

Program Review and Planning

OVERVIEW OF PROGRAM REVIEW AND PLANNING FOR **INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS**

Program Review is about documenting the plans you have for improving student success in your program and sharing that information with the 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 our new Guided Pathways plan, this review becomes even more crucial for the success of our students and college.

We are using the Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results (SOAR) strategic planning technique to help us focus on our current strengths and opportunities, create a vision of future aspirations, and consider the results of this approach.

BASIC PROGRAM INFORMATION

Academic Year 2018-2019

PRP? Comprehensive

Department Name Behavioral Sciences

Discipline Name Religious Studies (RS)

Department Chair Name

Division Name Social and Behavioral Sciences

Dillon Emerick

Website address for your discipline

https://www2.palomar.edu/pages/religiousstudies/

Discipline 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. The Religious Studies discipline 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 vitally important skills of cultivating mutual respect, empathetic learning, appreciation for diversity, integrative thinking, and holistic understanding in order 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 interfaith learning, collaboration, and informed public discussion about religion.

(click here for information on how to create a mission statement)

certificate associated with it?

Does your discipline have at least one degree or Are any of your programs vocational (CTE/CE)? No

Are you completing a comprehensive or annual

No

Please list the names and positions of everyone who helped to complete this document.

Craig Forney, Associate Professor of Religious Studies Jacqueline Smith, Part-time faculty

Full-time faculty (FTEF)

Part-time faculty (FTEF)

2

Classified & other staff positions that support this discipline

Rebecca Clements, ADA

Additional hourly staff that support this discipline and/or department

PROGRAM INFORMATION PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Begin this section by reviewing the Program Review reports for courses and programs in TracDat. All active course and program outcomes should be systematically assessed over a 3-year cycle.

- **Program** = Leads to a degree or certificate
- **Discipline** = A group of courses within a discipline

Depending on the degree or transfer goals of our students, they have the choice of three different GE pathways:

- Associate Degree GE Requirements
- CSU GE Requirements
- IGETC Requirements

Palomar College has identified a set of General Education/Institutional Learning Outcomes, which represent the overall set of abilities and qualities a student graduating from Palomar should possess. Click here for a link to Palomar's GE/ILOs.

How do the courses in your discipline support General Education/ Institutional Learning Outcomes? In your response, please specify which GE/ILO(s) your discipline supports. The courses in the Religious Studies at Palomar College provide students with the knowledge and skills particularly related to written communication, critical thinking, ethical reasoning, intercultural knowledge, and civil knowledge/engagement.

Summarize the major findings from your course outcomes assessments that are related to the General Education/Institutional Learning Outcomes that your discipline supports.

ENROLLMENT TRENDS

Palomar College uses the WSCH/FTEF ratio as one indicator of overall efficiency in addition to the overall

^{*}Programs will be able to complete program completion and outcome questions.

fill-rate for courses.

Although the college efficiency goal is 525 WSCH/FTEF and 85% fill-rate (minimal), there are many factors that affect efficiency (i.e. seat count / facilities / accreditation restrictions).

This information can be found by going to the "Program" page in the PRP Data Dashboard.

What was your efficiency trend over the last 5 years? Was it expected?

I'm not seeing Religious Studies listed in the "Program" section. So, I'm not sure what sure of the exact numbers being used.

Enrollments in Religious Studies have stabilized in recent semesters after a decline in previous years, mostly due to the consolidating of classes. Enrollment was 230 in 2017-2018 after being 238 in 2016-2017. Consolidations and changes in class offerings have strengthened and stabilized fill rates. Fill rates have steadily rose from 69.06% in 2014-2015 to 85.61% in 2016-2017, and to 91.27% in 2017-2018. The FTEF/WSH rates for Religious Studies has risen from 447 in 2016-2017 to 551 in 2017-2018, and 544 in 2018-2019. Success rates for RS classes has steadily increased from 67% in 2015-2016 to 72.5% in 2017-2018. The retention rate has similarly and steadily increased over the same time frame, up to 94% in 2017-2018. We will continue to assess, refine, and revise instruction in RS classes, especially related to distance education, with attentiveness to facilitation of continued improvements in success and retention rates.

