

Final Assessment Report

Religious Studies (BA, Minor, PhD), Jewish Studies (Minor)

January 2020

Executive Summary

External reviewers found that the Religious Studies (RS) programs (BA, Minor) and Jewish Studies Minor delivered by the Department of Religious Studies¹ were in good standing. The reviewers also agreed that the PhD in Religious Studies, jointly offered with Department of Culture and Religion at Wilfrid Laurier University, was in good standing.

“Both programs are in overall good standing and have excellent faculty.”

A total of 6 recommendations were provided by the reviewers, regarding administrative matters, curricular matters, addressing the decrease in majors and course enrolments, and renewing the doctoral program. In response, the program created a plan outlining the specific actions proposed to address each recommendation as well as a timeline for implementation. The next cyclical review for this program is scheduled for 2024-2025.

Student Complement (All Years)*

	BA General	BA Honours Regular	BA Honours Co-op	Religious Studies Minor	Jewish Studies Minor	PhD
Fall 2019	6	8	0	13	3	10
Fall 2018	6	12	0	12	3	11
Fall 2017	10	13	0	16	2	12

*Active Students Extract pulled from Quest December 2, 2019

Background

In accordance with the University of Waterloo’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response of the programs (BA, Minors, PhD) delivered by the Department of Religious Studies. A self-study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic and

¹ The Department of Religious Studies is a joint venture between five agencies of the University of Waterloo: the Faculty of Arts, Conrad Grebel University College, St. Paul’s University College, St. Jerome’s University, and Renison University College [hereafter: the five agencies]. This arrangement is unique within the University in that it is not simply a shared discipline across the various institutions but a shared Department.

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs on October 25, 2018. The self-study (Volume I) presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the programs, including the data collected from a student survey, along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP). The CVs for each faculty member with a key role in the delivery of the program(s) were included in Volume II of the self-study.

From Volume III, two arm's-length external reviewers were selected by the Associate Vice-President, Academic and Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs: Dr. Alison Marshall, Professor of Religion, Brandon University, and Dr. Noel Salmond, Professor of Religion, Carleton University.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University of Waterloo (UW) and Wilfrid Laurier University (WLU) on December 10-11, 2018. An internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Marc Aucoin, Professor of Chemical Engineering, was selected to accompany the external reviewers. The visit included interviews with the Vice-President, Academic & Provost (UW); Associate Vice-President, Academic (UW); Dean of Arts (UW); Dean of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies (WLU); Chair of Religious Studies (UW), Chair of Religion and Culture (WLU), and UW and WLU Faculty members and staff. The Review Team also had the opportunity to meet with current UW undergraduate and graduate students, WLU PhD students and representatives from the library.

This final assessment report is based on information extracted, in many cases verbatim, from the self-study, the external reviewers' report and the program response.

Program characteristics

Religious Studies (BA): The Religious Studies program allows students to take courses in the areas of World Religions, Christian Traditions, and Religion, Culture and Society. Through their training in method and theory and development of analytical skills, Religious Studies graduates are able to contribute meaningfully to their local communities, Canada, and global society, discussions on contemporary issues regarding religion and public policy, and the broader "issues of the day."

Religious Studies (Minor): The Religious Studies Minor is often added to complement a non-Religious Studies major. Students frequently comment that since Canada is multicultural, it is good to know about people from a variety of cultural/religious contexts.

Jewish Studies (Minor): The Jewish Studies Minor is a program centred on Jewish philosophy, belief, and social history as well as the Bible. It exposes both Jewish and non-Jewish students to Jewish thought, and the interaction and influence of Jewish thought on the development of Christianity and Islam, and offers courses that expose students to the richness of Jewish thought and culture while developing their oral and written competence, and analytic abilities.

