, and quite possibly return part of the funds back to the Endowment account. There are additional plans to increase fund raising activities for our Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies accounts (See I.C., above and Appendix IV, below) as well as our General Fund and Award accounts.

In 2018, the Jain Center of Southern California (JCSC) and the Jain Temple of Los Angeles (JTLA) committed to contribute \$150,000 to the Cal State Fullerton Philanthropic Foundation for the benefit of California State University, Fullerton to support the Bhagwan Shantinath Program in Jain Studies program in the Department of Religious Studies. 2018 commitment has already been met as seen below. The Donors agreed to fulfill the entire gift by the following schedule:

- \* \$30,000 on or before August 30, 2018
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2019
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2020
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2021
- \* \$30,000 on or before September 30, 2022

This amount would support an adjunct instructor in Jain Studies who would teach one course and organize a symposium each academic year. It would also provide scholarships to

students interested in Jain Studies courses and study abroad programs related to Jain Studies. If adjudged a success at the end of the five years, a permanent chair position may be created in Jain Studies in the department. We consider this donation and its impact to be a well-deserved service for CSUF, H&SS College and Religious Studies, for which the university should appreciate the department and its role in the community, even though it remains one of the smaller departments on campus.

*B. Identify any special facilities/equipment used by the department such as laboratories, computers, large classrooms, or performance spaces. Identify changes over last five years and prioritize needs for the future.*

The department continues to receive its fair share of large classroom allocations from the Dean's Office. More importantly, our regular classroom allocation is now for two rooms that each holds 39 students. This is beneficial in our attempt to grow enrollments. One room is available for our scheduling five days a week. The second room is only available to us on Tuesdays and Thursdays. In the recent past years, classroom allocation has not been our problem since, as stated above, we now offer more online classes than in-class ones.

*C. Describe the current library resources for the department, the priorities for acquisitions over the next five years and any specialized needs such as collections, databases etc.*

An inventory of the current library resources was conducted in conjunction with the approval of the new minor in Islamic Studies. The department believes that the library has been successful in acquiring materials that serve our students. However, we plan to do another inventory in relations to South and South Asian Religions. We hope to assign this task to Dr. Mugdha Yeolekar. Considering that she is new and an expert in that area, she might be well placed to see exactly what are the appropriate needs of the department in this area. Moreover, our program is beginning to increase our focus on Jainism, and we to ensure that the library has adequate materials on that. Significantly, the library liaison for our department (Dr. Mark Bilby) is also an active adjunct faculty member (teaching this semester), who regularly (every semester) sends us books to identify for acquisition consideration by the library.

The premiere databases for religious studies remain those produced by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA). Fortunately, these databases are available to CSU Fullerton faculty and students through the Pollack Library Proxy Services. Still, databases to which CSU Fullerton subscribes, such as JSTOR and Academic Search Premiere, have expanded their inclusion of religious studies journals. Additional key references sources, such as the Encyclopedia of Religion, second edition, and an array of Oxford publications on religion are also electronically accessible through the CSU Fullerton Pollak library, via Gale Virtual Reference Library and Oxford Reference Online Premium, respectively.



## VII. Long-term Plans

- A. Summarize the unit's long-term plan, including refining the definitions of the goals and strategies in terms of indicators of quality and measures of productivity. (See Appendix V)*

The department's long term plans (from I. C. above) focus on two main areas: achieving its mission and goals; and enhancing its pedagogy, which are summarized in Appendix V. The table in this appendix describes the indicators of quality and measures of productivity for each of the department's long-term goals. In addition, this appendix aligns the department's goals and effectiveness indicators with a long-term budget plan. The largest funding request will be to raise the FTEF allocation incrementally from 5.2 to 7.5.

- B. Explain how long-term plan implements the University's mission, goals and strategies and the unit's goals.*

The department's priorities for the future seek to implement the University's mission, goals and strategies. The following is a list of example explanations of this alignment to all four university goals.

Increasing the size of our faculty would "provide a transformative experience" (CSUF Goal I) by enriching the number, variety and frequency of course offerings. It would also directly support the university Goal III to "recruit and retain high-quality and diverse faculty and staff."

Increasing the number of majors would promote Goal II, to "strengthen opportunities for student." We could, with more majors, increase the frequency and variety of our course offerings, and create a larger and more vibrant student community. It also allows for the achievement of Goal I, that would "provide a transformative and educational experience."

Increasing the number of our courses in the GE menu would help us grow to the desired faculty positions because the increased student demand would justify expansion and recruitment (Goal III). This, in turn, would enable us to offer an even more high quality program (Goal II), and facilitate more student-faculty collaboration (Goal I. i).

Establishing stronger ties with our alumni/ae via a Religious Studies Alumni Association would help expand connections and partnerships with our region and allow us to "expand and strengthen our financial and physical capacity" (Goal IV).

