

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
APPENDIX C: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO ESTABLISH A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM

Date: September 1, 2010Constituent Institution: East Carolina UniversitySchool/College: Harriot College of Arts and SciencesDepartment: HCAS (religious studies program)**Program Identification:**CIP Discipline Specialty Title: Religion/Religious StudiesCIP Discipline Specialty Code: 38.0201.018.000 Level: BExact Title of the Proposed Degree: Religious StudiesExact Degree Abbreviation (e.g., BA, BS, MA, MS, EdD, PhD): BA

Does the proposed program constitute a substantive change as defined by SACS?

No X

a) Is it at a more advanced level than those previously authorized?

No X

b) Is the proposed program in a new discipline division?

No XProposed date to establish degree program (allow at least 3-6 months for proposal review): January 2010Do you plan to offer the proposed program away from campus *during the first year of operation*? No X*If yes, complete the form to be used to request establishment of a distance education program and submit it along with this request.***I. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM**

A. Describe the proposed degree program (i.e., its nature, scope, and intended audience).

At present, the multidisciplinary studies program at East Carolina University hosts a structured concentration in religious studies, in effect offering a major in religious studies. The multidisciplinary studies program, which was in part conceived as a testing ground for potential new stand-alone major programs, has enabled the religious studies program to demonstrate a clear track record of continuous and increasing student interest in religious studies. The religious studies program has matured with respect to the range of courses offered, faculty resources, and student majors, and it is now ready to exist as a stand-alone degree program. The proposed stand-alone religious studies major, to be housed within the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, would create a framework in which the religious studies program can accomplish its mission much more effectively and economically. It would also permit students to obtain a transcript and diploma that more clearly reflect the real nature of their academic education.

From the first planning meeting for the minor in religious studies in 1988 to the present, faculty members involved in the religious studies program have unanimously agreed that it ought to have an academic rather than a devotional mission, recognizing the distinction between the critical study of religion and its pious advocacy. This distinction occurs in the context of the American legal tradition of "separation of church and state," yielding a general approach to the study of religion that has become standard in public universities. This approach differs from the model employed in some theological schools sponsored by religious bodies. In terms of the stated mission, academic curriculum, and public programs, the aim of East Carolina's religious studies program has always been the promotion of a critical understanding of religious phenomena. The program neither excludes nor promotes any religious tradition or viewpoint, and the proposed program will follow this model in conformity with national norms. Such an approach to the human phenomena of religion is particularly important in today's globalized world as the United States becomes ever more multicultural, and students are required to have greater cultural competency and fluency in order to succeed in the workplace and as citizens in a complex world.

At the local and regional level, many people are religious and understand their world by way of their religion. At the same time, our state is rapidly becoming more racially, culturally, and religiously diverse. At the international and global levels, religious issues are playing an ever more important role in the evolution of world events. The religious studies program provides students with tools to help them be more aware and responsible as world citizens in a pluralistic society.

We do not aspire to transmit any set of religious beliefs; rather, we educate our students to think, speak, and write critically about religion using insights and methods from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. We educate our students to apply mature methodologies to questions of vital concern to the world's religions and to society at large so that they can analyze and understand religious phenomena in relation to other currents in a broad range of social and cultural contexts.

Creating a stand-alone major in religious studies would bring East Carolina University more in line with its peer institutions, help solidify the liberal arts mission of the Harriot College, correspond to national trends in public higher education, and provide a framework for more efficient and economical use of university resources.

The discipline of religious studies is a key part of the humanities and plays a central role in the liberal arts mission of the academy. Throughout the United States, it has become the standard practice at large universities to have a major in religious studies and a department of religious studies. We expect that the religious studies major will appeal to a broad array of students interested in understanding—from a rigorous academic perspective—the human condition and classic religious responses to that condition throughout time and across cultures. This expectation is supported by the appeal our program currently enjoys, a level of interest that will only increase with a stand-alone major.

In the future, the faculty members of the religious studies program aspire to create a concentration that focuses on the interface between religious studies and healthcare fields. Since people's most deeply held beliefs are frequently based in their religious outlooks, their attitudes, values, and decision making processes relating to their medical wellbeing are often also embedded in their religion. For these reasons, healthcare professionals benefit from understanding basic information about the world's religions and their connection to health issues. Likewise, religious studies majors will gain from understanding the relationship between these two important dimensions of the human experience. Since the health sciences are so significant at East Carolina University, this seems to be a quite natural avenue for future program development. The increasing interest in holistic and complementary medical modalities will also be supported by religious studies courses in this area.

B. List the educational objectives of the program.

Our major objective is to teach students to develop a critical understanding of religion. The program's specific objectives, listed below, are consistent with and, in some cases, a restatement of objectives found in the religious studies program charter, which currently guides the program.

In supporting the objectives of the university and the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, the religious studies program will:

- Provide a quality academic program that offers students a stand-alone major.
- Provide culturally diverse coursework that helps prepare students for citizenship and work in a global community.
- Promote lectures, seminars, and related activities for the university community and the region.
- Encourage research in the field of religious studies by faculty members and students.
- Provide students and faculty members with opportunities to study abroad.

Students graduating from the program will be able to:

- Cogently discuss classic conceptions of the meaning of life from a diverse array of cultures.
- Analyze religion as a cultural and historical phenomenon.
- Meaningfully discuss the strengths and limitations of various research methods applied to the study of religion.
- Describe the origins, historical development, and contemporary expression of major living religions.
- Identify standard methodologies employed in the academic study of religion.
- Communicate with a diverse array of people about religious questions and issues.
- Critically evaluate conceptions of religion communicated in art, the media, and other public arenas.
- Enter excellent graduate schools, compete for prestigious scholarships and programs, and obtain high quality jobs.

C. Describe the relationship of the program to other programs currently offered at the proposing institution, including the common use of: 1) courses, 2) faculty, 3) facilities, and 4) other resources.

The proposed stand-alone major, to be housed in the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences along with other stand-alone interdisciplinary degrees, is a reorganization and renaming of the existing religious studies structured concentration that is included within the multidisciplinary studies program. When approved by curriculum committees and the UNC General Administration many years ago, an explicit purpose of the multidisciplinary studies degree was to provide a testing ground for potential new stand-alone degree programs. This format allows programs to establish a track record before requests are submitted to establish stand-alone majors, programs, or departments. In this way, it was hoped the university could avoid proliferating an array of new programs that would turn out to be ineffective and unsustainable.

The religious studies committee took this opportunity seriously and has for several years established that track record, making a strong case for the current proposal for a stand-alone new degree program. Following an extensive assessment of our curriculum, we have also reorganized our course offerings, gathering all of the courses taught by the religious studies faculty members under the RELI prefix, and reorganized the level at which they will be taught. We have greatly expanded our offerings, adding special courses on Hinduism, indigenous religions, African religions, violence and religion, methodology, and religion and social issues. This is in addition to another set of courses added six years ago: Buddhism, Tibetan Religion and Culture, Classical Islam, and Islam in the Modern World. Currently, we are proposing three new courses: Religion and Film, Paul and His Letters, and Life and Teachings of Jesus. If these three latest courses are approved, we would have eighty-seven semester hours of course work under the RELI prefix, in addition to thirty-three semester hours of core electives and ninety-nine semester hours of general electives from other units, including anthropology, art, classics, English, history, philosophy, and languages.

This curriculum currently supports the multidisciplinary studies religious studies structured concentration major and would be more than sufficient to support the proposed stand-alone major. Those courses with a prefix other than RELI are taught in support of other majors, and the fact that they will be utilized by our majors will only support those other degree programs.

As part of our general curricular revision, religious studies is now listed in the catalog as one of the options for fulfilling the Foundations Curriculum humanities requirement. This change has resulted in a greatly enhanced visibility for our program.

Under the current structure at East Carolina University, our efforts to recruit majors are hindered by the mislabeling of religious studies. As it stands, students who have attended East Carolina for years often are surprised to learn that the university has religious studies courses and what amounts to a religious studies major. This is because our program is presently concealed within the multidisciplinary studies program and hence does not appear as a separate entity on the university web site, in the university phone directory, in the university catalog, in recruiting brochures, in manuals for first year students advising them on how to select a major, and so forth. Additionally, religious studies students are often mislabeled as "philosophy" students by the university and, most critically, as they apply to graduate school in their chosen field.

Students that obtain a concentration in religious studies through the multidisciplinary studies major would be better served by the model contained in this proposal; graduate schools, professional schools, and potential employers are justifiably confused about the nature of our program. The students' transcripts are difficult to understand. Religious studies faculty members spend time helping graduate and professional schools and potential employers of our graduates understand the nature of the degree our students are currently awarded. These confusions and the time spent by our faculty in addressing them would be eliminated with the proposed stand-alone degree.