Religious Studies (PhD) – joint with Wilfrid Laurier University: The Joint Laurier-Waterloo PhD Program in Religious Studies leads to the Doctor of Philosophy degree, with a research specialization in Religious Diversity in North America. Strongly interdisciplinary, this joint program draws on the combined resources of the Department of Religion and Culture at Wilfrid Laurier University and the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Waterloo, as well as numerous adjunct and associated faculty in different departments at both institutions, including Anthropology, History, Philosophy, Psychology, and Sociology.

Summary of strengths, challenges and weaknesses based on self-study

Strengths: The greatest strength of the program is the quality of the faculty and staff. Professors are dedicated to the intellectual development of their students and sound pedagogical means by which they can accomplish this goal. They understand the value of research as both part of their own career development and as a means of enhancing their teaching. The Administrative Assistant is not only knowledgeable and professional, but also dedicated to the programs and ways to improve them. There are no other staff members in the department.

Challenges: First, RS overall undergraduate enrolment is down about 40% since the 2011 review. Several reasons for this were suggested, including: the complexity of the program; the difficulty in scheduling required courses (e.g., RS 260); the ongoing secularization of Canadian society (which means younger cohorts have little exposure to religion), and the turn to STEM disciplines across Canada and the United States after the 2008 global financial crisis (not many parents see a connection between religious studies and the job market). The programs must increase their visibility on campus and educate students on the importance and value of having a solid grasp of religion in Canada and the world.

Time for online course development is also a major challenge. The Department has decided to put RS260 (How to Study Religion) online in order to mitigate the problem of students dropping the major(s). This will make the course far more accessible, but unfortunately developing online courses takes time and money.

Several retirements have not been replaced and several faculty are currently working on reduced loads, and thus the Department cannot mount the number or variety of courses as desired (particularly 300-level courses).

Finally, the administrative load of the Chair continues to increase, as faculty have less time to devote to department planning and activities. There is also concern around the impending retirement of one or more colleagues.

Weaknesses: In short, the weakness of the programs is that they are lacking in sufficient human resources. Overburdened faculty cannot offer as many courses and cannot attend Department and student events with any regularity; and they publish and attend professional conferences less regularly. Program and curricular changes take longer to develop and implement, which has hampered the program's ability to introduce courses that would appeal to a new cohort of students whom, studies have shown, to have had increasingly less direct experience of religion. A further weakness is the lack of an FTE in Islam, an omission that gets more critical as the years pass.

Summary of key findings from the external reviewers

The reviewers found that both the undergraduate and graduate programs were in good standing. The undergraduate program was commended for its faculty's ability to collaborate together "... at an arm's-length to deliver an impressively broad range of courses". In addition, the doctoral program was recognized as unique within Canada and as having a reputation for producing high-quality students.

Program Response to External Reviewers' Recommendations

1. Empower the [Chair of the Department] with more oversight/authority to undertake a review of all UW RS undergraduate and PhD joint program faculty and conduct a department retreat in order to reduce the duplication of course offerings, to boost the flow of enrolment in upper level courses, increase collaborations between the universities, and explore potential collaborations with other units (e.g., Peace and Conflict Studies).

Response

As indicated in the self-study report, while the Department operates as much as possible like any other department in Arts, in fact it is structured more as a Centre. With the exception of two Waterloo professors (Diamond and Jakobsh), the Department does not hire or evaluate its faculty nor does it assign or schedule courses. Rather, it takes advantage of a variety of resources that it does not control directly. In effect, the Chair operates as a coordinator, who leads the five agencies in a collaborative effort. While inelegant in theory, according to the assessors this model works well in practice, because of the collegial environment of the department and the good will of all five agencies.

However, this highly decentralized structure does present the Department with a number of challenges:

- Lack of communication about sabbaticals, retirements, secondments, teaching releases, etc.