***C & D, are incorporated into A and placed in Appendix V below.***

## CONCLUSION

We, at the Religious Studies Department, are very glad to be undergoing PPR at this juncture, where we are going through what may be considered as a difficult transition phase. Although it is clear that our department is successful in achieving its curricula goals and graduating students, the number of students being admitted keeps decreasing drastically in the last few years. We think the campus-wide impaction policy of the university is responsible for our dwindling numbers of freshmen. We are confident that selected impaction would have attracted many candidates to our department, at a time when academic study of religion as part of the humanities is generally struggling, and competition for high-achieving candidates from well-funded, endowment-laden universities is becoming all the more tough.

Even though policies such as EO1100r have proven to be devastating for our semester enrollments, our observation is that the impact could be absorbed by prudent scheduling on our part, such as offering more online classes. It could also be managed with a positive support from the College of Humanities or some of the departments in terms of adopting some activities that would encourage their students to spend some of their elective “capital” on enrolling in courses from the smaller departments like ours.

From the report above, it is clear that we are doing extremely well as an important department on campus with regards to meeting our goals and targets, serving the larger community, and attracting generous donors more than many departments. We think that the university should acknowledge the reality that we serve an important role in the community on behalf of the university, and grant us all the necessary support to grow our size, even if that means affording us some exceptions to general policies.

## APPENDIX I.

### UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

TABLE 1. Undergraduate Program Applications, Admissions, and Enrollments

*TABLE 1-A. First-time Freshmen: Program Applications, Admissions, and Enrollments*

<u>AY</u>	<u>applied</u>	<u>admitted</u>	<u>enrolled</u>
2013-2014	21	10	1
2014-2015	18	9	2
2015-2016	20	8	NA
2016-2017	18	6	NA
2017-2018	16	3	1

*TABLE 1-B. Upper Division Transfers: Program Applications, Admissions, and Enrollments*

<u>AY</u>	<u>applied</u>	<u>admitted</u>	<u>enrolled</u>
2013-2014	13	5	5
2014-2015	9	2	1
2015-2016	20	12	6
2016-2017	21	12	7
2017-2018	10	5	3

## TABLE 2. Undergraduate Program Enrollment in FTES

*TABLE 2-A. Undergraduate Program Enrollment in FTES*

AY	LDFTES	LDFTESbyMajorsOnly	UDFTES	UDFTESbyMajorsOnly
2013-2014	68.1	2.3	68.8	7.7
2014-2015	52.5	1.2	68.3	6.5
2015-2016	53.1	1.4	64.9	6.8
2016-2017	57.6	0.9	83.4	8.3
2017-2018	51.2	0.8	75.2	5.4

*TABLE 2-B. Undergraduate Program Enrollment (Headcount)*

AY	LowerDivision	UpperDivision	Total	FTESperHC
2013-2014	2.5	14.5	17.0	0.8
2014-2015	4.0	12.5	16.5	0.9
2015-2016	2.0	12.5	14.5	0.8
2016-2017	1.0	16.5	17.5	0.7
2017-2018	2.0	15.5	17.5	0.8

TABLE 3. Graduation Rates for Majors

*TABLE 3-A. First-time Freshman Graduation Rates for Majors*

EnteredIn	headcount	InMaj4yr	AllMaj4yr	InMaj5yr	AllMaj5yr	InMaj6yr	AllMaj6yr
2010	2	0	0	0	50	0	50
2012	1	100	100	100	100	100	100
2013	1	0	0	0	0		
2014	2	0	50				

*TABLE 3-B. Transfer Student Graduation Rates for Majors*

EnteredIn	headcount	InMaj2yr	AllMaj2yr	InMaj3yr	AllMaj3yr	InMaj4yr	AllMaj4yr
2012	2	0	0	50	50	50	50
2013	5	80	80	80	80	80	80
2014	1	100	100	100	100	100	100
2015	2	50	50	100	100		
2016	4	50	50				

TABLE 4. DEGREES AWARDED

CY	DegreesAwarded (source: My Queries)
2013-2014	13
2014-2015	17
2015-2016	18
2016-2017	16
2017-2018	13
Total	77

APPENDIX II. GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

*Not Applicable.*

## APPENDIX III. FACULTY

TABLE 9. Full-Time Instructional Faculty

*TABLE 9. FACULTY COMPOSITION*

AY	Tenured	TenureTrack	Sabbatical	FERP	Lecturer	FTEF	AYFTES
2013-2014	5	0	0	0	0	5.0	137.1
2014-2015	3	0	1	0	0	4.0	120.4
2015-2016	4	0	0	0	0	4.0	118.0
2016-2017	3	0	0	1	0	3.5	141.2
2017-2018	2	0	0	2	0	3.0	126.4

## APPENDIX IV. RESOURCES

*Provide a table showing for the past five years all department resources and the extent to which each is from the state-supported budget or from other sources, such as self-support programs, research, contracts and/or grants, development, fund-raising, or any other sources or activities.*

<b>Religious Studies Department Funding Sources FY 2013-2018</b>				
<b>Year</b>	<b>OE&amp;E</b>	<b>UEE*</b>	<b>FTF Funding</b>	<b>PTF Funding</b>
2013-14	14,059	N/A	423,462	69,000
2014-15	14,059	N/A	372,715	95,829
2015-16	13,200	N/A	379,985	53,055
2016-17	12,664	N/A	344,256	96,466
2017-18	7,209	7,591	291,694	132,024

\*Due to change in budget methodology, UEE revenue is not separately allocated by department.