We expect an enrollment of at least forty-nine majors in the first year of the program, as there are currently (as of October 16, 2010), forty-nine students seeking the concentration in religious studies through the multidisciplinary studies program. This number of students seeking the concentration has been achieved despite institutional obstacles that prevent interdisciplinary programs from obtaining the visibility enjoyed by departments. For example, until very recently, students who were interested in studying religion at East Carolina had to search for courses in the catalog listed under "p" for philosophy. If they wish to major in religious studies, they have to locate that option under "m" for multidisciplinary studies. Even then, for technical reasons the catalog merely described the minor in religious studies. The faculty members within religious studies often encounter students that have only learned of the existence of the program too late in their educational careers to become majors. Many faculty members, advisors, and administrators are unfamiliar with the program, and even people familiar with the curriculum process at ECU do not understand the nature of the discipline of religious studies or how our program is structured at ECU. For these reasons, we feel confident that with a clear presence in the catalog that would be afforded by having a stand-alone major, we would be able to attract the attention of a much larger block of students in the near future.

The proposed degree program will replace the current multidisciplinary studies structured concentration in religious studies. The new program will certainly be as successful as the current program, since all the current multidisciplinary studies structured concentration majors would be automatically transferred into the new stand-alone major program. There is every reason to believe that, the new degree will be even more successful, as the history of the program demonstrates. The religious studies program has grown to its present status in a deliberate and thoughtful manner. The religious studies minor was implemented in 1989, and the major was added under the auspices of the multidisciplinary studies program in 1998. More recent developments in our curriculum and changes in the description of our program in the catalog have provided a greater visibility for religious studies; accordingly, the number of students enrolling in our classes and the number pursuing the concentration in religious studies through the multidisciplinary studies major have continued to increase. If religious studies had a stand-alone major, it would be listed in all university publications, the

catalog, and on websites that students consult when trying to decide on a major. Potential majors would more easily be able to learn of our program.

Thousands of students through the years have benefited from the various courses offered, including senior seminars that often enroll students from various disciplines (See Table 1, p. 11). For a relatively new program and for an interdisciplinary program without the visibility of a stand-alone major, the number of religious studies majors, the number of graduates, and the enrollments are high. With the curricular cohesion and program visibility that would come with a stand-alone major, these trends should continue to improve.

D. Describe any explorations of collaborative offering of this program and the results of those explorations.

The academic study of religion is, by its nature, interdisciplinary. Throughout the history of the religious studies program, there has been, both formally and informally, excellent collaboration of faculty across several disciplines. The religious studies committee, which has governed the religious studies program, is composed of faculty members from six departments (anthropology, English, history, philosophy, psychology, and sociology). The proposed stand-alone major program will continue to be governed by the current committee comprised of faculty members across these six disciplines.

Courses offered in the current and proposed program are integrated into a number of the academic programs across campus. These include anthropology, Asian studies, classics, music, nursing, and women's studies.

Religious studies faculty have participated in the work of the interdisciplinary Harriot College Center for Diversity and Inequality Research, funded partly by Dr. Jesse Peel, a retired Atlanta psychiatrist, who has also funded an endowed professorship in the religious studies program. One of our faculty members, Dr. Derek Maher, is the co-chair of the Diversity Dimension Committee, bringing together faculty, staff, and students from across the university as part of the Foundations of Excellence initiative.

Religious studies faculty have served on graduate thesis committee in adult education, anthropology, art, communications, English, history, international studies, psychology, and sociology,

In collaboration with the College of Nursing, we are developing a special section of RELI 1690 World Religions that can be taken for humanities credit in fulfillment of the Foundations Curriculum requirements. The class will survey the major religions of the world, but will also include information particularly relevant to healthcare professionals, including religious conceptions of health and the body, religious views on healing, and end of life issues. The class will also be helpful for pre-med students, pre-dentistry students, and others in the allied health fields. As indicated above, we aspire to develop a more expansive collaboration with health sciences in the future.

II. JUSTIFICATION FOR THE PROGRAM (Narrative Statement)

A. Describe the proposed program as it relates to the following:

1. Institutional Mission and Strategic Plan and response to UNC Tomorrow

The proposed program is consistent with and provides substantial support for many elements of the strategic plan for the *UNC Tomorrow Commission Final Report (December 2007)*, *ECU's Phase I Response to UNC Tomorrow*, *ECU Tomorrow: A Vision for Leadership and Service*, *Internationalization Goals for 2009 and a Plan for Achieving Them (February 1, 2008)*, and other initiatives at East Carolina University and in the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

LIBERAL ARTS EDUCATION

One of the suggested strategies of the *UNC Tomorrow Report* is to "Recognize and reward the role of the humanities ... in developing soft skills by strengthening the commitment of resources to the liberal arts" (4.1.1). Consistent with this mission, the university's vision statement of *ECU Tomorrow* states that "We will provide our students with a strong foundation in the liberal arts, recognizing that foundation as essential for intellectual growth and lifelong learning." As the liberal arts college of East Carolina University, Harriot College's mission statement says, "The mission of the Harriot College of Arts & Sciences is to provide educational and learning experiences to provide the skills and knowledge for students to become responsible citizens in a diverse society..." Furthermore, as explained in the college's strategic plan:

A liberal arts education challenges students to examine the values that guide the organization and application of human knowledge to the problems of human existence, extends the student's knowledge through scholarly research and intellectual inquiry, inculcates ethical decision making and advances the skills necessary to become engaged citizens whose leadership improves the life of our communities, society, and the world. [Here I just indented the block quote. I will do that elsewhere also.]

Religion is a major worldwide dimension of human life and culture, and the scholarly study of religion, listed as one of the bona fide disciplines by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is now widely accepted in public higher education. As a result, the analytical study of religion merits a place in and can make a significant contribution to an institution of the size and with the mission of East Carolina University. Given the central role religion plays in the human experience, religious studies can make a significant contribution to the UNC, ECU, and Harriot College objectives. We will offer a program for our majors and others with courses that explore the practices and beliefs of the world's religions, providing knowledge that is instrumental to creating discriminating and critical students and responsible decision-makers and citizens capable of playing effective roles in the current and future environments.

CRITICAL THINKING AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* gives due emphasis to the "soft skills" important to today's graduate:

Today's college graduates need to develop 'soft skills' – those capabilities including the ability to think critically, reason analytically, solve problems, communicate clearly both orally and in writing, work in teams, and be comfortable within a diverse workforce. These skills, which are critical to lifelong learning and professional growth, have become a necessity as economic sectors, occupations, and job characteristics continue to change more rapidly today than in the past. In many instances, it is proficiency with the soft skills, along with the ability to think innovatively and creatively, that will carry students from one job or career to another (4.1).

The *Report* goes on to recommend that "UNC should prepare its students for successful professional and personal lives in the 21st century, equipping them with the tools they will need to adapt to the ever-changing world" (4.1.1). As part of its contribution to "21st Century Research," Harriot College's mission is "to provide undergraduate and graduate students direct training and experience in the application of the scientific method to solve real problems. Harriot College is committed to developing each learner's ability to discover, evaluate and communicate knowledge ..."

Religious studies, as a basic discipline in the liberal arts, provides students significant training in these "soft skills." Our lower level classes and especially our seminar classes required for majors emphasize writing, competent oral discussion of complicated concepts and issues, critical thinking, and effectiveness in group collaboration. The proposed major will allow the religious studies program to enhance and increase its ability to promote these soft skills. At many major public universities, religious studies is at the center of the liberal arts program, providing students with the learning experiences that will turn them into lifelong learners and careful thinkers.

DIVERSITY AND RESPECT

The university lists "respect" as one of the five enduring values to which it is committed, saying "Respect for others is at the heart of our community." Consistent with this commitment, the Harriot College, as part of its mission, "is committed to diversity and to adopting cross-cultural and transnational perspectives in our teaching, learning, and scholarly activities."

As world events and globalization enhance the need for greater cultural and religious understanding in the 21st century, the proposed major will contribute to enhanced awareness of diversity. The proposed degree curriculum, with its nonsectarian and analytical features, will promote cultural diversity through its focus on religious diversity. To this end, religious studies at East Carolina will also participate in the emerging Harriot College Center for Diversity and Inequality Research, explicitly referred to in *Phase I Response* and funded partly by Dr. Jesse Peel, a retired Atlanta psychiatrist who has also funded an endowed professorship in the

religious studies program. The director of religious studies, Dr. Derek Maher is co-chairing a campus-wide committee on diversity as part of the Foundations of Excellence program.

INTERNATIONALIZATION

“Global Readiness” is a major objective advocated by the *UNC Tomorrow Report*: “UNC should educate its students to be personally and professionally successful in the 21st century ...” (4.1). Specific strategies of the *UNC Tomorrow Report* include providing “more opportunities for students to work, study, and experience different cultures overseas” (4.1.3). The report also urges the expansion of:

Students’ global and cultural awareness that includes an understanding of diverse cultures but also stresses the commonality of human problems through such efforts as: Taking to scale successful existing UNC programs that focus on global awareness and global education, and incorporating global awareness into the general education curriculum, and encouraging all majors and graduate programs to incorporate global awareness into their curricula (4.1.3).

