

Program Review & Planning (PRP)

PART 1: BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Review is a self-study of your discipline. It is about documenting the plans you have for improving student success in your program and sharing that information with the college community. Through the review of and reflection on key program elements, program review and planning identifies program strengths as well as strategies necessary to improve the academic discipline, program, or service to support student success. With that in mind, please answer the following questions:

Discipline Name:	Religious Studies
Department Name:	Behavioral Sciences
Division Name:	Social and Behavioral Sciences

Please list all participants in this Program Review:

Name	Position
Craig Forney	Assistant Professor of Religious Studies

Number of Full Time faculty	1	Number of Part Time Faculty	3
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Please list the Classified positions (and their FTE) that support this discipline:

Rebecca Clements, ADA (Shared with Philosophy and Anthropology)

What additional hourly staff support this discipline and/or department:

Discipline mission statement ([click here for information on how to create a mission statement](#)):

The mission of Religious Studies at Palomar College is to provide religion literacy to students and the larger community in preparation for quality engagement with an increasingly religious, interdependent, and global world. Religious studies offers the preparation of learning core knowledge and language of the world's diverse religious traditions, studied in historical and contemporary forms. The academic study of religion also instills the skills of cultivating mutual respect, empathetic learning, appreciation for diversity, integrative thinking, and holistic understanding to prepare students for engagement as global citizens. Ultimately, the Religious Studies discipline at Palomar College is directed to facilitation of Palomar as a center for

interfaith learning, collaboration, and informed public discussion about religion.

List any new degrees and certificates offered within this discipline since your last comprehensive review:

We have pursued establishment of an AA-T in Religious Studies for many years and continue to push for this, but the state has yet to support or approve an AA-T for Religious Studies.

Discipline Level Data: <https://sharepoint2.palomar.edu/sites/IRPA/SitePages/PRP%20Summary%20Source.aspx>

PART 2: PROGRAM REFLECTION

1. Program Analysis:

Reflect upon and provide an analysis of your summary data.

Enrollments declined somewhat in the fall of 2016, down from 286 in the fall of 2015 to 238 in 2016, though the decline is primarily due to the offering of less class sections. The consolidations and varied efforts to promote the discipline have strengthened and stabilized fill rates, up from 69.06% in the fall of 2014 to 87.8% in the fall of 2015 and at 85.61% in the fall of 2016. Going forward, the plan is to build on this consolidation through further strengthening of the articulation status for RS courses, participation in the zero cost textbook program, the linking of RS classes with English 100, the offering of classes at sites other than the San Marcos campus, and through increased outreach efforts in the local community along with inreach actions to promote the discipline on-campus.

The success rates for RS classes increased from 71.4% on the fall of 2015 to 72.5% in the fall of 2016 for face to face classes and from 60.6% to 61.3% for distance education classes. The retention rate held steady at 91.5% in the fall of 2016 compared to 91.6% in the fall of 2015. We will continue to assess, refine, and revise instruction in RS classes, especially related to distance education, with attentiveness to the goal of improving success and retention rates.

2. Standards:

ACCJC requires that colleges establish institutional and program level standards in the area of course success rates. These standards represent the lowest success rate (% A, B, C, or Credit) deemed acceptable by the College. In other words, if you were to notice a drop below the rate, you would seek further information to examine why the drop occurred and strategies to address the rate.

Discipline Level Course Success Rate:

- A. The College's institutional standard for course success rate is 70%.**
- B. Review your discipline's course success rates over the past five years.**
- C. Identify the minimum acceptable course success rate for your discipline. When setting this rate, consider the level of curriculum (e.g., basic skills, AA, Transfer) and other factors that influence success**

Standard for Discipline Course Success Rate:

65%

Why?

Religious Studies now approaches having 50% of courses in Distance education. So a reasonable minimum rate would seem to be the average of face to face and distance education rates for success.

3. Program Update:

Describe your proudest moments or achievements related to student success and outcomes.