<b>Foundation Funds (Fund-Raising)</b>								
<b>Year Current: Jan. 2019</b>	<b>General Department Fund 31000</b>	<b>McLar en Essay Award 31040</b>	<b>Gard Student Achievem ent Award 31041</b>	<b>General Award Fund 31043</b>	<b>Jewish Studies Fund 31060</b>	<b>Islamic Studies Distributio n 31042</b>	<b>Islamic Studies Endowment 31012</b>	<b>Bhagwan Shantinath Jain Fund 31080</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,977.06</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$1,386.85</b>	<b>\$4,856.09</b>	<b>\$7,822.41</b>	<b>\$4,002.13</b>	<b>\$84,973.54</b>	<b>\$30,000.00</b>
<b>\$135,018.08</b>								



## APPENDIX V. LONG-TERM PLANNING

The following Priorities for the Future are listed in I.C. above.

DEPARTMENT'S PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE	EFFECTIVENESS INDICATORS/ EVIDENCE Indicators of Quality/ Measures of Productivity	BUDGET PLAN
<b>Departmental Mission &amp; Goals</b>		
Revisit the department mission and goals to align them closely with those of CSUF	Successfully creating and aligning them more closely and directly with that of CSUF than the current ones.	Funds from OE&E and possibly, faculty time commitment in a retreat. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
Effort to increase the number of majors, minors and students taking our GE courses	Maintain a cohort of at least 50 majors through admissions, recruitment and retention. Create additional resources for students that explain possible career paths with a degree in Religious Studies. Add additional sections of existing GE courses and successfully fill the seats.	Funds from OE&E and possibly Foundation Accounts; possible release time.
Two new Tenure Track faculty hires in the next two to three years	Approval for search and successful search resulting in a hire.	Substantial impact on budget. Additional FTEF allocation required from Dean's Office.
Elicit more donors for specific minors (Christian Studies, Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies Funds)	Action plan to raise funds, resulting in an increase in funds for all accounts.	Use funds from OE&E to raise funds for these Foundation Accounts.
Create a minor in Asian Religions	Final Approval on Curriculog	Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members; possible release time.
Intensify outreach to alumni	Greater contact with alumni, via newsletters and electronic media. Creation of a list of alumni graduate degrees and career choices. Overwhelming response from alumni to our invitations.	Funds from OE&E and possibly Foundation Accounts. Faculty time commitment – possible part of future assigned time.
Offer greater personalized advising and attention to majors and minors	Train most/all full-time faculty to give basic academic advisement. Assign specific students to each faculty member.	Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.

Monitor and promote high graduation rates	Monitor graduate rates of RLST majors to be at least as high as the university average. Address this goal via advisement.	Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
Collaborate with the office of Outreach, Recruitment and Orientation	Increase in majors, minors and semester enrollment.	Funds from OE&E, MCF and possibly Foundation Accounts. Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
Organize regular workshops with the Academic Advisement Center for undeclared students	Increase in majors, minors and semester enrollment.	Funds from OE&E, MCF and possibly Foundation Accounts. Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
Stage more high-impact activities for visibility on campus	Get students attention; increase in majors, minors and semester enrollment.	Funds from OE&E, MCF and possibly Foundation Accounts. Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
<b>Pedagogy</b>		
Ongoing Assessment and improvement of assessment instruments	Meeting our assessment goals and targets; getting approval and positive response from the university assessment team.	Faculty time commitment. Part of the regular duty of faculty members, or part of future assigned time.
Expand our online course offerings	Offering 80-100% of our classes. We currently offer 60-70% of our semester classes online. Measures of additional success will be the submission and approval of online course proposals on curriculog.	Faculty time commitment. Assigned time (Mugdha Yeolekar) for training and preparation of online course, for example in Spring 2019.
Explore the possibility of an online certificate	Successful development and approval of proposal on curriculog, and consultation with Extended Education.	Faculty time commitment. Probably part of the regular duty of faculty members.
Continue to create new, topic courses, e.g., additional courses in Islam, and a course on religion, sex, and love	Successful submission and approval of New Course Proposals on curriculog.	Faculty time commitment. Assigned time (e.g., Jeanette Solano) to create a New Course