As stated in the *ECU Tomorrow* document, “ECU will internationalize our programs, students, and faculty.” Harriot College “... will provide programs and experiences for our students that will develop in them the ability to interact effectively with people from many cultures and backgrounds ...” In particular, Harriot College will “expand international opportunities for study.”

The *Phase I Response*, under the goal of “Globalizing (Internationalizing) ECU,” lists five major goals: 1) incorporate international education into the University’s mission statement; 2) expand and diversify overseas opportunities for ECU students; 3) increase and diversify ECU’s international student population; 4) internationalize ECU’s faculty and staff; and 5) promote more global awareness through the ECU curriculum. The religious studies program contributes directly to goals 2, 4, and 5 and indirectly to goal 3. The religious studies program’s contribution to goal 4 (internationalizing ECU’s faculty) has been discussed earlier under “Diversity.” Goals 2 and 5 are discussed below.

Because religion is a worldwide phenomenon, a baccalaureate degree in religious studies would contribute significantly to enhancing the international curriculum at the university. Not only do our courses inform students about the religious traditions found throughout the world, but the methodologies employed in the academic study of religion are ideally suited to help to inculcate in students a critical awareness of multiculturalism, cross cultural communication, and inter-religious relations.

Most of the courses in the proposed program promote the goal of internationalization, some very explicitly, such as, African Religions, Buddhism, Hinduism, Indigenous Religions, Islam, and Islam in the Modern World, Tibetan Religion and Culture, and World Religions. Specifically, with regard to internationalizing the curriculum, the *Phase I Response* says that “New courses will be developed as needed to make ECU students more globally aware and competitive.” It also says that “Departments and schools will define and implement curriculum enhancements to existing courses or will create new courses in each student’s major as necessary to provide all ECU graduates with the discipline-specific education essential to global readiness in the major.” The religious studies faculty strives to meet this goal through our course content and the methodology we teach our students, as detailed elsewhere in this proposal.

Related to internationalization efforts, the *UNC Tomorrow Report* calls for increasing “student proficiency in foreign languages...” (4.1.1). The proposed BA in religious studies requires that majors have competency in a foreign language. In addition, the religion faculty members have worked closely, in tutorial settings, with a number of students to provide them with advanced skills in language, especially Tibetan, beyond the typical four semester requirement. Details on specific students can be found elsewhere in this document.

Study Abroad Program in Religion

With regard to the *Phase I Response* goal of expanding and diversifying overseas opportunities and as part of our program’s contribution to this internationalization goal, the religious studies program has distinguished itself with a successful quality study abroad program, despite its small size and the disadvantages associated

with being nearly invisible on campus and in the catalog. With the coherence and increased visibility of the proposed program, we can expand these kinds of opportunities.

Summer 2011 will be the thirteenth year of what, according to East Carolina University's International House, has been the most enduring study abroad program at the university. While the program is designed for students to gain academic credit, the opportunity is open to the public, and some travelers have been non-traditional students and members of the community, including public school teachers, auditing the courses. Programs have been conducted by Derek Maher and Calvin Mercer, and a program to Kenya is being planned by Mary Wangila. The destinations and enrollments of our study abroad programs from 1999-2011 are summarized in the supplement.

International Presence on Campus

The *Phase I Response*, under the goal of "Globalizing (Internationalizing) ECU," lists as a major goal the internationalization of ECU's faculty and staff. The religious studies program has contributed to this goal by bringing in Dr. Isaac Kalimi, PhD, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, as the Whichard Distinguished Chair in the Humanities for the 2009-2010 school year. We also hired in a tenure-track position Dr. Mary Wangila, a Kenyan scholar of African and indigenous religions. Dr. Wangila, who joined our faculty in fall 2008, holds the endowed professorship funded by Dr. Jesse Peel. Previously, in 2003, we hired Dr. Derek F. Maher, a Canadian scholar of Buddhism and Indian and Tibetan religions. Thus, out of the four full-time faculty members at ECU with PhDs in religious studies, two are international scholars with cross-cultural perspectives and international areas of specialization.

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* recognizes the importance of helping to "ensure that all students are better prepared to enter and succeed academically in college" (4.2.6). The *ECU Tomorrow* plan calls for "Supporting Student Success: Even as our research and extension enterprise grows, we remain committed to providing a great education in the classroom and to preparing tomorrow's leaders through engagement, community service, and meaningful leadership experiences." The *Phase I Response* states that "The University will foster the enrollment of promising students (from all sectors of society) and work to ensure that when they depart the University, they are poised to succeed both as individuals and as members of society." Religious Studies faculty members are actively involved in the Foundations of Excellence initiative, which is focused on enhancing success for first year students and transfer students.

The religious studies program has been remarkably effective in supporting these initiatives. The cohesion and visibility offered by the proposed program will enhance our ability to contribute even more significantly to these goals. Our accomplishments have come by emphasizing good teaching. Our core professors have been awarded the UNC Board of Governors Distinguished Professor for Teaching Award and the University Scholar-Teacher Award, and they have won numerous grants for teaching. We have a solid track record of attracting, retaining, and graduating academically proficient and talented students who do well beyond East Carolina University. This track record bodes well for the proposed program to continue and expand this tradition. Below, we have compiled data on this point from the past four years. Note that in three of the last four years that such data could be tracked, the mean GPA of religion majors has easily exceeded the mean GPA of all East Carolina University declared majors. This comparatively high average GPA is due to the quality of the students who decide to major in religious studies; other institutions report the same results for religious studies majors. Detailed data since 2004 is provided in the supplement.

The *Phase I Response* intends that our graduates are "poised to succeed." We emphasize good teaching in our program; however, our core faculty is also very active in professional contexts at the national level, reading papers and serving on professional society steering committees. We work to introduce our majors to the networks of the academic study of religion and, for those with an interest in pursuing graduate school, we help them be as successful as they can be in securing admission to good schools. Some accomplishments by our majors in recent years are recorded below. Despite their accomplishments, these excellent students have been hampered by a transcript that does not clearly reflect the religious studies focus of their undergraduate degree. The proposed degree will correct this problem, attract an increased number of majors due to the

higher visibility of the program, and provide a more coherent course of study. Our ability to recruit, retain, graduate, and ensure success of students will be enhanced.

A significant number of our graduates have entered good quality graduate and professional programs in various fields at top educational institutions. These include the Duke University, Emory University, Notre Dame University, University of Michigan, University of Oxford, and others. The achievements are summarized in the supplement.

The religious studies major would serve as a complement for a broad array of careers, including those in business, counseling, education, foreign service, ministerial careers, and social work. Informal surveys of graduates of the religious studies concentration in the multidisciplinary studies program indicate that they have moved into a variety of fields. We have found that more than a third of our majors go on to graduate school in religious studies, theological programs, or other fields. These students aspire to become either academics or ministers. Another segment of our graduates find that the quasi-major they now receive through the multidisciplinary studies program provides excellent preparation for various forms of employment in faith-based communities, including ancillary institutional functions such as education, finance, music, publishing, and recreation. A smaller number of the remainder have pursued their education through our program out of personal interest in religion, and these graduates end up following career paths that take them in diverse directions, including, in recent years, a computer expert in the business school, a music engineer, and a yoga instructor. (See Table 2, p. 13.)

COMMUNITY SERVICE

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* states that the mission of UNC will be implemented, in part, through public service (4.7). It also states that “UNC should promote the arts and cultural enrichment in all regions of the state” (4.4.4). Suggested strategies to achieve this include: “Support and expand campus artistic and cultural programs, and increase offerings of such programs to the public” (4.4.4). The *Report* also states that “UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences” (4.7.4). The *Phase I Response* document correctly states that *Servire*, our motto, is a fundamental guiding principle of our work. As detailed below, the religious studies program has made significant public service contributions; these efforts will be enhanced with the visibility and organizational streamlining to come with the proposed degree.

As part of its *ECU Tomorrow* commitment, the university will “enhance and expand its position as an arts and culture center, “in order to “significantly enhance Greenville’s standing as an arts and culture center.” The *Phase I Response* commits our university to “Create vibrant and livable communities through ... cultural enrichment.” Relatedly, the university is committed to “Creating Opportunity for the East.” As explained in the *ECU Tomorrow* document, “No institution is more important to eastern North Carolina than East Carolina University.” Another “new century opportunity” is “Forging Effective Partnerships: We are committed to building relationships with a wide range of partners for the benefit of the people of North Carolina.” Harriot College, as well, is committed to serving “the community and region through... community engagement,” committed to “providing meaningful benefits for the region/community,” and the college also affirms “East Carolina’s “tradition of public outreach and strong regional ties.”

The religious studies program has distinguished itself with the annual Jarvis Lecture, which has developed as one of the most popular public lecture series at the university. As such, it was invited to become a part of Harriot College’s Voyages of Discovery Lecture Series, and the 17th annual Jarvis Lecture held in fall 2008 was one of the featured Voyages of Discovery lectures. While not directly related to the academic mission, one of the goals of the religious studies program is serving the eastern North Carolina region by providing programs that promote a thoughtful understanding of religion. Several hundred people, mostly from the Greenville and eastern North Carolina area, attend this annual lecture each year. It is estimated that 700 people attended the 2008-2009 lecture and more than 700 people attended the 2009-2010. The lecture series reflects the kind of public-private cooperation between university and outside organizations that is mutually beneficial.