- Lack of control over course scheduling
- Absence of evaluation by the Chair, which can translate into poor communication among Department members about their achievements, duties, and priorities

Both assessors suggested augmenting the authority of the Chair to address these issues, especially to address the decline in major registrations and course enrolments as well as the renewal of the program requirements and course offerings. Although their recommendation may violate the autonomy of the five agencies and thus would meet with some resistance, Department members agreed with the assessors that the role and authority of the Chair needed to be reviewed. Hence, the reviewers suggested finding new ways to augment the capacity of the Chair to coordinate, plan and administer the Department effectively in order to address the decline in majors and course enrolments as well as the restructuring of the program and renewal of the curriculum.

Additionally, the two assessors both recommended a retreat dedicated to renewing the undergraduate program in light of declining course enrolments and registration of majors. At its February meeting, the Department enthusiastically endorsed this recommendation. Additional areas that need to be considered are:

- Program requirements: Members of the Department agreed that some program requirements may discourage or even prevent some students from registering as Majors or Minors, particularly since many students become aware of the Department relatively late in their degree.
- Curricular matters: Members of the Department agreed that courses need to be rethought to appeal to a new generation of students, increasingly polarized between those with exposure to religion and those without. It was recommended that the Department:
 - Re-evaluate titles and course descriptions
 - Re-evaluate course levels (i.e., 100, 200, 300 and 400-level courses)
 - Offer more opportunities for experiential learning
 - Expand online course offerings
 - Rationalize course offerings (e.g., eliminate courses that have not been taught since the last review, ensure that course scheduling allow students to fulfill program requirements in a timely manner; and review offerings of upper level courses)
 - Respond to the University of Waterloo's [Indigenization Strategy](#).

Actions

- a) The Department will hold a retreat to review and simplify the undergraduate program and curriculum, and to discuss strategies for increasing department visibility on campus.
- b) The Department will request a meeting of the Heads (or their delegates) of the five agencies to discuss, clarify, and agree upon the role and powers of the Chair.

January 2020 Update

- a) The Department held two meetings on simplifying the undergraduate program and curriculum. UGAG has already approved simplified Plan changes, renumbering of courses, and removal of a number of dormant courses.
 - b) The Department has requested a January meeting with the Heads of the five agencies.
2. Increase visibility of the undergraduate program to attract more students (e.g., program to do self-promotion and receive support from the centre such as MUR).

Response

Both the assessors' reports and the self-study emphasized the need to better publicize the Department, its programs, and its courses.

First, the Department needs to analyze and better understand why the number of majors has dropped so dramatically in the last number of years. Unfortunately, this is not an isolated instance but rather other traditional departments in the Waterloo Faculty of Arts and other universities have experienced similar declines. As Dr. Marshall observed, "We must emphasize that this enrolment trend is not unique to the Waterloo Religious Studies or Faculty of Arts. Both external assessors have seen similar declines in their upper level enrolments over the years."

Studies have shown that young Canadians are becoming increasingly disconnected from traditional forms of religion and their institutions, and so many have had no direct experience of traditional religion, and hence are uninterested in traditionally defined courses. The Department has already undertaken steps to make itself more visible (e.g., promoting its activities on social media) and to redefine some of its courses to appeal to students.

Actions

- a) The Department will hold a retreat to discuss strategies for increasing department visibility on campus (see action #1 above).
- b) As the first 'face' of the RS Department that students see, editing and continuously updating the RS website is very important. Thus, the Department plans to revise the website in order to: consistently target the typical undergraduate student (17-25 years old, etc.); highlight courses in upcoming terms during pre-enrolment and enrolment periods, making this list (with links to syllabi) one click away from entering the site; underscore the flexibility of the program to encourage students to consider this as a valuable and complementary area of study alongside other areas/majors.
- c) The Department will develop and institute a campus communications plan that regularly promotes the Department: focusing especially on maximizing the effectiveness of online tools (social media, Waterloo Learn, etc.), faculty participation in Arts First program in

order to expose students to RS professors, and adding a campus presentation event on undergraduate research in RS.