# APPENDIX VI

## RUBRICS: DIRECT PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH SKILLS

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor	Failure
<b>Content</b>					
The writing contains all necessary information of the topic as related to the assignment.	Information is complete and clearly relates to the assignment.	Information is mostly complete and clearly relates to the assignment.	Information is somewhat complete and mostly relates to the assignment.	Information has little to do with the assignment or consists of some misstatements.	Information does not relate to the assignment and consists of many misstatements.
The writing contains an identifiable, central focus.	Central focus is clear and consistent throughout.	Central focus is apparent.	Focus is somewhat unclear or inconsistent.	The writing wanders in many directions.	No identifiable focus.
<b>Development and Organization</b>					
The writing fully develops each idea in a clear, logical sequence and, when appropriate, offers evidence supporting the thesis or central focus.	There is a logical progression of ideas that is unified and complete. Supporting evidence is presented as needed.	There is a logical progression of ideas that is relatively complete, although a few minor lapses may be present. Supporting evidence is presented.	Many minor lapses in the logical progression of ideas are evident. Limited supporting evidence is presented.	Major lapses in the logical progression of ideas are evident. Limited supporting evidence is presented.	Ideas are presented in a random fashion. No supporting evidence is presented.
The writing effectively uses transitions to connect sentences and paragraphs.	Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are flowing and varied.	Transitions between sentences and paragraphs are varied.	A few transitions between sentences and paragraphs are choppy or disconnected.	Many short, choppy, or disconnected sentences and paragraphs.	No clear use of transitions between sentences and paragraphs.
The writing demonstrates an ability to share ideas or information in the author's own words.	Ideas or information are expressed elegantly in the author's own words.	Ideas or information are expressed clearly in the author's own words.	For the most part, Ideas or information are expressed in the author's own words.	Minimal ability to express ideas or information in the author's own words.	No clear ability to express ideas or information in the author's own words.
<b>Format, Style, and Mechanics</b>					
The writing uses credible sources effectively and with proper citations.	Credible sources are properly cited and woven seamlessly into the writing.	Credible sources are properly cited and used in the writing.	Sources are mostly credible and properly cited.	Minimal use of credible sources or proper citations.	Most sources are not credible and/or most sources are not properly cited.
The writing contains few if any errors of spelling, syntax, word usage or punctuation.	No errors in spelling, syntax, word usage or punctuation.	A few minor errors in spelling, syntax, word usage or punctuation.	Many minor errors in spelling, syntax, word usage or punctuation.	Major errors in spelling, syntax, word usage or punctuation.	The number of errors makes the writing almost unreadable.
The writer strives to achieve an original voice where appropriate.	An original writing style that is a joy to read.	An informative and interesting writing style.	A readable presentation.	Writing is tedious to read.	Writing is extremely difficult to comprehend.

Approved by the Department of Comparative Religion 5/23/08  
 Revised 11/12/09; updated 12/14/10; updated 1/10/11

## APPENDIX VII. CURRICULUM MAP

12/3/10	SKILLS: Goal: Students possess the ability to perform research and interpret materials related to the study of religion.		SKILLS: Goal: Students can effectively communicate in written and spoken mediums.		KNOWLEDGE: Goal: Students can demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs, rituals, texts, and figures related to a variety of religious traditions.				
Course	Outcome 1 analyze written materials related to the study of religion	Outcome 2 acquired information literacy in the study of religion	Outcome 3 write well-organized critical and analytical research papers	Outcome 4 speak clearly and effectively using relevant & adequate supporting evidence	Outcome 5 describe the basic teachings & practices of major religious traditions and can compare & contrast the principal similarities and differences between them	Outcome 6 identify the history and development of specific religions and their contemporary relevance	Outcome 7 compare key theories and theorists in the study of religion	Outcome 8 interpret key thinkers and figures within religious traditions	
105	I	I	I	--/I	I	I	I	I	
110	I	I	I	--/I	I	I	I	I	
200	I	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
201	I/D	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
210	I/D	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
250	I/D	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
270T	I/D	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
280	I/D	I	I	--/I	--	D	I	D	
<b>300</b>	D/M	D/M	D/M	D/M	D	--	M	I	
306	D	D	D	--/I	D	--	I	D	
330T	M	D	D/M	--/I	--	D/M	D	D	
331T	M	D	D/M	--/I	--	D/M	D	D	
335	D/M	D	D	--/I	D	--	I	D	
341 & 42	D	D	D	--/I	--	D/M	I	D/M	
351 & 52	D	D	D	--/D	--	D/M	I	D/M	
361 & 62	D	D	D	--/I	--	D/M	I	D/M	
371 & 72	D	D	D	--/I	--	D/M	I	D/M	
350T	D	D	D	--/I	--	D/M	I	D/M	
358	D	D	D	--/I	D	--	I	D/M	
367	D	D	D	D/M	D	--	I	D	
370	D	D	D	--/I	D	--	I	D	
375	D	D	D	--/I	D	--	I	D	
380	D	D	D	--/I	D	--	D/M	D	
381	D	D	D	--/I	I	D	D	D	
397	D	D	D	--/I	I	D	D	D	
400	D	D	D	I	D	--	I	D	
401T	M	D	D/M	--/I	--	D/M	D	D	
411	M/C	D	M/C	M	D	--	D	--	
485T	M/C	M	M/C	M/C	M/C-VT	M/C-VT	M	M-VT	