Thousands of people on campus and in the community have benefited from lectures sponsored by the religious studies program. For further information see the supplement. Moreover, the religious studies program has also sponsored or co-sponsored dozens of other presentations. Moreover, religious studies faculty members themselves provide dozens of talks each year in contexts outside of the classroom. The religious studies faculty members take seriously their role in cultivating mature considered engagement of religious issues in our community.

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* states that UNC schools should “encourage and reward public service ...” (4.7.2). Members of the religious studies committee have routinely provided various services to community groups, including lectures, seminars, a N.C. Humanities Council-funded public conference, and consultations in the region. Some of the speakers in the Jarvis Lecture series conduct seminars for local religious leaders. One member of the religion faculty maintains an email list of 1000 people who receive regular mailings of religion-related academic or cultural events in the region. The 1000 people have requested to be on the list and are active participants in various events announced on the list. As part of his Study Abroad in India program, Dr. Maher has incorporated volunteer work with a non-governmental organization dedicated to poverty alleviation in north India.

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* presents the following major finding: “UNC should become more directly engaged with and connected to the people of North Carolina, its regions, and our state as a whole” (4.7). The *Phase I Response* intends for ECU to play a significant role in creating “a region recognized for its creativity, diversity, and ... cultural richness.” Given its small size, we make substantial contributions to the region’s diversity and cultural richness. If we can gain greater visibility by developing a stand-alone major, we will be able to help develop our community’s cultural opportunities, diversity, and international awareness.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* states that “UNC should increase community awareness of environmental and sustainability issues” (4.6.3). Suggested strategies include: “incorporate environmental literacy into undergraduate curricula” and “provide community workshops on sustainability” (4.6.2). The *Phase I Response* document says that “ECU will lead in the area of environmental sustainability and demonstrate a clear sensitivity to the sustainability of its own operations and to the advocacy of sustainability in its instructional, research, and outreach programs.”

The current major explicitly includes discussion of religion and the environment in a course called “Religion and Social Issues.” Environmental concerns are also addressed in other courses, such as Buddhism, Indigenous Religions, and World Religions. One member of the faculty is active in local environmental initiatives. For example, in a recent lecture, he has spoken to a local environmental group on religion and the environment. Preliminary plans are underway to feature this topic in an upcoming Jarvis Lecture. In summary, the visibility and cohesion of the proposed major will allow the religious studies program to build on its record of making a contribution on this issue.

INNOVATIVE LEARNING

One of the suggested strategies contained in the *UNC Tomorrow Report*, is to “incorporate experiential learning opportunities across degree programs and throughout curricula through such activities as undergraduate research, project-based and active learning, study abroad ...” (4.1.1). This strategy lists eight such activities, three of which have played a significant role in our courses and programs. Professors in our program each year participate in the East Carolina Honors Undergraduate Research Program, working closely with students to mentor them in developing research skills. Without sacrificing traditional emphases on reading, writing, and critical thinking, experiential learning is a key element in the offering of a number of our courses, including our biblical studies courses, World Religions, Religion and Social Issues, Women and Religion, and Monasticism.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

It is increasingly being recognized that quality interdisciplinary research initiatives are needed and appropriate in the modern context. The Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, consistent with the *ECU Tomorrow Report*, is committed to this as a strategy to “promote multidisciplinary research by formulating policies that

reward and encourage investigators and their academic units to engage in projects involving faculty from different disciplines.” While the primary purpose of the proposed program is to expand curriculum options for undergraduate students, the possibility for collaborative research will be enhanced as faculty from various departments are working together to provide an interdisciplinary degree option for students. Religion as a field of study lends itself naturally to interdisciplinary study, since many methodologies are routinely employed, including those used in history, literary studies, philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology, and other disciplines. Already our faculty members have played key collaborative roles in women’s studies, Asian studies, and have served on graduate-level thesis committees in several other disciplines including adult education, anthropology, art, communications, English, history, international studies, psychology, and sociology.

PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* says “UNC should communicate its resources and expertise to wider audiences” (4.7.4). Consistent with an emphasis of the American Academy of Religion, the largest scholarly society of professors and researchers who teach and research religion, members of the ECU religion faculty have been successful in promoting thoughtful public understanding of religion. In addition to the Jarvis Lecture, already mentioned, they have fostered public understanding through publications for lay people, lectures, other programs for the public, and consultations. The successful public face of our program is one reason for the good will that has issued in public/private partnerships, such as the Peel Endowed Professor of Religion, the Jarvis Lecture series, and smaller grants from private individuals to support students on study abroad programs. With the advantages that will come with a renaming and reorganization of the major, we expect to be able to expand our public/private partnerships by obtaining contributions to help low and moderate income students participate in our program. We will also continue to seek larger donations, along the lines of the endowed Peel Professorship.

THE REGION'S HEALTH

The *UNC Tomorrow Report* says that UNC schools “... should lead in improving health and wellness in North Carolina” (4.5). The Harriot College plan notes: “Students who become our future mental health professionals—psychologists, counselors, social workers, therapists—are educated in the College of Arts and Sciences liberal arts foundation.”

While contributing to this initiative is not central to the mission of the religious studies program, the proposed degree relates in that we will offer courses that explore the various religions of the world so that aspiring medical professionals in our courses are exposed to information about the beliefs and practices that animate their increasingly multicultural clients and patients. More specifically, in response to discussions with the dean of the nursing school and her planning staff, we are offering in spring 2011 a special section of world religions designed for nursing majors. We have plans to expand this kind of offering in ways that contribute to the mission of our allied health programs.

SUMMARY

The religious studies program has done many things well. The proposed major will provide a more coherent and comprehensible academic foundation upon which the program can expand its contribution to students, the university, and the region, all without additional resources. And, in fact, the proposed program will provide for more efficient and economical use of current resources, streamlining the operation of the existing program. Our program mission is supportive of many of the goals and strategies contained in the *UNC Tomorrow Report*. As part of its 21st century strategy to “expand educational opportunities on and off campus,” Harriot College is committed to increasing “student access and diversity to HCAS degree offerings including undergraduate (e.g., religious studies), masters level (e.g., security studies) and doctoral (e.g., health psychology) programs.” Religious studies is here listed as an example of a unit where educational opportunities on campus can be expanded. Local and global realities in the contemporary world combine to permit the religious studies program, if this proposal is approved, to make an even more substantial and significant contribution to the objectives of the Thomas Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

Although not stated explicitly in its planning documents, it is understood that the university and Harriot College always works to maximize their limited resources. It is appropriate and inevitable that requests for new degree

programs come under close fiscal scrutiny. Many programs that are not by nature interdisciplinary do legitimately require new funds for curriculum and faculty development. Religious studies is a widely accepted bona fide academic field of study and one which by nature legitimately lends itself to interdisciplinary analysis. It is a perfect field in which to offer a new degree in a time of budget constraint. The proposed cost-sensitive major can be offered by reorganizing the current multidisciplinary studies structured concentration in religion studies, with its proven track record, into a stand-alone major. At the same time, this move will benefit students, faculty, and the local community—all without any requiring that any new funds be injected into the program. Much of this document is a display of what the current religious studies program has accomplished within current constraints, but we anticipate that the proposed change will lead to greater visibility and, as a result, a more significant contribution to the university and the community by the religious studies program when the advantages of a renaming and reorganization are realized.

2. Student Demand.

The multidisciplinary studies program was designed to be a testing ground for evaluating the viability of potential programs. Through the structured concentration in religious studies within the multidisciplinary studies program, our religious studies program has demonstrated a strong record of majors in the structured concentration, as well as enrollments among the general student population. As our curriculum and visibility have increased over the past several years, the numbers of majors have increased apace, and there has been a continual growth in enrollments over the past several years. As we have gained a higher profile, we have continued to enroll a higher percentage of the seats we have available in our classes. Also, as the number of faculty members has grown, we have been able to offer more sections, and at an increasing rate students are choosing to enroll in our courses. In other words, the more classes we can offer, the more the new sections become full. This would indicate that there is a still untapped appetite for religious studies courses, and further development of our program is likely to be met with greater interest among students in general.

The accompanying Table 1 shows the number of enrollments, the number of majors, and the number of sections religious studies has offered over the previous eight school years.