January 2020 Update

The department has revised its web site, although more changes are foreseen. The Administrative Manager and Chair have worked together to improve outreach through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

3. Increase the current administrative staff position from part-time to full-time in order to support students (e.g., fieldwork forms, ethics approvals etc.) and enhance program communication (e.g., advertising for the program such as posters, social media presence etc.).

Response

Both external assessors strongly recommended that the Administrative Manager's position be made full-time (35 hours) rather than the current part-time (30 hours). This would allow the Administrative Manager to:

- Facilitate communication among Department members, among faculty and students, and among the students themselves.
- Organize colloquia, speaker events, and other events to enhance Department visibility and promote departmental goals.
- Promote and publicize RS courses on social media.
- Assist graduate students, helping them with the Research Ethics milestone, etc.

At the February departmental meeting, there was a strong consensus in support of this recommendation. At the same time, it was recognized that the timing of this recommendation could not be worse as the government announcements regarding university tuition fees means that each of the five agencies may resist any additional expenses.

Actions

- a) The Chair will approach the Heads of the five agencies (see action #2 above) to enquire about the possibility of making the Administrative Manager's position full-time (35 hours).
4. Ensure field methodology training and ethics approval training are built into the doctoral course offerings. Students interviewed all expressed a feeling of isolation and expressed a need to build connections with sociology and anthropology faculty in order to strengthen their research competencies and for students to mobilize knowledge and training opportunities and better understanding of approaches that would help them shape their thesis proposals.

Response

There was a consensus among the two assessors' reports and the self-study regarding requirements for the Laurier-Waterloo Joint Doctoral Program in Religious Diversity in North America. This included exploring courses, workshops, and procedures to ensure that students receive more training in methods (including research ethics training) before beginning their dissertation research stage.

Action

- a) The Department will approach with Wilfrid Laurier University to address the issues of a course on Methods to be offered in the winter semester as well as ethics approval training.

January 2020 Update

The Joint Doctoral Program held a retreat in December 2019 to address this issue. Discussions are ongoing.

5. Better coordination of course offers between AFIW institutions and UW.

Response

As observed in the 2011 cyclical review and echoed by the assessors' reports and the self-study, the most important distortions in the area of course offerings are tied to the attempts of department members to meet the equity level teaching requirements of their respective agencies. This has meant, for example, that various agencies tend to offer large-enrollment classes and avoid low-enrolment, upper-level courses. Consequently, it is necessary to discuss the underlying implications of the teaching equity agreement in order to address these curricular matters.

Actions

- a) The Department will request a meeting of the Heads (or their delegates) of the five agencies to come to an agreement around teaching equity levels in Religious Studies in order to empower faculty members to offer courses according to the needs of the program. The Department will ask for clarification and commitments regarding teaching levels in relation to administrative and teaching responsibilities within the agencies. This meeting will also request RS faculty participation in the Arts First program to expose students to professors.
6. Renew efforts at fostering communication, community and collegiality among the doctoral students, between the two institutions, and between the faculty and doctoral students.

Response

There was a consensus among the two assessors' reports and the Self-Study for this recommendation.

Action

- a) The Department will approach Wilfrid Laurier University to foster communication, community, and collegiality among the doctoral students, between the two institutions, and between the faculty and doctoral students.

January 2020 Update

The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, Doris Jakobsh has initiated academic and social events (including dinners for grad students in her own home) to promote collegiality at all levels in the Joint Program.

Initiatives the Program wishes to Implement

The following are recommendations that the program has chosen to include and act upon. A number of these were discussed with the reviewers and included in their reports, but were not listed as concrete recommendations.

1. Renewal of the doctoral program to expand its purview to allow broader participation, partner with other units at Waterloo, and implement an Indigenization plan.