I am especially proud of successful advancement by students in academic programs beyond Palomar after completing multiple classes in Religious Studies at Palomar. Currently, Gabby Perez is progressing in a Master's program at Harvard Divinity School, Daniel Garcia in the Religious Studies Master's program at CSU Long Beach, and Miranda Mattis in a Master's program in Psychology at Azusa Pacific University. Gabby and Daniel were the first in their families to attend college when they enrolled at Palomar. So their graduate work success is quite exceptional. In addition, I am most proud when students demonstrate interest in and ability to engage in learning with people from the religious communities studied in class, particularly during visits each semester to local communities of faith. We are proud of each way in which students succeed by way of participation in religious Studies, yet not so proud as to be unconcerned with improvement.

4. Program Improvement:**What areas or activities are you working on this year to improve your program? Please respond to new data as well as feedback from last year's program review.**

The plan for improvement must always start with the giving of full engagement to prepare for and teach the next class, supplemented by ongoing review and revision of teaching related to use of diverse methods, academic technology, plus engagement with local, contemporary, and relatable case studies. Then, we continue to focus on strengthening and developing the articulation of classes related to educational pathways for students, especially related to based on feedback from the monitoring of four year institutions and especially CSU institutions. First, we are working on strengthening RS 101, World Religions, through designation as a "no textbook" course and by the articulation of the class to meet the multicultural requirement at Palomar. Second, we are reactivating RS 103, Religion and American Political Institutions, to pair with RS 102 to meet all three points of the U.S. History and Institutions requirements, a requirement of six credits for graduation at CSU institutions. Third, we are scheduling the offering of classes at Camp Pendleton and at the South Center to expand class offering and exposure to the discipline. Fourth, we plan on the offering of linked classes with English 100. Fifth, we are working on local agreements with CSU Long Beach, Fullerton, and San Marcos for students with interests in majoring in Religious Studies. We have not found much incentive at the CSU institutions to push for a statewide AA-T but we have developed local agreements and started ongoing collaboration with other community college professors in southern California. Not having a statewide ADT remains an issue but we are currently focused intently on these above three points.

Finally, we are concentrating on in-reach on campus and outreach beyond campus to increase the breadth and depth of participation in the Religious Studies discipline at Palomar. The in-reach on campus concentrates on collaboration with counselors, student clubs, and students in classes outside the discipline. The outreach focuses on collaboration with interfaith groups, local faith communities, and high schools. Related to high schools, we are working to offer RS classes as part of dual enrollment courses offered by Palomar at local high schools. Also, we have started interaction with a group looking to create an interfaith seminary program and another group resulting from governmental push for increased chaplaincy programs. We envision World Religions and other Religious Studies classes at Palomar as potentially being a part of the curriculum for both of these groups. Last, we created an advisory board in the fall of 2016 to facilitate reception of concentrated and consistent feedback from representatives of core groups in the outreach effort.

5. Unanticipated Factors:**Have there been any unanticipated factors that have affected the progress of your previous plan?**

The impact of structural exclusion of the discipline of Religious Studies statewide looks to be greater than previously thought. Here, California is not leading but following nationwide forces and trends. I have my theory of why. The impact of the structural push towards certain disciplines and away from others begins with enrollments, as a class in Religious Studies is increasingly the last to be added to a student's schedule and at the bottom of the list of classes to be recommended by counselors. Enrollment is only the beginning of the structural impact, since retention of students in Religious Studies classes is increasingly more difficult. Students have less and less incentive to retain a class in Religious Studies, much less so than to retain a class from a discipline with institutional support. Then after retention, facilitating the success of a student in a Religious Studies class is increasing more difficult due to lesser incentive to succeed than in a class from a discipline with institutional support. Moreover, the more things are pushed in the current direction in education the less students arrive in a class prepared with the knowledge and skill base to succeed in a Religious Studies class. Then, the impact on enrollment brings less students to a Religious Studies class to receive preparation with this knowledge and skill base. So the forces of spiraling downward grow stronger. The playing field related to academic disciplines of study was not close to equal before and

it is getting dramatically more unequal. Using my trained abilities for objective thinking, education in California and in the United States is becoming much narrower and flatter rather than broader and deeper. I am not seeing how this is better preparing students for a future that will be more complex, diverse, and changing. Actually, the reverse looks to be the outcome of the current forces. Regardless of these larger dynamics, we are actively and intensively working to offset the negative impacts on Religious Studies on campus, in the local community, and statewide.