Table 1

Year	student credit hours	number of majors	number of courses offered
2003-2004	1281	19	11
2004-2005	1317	17	11
2005-2006	1290	26	11
2006-2007	1329	28	11
2007-2008	1434	30	11
2008-2009	1911	28	15
2009-2010	2124	37	15
2010-2011	1602 (first half of year only)	49	11 (first half of year only)

Based on these trends, we feel justified in anticipating continued growth in the number of majors and the number of enrollees in our religious studies courses into the future. For a long time, there was only one professor with a PhD in religious studies at ECU. The data shown here demonstrates that after the second was added in the fall of 2003, there was a sharp jump in the number of majors. Over the next four school years, 2005-2009, our numerical landmarks remained relatively flat. Since then, we have experienced a sharp rise in interest in our program. This is due to the fact that a third faculty member has been hired in religious studies. But also, during that same time period, we spent a great deal of time and effort rationalizing our curriculum, adding courses, and making changes so that religious studies appeared in the catalog in a more accessible and comprehensible form. In 2009, religious studies was explicitly listed in the catalog as one of the options for satisfying the Foundation Curriculum distribution requirement for the humanities. These changes have provided us with a higher profile, an outcome that has resulted in a brisk increase in our enrollments and number of majors. This semester, we added a fourth faculty member, and we anticipate a similar bump in our numbers due to being able to offer more sections.

Moreover, the approval of this proposal itself would serve to radically enhance our visibility in the catalog and on campus. In dozens of university publications and websites, the religious studies program has been obscured or ignored because of not having a stand-alone major. This institutional change will raise the profile of our program once again, and this will enhance enrollments, attract more majors and minors, and fortify our program. The proposed new degree program would reinforce all of these efforts without the need for new resources or new faculty members.

3. Societal Need.

The humanities form one of the foundations of a liberal arts education, and religious studies is at the core of the humanities. The humanities help prepare students to cultivate values, foster social responsibility, develop meaning in their own lives, and become better citizens; these disciplines are intrinsically valuable and constitute a vital part of a liberal arts education for those reasons. Like other humanities disciplines, the discipline of religious studies is concerned with the human condition, and it helps students cultivate a reflective disposition towards the means through which people have made sense of the human experience throughout time.

Additionally, the humanities and the liberal arts education in general help students to gain a realistic sense of the world at large so that they can navigate their way through the increasingly complex multi-cultural and multi-religious atmosphere that characterizes the contemporary world. The study of the humanities enables students to understand major social issues more effectively so they can participate in society in a more meaningful fashion. Given that religions constitute some of the most deeply held beliefs of most people throughout the world, a well-rounded education in religious studies will usefully inform students engaged in the study of many fields, including anthropology, art, business, economics, history, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, and world affairs. Religious studies, in particular, helps students to acquire analytical skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural awareness so that they can succeed in a multicultural environment; the trend towards globalization makes these concerns even more critical.

The previous section on student demand demonstrated that interest in religious studies among ECU students is increasing. Nationally, this is also the case. Even in the pre-9/11 environment, students across the country have exhibited an increased interest in studying religion. A comprehensive study of the status of religious studies across the country was released in 2003 by the American Academy of Religion (AAR), the primary academic professional organization for scholars of religious studies. According to this report, nationwide between 1996-1997 and 1999-2000, there was a dramatic increase in the number of religion majors (25.6 percent), in the number of students taking religion courses (15.3 percent), and the number of religion courses offered (9.3 percent). A recent white paper on "The Religion Major and Liberal Education" indicates that such trends are continuing. See Appendix 1.

A 2007 update to the aforementioned white paper indicated that:

By most indicators, the field is growing, perhaps significantly. The number of religious studies majors increased by 22 percent in the past decade (to an estimated 47,000 students), with like percentage increases in the number of total courses offered, course enrollments, and faculty positions in the field. The number of religious studies majors at public institutions has grown even more rapidly, by 40 percent during the same period, signifying a sea-change in the field. What was once a major situated largely within liberal arts colleges and denominationally-linked institutions is now establishing a widespread presence at state universities. In the past five years alone, new degree programs or departments of religion have been proposed or established at the University of Texas, Ohio State University, Florida State University, Georgia State University, the University of Minnesota, the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, the University of North Carolina, Asheville, and Towson State University, among other public institutions. In part shaped by this trend, the number of religion degree programs that are housed in free-standing religion departments also appears to be on the rise, with the total now topping 50 percent. (See Appendix 8)

These updated figures reflecting an intensified interest during the post-9/11 period may be a consequence of an increased awareness of the importance of understanding religions.

The religious studies major helps to prepare students for a number of future careers and educational opportunities. The ECU students who have graduated with a concentration in religious studies over the past several years have gone on to graduate schools in religious studies or other areas, gone to work in churches or the helping professions, or sought out careers in unrelated areas. Table 2 summarizes these data on students that graduated from the ECU multidisciplinary studies program with a concentration in religious studies since the 2004-2005 school year.

Table 2

Non-Ministerial Graduate School	Ministerial graduate schools/careers	Helping professions	Unrelated careers
14	5	4	17

Among the careers that our graduates have undertaken, there is expected to be above average growth in religious studies education at the university level (see appendix 8), and average growth in both the clergy and the category known as “directors, religious activities and education,” according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20052.htm>).

4. Impact on existing undergraduate and/or graduate academic programs at ECU. (e.g., Will the proposed program strengthen other programs? Will it stretch existing resources? How many of your programs at this level currently fail to meet Board of Governors’ productivity criteria? Is there a danger of proliferation of low-productivity degree programs at the institution?)

The enhancement of the religious studies program at East Carolina University that would be entailed by approval of the new degree program would reinforce a variety of other programs. In recent years, faculty members in religious studies have served on thesis and dissertation committees of students from a variety of programs, including adult education, anthropology, art, communications, English, history, international studies, psychology, and sociology.

Religious studies also provides courses that serve a range of other programs on campus, including anthropology, Asian studies, classics, music, nursing, and women’s studies by providing courses they employ in their programs.

Also significant, if the religious studies program separates from the multidisciplinary studies program by virtue of the approval of this proposal, the latter will not be weakened. Instead, the multidisciplinary studies program will continue serving its numerous constituencies after the religious studies stand-alone major is implemented. The multidisciplinary studies program has fifty-seven majors, excluding the religious studies majors. These majors are divided between neuroscience, classics, Asian studies, Russian studies, international studies, and the individual concentrations. For comparison, these non-religious studies numbers are up from twenty-five majors in 2007-2008 and thirty-six majors in 2008-2009.

According to Calvin Mercer, the director of the multidisciplinary studies program, that program is currently viable without the students pursuing the religious studies concentration; additionally, there is significant growth in the multidisciplinary studies program at present. This is in part because of the relatively new initiatives in Asian studies, international studies, and Russian studies, programs that are growing due to an increase in faculty and student interest. Mona Russell of the History Department has also indicated that she will likely propose a Middle East studies concentration within the multidisciplinary studies program. In the past, there was strong interest from faculty members in ethnic studies to create a concentration within the multidisciplinary studies program, but that has waned following the death of the program director. It is anticipated that the ethnic studies concentration might be revived at some point. In recent years, also, there have been indications that coastal studies may want to develop a presence within the multidisciplinary studies program, though nothing formal has been proposed.

While some concentrations within the multidisciplinary studies program have demonstrated only a short-term appeal, there is an overall growth trend among the various "programs" that are "housed" in the multidisciplinary studies program. The long-standing neuroscience and classics programs will continue to anchor the multidisciplinary studies program, with Asian studies and perhaps international studies, Middle East studies, and Russian studies joining them as significant elements of multidisciplinary studies. With respect to Asian studies, international studies, and Russian studies, because of the growing interest in these programs, the director, Calvin Mercer, has recently initiated procedures that will make it easier for students in those programs, with counsel from their advisors, to declare majors and take required courses. While these and other programs may continue to grow in the context of multidisciplinary studies, religious studies is the only program within multidisciplinary studies that is appropriate at this time for stand-alone status. There is no indication from the faculty involved in any of the other programs that stand-alone status is desired or anticipated in the foreseeable future. So multidisciplinary studies will continue to grow and serve its various constituencies without religious studies. Over a long time span, it is evident that the multidisciplinary studies program remains a strong and lively unit that will continue to serve students and faculty members at East Carolina University. It will not become less viable in terms of the number of majors or the number of graduates if religious studies becomes independent.

The proposed major in religious studies will do nothing to weaken the philosophy department in which all four current faculty members with PhDs in religious studies now serve. At present, the second administrative assistant located in the philosophy department also provides support for both the religious studies program and the multidisciplinary studies program. This will remain the same under the proposed change. The religious studies curriculum and the philosophy curriculum are separate, so this program change will have no effect on philosophy at all.

In fact, the proposed change will make more efficient use of the time of the advisors within the religious studies program. At present, we expend considerable time removing confusions about the nature of the program, explaining it to graduate schools and prospective employers, and advertising our program to prospective majors and enrollees who might be interested but who would have trouble learning of our existence.

The religious studies program already has enough enrollments and majors (through the concentration in religious studies in the multidisciplinary studies degree program) to avoid being considered a low productivity program. There is no danger at East Carolina University of a proliferation of low productivity degrees, and this proposal will do nothing to increase the likelihood of that outcome.

B. Discuss potential program duplication and program competitiveness.

1. Identify similar programs offered elsewhere in North Carolina. Include a) public and b) private institutions of higher education.