Response

There was a consensus among the two assessors' reports and the self-study on two points regarding the renewal of the Laurier-Waterloo Joint Doctoral Program in Religious Diversity in North America. These included:

- Broadening the focus of the doctoral program to allow for wider participation among departmental members, e.g., revising its North American focus as well as its emphasis on the social scientific study of religion;
- Exploring the potential for a formal connection of the doctoral program with other Waterloo units (e.g., Peace and Conflict Studies, Classical Studies, etc.).

Moreover, Dr. Marshall introduced an important priority not mentioned in the other reports:

- Making indigenization of the Joint Program a priority by involving Indigenous elders from the community in the program, and by hiring faculty in the area of Indigenous Spirituality.

Actions

- a) The Department will facilitate an internal discussion in terms of broadening its purview to open participation to other department members and to begin exploratory discussion with potential Waterloo partners regarding the possibility of expanding the scope of the doctoral program, as well as implementing an Indigenization plan.
- b) The Department will hold a joint retreat with its WLU counterpart to review the doctoral

program and to consider an expanded vision moving forward.

January 2020 Update

The Joint Doctoral Program held a retreat in December 2019 to address this issue. There was enthusiasm for expanding the scope of the Joint Doctoral Program.

2. Address the issue of RS faculty complement regarding course releases due to secondments, administrative duties, and teaching in other units; and planning for future retirements, which could represent half of the current faculty complement within the next seven years.

Response

While the two assessors did not discuss the issue of faculty complement at length, the self-study and the discussion at the February 11, 2019 departmental meeting examined the issue thoroughly. There were two main issues identified.

First, although the Department has 13 faculty members, most have course release(s) for administrative duties for the Department, secondments (administrative duties for the four other agencies), and teaching for agency-programs outside of Religious Studies (e.g., Masters of Theological Studies, Conrad Grebel; Masters of Catholic Thought, St. Jerome's). For example, the three members who teach no RS courses serve as senior administrators in their various institutions. Other members are assigned to teach in Masters programs or other Departments in their agencies. A poll of departmental members conducted in the Winter 2019 semester revealed that only one member was teaching a full course load within RS, one member was on sabbatical, and three members taught no RS courses.

While course releases for the purposes of research may be an issue in the Faculty of Arts, the challenge within the RS Department involves course releases due to administrative duty or teaching in other units. As of Winter 2019, no one is receiving a course release for research purposes.

In any case, in terms of teaching and serving in Departmental roles, the Department is operating on a half-complement. This means that: compared to seven years ago, many more courses are taught by sessional appointments; and ii) the pool of people to serve in departmental roles (Chair, Associate Chair, Director of the Joint Doctoral Program) is very limited, to the point where these roles may not be able to be filled in the near future.

In 2019-2020, Department members will teach 26 Undergraduate RS courses, while course releases due to administration and teaching outside of the Department will total 37.

The second issue has to do with retirements. Approximately six members of the Department will reach retirement age by the time of the next cyclical review in 2025. This will affect teaching in both the undergraduate programs (Religious Studies and Jewish Studies) as well as the Joint Doctoral program. Moreover, these retirements will affect the Department's ability to fill essential service roles. At the February 11, 2019 Department meeting, members suggested that in the next few years the Chair should review possible retirements and approach the Deans of the five agencies to determine whether these positions will be renewed and, if so, how (that is, in what field of study).

Actions

- a) The Department will meet with the Heads of the five agencies to negotiate a renewed commitment to Religious Studies that would allow departmental members to teach and perform service in the Waterloo Department of Religious Studies rather than mostly or solely at their respective institutions.
- b) The Department will undertake a study of the impact of impending retirements on the undergraduate and doctoral programs, asking each agency for a commitment to replace retiring professors.

3. Address hiring equity issues in the Department.

Response

The Department recognizes the serious imbalances in terms of diversity among its members. Following Mavis Fenn's retirement in July 2018, three of its members are women, which represents only 25 percent, an imbalance that needs to be addressed (45% of Arts professors are women). Moreover, no one in the department is a member of a visible minority (one has an Indigenous heritage). Hence, replacements for retirements should be done with an eye to increasing diversity.