**Guide:** **I** = Introduced, **D** = Developed & Practiced with Feedback, **M** = Demonstrated at the Mastery Level Appropriate for Graduation, **R** = Review of basics added to junior-level courses to ensure that all students have the background for upper-division work, **C** = Consolidation: students given opportunities to consolidate their learning of outcomes that have been previously mastered in the curriculum. VT= variable topic – thus, the level depends upon the specific topic.

## APPENDIX VIII. DIRECT ASSESSMENT QUIZ

Direct Assessment of Learning Goal 1: Students possess the ability to perform research and interpret materials related to the study of religion. Outcome 1: Students can analyze written materials related to the study of religion.

### DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES: ASSESSMENT QUIZ

INSTRUCTIONS: (1) PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING PASSAGES AND SELECT THE BEST ANSWER TO THE QUESTION FOLLOWING EACH PASSAGE. PLACE YOUR ANSWER ON THE PROVIDED SCANTRON. (2) DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE SCANTRON.

1. Buddhism developed a broad vision for an integrated spiritual community and a clear sense of proper social practice. The texts speak of the devout layman's and monk's duty to help others grow in faith, morality, knowledge, and charity. This "imagined community" enabling spiritual pursuits has depended on a constant altruistic effort by householders: By giving up a portion of their household's material wealth to sustain Buddhist monastics and their institutions, they support exemplary individuals in their midst seeking refuge to realize *nirvana*. Powered by altruistic giving, the agency of merit can benefit all individuals in society by positively affecting their path through *samsara*.

[Lewis, Todd. (2005). Altruism in Classical Buddhism. In Jacob Neusner & Bruce Chilton (Eds.), *Altruism in World Religions* (pp. 100-101). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.]

Which of the following conclusions is implied in this passage?

- A. Householders can immediately escape *samsara* and realize *nirvana* by sacrificing their wealth.
- B. Householders can surpass monastics on the road to nirvana by materially supporting those who are farther along the path than they are.
- C. Meritorious interaction between householders and monks forms an integrated system of spiritual benefits.
- D. Buddhist monks benefit from the generosity of common people, who imagine a community of meritorious altruism and spiritual pursuits.

2. When the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls of Qumran were first publicized, beginning in the 1950s, a great deal of attention was given to the seeming preponderance of dualistic ideas and imagery contained in them. And, of course, the usual suspects from Zoroaster's neighborhood were implicated: Good (Ahura Mazda) and Evil (Angra Mainyu/Ahriman)... But in the decades that followed, a different perspective began to emerge, culminating in the 1990s, when all of the unearthed materials were published. It now appears that the incidence of dualistic texts is comparatively minor. Furthermore, much of this material was not original to the Qumran material, but simply formed part of their library, without being influential in the writings actually produced by the community. From this perspective, we can take the library as representative, at least to a certain extent, of reading interests in Jerusalem around the beginning of the Christian era.

[Kelly, Henry Angsgar. (2006). *Satan: A Biography* (pp. 41-42). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.]

Which of the following conclusions is implied in this passage?

- A. The Essenes understood the cosmos as a battleground between the forces of Good and Evil.
- B. The fact that dualistic texts were found in the library of Qumran does not mean that those living in Qumran adhered to dualistic doctrines.
- C. The limited availability to scholars of texts from Qumran did not hamper their ability to gain a reasonably accurate view of the Community's perspective.
- D. Greater availability of texts indicates that the community at Qumran did not read the dualistic texts they had in their own library.

3. Many Muslims view contemporary Euro-American feminist approaches that reinforce reductionist views of Islam as a peculiarly sexist religion as part of the broader Western enterprise to discredit and misrepresent Islam. Ironically, many of these same Muslims also misrepresent feminism by stereotyping it with all that is considered negative and problematic in Western culture.... Some Muslim scholars have reacted with blind defensiveness to this perceived Western feminist attack on Islam. In legitimately attempting to repudiate the unpalatable and inaccurate stereotypes of certain orientalist discourses, these Muslim scholars have unwittingly become equally reductionist by romanticizing the Muslim legacy as one that has unequivocally empowered Muslim women. This stance makes it increasingly difficult to approach the questions of gender relation in an honest manner, seeking to identify and redress realities of injustice.