6. SLOACs:

Describe your course and program SLO activities this past year. How have you used the results of your assessments to improve your courses and programs? Refer to the SLO/PRP report – <https://outcomes.palomar.edu:8443/tracdat/>

We have updated the assessment results and action plans for the SLOs in every RS course. The assessments results were quite positive and consistent for RS 101, 102, 105, 108, and 110. The compare and contrast essay format used in each of the classes for assessment disclosed certain areas of learning that are most in need of improvement, in general for the Religious Studies courses and not specific to any one course: writing skills, comprehension of the more abstract dimensions to religion (e.g., doctrine, ethics), and ability to evaluate core themes of similarity and difference in comparative study and particularly related to themes of similarity or connectedness. Consequently, we are focused on increased efforts and improved ways to aid students in the writing essays and papers, in the use of local and tangible examples for learning related the more abstract dimensions of religion (i.e., doctrine, ethics), and in the use of increased rigor alongside creativity to enhance student ability to better understand implicit commonalities and the most pivotal themes of difference in the comparative approach to study of religions.

PART 3: PROGRAM GOALS

1. Progress on Previous Year's Goals: Please list discipline goals from the previous year's reviews and provide an update by placing an "X" the appropriate status box .

Goal	Completed	Ongoing	No longer a goal
Excellence in teaching		X	
Strengthen and expand the articulation for RS courses		X	
Prepare students to be global citizens		X	

2. New Discipline Goals: Please list all discipline goals for this three-year planning cycle (including those continued from previous planning cycle):

Goal #1	
Program or discipline goal	Expand and develop outreach into the local community
Strategies for implementation	Development of a community advisory board, hosting of interfaith events on campus, teaching of RS classes off of the San Marcos campus
Timeline for implementation	Currently underway
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	Increased engagement with local faith communities, increased depth and breadth of participation in the RS discipline at Palomar

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Goal #2	
Program or discipline goal	Expand and develop inreach on campus
Strategies for implementation	Teaching of linked classes with the English department, collaboration with student clubs, improved collaborations with counselors and advisors, increased working relations with other faculty and disciplines
Timeline for implementation	Currently underway
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	Increased enrollments and class offerings in Religious Studies
Goal #3	
Program or discipline goal	
Strategies for implementation	
Timeline for implementation	
Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)	

PART 4: FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW-UP

Craig, thank you for your review and analysis and for single-handedly directing the important discipline of Religious Studies.

Confirmation of Completion by Department Chair	
Department Chair	David Michael Lockett
Date	01/30 2018

***Please email your Dean to inform them that the PRP has been completed and is ready for their review**

Reviewed by Dean	
Reviewer(s)	Justin Smiley
Date	11/21/2017
1. Strengths and successes of the discipline as evidenced by the data and analysis:	
Good progress on inreach and outreach opportunities. Glad enrollments are stabilizing. Thank you for being proactive to modify curriculum to capture more GE students.	
2. Areas of Concern, if any:	
Goal for student success seems low, even with a large number of online classes.	
3. Recommendations for improvement:	
none	

***Please email your VP to inform them that the PRP has been completed and is ready for their review**

Reviewed by Vice President**Reviewer(s)** Jack S. Kahn, Ph.D.**Date** 1/29/17**1. Strengths and successes of the discipline as evidenced by the data and analysis:**

1. Great mission statement- inspirational and captures the spirit of the discipline
2. Enrollment section is excellent and includes data- well done
3. Student stories are the always the best proud moments
4. Program Improvement ideas are great – implementing them quickly will have a result (I think a couple of these have been ongoing)
5. Appreciate the upfront discussion about religious studies and the potential transfer in diverse studies etc.
6. Goals make good sense and fit the narrative well.

2. Areas of Concern, if any:

- a. You really can't have a success rate that is below the college. We need to address the issues that are making it difficult for students to obtain (and surpass) the average.
- b. SLO is on the right track but see rubric for next steps in improvement

3. Recommendations for improvement: