

**Minutes for
Audit & Review Face-to-Face Meeting
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
World Religions Minor, 2013-2014**

Date: May 15, 2014

Time: 3:00-4:00PM

Place: Laurentide 4219

Attended: Provost Beverly Kopper; AVC Greg Cook; Dean David Travis; Department Chair David Cartwright; faculty and staff in the World Religions program Michael Gueno, Alyson Prude, David Simmons; Audit & Review Chair Joan Cook.

- 1) Call to order and introductions.
- 2) Joan Cook noted that this program was implemented in Summer 2008. This is its first Audit & Review. She summarized numerous strengths of the program including that it is the only one of its kind offered in the UW System, it places a strong emphasis on diversity, and it encourages students to think critically about complex problems. The faculty and staff are active researchers (including the academic staff, for whom research is not expected as part of their job), and they support individualization for their students. The program provides a variety of valuable opportunities for students including multiple independent study options, travel study, student involvement in program development, and an active student organization. The courses offered as part of the program play an important role in supporting the university's GenEd program.
- 3) Department Chair David Cartwright summarized progress and accomplishments during the review period. He noted that an important accomplishment was the hiring of excellent new faculty after the retirement of multiple faculty in Spring 2011 (D. Simmons was recently tenured, A. Prude and M. Gueno recently hired). In addition, changes in the Liberal Studies program have allowed the World Religions minor to develop, and the World Religions program has engaged in thoughtful and collaborative discussions of what the minor should be. For example, some courses are being moved to the 100-level to provide greater verticality in the curriculum as well as to attract more students to the program. Another strength of the program is its students. A student organization was approved in Fall 2013, met weekly due to student interest and enthusiasm, and "became a community."
- 4) Discussion of Review Team's evaluation:
 - a. *Assessment process. The program is making good progress in its assessment plans and activities, and the analyses to date are thoughtful and thorough. What are your next steps in program assessment, and what is your process for setting, evaluating, and making decisions based on the data? What process is used to score the student work (pg. 18-19; Was a rubric used, who did the ratings, etc.)? Also, please update us on the results from the Chair's analysis of the achievement scores and SOAS data (pg. 21).*

The program has revised its student learning outcomes and is in the process of gathering baseline data on seniors. It collects both direct and indirect assessments and is beginning to implement an embedded assessment approach. Crista Lebens received an L&S Assessment grant to develop an online tracking system to collate and analyze data on student performance. The program plans to move toward a longitudinal design and is currently considering which courses to use for beginning- and end-of-program data collection. We discussed resources the program is encouraged to use as it moves forward with developing, implementing, and scoring embedded assessments (e.g., the Office of Academic Assessment, Assistant Dean Hachten's summer workshop on developing signature assignments). The program

incorporates discussions of data into its department meetings throughout the year.. The Chair's analysis of achievement scores and SOAS data is ongoing.

- a. *Target enrollment and resources needed. The program is the only one of its kind in the UW System. How is the program making use of this competitive advantage? Increasing the program visibility and enrollment seems needed. What enrollments would the program like to have, and what resources are needed to achieve this goal? What are the program's priorities in terms of resources needed and what plans do you have for acquiring them?*

Based on current course availability, the program has a target enrollment of 70 students. The newly hired faculty have new specialty areas, such as indigenous religions and new religions. The program is considering new courses in these areas, which are likely to be of interest to and draw more students to the minor. We discussed the possibility of a World Religions major and/or a Native American Studies major at some point. The program recognizes the need for greater visibility. One way they are addressing this is by building connections with students through an end-of-year meeting. The most recent meeting included 21 students representing 19 different majors and all 4 colleges. Current minors and anyone interested in the minor were included. We discussed other ways to make connections across campus and increase awareness of the program (e.g., further develop the program's web presence, connect with the Liberal Studies majors, coordinate with other colleges, make connections with the New Student Seminar and with the Advising Center).

The Provost asked what resources would be help support the program. Money for field trips would be very helpful, as well as support for a possible lecture series and discussion panels relevant to current world issues and events. Additional staffing would also be useful. David noted that the Philosophy department has the highest SCH/FTE in the university and offers numerous sections of the GenEd World of Ideas course each semester. These responsibilities given current staffing levels leave little room for flexibility in scheduling courses. The program would also make good use of student help, some of which would help increase program visibility (e.g., webpage development, making connections with other programs, etc.). The program was encouraged to develop a budget for field trips, lecture series, discussion panels, etc., aligning these with courses, and discuss options with Dean Travis and the Provost.

- 2) **Recommended Actions:** The evaluation report (below) lists two recommended actions related to assessment of student learning and enrollment.
- 3) **Recommended Result:** Continuation with minor concerns
 - **Please make use of the detailed comments in the evaluation report (below).**
 - **Next full self-study will be due in October 2018.**
- 4) Adjourned at 4:05pm.

Summary Report
University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
Committee Form: Review of Audit & Review Self-Studies
Undergraduate Programs, 2013-2014
Majors/Minors and Standalone Minors

Program World Religions Major _____ Minor X

Date of Evaluation March 17, 2014

Evaluations submitted by: John Ejnik, Jim Kates, Bob Kuzoff, Linda Yu, Joan Cook

Review meeting attended by: John Ejnik, Jim Kates, Bob Kuzoff, Linda Yu, Joan Cook

NOTE: This is the first A&R for this minor. Minor was implemented in Fall 2008.