[Shaikh, Sa'Diyyah. (2003). Transforming Feminisms. In Omid Safi (Ed.) *Progressive Muslims: On Justice, Gender, and Pluralism* (pp. 149-150). Oxford: Oneworld Publications.]

Which of the following conclusions is implied in this passage?

- A. Reductionist perspectives on women and Islam clarify the realities and make it easier to identify and challenge injustices.
- B. Writers and scholars on both sides of this issue simplify complex realities and make it harder to attain clarity and an effective course of action.
- C. Orientalist perceptions of Islam and women have been repudiated, but should have been taken seriously in order to perceive the situation more clearly.
- D. It is important for Euro-American feminists to understand that Islam has nearly always served to empower women.

4. Since Christians insisted on the historical specificity of a person [Jesus] born during the reign of Caesar Augustus, they had to admit that the founder of the religion lived only recently. Other religions that entered the empire claimed connection with older cultures. They were new only in the sense that they were introduced recently, not in the sense that they were new chronologically. Moreover, they featured deities who were not limited to a time or place. Isis and Mithras, for example, transcended the limitations of time and geography.... Christianity's origination in a set place at a particular time was taken by pagans as a clear indication that its claims to truth were shaky at best. Initially, Christians responded that they actually held to the oldest form of divine revelation. That response relied heavily on their claim to be the true continuation of God's chosen people, Israel.... They also read Jesus' teachings into Greco-Roman literature and philosophy. Socrates and Plato, the dramatists and poets, were, said some Christians, proto-believers in Jesus.

[Wagner, Walter H. (1994). *After the Apostles* (p. 135). Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress.]

Which of the following conclusions is implied in this passage?

- A. Romans and other pagans respected religions that were old, and so Christians needed to minimize the local and recent elements of their origins.
- B. Christianity was not respected by pagans because it had emerged from a region that Rome considered part of its conquered territory.

- C. Christians had to assert both the recent specificity of their religious origins, and at the same time claim they were not a new religion.
- D. Christians argued that they were a new religion because they were connected to Judaism and Greco-Roman philosophy.

5. For Krishna, clearing up dharma-confusions is only a starting point, however. He quickly raises another topic that has to do with “cutting away the bondage of the act.” Although Arjuna has not explicitly stated this issue as a concern, Krishna intuitively senses his unstated objection. In effect, Arjuna proposes a renunciation of action, while Krishna is urging him to act as a warrior. Won’t this act inevitably lead to karmic consequences? Won’t it necessarily create further bondage for Arjuna? Krishna recognizes that to make his case for fighting persuasive, he must acknowledge and counteract the renunciatory argument. He must show Arjuna a way to act in the world that will not engender further bondage. In effect, Krishna redefines renunciation. Renunciation is not a matter of abandoning action... but of abandoning attachment to the fruit of action... Truly disinterested action allows one to act in the world and not bind oneself further to the world.

[Davis, Richard H. (2005). Altruism in Classical Hinduism. In Jacob Neusner & Bruce Chilton (Eds.). *Altruism in World Religions* (170-71). Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.]

According to the writer of the above passage:

- A. Krishna is trying to convince Arjuna that he must not renounce his duty as a warrior, but rather his attachment to the outcome of his action.
- B. Krishna’s teaching is that Arjuna must renounce his intention to become a warrior.
- C. Krishna’s teaching is that renunciation of the world in itself generates bad karma. In effect, one must renounce renunciation of the world.
- D. Krishna, in effect, is advising Arjuna to abandon worldly action and pursue *moksha*.

6. The term “religion” must be understood as designating an academically constructed rubric that identifies the arena for common discourse inclusive of all religions as historically and culturally manifest. “Religion” cannot be considered as synonymous with Christianity or with the teaching of religion to members of specific traditions. “Religion” must not be thought of as the essence of the subject studied. “Religion” is not “the sacred,” “ultimate concern,” or belief in god (or some disguising euphemism). There is nothing religious about “religion.” Religion is not *sui generis*. There are no uniquely religious data.

[Gill, Sam. (1994) The Academic Study of Religion. *The Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 62:4, 965.]

According to the author of this passage:

- A. “Religion” is best understood from within a religious tradition.
- B. “Religion” is one of many human expressions that can be studied academically.
- C. “Religion” is a unique subject that must be expressed in uniquely “religious” ways.
- D. It is impossible to define “religion.”

7. Which of the following statements best describes you?

- A. I am currently pursuing a major in Comparative Religion.
- B. I am currently pursuing a minor in Comparative Religion.
- C. I am currently pursuing neither a major nor a minor in Comparative Religion.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING TIME TO ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS.



## APPENDIX IX. DIRECT ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH SKILLS

Direct Assessment of Learning Goal 1: Students possess the ability to perform research and interpret materials related to the study of religion. Outcome 2: Students have acquired information literacy in the study of religion.