In the UNC system, many schools, some smaller than East Carolina, have substantial programs of religious studies; all of them are critically oriented programs instead of the devotional programs found at many private institutions. A summary of the critically oriented academic programs in religious studies and the devotional programs in North Carolina universities and colleges is in the supplement.

2. Indicate how the new proposed program differs from other programs like it in the University. If the program duplicates other UNC programs, explain a) why it is necessary or justified and b) why demand (if limited) might not be met through a collaborative arrangement (perhaps using distance education) with another UNC institution. If the program is a first professional or doctoral degree, compare it with other similar programs in public and private universities in North Carolina, in the region, and in the nation.

The baccalaureate in religious studies is an option students have at eight public North Carolina universities and a number of private colleges and universities in the state. There are several dimensions to the rationale for the proposed degree at East Carolina University.

First, with respect to private institutions that offer religious studies programs, it should be noted that the approach to the study of religion is decidedly different at public and private institutions. The study of religion at public institutions is conducted in the context of the doctrine of the separation of church and state and is avowedly analytical, critical, and nonsectarian in method. In contrast, at many private institutions, the study of religion legitimately involves a devotional and advocacy dimension that is entirely absent in a public setting, such as ECU.

While schools such as Barton College in Wilson, Mount Olive College in Mount Olive, and NC Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount offer religion programs in our area of North Carolina, they are church-related and faith-oriented programs, unlike the proposed degree program under consideration for East Carolina University.

Given this distinction between the study of religion in public and private settings, it is appropriate that public universities like East Carolina University have degree programs in religious studies. Moreover, since the only similar nonsectarian public program in the eastern region of North Carolina is the one at Wilmington, our program would not duplicate other nearby programs within the UNC system.

Second, religious studies is a vital dimension of the public university and this program is especially needed in our region because of the dearth of such programs east of I-95. East Carolina University is the largest educational institution east of I-95 and serves a major portion of the population in this area. As the third largest university in the UNC system, East Carolina has a student body much larger than other schools in the system that have a religious studies major.

Third, given the liberal arts mission of East Carolina, a religious studies major would provide an important addition to the liberal studies options for ECU students. Along with the arts, history, languages, literature, and philosophy, the discipline of religious studies stands at the center of the humanities within the modern American university. It is unusual and in sharp contrast to national norms that a university the size of East Carolina University lacks a major in religious studies.

Finally, and very importantly, as has been demonstrated, the proposed degree is, in a sense, already located at East Carolina. The proposed degree is a renaming and reorganization of an established program. As such, no new funding will be required and no new faculty lines will be required. The proposal simply allows the existing program to better fulfill its mission and utilize its resources more effectively.

C. Enrollment (baccalaureate programs should include only upper division program majors, juniors, and seniors):

Headcount Enrollment

Show a five-year history of enrollments and degrees awarded in similar programs offered at other UNC institutions (using the format below for each institution with a similar program); indicate which of these institutions you consulted regarding their experience with student demand and (in the case of professional programs) job placement. Indicate how their experiences influenced your enrollment projections.

Institution: North Carolina State University
 Program Title: Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Enrollment (majors)	47	53	52	50	49
Degrees-Awarded	11	10	11	13	11

This department has a graduate program, and is a combined department. The information included here represents data about religious studies. It was provided by the department chair.

Institution: University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
 Program Title: Religious Studies Department

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Enrollment (upper division)	44	39	49	54	55

enrollment)					
Degrees-Awarded	22	18	24	23	31

This information was obtained from the University of North Carolina on-line database:
<http://www.northcarolina.edu/ira/ir/analytics/enrdeg.htm>

Institution: University of North Carolina - Charlotte
 Program Title: Religious Studies Department

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Enrollment (upper division enrollment)	37	33	28	38	37
Degrees-Awarded	15	12	14	14	13

This department has a graduate program. This information was obtained from the University of North Carolina on-line database: <http://www.northcarolina.edu/ira/ir/analytics/enrdeg.htm>

Institution: University of North Carolina - Greensboro
 Program Title: Religious Studies Department

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Enrollment (upper division enrollment)	31	31	36	29	28
Degrees-Awarded	10	8	11	14	9

This information was obtained from the University of North Carolina on-line database:
<http://www.northcarolina.edu/ira/ir/analytics/enrdeg.htm>

For comparison, the following chart shows the number of students that graduated with a concentration in religious studies through the multidisciplinary studies program at East Carolina University. We anticipate having eleven graduates this year, 2010-2011.

Institution: East Carolina University
 Program Title: Religious Studies

	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010 fall
Enrollment (religious studies concentrations in the multidisciplinary studies major)	26	28	30	28	37	49
Degrees-Awarded	10	13	7	5	6	-

Use the format in the chart below to project your enrollment in the proposed program for four years and explain the basis for the projections:

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
Full-time	49	55	61	67
Part-time	0	0	0	0
TOTALS	49	55	61	67

We already have forty-nine students enrolled in the concentration in religious studies through the multidisciplinary studies major. We expect that the higher visibility of having a stand-alone major will result in an increased awareness of and interest in our program. We project that we will experience a growth of six majors per year over the next four years from the proposed change. Separately, we are confident that an additional growth in our numbers will be experienced as a consequence of a new faculty member who joined us this semester.

Please indicate the anticipated steady-state headcount enrollment after four years:

Full-time 67 Part-time 0 Total 67

SCH production (upper-division program majors, juniors, and seniors only for baccalaureate programs)

Use the format in the chart below to project the SCH production for four years. Explain how SCH projections were derived from enrollment projections. (See UNC website for a list of the disciplines comprising each of the four categories.)

Given that we have 1602 semester hours in the first half of the 2010-2011 school year, we project that we will exceed 3000 semester hours this year for the first time. We anticipate that these numbers will increase over the subsequent years.

Year 1	Student Credit Hours		
Program Category	UG	Masters	Doctoral
Category I	3000		
Category II			
Category III			
Category IV			

Year 2	Student Credit Hours		
Program Category	UG	Masters	Doctoral
Category I	3200		
Category II			
Category III			
Category IV			

Year 3	Student Credit Hours		
Program Category	UG	Masters	Doctoral
Category I	3400		
Category II			
Category III			
Category IV			

Year 4	Student Credit Hours		
Program Category	UG	Masters	Doctoral
Category I	3600		
Category II			
Category III			
Category IV			

III. PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND CURRICULUM

A. Program Planning.

1. List the names of institutions with similar offerings regarded as high quality programs by the developers of the proposed programs.

University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill
 University of North Carolina - Charlotte
 University of North Carolina - Greensboro
 University of South Carolina
 North Carolina State University

2. List other institutions visited or consulted in developing this proposal. Also discuss or append any consultants' reports, committee findings, and simulations (cost, enrollment shift, induced course load matrix, etc.) generated in planning the proposed program.

In formulating the current major and proposing its renaming and reorganization, and in generating the courses utilized in the major, we followed patterns common in public institutions throughout the country. Some of the universities with which we are familiar, and whose undergraduate program we reviewed as our program developed, include the following:

Florida State University
 North Carolina State University
 University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
 University of North Carolina - Charlotte
 University of North Carolina - Greensboro
 University of North Carolina - Wilmington
 University of Virginia

A number of reports and findings were valuable as we developed the current program and considered how to rename and reorganize it. Those reports and findings include the following:

- “Survey of Religious Studies Programs,” which provides key findings from the American Academy of Religion Survey of Undergraduate Religion and Theology Programs in the U.S. and Canada (see Appendix 1)
- “The Religion Major and Liberal Education—A White Paper;” “The Religious Studies Major in a Post-9/11 World, New Challenges, New Opportunities” (see Appendix 1)
- “Religion and Theology Census: The Study of Religion Counts,” American Academy of Religions, 2001. (See Appendix 6).
- “American Academy of Religion Survey of Undergraduate Religion and Theology Programs in the U.S. and Canada,” (see Appendix 7).
- “Going Our Way: The 2000 Survey of Departments of Religious Studies, Religious Studies News, March 2000, (see Appendix 9).
- “Survey of Undergraduate Religion and Theology Programs Data Analysis: Initial Data Run Packet Methodology,” American Academy of Religion, 2003, (see Appendix 8).
- “Committee on Placement of Religion in the Social Studies Curriculum,” N. C. Department of Public Instruction, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1989 (see Appendix 3).

Religious studies, however, is distinct from many other liberal arts degrees in one important way: some students employ the degree as pre-professional undergraduate preparation for graduate professional education, while other students regard it as preparation for further academic study at the graduate level. According to a United States Department of Education report (National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 2007), 7,521 (6,092 masters; 1,429 doctorates) graduate degrees in “Theological studies/religious vocations” were conferred by US institutions of higher education in 2005-06, the last year for which data was available (http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_262.asp?referrer=report and http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d07/tables/dt07_263.asp?referrer=report). According to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS), in 2006 (the most recent year for which data is available), 70,552 students were enrolled in ATS-related graduate programs (See Table 2.10 in Appendix 2). The ATS-related schools do not include graduate-level programs in public universities and do include schools in Canada, unlike the US Department of Education figures. So, thousands of students each year enter graduate programs for which a degree in religious studies could be advantageous.