What factors have influenced your efficiency trends?

The impact of structural exclusion of the discipline of Religious Studies statewide continues to be paradigmatic.

Here, California is not leading but following nationwide forces and trends. I have my theories on why our state is somewhat backwards on the academic study of religion and the lack of such study only enhances the ignorance. 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 the above described trends and conditions continue to bring increasing inequities. 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, particularly given that the identification with religion is increasing at increasing rates on the global scale. 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. The preponderance of evidence shows that identification with religion in the

global context, and in its traditional forms, is increasing and at a fast increasing rate. Consequently, lack of higher education in religious studies leave students lacking in literacy related to the world's populations. Regardless of the larger dynamics related to contemporary higher education, we are actively and intensively working to offset the negative impacts on Religious Studies on campus, in the local community, and statewide. The stabilization of enrollment, the increased fill rates, improved retention rates, and increased success rates show positive results for the intensive efforts to work against the structural opposition.

cancelled due to low enrollment, or are not scheduled at this time? What is contributing to this issue? Does this level of efficiency meet the needs of the program and the district? In recent semesters, we have made many adjustments in the scheduling of classes. First and foremost, the changes have been especially related to lower enrollments in face to face classes and higher enrollments in online sections. This has meant that more specialized courses such as RS 105 and 108 have had been difficult to schedule, since these have been exclusively face face offerings, leading to the attempt to try each class online. :Undoubtedly, there are many contributing factors to the push online, starting with a systematic pursuit of bigger numbers. Certainly, the shift towards online education meets many needs and brings improvements in various ways for students. However, I believe there is much evidence for continued value and often superior value of face to face evidence, starting with quantifiable elements such as retention and success rates as well with qualitative aspects in the depth and breadth of

learning. For a small discipline like Religious Studies, the push online has had dramatic results, often making online offerings well over 80% of course offerings in the discipline. Consequently, it becomes ridiculous to compare and contrast numbers related to retention and success in Religious Studies with other disciplines with course offerings well below 80% online. So, yes, the shift to mostly online education meets many needs but represents a decline in meeting needs for many students who benefit greatly from

Are there particular courses or programs that are not getting sufficient enrollment, are regularly

The Chancellor's Office Vision for Success stresses the importance of reducing equity gaps through faster improvements of underrepresented groups.

ACCJC also requires that colleges establish institutional and program level standards in the area of success rates. These standards represent the lowest success rate 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.

Click on this link to review the course success rates (A, B, C, or Credit) for your discipline.

In this section we will identify a course success rate standards and a stretch goal (what you would like to move toward) for programs.

Course Success Rates by gender, age, ethnicity, special population, location, and modality (You can access the Student Equity Plan on the SSEC website https://www2.palomar.edu/pages/ssec/)

COURSE INFORMATION COURSE SUCCESS AND RETENTION

What is your program's standard for Discipline COURSE Success Rate? 65.0%

Why did you choose this standard?

face to face learning.

The above rate was the stated standard in the previous PRP. As described in the previous section and page, Religious Studies now approaches having 75-85% of courses in Distance education. So a

reasonable minimum rate seemed to have been based upon the average of distance education rates for success, since three quarters of the classes were online.

Has your overall course SUCCESS rates increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the last 5 years?

Increased

Was this expected?

This was not expected due to the increasingly online forum for Religious Studies classes. That being said, we have focused on continual refinements of online teaching to improve success rates, particularly in making classes continually interactive and responsive to student concerns.

What is your Stretch goal for COURSE success rates? 75.0%

How did you decide upon the goal?

We reached 74% this past academic year. So, 75% looks to be a reasonable stretch. As already discussed, Religious Studies now approaches having 75-85% of courses in Distance education. So, maintaining previously established rates and a little higher will consistently require much stretching and intensive effort.

