Date: July 21, 2014

To: Dr. Dianne F. Harrison
President

From: Dr. Michael Neubauer
Vice Provost

Subject: Final Memorandum of Understanding -- Religious Studies

The final phase of the program review process for the Religious Studies Department occurred on April 24, 2014. At this time the commendations and recommendations from the external reviewers’ report were discussed. Present at the meeting were: Michael Neubauer, Vice Provost, Academic Affairs; Elizabeth Say, Dean, College of Humanities; Rick Talbott, Chair, Religious Studies; Eric Garcia, EPC Representative; Linda Lam-Easton, Faculty, Religious Studies; and Eli Bartle, Program Review Coordinator.

The program was congratulated on its strengths as identified by the commendations in the external reviewers’ report. A discussion of the reviewers’ commendations and recommendations followed.

The attached MOU is the final understanding between the department and the college.

Attachment: MOU

cc:
Elizabeth Say, Dean, College of Humanities
Rick Talbott, Chair, Religious Studies
Eric Garcia, EPC Representative
Linda Lam-Easton, Faculty
Bonnie Paller, Director of Academic Assessment and Program Review
Religious Studies
Program Review – 2013/2014

Memorandum of Understanding

The CSUN Department of Religious Studies, housed in the College of Humanities, offers a major in Religious Studies. The Department undertook a self-study (submitted Spring Semester, 2013), followed by an external review on October 28 and 29, 2013. The external reviewers were Dr. Bradley E. Starr, Department of Comparative Religion, CSU Fullerton and Dr. Sarah M. Pike, Department of Religious Studies, CSU Chico. The Department’s MOU meeting occurred on April 24, 2014. Follow-up will occur at one and three years. Their next program review cycle will culminate in a new self-study, external review, and MOU in AY 2018-2019.

The following commendations and recommendations are intended to help the Department focus its efforts over the next 5 years. They are arranged in topical order as follows: students, faculty, curriculum, assessment/strategic planning, other/misc.

Commendations: The Department is commended for:

Students:
1. Ongoing advisement, care, and career/graduate school help for majors.
2. Recruitment outreach for new majors, double majors, and minors.
3. The active student religion club and recent affiliation with Theta Alpha Kappa.

Faculty:
4. Faculty engagement in teaching and student success.
5. Collegiality and support among chair, tenured faculty members, new hires, and part-timers.
6. Involved and engaged part-time faculty.
7. Overall diversity of faculty in terms of gender and ethnic background as well as area of training.
8. Faculty hires in new and growing interdisciplinary fields.
9. Intellectual engagement and research orientation of the faculty.

Curriculum:
10. Overall diversity of its course offerings in General Education as well as in other university programs.


12. Its important role in the development of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Program.

Assessment:

13. Its well-organized assessment program and excellent faculty engagement in terms of responding to the assessment findings.

Other/Misc.:

14. Excellent office staff support.

15. Excellent leadership provided by the Chair both within the department and in the wider academic community.

Recommendations: The program should:

Students:

1. Continue to monitor the central advising arrangement.

2. Continue to seek new methods and approaches to recruit majors and minors, including cross listed course offerings.

3. Consider making the resource room and its reference materials available to religious studies majors.

Faculty:

4. Develop a department handbook for part-time faculty.

5. Work with the Dean's office to find lab space to support research and professional development.

6. Encourage and support more research and publication by tenured and tenure-track faculty.

7. Develop a plan for future hires.

Curriculum:

2
8. Address issues related to RS 255.

9. Work on improving the balance between GE and electives for majors/minors.

10. Update catalog course descriptions and offerings.

11. Work with ethnic studies departments to crosslist courses as appropriate and to develop new curriculum in consultation.

Assessment:

12. Continue to build on the strong assessment efforts of the department and use the data for future curriculum and hiring planning.

Other/Misc.

13. Continue to develop opportunities for intradepartmental sharing and feedback.