B. Admission. List the following:

1. Admissions requirements for proposed program (indicate minimum requirements and general requirements).

There are no admission requirements beyond those for admission to the university.

2. Documents to be submitted for admission (listing or sample).

Students submit a Declaration of Admission form that merely declares their participation in the program.

C. Degree Requirements. List the following:

1. Total hours required. Major. Minor.

The major requires 30 semester hours of coursework from an approved list of core and general elective courses, of which 6 semester hours will be in RELI 4500 and RELI 4800 and 21 semester hours will be from the core course list.

The minor requires 24 semester hours of coursework from an approved list of core and general elective courses, of which 6 semester hours will be in RELI 4500 and RELI 4800 and 15 semester hours will be from the core course list.

These requirements are identical to the requirements now in place for the concentration in religious studies in the multidisciplinary studies program. For additional information, please see: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/ugcat/religiousstudies.cfm>

2. Proportion of courses open only to graduate students to be required in program (graduate programs only).

N/A

3. Grades required.

A grade of C is required in the major courses for credit to be applied to the major.

4. Amount of transfer credit accepted.

Twelve semester hours of transfer credit will be accepted.

5. Other requirements (e.g. residence, comprehensive exams, thesis, dissertation, clinical or field experience, second major, etc.).

None

6. Language and/or research requirements.

Majors will be required to have 12 semester hours in a single foreign language

7. Any time limits for completion.

None

D. List existing courses by prefix, number, and title (include s.h.) and indicate (*) those that are required. Include an explanation of numbering system. List (under a heading marked "new") and describe new courses proposed.

Core Religion Electives:

- ANTH 4054. Anthropology of Religion (3)
- ENGL 3630. The Bible as Literature (3)
- ENGL 3640. Literature and Religion (3)
- HIST 3412. A History of Christianity to 1300 (3)
- HIST 3413. A History of Christianity 1300-present (3)
- HIST 3627. History of Japanese Buddhism (3)
- HIST 5360. The Reformation, 1450-1598 (3)
- PHIL 1290. Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (3)
- PHIL 3290. Philosophy of Religion (3)
- PSYC 3314. Psychology of Religion (3)
- RELI 1000. Introduction to Religious Studies (3)
- RELI 1690. World Religions (3)

RELI 2400 Religion and Film (3) pending approval
 RELI 2500. Study Abroad (6)
 RELI 2691. Classical Islam (3)
 RELI 2692. Buddhism (3)
 RELI 2693. Hinduism (3)
 RELI 2694. Indigenous Religions (3)
 RELI 2695. Introduction to the Old Testament (3)
 RELI 2696. Introduction to the New Testament (3)
 RELI 3000. Motherhood of God in Asian Traditions (3)
 RELI 3113. Archaeology of the Old Testament World (3)
 RELI 3114. Archaeology of the New Testament World (3)
 RELI 3500. Methodology of Religious Studies (3)
 RELI 3600. Greek and Roman Religions (3)
 RELI 3690. Women and Religion (3)
 RELI 3691. Islam in the Modern World (3)
 RELI 3692. Tibetan Religion and Culture (3)
 RELI 3694. Religions of Africa (3)
 RELI 3698. Mysticism (3)
 RELI 3700. Religion and Social Issues (3)
 RELI 3796 Paul and His letters (3) pending approval
 RELI 3800. Religion and Violence (3)
 RELI 3896 Life and Teachings of Jesus (3) pending approval
 RELI 3930. Directed Readings in Religious Studies (3)
 *RELI 4500 Religious Studies Seminar I (3)
 RELI 4699. Special Topics in Religious Studies (3)
 *RELI 4800 Religious Studies Seminar II (3)
 SOCI 4341. Sociology of Religion (3)

General Religion Electives:

ANTH 2010. Societies Around the World (3)
 ANTH 3002. Cultures of East Asia (3)
 ANTH 3003. Cultures of Africa (3)
 ANTH 3004. Cultures of the South Pacific (3)
 ART 2920. Art of the Middle Ages (3)
 ART 3920. Asian Art (3)
 ART 4916. Art of India (3)
 CLAS 1500. Classical Mythology (3)
 ENGL 3450. Northern European Mythology (3)
 ENGL 3460. Classical Mythology (3)
 ENGL 3620. Oriental Literature (3)
 ENGL 4010. Medieval Literature (3)
 ENGL 4030. Milton (3)
 FORL 2600. Literature in Translation: The Holocaust (3)
 GRK 1001. Ancient Greek Level I (3)
 GRK 1002. Ancient Greek Level II (3)
 GRK 1003. Ancient Greek Level III (3)
 GRK 1004. Ancient Greek Level IV (3)
 HIST 3415. The Middle Ages (3)
 HIST 3610. History of East Asia to 1600 (3)
 HIST 3669. History of the Middle East, 600-1500 (3)
 HIST 3670. History of the Middle East Since 1500 (3)
 HIST 5310. Intellectual History of Europe (3)
 HIST 5340. The Ancient Near East (3)
 HIST 5350. The Renaissance in European History (3)
 HIST 5450. Tudor-Stuart England (3)
 LATN 1001. Latin Level I (3)

LATN 1002. Latin Level II (3)
 LATN 1003. Latin Level III (3)
 LATN 1004. Latin Level IV (3)
 MRST 5000. Medieval and Renaissance Studies Seminar (3)
 PHIL 2453. Existentialism and Phenomenology (3)
 PHIL 3321. Medieval and Renaissance Philosophy (3)
 PHIL 4250. Metaphysics (3)

IV. FACULTY

- A. List the names of persons now on the faculty who will be directly involved in the proposed program. Provide complete information on each faculty member's education, teaching experience, research experience, publications, and experience in directing student research, including the number of thesis and dissertations directed for graduate programs. The official roster forms approved by SACS can be submitted rather than actual faculty vita.

Please see Appendix 5 for detailed information on the individual faculty members involved in the religious studies program.

Derek Maher (director of the religious studies program) and Calvin Mercer, both teaching faculty in religious studies, are leading the planning process for the major in religious studies. Members of the religious studies committee, made up of faculty members, are playing a support role and have approved the proposal. This religious studies committee will serve as the faculty curriculum committee as well as the program advisory committee. This religious studies committee, a committee within the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences, is now in place to oversee the current religious studies program.

- Dr. Michael Brown, Associate Dean, brownmi@ecu.edu (252.328.4170), Professor
- Dr. Robert Bungler, Anthropology, bungerr@ecu.edu (252.328.9435), Associate Professor
- Dr. Seodial Deena, English, deenas@ecu.edu (252.328.6683), Professor
- Dr. Michael Enright, History, enrightm@ecu.edu (252.328.1031), Professor
- Dr. Charles Garrison, Sociology, garrisonc@ecu.edu (252.328.6486), Professor
- Dr. Lee Johnson, Philosophy, johnsonle@ecu.edu (252.737.4305), Assistant Professor
- Dr. Derek Maher, Philosophy, Director of Religious Studies Program, maherd@ecu.edu (252.328.5332), Associate Professor
- Dr. Laura Mazow, Anthropology, mazowl@ecu.edu (252.328.9432), Assistant Professor
- Dr. Calvin Mercer, Philosophy, mercerc@ecu.edu (252.328.4310), Professor
- Dr. Kathleen Row, Psychology (Chair), rowk@ecu.edu (252.328.6492), Professor
- Dr. Mary Nyangweso Wangila, Philosophy, wangilam@ecu.edu (252.737.2422), Assistant Professor

- B. Estimate the need for new faculty for the proposed program for the first four years. If the teaching responsibilities for the proposed program will be absorbed in part or in whole by the present faculty, explain how this will be done without weakening existing programs.

No additional faculty members will be required for the proposed major.

- C. If the employment of new faculty requires additional funds, please explain the source of funding.

N/A

- D. Explain how the program will affect faculty activity, including course load, public service activity, and scholarly research.

For reasons explained above, it is expected that with the proposed changes more students will become majors in religious studies as compared to the current system. This will result in a modest increase in advising responsibilities. Also, we anticipate that our classes will have moderate growth in our enrollment percentages. Otherwise, the change is not expected to consume significantly more time for faculty members, and it will not change the research responsibilities of faculty members at all.

On the positive side, faculty members will need to spend much less time on the following current time-consuming activities: addressing the confusion of students, advisors and faculty regarding the current religion concentration that is concealed within the multidisciplinary studies structured concentration program; working to make the current program visible within the problematic context of the multidisciplinary studies program; and explaining to graduate and professional schools and employers the nature of the current major which our students earn. On balance, with the new stand-alone program, faculty members will be freed to expend more time on research, teaching, and advising.

V. LIBRARY

A. Provide a statement as to the adequacy of present library holdings for the proposed program.

The current holdings in the library are sufficient to serve the proposed program. Already, the religious studies program advises the library on purchases and has a budget for acquisitions.