Have your overall course RETENTION rates increased, decreased, or stayed the same over the last 5 years?

Increased

Was this expected? Please explain.

This was not expected due to the increasingly online forum for Religious Studies classes. That being said, we have focused on continual refinements of online teaching to improve success rates, particularly in making classes increasingly interactive and responsive to student concerns.

Are there differences in success or retention rates in the following groups? (choose all that apply)

Are there differences in success/retention between on-campus and online courses? Yes

Do you have any best practice methods you use for online courses to share with the community?

Please explain.

COURSE OUTCOMES

How is course assessment coordinated across sections and over time?

Assessment of SLOs follows the plan to assess, review, and revise each SLO in every course within in a three year cycle. We have been able to establish a spacing in the timing for the assessment of classes, bringing some balance to the quantity and quality of efforts invested.

How have you improved course-level assessment methods since the last PRP?

Since last year? We did not particularly find problems or potential improvements related to the assessment methods, but primarily concerning the adjustment of teaching, learning methods, and in the preparation of students outside of class to meet targeted areas for improvement.

Summarize the major findings of your course outcomes assessments.

Results display the need for improvements in learning on comparisons or similarities that exist below the surface, generally requiring more intensive analytical thinking than the identification of contrasts or differences. The identification of differences between religious communities can be too easy and the settling for a somewhat lazy approach. Related to history of religion classes (RS 102, 108), the results reveal the need for improvements in learning about dynamics of change that occur within religious communities over time, as religious communities are continually shifting and redefining in orientation. Students too easily give in to seeing communities as static. Also, the results in each of our Religious Studies classes disclose the need for improvements in learning about elements of doctrine and ethics, two of the more abstract aspects of religious life, areas of study for which students are increasingly ill prepared for engagement.

Reflecting on the major findings you summarized, what are some questions you still have about students' learning in your courses that you have not yet been able to address with your outcomes assessments?

What are some improvements in your courses that have been, or can be, pursued based on the key findings from your course learning outcomes assessments?

As stated above, we have focused more intently on teaching and learning that promotes increased understanding of comparisons or commonalities between religious communities, of how religious communities develop over time and in particular time periods, and of dynamics related to the dimensions of doctrine and ethics in religious life. Practically, this involves giving increased time and quality of focus to teaching and active learning on those areas of concern.

PROGRAM CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT, MAPPING, SCHEDULING, & PLANNING

The Chancellor's Office Vision for Success stresses the importance of decreasing the average number of units accumulated by CCC students earning degrees.

Palomar College's Guided Pathways plan includes clarifying paths for students by sequencing course offerings so that they support scaffolding and timely completion. Our goal is to ensure learning through:

- The mapping and assessment of clear program outcomes that are also aligned to employer and/or transfer institution expectations.
- Engaging and applied learning experiences.
- Effective instructional practices to support students in achieving success.

How do your course outcomes help your students achieve their program outcomes? NA

What is your departmental strategy on how you schedule your courses including the time of day you offer courses? Do you use fast track or block scheduling (putting required classes near each other) to organize required classes (Particularly to meet the needs of disproportionately impacted students)?

How do you work with other departments that require your course(s) for program completion?

Does your discipline offer cross-listed courses?

No

Are there curriculum concerns that need to be resolved in your department? What are they? NA

How is the potential need for program/course deactivation addressed by the department? We assess the present and future value of courses that have not been offered recently, especially those identified by the Curriculum committee as not having been offered in the past four years.

Is your department pursuing non credit or not-for credit options at this time? Yes

Are there areas you would like to expand?

We are just beginning to explore into this realm. Non credit and not for credit courses look like to have much potential for expanding the community and student awareness of Religious Studies. Such courses, for example in World Religions or in the History of Christianity, can provide service and outreach to the larger community, while expanding the base of potential students in for credit courses.