Action

- a) The Department will meet with the Heads of the five agencies to negotiate a renewed commitment to equity in hiring in Religious Studies.

Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	Empower the Chair/Director of the program with more oversight/authority to undertake a review of all UW RS undergraduate and PhD joint program faculty and conduct a department retreat in order to reduce the duplication of course offerings, to boost the flow of enrolment in upper level courses, increase collaborations between the universities, and explore potential collaborations with other units (e.g., Peace and Conflict Studies).	<p>The Department will hold a retreat to review and simplify the undergraduate program and curriculum. The Department held two meetings on simplifying the undergraduate program and curriculum. UGAG has already approved simplified Plan changes, renumbering of courses, and removal of a number of dormant courses. There was also discussion of strategies increase enrolments and explore collaborations with other units. The development of online courses will also be discussed.</p> <p>The Department will also request a meeting of the Heads (or their delegates) of the five agencies to discuss, clarify, and agree upon the role and powers of the Chair. This meeting has been requested and should take place in January 2020.</p>	<p>(Acting) Chair;</p> <p>Chair; AFIW Deans or delegates.</p>	<p>Complete – changes will take effect in Fall 2021</p> <p>January 30, 2020</p>
2.	Increase visibility of the undergraduate program to attract more students (e.g., program to do self-promotion and receive support from the centre such as MUR).	The Department will hold a retreat to discuss strategies for increasing department visibility on campus (see #1 above). Revise the RS Department website to: consistently target the typical undergraduate student (17-25 years old, etc.); highlight upcoming courses, making this list (with syllabi) one-click away from entering the site; and underscore the flexibility of the program, to encourage students to consider this as a valuable and complementary area of study alongside other areas/majors. Develop and institute a public communications procedure that regularly promotes the department, focusing especially on maximizing the effectiveness of online tools (social media, UW Learn,	(Acting) Chair; Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies	In progress and ongoing.

		<p>etc.) and adding a public presentation event of undergraduate research in RS.</p> <p>The department has revised its web site, although more changes are foreseen. The Administrative Manager and Chair have worked together to improve outreach through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).</p>		
3.	<p>Increase the current administrative staff position from part-time to full-time in order to support students (e.g., fieldwork forms, ethics approvals etc.) and enhance program communication (e.g., advertising for the program such as posters, social media presence etc.).</p>	<p>The Chair will approach the Heads of the five agencies to enquire about the possibility of increasing the Administrative Manager's position to full-time (35 hours).</p>	<p>Chair; AFIW Deans or delegates.</p>	<p>January 30, 2020</p>
4.	<p>Ensure field methodology training and ethics approval training are built into the doctoral course offerings. Students interviewed all expressed a feeling of isolation and expressed a need to build connections with sociology and anthropology faculty and for students to mobilize knowledge and training opportunities and better understanding of approaches that would help them shape their thesis proposals.</p>	<p>The Department will approach its Laurier counterpart to address the issues of a course on Methods to be offered in the Winter semester as well as ethics approval training within the program requirements. The Department will approach other units in the Waterloo Faculty of Arts to collaborate on a course on Methods.</p> <p>The Joint Doctoral Program held a retreat in December 2019 to address this issue. Discussions are ongoing.</p>	<p>Associate Chair, Graduate Studies</p>	<p>January 30, 2020 and ongoing</p>
5.	<p>Better coordination of course offers between AFIW institutions and UW.</p>	<p>The Department will meet with the Heads (or their delegates) of the five agencies to come to an agreement around Teaching Equity levels in Religious Studies, asking for clarification and commitments re: teaching levels in relation to administrative/teaching responsibilities within the agencies, etc. This meeting will also request RS</p>	<p>Chair; AFIW Deans or delegates;</p>	<p>January 30, 2020</p>