B. State how the library will be improved to meet new program requirements for the next five years. The explanation should discuss the needs for books, periodicals, reference material, primary source material, etc. What additional library support must be added to areas supporting the proposed program?

No changes will be needed.

C. Discuss the use of other institutional libraries.

Already existing faculty members and students enrolled in the religious studies concentration in multidisciplinary studies use the facilities in Joyner Library. No change in library usage is envisioned.

VI. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

A. Describe the facilities available for the proposed program.

As the proposed change is largely a reorganization of an existing program, the facilities currently employed in the administration of the concentration in religious studies now housed within the multidisciplinary studies program will be adequate. All of the faculty members already have offices. The administrative assistant who works on issues relating to religious studies is already in place. This assistant is the second staff person in the philosophy department, and part of the justification for funding that position was that the person serving in that position would also serve religious studies and multidisciplinary studies.

B. Describe the effect of this new program on existing facilities and indicate whether they will be adequate, both at the commencement of the program and during the next decade.

The change to the stand alone major in religious studies will not require any additional facilities.

C. Indicate any information technology needed and/or available

The change to the stand alone major in religious studies will not require any additional information technology.

D. Indicate sources of financial support for any new facilities and equipment.

N/A

VII. ADMINISTRATION

Describe how the proposed program will be administered, giving the responsibilities of each department, division, school, or college. Explain any inter-departmental or inter-unit administrative plans. Include an organizational chart showing the "location" of the proposed new program.

The administration of the program will be conducted in the same manner as is the currently existent concentration in religious studies now housed within the multidisciplinary studies program. This is to say that there is an interdisciplinary committee of faculty members from relevant disciplines and departments which oversees the religious studies program. There is a director of religious studies who reports directly to the dean of the Harriot College of Arts and Sciences.

VIII. ACCREDITATION

Indicate the names of all accrediting agencies normally concerned with programs similar to the one proposed. Describe plans to request professional accreditation. If the proposed new degree program is at a more advanced level than those previously authorized or if it is a new discipline division, was SACS notified of a potential "substantive change" during the planning process? If so, describe the response from SACS and the steps that have been taken to date with reference to the applicable procedure.

There is no relevant accreditation for religious studies majors.

IX. SUPPORTING FIELDS

Are there other subject matter fields at the proposing institution necessary or valuable in support of the proposed program? Is there needed improvement or expansion of these fields? To what extent will such improvement or expansion be necessary for the proposed program?

No such improvements or expansions are needed.

X. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Include any additional information deemed pertinent to the review of this new program proposal.

N/A

XI. BUDGET

Provide estimates (using the attached form) of the *additional costs* required to implement the program and identify the proposed sources of the additional funds required. Use SCH projections (section II.C) to estimate new state appropriations through enrollment increase funds. Prepare a budget schedule for each of the first four years of the program, indicating the account number and name for all additional amounts required. Identify EPA and SPA positions immediately below the account listing. New SPA positions should be listed at the first step in the salary range using the SPA classification rates currently in effect. Identify any larger or specialized equipment and any unusual supplies requirements.

For the purposes of the second and third year estimates, project faculty and SPA position rates and fringe benefits rates at first-year levels. Include the continuation of previous year(s) costs in second and third-year estimates.

Additional state-appropriated funds for new programs may be limited. Except in exceptional circumstances, institutions should request such funds for no more than three years (e.g., for start-up equipment, new faculty positions, etc.), at which time enrollment increase funds should be adequate to support the new program. Therefore, it will be assumed that requests (in the "new Allocations" column of the following worksheet) are for one, two, or three years unless the institution indicates a continuing need and attaches a compelling justification. However, funds for new programs are more likely to be allocated for limited periods of time if at all.

The budget template that ECU employs to calculate the financial impact of program changes shows that the proposed change, the introduction of a new degree in religious studies, will result in a modest net gain to ECU. We project a trend of increasing majors over the next five years from forty-nine at present to fifty-six in year five. Moreover, we project that a total of four of those new students will be students that otherwise would have selected another university. These modest assumptions indicate that a net financial benefit will be realized by ECU. No new faculty lines, no new staff lines, no start-up costs, no additional office supplies or office space, no graduate student stipends or tuition remissions, and no additional faculty support or equipment will be required. Consequently, the net gain to ECU of \$22,638.08 is projected to be realized over five years.

XII. EVALUATION PLANS

All new degree program proposals must include an evaluation plan which includes (a) the criteria to be used to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the program, (b) measures to be used to evaluate the program, (c) expected levels of productivity of the proposed program for the first four years of the program operation (numbers of graduates), (d) the names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of at least three persons (six reviewers are needed for graduate programs) qualified to review this proposal and to evaluate the program once operational, and (e) the plan and schedule to evaluate the proposed new degree program prior to the completion of its fifth year of operation once fully established.

Program Evaluation Format

A. Criteria to be used to evaluate the proposed program.

In addition to the ongoing student outcome assessment process, we will continue to gather data about our alumni so that we can track the success of our program. Every seven years, in conformity with standard review procedures at East Carolina University, we will schedule a program review. Both the internal self-review and the external review of our on-going efforts will be undertaken with an eye to quality enhancement.

We will evaluate the quality and effectiveness of the program using at least the following criteria:

- Ability of the graduates to think critically about religion as a cultural and historical phenomenon.
- Extent of graduates' knowledge of the origins, historical development, and contemporary expression of major living religions.
- Ability to communicate in writing and orally with a diverse array of people about religious questions and issues.
- Ability to critically evaluate notions of religion communicated in art, the media, and other public arenas.
- Percentage of majors who graduate.
- Percentage of graduates who enter graduate schools and, of those who enter, who receive prestigious scholarships and programs.
- Percentage of graduates who acquire employment related to their major.

B. Measures to be used to evaluate the program.

Measures we will use to evaluate the program include, but are not limited to:

- Questions embedded in senior level course testing instruments.
- Exit interviews.
- Surveys of our majors.
- Follow-up communications with graduates.
- Data from and verified by the registrar regarding graduation/retention rates.

C. Projected productivity level (number of graduates):

Level	Year 1 (2011-2012)	Year 2 (2012 - 2013)	Year 3 (2013 - 2014)	Year 4 (2014 - 2015)	Totals
B	10	12	14	16	52
M					
I/P					
D					

(Key: B-Bachelor's, M-Master's, I/P-Intermediate or Professional, D-Doctoral)

D. Recommended consultants/reviewers: Names, titles, addresses, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers. May not be employees of The University of North Carolina.

The main professional organization of the discipline of religious studies is the American Academy of Religion. They facilitate program reviews, and they would provide potential reviewers to us. The contact at the AAR is here:

John Fitzmier, executive director. 404-727-3049. jfizmier@aarweb.org

http://www.aarweb.org/Programs/Department_Services/Program%20Assessment/guide.asp and

E. Plan for evaluation prior to the fifth operational year.

In the third year of the program, we will design a comprehensive evaluation plan to be implemented in the fourth year. The plan will be designed by the governing Religious Studies Committee, with input from university staff and administrators who can provide expert input into the construction of a sound evaluation plan. The plan will likely include, but not be limited to:

- Peer review of the program from an outside consultant.
- Questions embedded in senior level course testing instruments.
- Exit interviews.
- Surveys of our majors.
- Follow-up communications with graduates.
- Data from and verified by the registrar regarding graduation/retention rates.

XIII. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Institutions will be expected to report on program productivity after one year and three years of operation. This information will be solicited as a part of the biennial long-range planning revision.

Proposed date of initiation of proposed degree program: January 2012

This proposal to establish a new degree program has been reviewed and approved by the appropriate campus committees and authorities.

Chancellor: _____

Date: _____

SUMMARY OF ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL COSTS FOR PROPOSED PROGRAM

INSTITUTION: East Carolina University *DATE:* September 1, 2010
Program (CIP#, Name, Level): 38.0201.018.000, Religious Studies, B
Degree(s) to be Granted: BA *Program Year:* 2011

ADDITIONAL FUNDS REQUIRED - BY SOURCE					
	Reallocation of Present Institutional Resources	Enrollment Increase Funds	Federal or Other (Identify)	New Allocations	Total
101 Regular Term Instruction					
1210 SPA Regular Salaries (Identify Positions)	\$ 0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()
1310 EPA Academic Salaries	\$ 0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()
1810 Social Security	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
1820 State Retirement	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
1830 Medical Insurance	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
2000 Supplies and Materials (Identify)	\$ 0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()
3000 Current Services (Identify)	\$ 0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()	\$0 ()
	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()

4000 Fixed Charges	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
(Identify)	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()
5000 Capital Outlay (Equipment)	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
(Identify)	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()
	()	()	()	()	()
TOTAL Reg. Term Instruction	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
151 Libraries	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
(Identify Accounts)	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
TOTAL Libraries	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL ADDITIONAL COSTS	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$0	\$0	\$0

Note: Accounts may be added or deleted as required. Currently benefits are figured at 10.10% retirement, 7.65% social security, and \$1,735 for health insurance. These percentages/amounts should be verified in the benefits office of Human Resources at the time this form is completed.