And Learning Goal 2: Students can effectively communicate in written and spoken mediums. Outcome 3: Students are able to write well-organized critical and analytical research papers related to the study of religion.

The next three pages consist of the scoring rubric and number of students receiving each comment.

# APPENDIX X

## AAR Survey: CSUF

### Education - Religious Studies

		Your Institution N = 38	Other Institutions N = 919
Are you currently enrolled in a graduate program in theology, religion, or religious studies?	Yes	7.9%	7.9%
	No	92.1%	92.1%
What degree(s) are you pursuing? (Check all that apply.)			
	M.Div.	0.0%	28.8%
	M.T.S.	0.0%	4.1%
	M.A.	33.3%	20.5%
	Ph.D.	66.7%	34.2%
	Th.D.	0.0%	1.4%
	Other	0.0%	15.1%

*Note.* Percentages may equal more than 100.0% because of multiple selections.

*All responses are exported directly into a Word document without any changes to wording, punctuation, or grammar.*

**Other Degree:** American Religion

### At what institution are you pursuing your degree(s)?

Boston College  
Claremont Grad. Univ.  
CSU Long Beach

		Your Institution N = 37	Other Institutions N = 908
Have you in the past pursued a graduate program in theology, religion, or religious studies?	Yes	35.1%	36.0%
	No	64.9%	64.0%
What degree(s) did you earn? (Check all that apply.)			
	M.Div.	23.1%	44%
	M.T.S.	7.7%	5.7%
	M.A.	69.2%	34.6%
	Ph.D.	0%	11.4%
	Th.D.	0%	0.6%
	Did not finish program.	0%	10.2%
	Other	7.7%	6.6%

*Note.* Percentages may equal more than 100.0% because of multiple selections.

*All responses are exported directly into a Word document without any changes to wording, punctuation, or grammar.*

**Other Degree:** Rel.Stud., STM

**At what institution did you pursue your degree(s)?**

- Brandeis Univeristy
- Cal State Long Beach
- Claremont Graduate University
- CST
- CSU Long Beach
- CSULB
- Fuller Seminary (2 responses)
- JSTBerkley
- Loyola Marymount University
- Pacific School Religion
- Princeton Seminary
- University of Judaism

**Competency Areas**

Survey Questions: *Before you enrolled in your undergraduate program in religious studies, how would you rate your competency level in the following areas? Immediately after completing your undergraduate program in religious studies, how would you rate your competency level in the following areas? In the time since completing your undergraduate program in religious studies, has your competency level in each of the following areas changed? In the following areas?*

Note. E = "Entering" and X= "Exiting" (Mean range: 1= very weak competency to 6=very strong competency)

Survey Items	
Understanding religion from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g., historical, sociological)	E X
Understanding of two or more religious traditions	E X
Understanding of religious phenomena within U.S. culture	E X
Understanding the diversity of religious beliefs in U.S. culture	E X
Understanding of religious beliefs within a global context	E X
Reflecting critically on one's self (e.g., one's own beliefs, practices, values)	E X
Working effectively with individuals who are culturally different than you	E X

Examining issues about social and ethical responsibility	E
	X
Using your knowledge of religion to understand current events	E
	X
Using your knowledge of religion to understand historical events	E
	X
Writing clearly and effectively	E
	X
Speaking clearly and effectively	E
	X

\*p<.000

**Your Institution  
Frequencies**

***Competency level before enrolling in a religious studies program and competency level after completing the degree.***

**Note. E = "Entering" and X= "Exiting"**

		Very weak competency	2	3	4	5	Very strong Competency	N
Understanding religion from a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches (e.g., historical, sociological)	E	26.3%	31.6%	23.7%	13.2%	5.3%	0%	38
	X	0%	2.6%	0%	13.2%	50%	34.2%	38
Understanding of two or more religious traditions	E	15.8%	18.4%	34.2%	21.1%	7.9%	2.6%	38
	X	0%	0%	2.6%	2.6%	36.8%	57.9%	38
Understanding of religious phenomena within U.S. Culture	E	13.2%	36.8%	28.9%	10.5%	7.9%	2.6%	38
	X	2.7%	0%	0%	10.8%	40.5%	45.9%	37
Understanding the diversity of religious beliefs in U.S. culture	E	10.5%	26.3%	28.9%	13.2%	15.8%	5.3%	38
	X	0%	0%	0%	5.3%	50%	44.7%	38
Understanding of religious beliefs within a global context	E	15.8%	28.9%	31.6%	13.2%	7.9%	2.6%	38
	X	2.6%	0%	0%	5.3%	47.4%	44.7%	38
Reflecting critically on one's self (e.g., one's own beliefs, practices, values)	E	5.3%	13.2%	26.3%	18.4%	23.7%	13.2%	38
	X	0%	2.7%	0%	5.4%	29.7%	62.2%	37
Working effectively with individuals who are culturally different than you	E	10.5%	13.2%	21.1%	15.8%	23.7%	15.8%	38
	X	0%	2.6%	2.6%	5.3%	39.5%	50%	38
Examining issues about social and ethical responsibility	E	8.1%	13.5%	32.4%	18.9%	10.8%	16.2%	37
	X	0%	0%	0%	0%	55.3%	44.7%	38
Using your knowledge of religion to understand current events	E	10.5%	23.7%	31.6%	13.2%	10.5%	10.5%	38
	X	0%	0%	0%	2.6%	44.7%	52.6%	38
Using your knowledge of religion to understand historical events	E	7.9%	18.4%	44.7%	13.2%	2.6%	13.2%	38
	X	0%	0%	2.7%	0%	43.2%	54.1%	37
Writing clearly and effectively	E	7.9%	7.9%	18.4%	28.9%	21.1%	15.8%	38