I have contacted Suzanne Sebring and Nichol Roe. I'm meeting with Suzanne before the end of the spring semester.

Click here for information about **Noncredit** and **Community Education**

Is your department offering online classes?

Yes

How do you consider student needs when determining which classes and how many classes should be offered online versus face-to-face?

Our decisions look to be first and foremost enrollment driven, at least enrollment in the sense of considering bigger numbers to be better.

Describe other data and/or information that you have considered as part of the evaluation of your program

I am consistently reading about the history and contemporary state of higher education in the United States and in California, particularly related to the discipline of Religious Studies. Relatedly, understanding of American culture and the impact of cultural values on trends in higher education is most informative, especially associated with the understanding of the faster and narrower as better. Discussions with colleagues at and outside of Palomar also play an important role in shaping evaluations.

CAREER AND LABOR MARKET DATA

The Chancellor's Office Vision for Success stresses the importance of increasing the percent of exiting students who report being employed in their field of study. It is important for us to consider how <u>all</u> of our programs connect to future careers.

Go to this website https://www.onetonline.org/ and enter your discipline in the bubble on the top right for ideas about potential occupations. Click on an example to see more detail.

What kinds of careers are available for people who complete your programs (and/or transfer)? (Refer to link above) Are there any new or emerging careers and if so how would the new or emerging careers impact your future planning?

Americans have an average of 7 careers over the course of their lives. In the study of religions, students learn valuable skills that can be applied to any field of work. These are the abilities to think objectively, to appreciate cultural diversity, to assess influential human ideas, to understand different views of life's meaning, to process new information, to love knowledge. Moreover, Religious Studies learning provides skills and knowledge in written communication, empathetic thinking, ethical reasoning, and integrative thinking. These are abilities important to any career.

Courses in the study of world religions focus on those beliefs, values, and issues that have concerned humans of every walk of life. Consequently, Religious Studies courses help to prepare students person for life in general. International and historical perspectives provide students with wider context for his or her understanding of all cultures, as well as provide preparation for diverse careers as almost every career requires ability to relate to diverse people and increasingly in a global context. In today's multicultural workplace and global economy, basic knowledge about other cultures and religious perspectives is indispensable.

Success in a selected career is not just about interpreting information and applying specialized knowledge but is also dependent on making and maintaining connections with people. Studying religion brings developed understanding of people and their many perspectives. Most importantly, courses in Religious Studies provide students with excellent skills and knowledge for the reaching out to diverse people, the building of bridges, and for the incorporation of many perspectives in the work environment.

Majors in Religious Studies have many pathways. After graduation, religion majors do the same kinds of things that other humanities majors do, in roughly the same proportions. Majoring in the study of religion is not, for most students, a route to a religious career. (Although it certainly can be) The major imposes no limitations, but also lends its own particular strengths to a number of different career choices. Religion majors have successfully gone on to professional training in:

Law

Higher education

Counseling and social work

Medicine

Ministry

Business (particularly international business)

Journalism

Others have moved directly into the job market, taking up positions in:

Government, foreign service, or the Peace Corps

Non-profit agencies

Marketing and management

Museums and the arts

Publishing

According to the Pew Research Center, the highly respected research org in Washington, D.C., the global population is increasingly religious, meaning identification with traditional forms of religion (Islam, Christianity Buddhism, etc) and the rate of becoming increasingly religious is increasing. Consequently, learning about the religions of the world will be increasingly essential for communication with the majority of the global population. The study of religion provides religion literacy, being conversant in relation to communities and traditions of religion. RS and esp World Religions should be on the level of a foreign language requirement, since a religion is a kind of language. It centers on a rich set of terms associated with ritual practices, stories, beliefs, ethical guidelines, and institutions for understanding of and communication about life. Being conversant in these world languages is essential for the education of student regardless of career pathway.