		faculty participation in the Arts First program to expose students to professors.		
6.	Renew efforts at fostering communication, community and collegiality among the doctoral students, between the two institutions, and between the faculty and doctoral students.	<p>The Department will coordinate with its Laurier counterpart to address this issue.</p> <p>The Associate Chair, Graduate Studies, Doris Jakobsh has initiated academic and social events (including dinners for grad students in her own home) to promote collegiality at all levels in the Joint Program.</p>	Associate Chair, Graduate Studies	Ongoing
	Initiatives the Program wishes to Implement	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
7.	Renewal of the doctoral program to expand its purview to allow broader participation, partner with other units at Waterloo, and implement an Indigenization plan. (Program's Recommendation)	<p>The Department will hold a joint retreat with its Laurier counterpart to review the doctoral program and to consider an expanded vision moving forward. Additionally, the department will facilitate an internal discussion and begin exploratory discussions with potential Waterloo partners regarding the possibility of expanding the scope of the doctoral program and its future direction more generally.</p> <p>The Joint Doctoral Program held a retreat in December 2019 to address this issue. There was enthusiasm for expanding the scope of the Joint Doctoral Program.</p>	Chair; Associate Chair, Graduate Studies	January 30, 2020 and ongoing
8.	Address the issue of RS faculty complement regarding course releases due to secondments, administrative duties, and teaching in other units; and planning for future retirements, which could represent half of the current faculty complement within the next	The Department will meet with the Heads of the five agencies to confirm their commitment to Religious Studies, including both teaching essential courses and participating in service essential to the well-being of the department (see #5 above). The Department will undertake a study of the impact of impending retirements on the undergraduate and doctoral	Chair; AFIW Deans or reps.	January 30, 2020 and ongoing

	seven years. (Program's Recommendation)	programs, asking each agency for a commitment to replace retiring professors.		
9.	Address hiring equity issues in the Department. (Program's Recommendation)	The Department will meet with the Heads of the five agencies to negotiate a renewed commitment to equity and diversity in hiring in Religious Studies.	Chair; AFIW Deans or reps.	June 1, 2020.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

25 January 2020

Professor David DeVidi
Associate VP, Academic
University of Waterloo

Dear Dave,

I am appending a brief decanal response to the Final Assessment Report on Religious Studies. I am supportive of the Department's wish to move forward with the specific recommendations outlined in their implementation plan. As you know, the Faculty of Arts is currently in a situation that puts constraints on its ability to make immediate financial promises to any unit. Moreover, the equity agreements between the AFIW and the University are complex and challenging. For that very reason, I suspect that they at times present barriers to innovation; it may well be time to examine them in detail, but it will be a lengthy process.

Nevertheless, as the Faculty works towards eliminating its financial deficit, I am open to conversations around forward planning, and am committed to doing whatever I can to put all units on a sound footing. In the case of RS, I'm particularly supportive of enhanced Indigenization of the program, and look forward to working together with our AFIW colleagues towards that goal.

Sincerely,



Sheila Ager
Dean, Faculty of Arts

Cc: David Seljak, Chair, Religious Studies
Marcus Shantz, President, Conrad Grebel University College





Date of next program review _____ 2024-2025 _____
Date

Signatures of Approval

David Selyak _____ Jan. 15, 2020 _____
Chair/Director Date

MARCUS SHANTE
CONRAD GAEBEL UC _____ JAN 23/2020 _____
AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only) Date

Faculty Dean _____ Date
Note: AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.

Associate Vice-President, Academic _____ Date
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs _____ Date
(For graduate and augmented programs)



Date of next program review

2024-2025

Date

Signatures of Approval

Chair/Director

Date

AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only)

Date

*please see additional
decanal response*

25 Jan/20

Faculty Dean

Date

Note: AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.

December 2019

Associate Vice-President, Academic
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

Date

December 2019

Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs
(For graduate and augmented programs)

Date