	X	0%	0%	0%	21.1%	31.6%	47.4%	38
Speaking clearly and effectively	E	2.6%	18.4%	18.4%	21.1%	23.7%	15.8%	38
	X	0%	0%	2.6%	13.2%	39.5%	44.7%	38

**Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following:**

	Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5	Strongly agree	N
My education in religious studies has made a positive contribution to the quality of my life.	0%	0%	0%	5.3%	28.9%	65.8%	38
I have applied skills I learned in religious studies to help resolve problems I've faced in my personal life.	0%	2.6%	13.2%	18.4%	23.7%	42.1%	38
Overall, I was satisfied with my degree program in religious studies.	0%	0%	0%	15.8%	23.7%	60.5%	38
If I had it to do over again, I would choose religious studies as my undergraduate major.	2.6%	5.3%	5.3%	15.8%	15.8%	55.3%	38

#### Additional Majors

	Your Institution		Other Institutions	
	N = 37		N = 914	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Did you have an additional major (double major) as an undergraduate?	32.4%	67.6%	51.3%	48.7%

#### What was your additional major?

**All responses are exported directly into a Word document without any changes to wording, punctuation, or grammar.**

American Studies  
 Anthropology,  
 History  
 Biological Science  
 Business  
 English  
 History  
 Liberal studies  
 Philosophy  
 Sociology  
 Sociology

## Satisfaction

Survey Question: *Please rate the extent to which you disagree or agree with the following:*

(Mean range: 1=strongly disagree to 6=strongly agree) (SD) = standard deviation

Survey Items	Your Institution		Other Institutions		Sig.	Effect size
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
My education in religious studies has made a positive contribution to the quality of my life.	5.61	0.59	5.40	0.90		
I have applied the skills I learned in religious studies to help resolve problems I've faced in my personal life.	4.89	1.18	4.83	1.23		
Overall, I was satisfied with my degree program in religious studies.	5.45	0.76	5.22	1.04		
If I had it to do over again, I would choose religious studies as my undergraduate major.	5.03	1.37	4.67	1.52		

Note. No significant differences found.

## Volunteer Work

	Your Institution N = 37		Other Institutions N = 912	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
During the last 12 months, have you participated in volunteer work or community service activities?	75.7%	24.3%	81.6%	18.4%

## Employment

Employment	Your Institution N = 38		Other Institutions N = 922	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Are you currently employed?	84.2%	7.9%	80.8%	10.0%
Not seeking employment	7.9%		9.2%	
Have you been employed at any time over the last 18 months?	33.3%	66.7%	38.2%	61.8%

**Area of Employment**

In what general area are you currently employed or were employed at any time over the last 18 months?

	<b>Your Institution</b>	<b>Other Institutions</b>
	<b>N = 32</b>	<b>N = 794</b>
Agriculture and Natural Resources	3.1%	0.8%
Arts	3.1%	3.1%
Business and Finance	15.6%	7.7%
College Faculty & Administration	12.5%	15.4%
Counseling & Mental Health	3.1%	3.9%
Education K-12	12.5%	8.9%
Government and Public Administration	3.1%	3.5%
Hospitality and Tourism	3.1%	2.6%
Information Systems & Technology	0%	4.7%
Journalism & Publication	0%	1.9%
Law	12.5%	6.3%
Library Work	3.1%	3.1%
Manufacturing & Construction	0%	0.8%
Marketing	0%	2.9%
Medicine and Nursing	6.3%	4.9%
Military	0%	0.3%
Non-Profit or Community Organization	6.3%	8.3%
Religious Organization	15.6%	20.3%
Transportation	0%	0.6%

Survey Question: Did you list the following skills you may have acquired during your undergraduate religious studies program on your résumé, discuss these skills during your job interview or use these skills in your current job?

Note. (%) = All other participating institutions' percentage.