What are the associated knowledge, skills, abilities (KSA's) needed for the occupations listed above? (click examples in the link above to get ideas)

The ability to think objectively, to appreciate cultural diversity, to assess influential human ideas, to understand different views of life's meaning, and to process new information are abilities important regardless of career pathway. Classes in Religious Studies also provide broadly needed skills in written communication, empathetic thinking, integrative thinking, and ethical reasoning.

How does your program help students build these KSA's?

Religious Studies classes focus on the above KSAs as foundational to the learning and discussion about the diverse religious communities across the globe.

Have you incorporated work based learning (work experience, internships, and/or service learning) into your program?

Yes

What have you done to integrate work-based learning?

Service learning was a key option in Religious Studies for about seven years. However, we increasingly had difficulty in finding local sponsors of the learning, particularly sponsors that were willing to maintain sponsorship and provide meaningful experiences for students.

How does your work-based learning help your students learn how to do some of the tasks associated with the potential occupations?

How do you engage with the community to keep them apprised of opportunities in your program? We frequently and consistently visit and interact with religious communities in the larger community. These interactions promote knowledge of the Religious Studies program at Palomar and of the concern within the program for community service.

We will connect with Star Rivera-Lacey to see how we might collaborate.

Program Goals

In the previous sections, you identified opportunities for improvement. Using these opportunities, develop 3-year <u>SMART goals</u> for your department. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-Specific. Ensure your goals align with the mission of your department and/or <u>the College's strategic plan</u>.

Please list all discipline goals for this three-year planning cycle. <u>Click here for previous PRPs and goal information.</u>

Goals

Goal 1

Brief Description

Excellence in teaching

Is this a new or existing goal? Existing

Goal Status
Ongoing

How will you complete this goal?

The goal is aspirational. Pursuit of excellence is never ending, first and foremost something not be assumed as having been achieved. The way of progression to the goal involves continual assessment and refinement of teaching based on student, peer, and self input. The focus is ever on improving the quality of teaching for the next class.

Through extensive research and personal experiences, I have learned the supreme importance of an aspirational approach to goals, though I'm sure individual personalities matter here. As a scholar of American religion, aspirational thinking has clearly produced the best and longest lasting results. Constitutional goals of freedom and equality have proven to be best understood as aspiration ideals, not

to be reduced to something narrowly or simply defined. For example, the goal of equality may be impossible to achieve. However, where would we be without the concept of and never-ending aspiration for equality? We would be living in a nation with the establishment of much less equality than we have. The superiority of aspirational or aesthetical thinking to instrumental thinking with focus on the narrowly defined next step or steps was a foundational theme of my dissertation on famed civil rights leader W.E.B. Du Bois. Over ninety-five years, Du Bois achieved incredibly dramatic results in far-ranging venues through the pursuit of an inner sense of vision for equality, community, and interdependency. Through pursuit of this aesthetic, he produced highly productive results in higher education, political activism, and the writing of literature. I've had a similar learning experience as an athlete and in the study of great athletes. Most great athletes achieve highly productive results through the envisioning or visualization of a kind of perfect performance, with an inner feel and sensibility for the blending of various qualities and elements, not through the focus on strictly defined step by step goals.

The aspirational approach to goals highlights the importance of aesthetical reasoning that aspires to involve every sensibility in the wholistic pursuit of an envisioned purpose. Aesthetical reasoning focuses on the marshaling of much imagination and feel in striving for a goal. Oftentimes, this sense of the purpose is a fleeting glimpse, seen out of the corner of the inner eye, something felt but feintly, heard but very quietly, and thought but not too certainly. Related to teaching and the teaching of Religious Studies, I envision the near perfect or excellent teaching moment to be centered on the inspiring students to the love of learning, to the love of learning how people see life and the inter-relatedness of the diverse elements involved in living. I envision teaching that facilitates learning with ever deeper sense of why people do what they do, with growing understanding of how religiosity reaches into every aspect of living, and with sensibility for multiple dimensions of meaning for the diverse peoples of the world. I perceive the excellent teaching moment to foster ever developing learning about how people are connected and similar yet also different and not to be reduced to my preconceptions. I envision teaching and learning that inspires desire to continue learning from people of diverse religious orientations, with sense of responsibility to find ways of collaboration. Ultimately, I perceive teaching that instills sense of how little we know about life and the people across the globe, with overwhelming sense of how so very much more we have to learn. This is the vision for excellent teaching that the teacher of Religious Studies should aspire to achieve. If I never perfectly fulfill this aspiration, I know I have continually and frequently come closer and closer to the goal.

Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)

The outcome is expected, but with much trepidation and without assumption of achievement. The desired outcome is to inspire and empower students with the love of learning, the love of learning about diverse people, about diverse religions, and about the various ways in which religion influences everyday life. Excellent teaching also requires the fostering of learning the key skills and knowledge associated with becoming educated about the diverse religions of the world and about the role of religion in general.

How does this goal align with your department mission statement, the college strategic plan, and /or Guided Pathways?

Excellence in teaching is essential to meet core elements of the mission of the department and college. I assume and hope that the guided pathways program will also be driven by similar ultimate concern for quality teaching.

Expected Goal Completion Date 5/28/2027

Goal 2

Brief Description

Prepare students to be global citizens

Is this a new or existing goal?

Goal Status

Existing Ongoing

How will you complete this goal?

We will teach and provide learning opportunities as directed by the purpose of fostering a more global, interactive, integrated, and collaborative way of life. Religious Studies requires use of ability to listen, learn from, and interact with people from diverse communities across the globe. To further the understanding of global citizenship, we provide opportunities for students to visit and be visited by people from the various faith orientations that predominate internationally.

Global citizens are individuals with understanding of being a member of an international community, with sense of being interdependent with and responsibility to the diverse people from across the globe, all of it. Here, the aspirational or aesthetical goal is for ever developing sensibilities regarding connections with and differences from others, such a balanced understanding is essential for healthy relations with others. In the study of religion, the goal is to produce deeper and broader sense of our common humanity and our need to learn from those different from ourselves to become more well rounded in perspective. This is the orientation of global citizen, quite in contrast to people who see themselves in very narrow terms as identified with one particular locality, nation, race, class, age group, or gender.

Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)

The learning outcomes related to global citizenship are: critical thinking, integrative thinking, literacy, mutual respect, empathetic learning, appreciation for diversity, and wholistic understanding. These will be assessed through multiple-choice, short answer, and essay formats.

How does this goal align with your department mission statement, the college strategic plan, and /or Guided Pathways?

The department and college remain committed to the development of students as global citizens. I assume and hope that the guided pathways program will also be driven by the importance of this mission.

Expected Goal Completion Date

5/28/2027

Goal 3

Brief Description

Develop in reach on campus and outreach into the larger community for collaboration

Is this a new or existing goal?

Goal Status Ongoing

Existing

How will you complete this goal?

The plan is to continue to work with already established collaborations on campus and in the larger community in addition to efforts to find new individuals, programs, and communities to collaborate with.

Outcome(s) expected (qualitative/quantitative)

The expected outcomes are: improvements in the support for and participation in Religious Studies classes, expanded and improved opportunities for student learning, and increased collaboration between people from diverse religious orientations or the lack thereof.

How does this goal align with your department mission statement, the college strategic plan, and /or Guided Pathways?

The goal of greater collaboration to promote quality student learning intersects with the core of the college's purpose, to involve the larger community in the comprehensive education of students to

become better, globally oriented citizens. Such learning involves excellent teaching and innovative approaches, involving learning intimately associated with developed concern for equity, inclusiveness, diversity, mutual respect, and participation in the community.

Expected Goal Completion Date 5/28/2027

STAFFING AND RESOURCE NEEDS

Instructions

- 1. Refer to Strategic Plan.
- 2. See Data.
- 3. See career info (In PRP)

Are you requesting additional full-time faculty? No

Are you requesting additional Staff, CAST or AA?
No