I. Program Purpose & Overview

A. Centrality

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program contributes to the fulfillment of UW-Whitewater's core values, Mission, and Strategic Plan.				5
2. The program supports general education, proficiency, and/or other programs at UW-W.				5
3. The program has achieved or is appropriately working toward achievement of at least two goals of Inclusive Excellence.			2	3
4. The program has been responsive to actions recommended from the previous Audit and Review Report; Progress Reports have been submitted, if relevant.	5			

Comments:

- Any A&R report that can quote Confucius while also linking the LEAP initiative to the Gospel of Luke has my vote.

#1.

- Good explanation of how the program contributes to UWW's core values, Mission, and Strategic Plan

#2.

- As you indicate, most students' exposure to this sort of classes comes when they take them to meet Gen Ed requirements. It certainly is true that bright and curious students "self-select" for your minor, but don't be afraid to do a little more proselytizing (to use a religious term) when you see students with potential.
- Good contribution to GenEd (10 courses are GH electives) and to other programs.
- Thorough explanation of contribution to GenEd goals.

#3.

- The program focuses on course material and course development under Intercultural Competence. What about faculty professional development in this area?
- What was Dr. Reinhart’s topic on LEAP Day and how does it related to program assessment?

B. Program Mission, Goals, & Accomplishments

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program’s mission statement reflects the nature and scope of the program.				5
2. Goals and objectives were identified and undertaken to improve or advance the program.				5
3. The program has a process for setting and assessing goals, and/making decisions about changes to the program goals.			3	2
4. The program is considering potential revisions to mission, goals, or objectives; the program has a “vision” for where it wants to be in the future and how to get there.	1		3	1
5. The program achieved or maintained accreditation (if applicable) and/or earned recognition or awards.	3			2
6. The program has achieved program-level accreditation or has considered seeking it, where appropriate.	5			

Comments:

#1.

- The program mission statement doesn’t seem to connect religion to society. Maybe it doesn’t need to be stated but understanding religious beliefs seems key to understanding society’s values.
- pg. 6. Nice inclusion of service to the wider Whitewater community in the mission statement.

#2.

- Course development, recruitment of students, getting assessment going are all included as goals.
- The program has begun data collection and review and is working toward getting more data. Given the small enrollments at this point, it will take some time to get enough data to make decisions based on it.

#3.

- It is not clear how the program goals and assessment data is shared with different parties and how feedback is incorporated into course development/revision and teaching enhancement.
- The direct assessment tools seem to be slow to be implemented.

#4.

- Future goals are not well defined.
- Already revised the program goals, student ELOs.
- There’s some indication of the program’s vision in the yearly program goals.

II. Assessment: Curriculum & the Assessment of Students' Learning

A. Curriculum

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program has a clearly articulated, efficient, and purposeful curriculum, including options or emphases within the program (if applicable).				5
2. If program offers dual-listed courses, the expectations of graduate students differ from undergraduate students; otherwise NA.	5			
3. Appropriate assessment data were used in making curricular revisions.		1	4	
4. The program provides opportunities for students to learn in ways that extend beyond the classroom, and discussed the extent to which students are involved in these activities and opportunities.			2	3
5. Online courses are evaluated in ways that ensure effective delivery, continuous improvement, and student learning (if applicable).			1	4

Comments:

#1.

- Good core of courses required. It provides a broad basis with attention to critical thinking about religions and religious issues.

#3.

- The program discusses curricula changes but it's not clear if and/or how assessment data is used in the process.
- Assessment data has really not been evaluated yet for the program.
- pg. 12. "in concert with the review of the Philosophy minor...". Please explain this a little more. I'm not sure what it means.

#4.

- What is the size of the student organization, and nature of its meetings? In other words, what do students do (activities)?
- Good opportunities for students, especially given that this is a new minor (e.g., student org; multiple independent study opportunities; travel study). There is also good opportunity for individualization of the minor to better meet student interests.
- I particularly like the involvement of students in getting recommendations for new courses, for the SLOs, for program development.

#5.

- Is the evaluation by Quality Matters required for all online courses, or it's voluntary?
- We see evidence here that students like Second Life somewhat more than they do nonsynchronous online learning. Is it time to promote a bigger rollout of synchronous online efforts in other programs? At the very least, let's make sure other faculty know what is going on with your Second Life efforts (perhaps through a LEARN Center presentation). Courses don't necessarily have to be delivered entirely in Second Life, but I get the impression through my own

work that students would like to have more synchronous elements in their classes, such as scheduled discussion sections via WebEx.

- Interesting results from the survey on Second Life. I know these results include more than just courses in this minor, but has there been any follow up on these results yet?
- Is the longer-term plan to be able to offer this as a fully online minor?

B. Assessment of Student Learning

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program has clearly articulated learning outcomes for students, courses are “mapped” to these learning outcomes, and some outcomes received specific attention during the review period.				5
2. Student learning outcomes are aligned with the LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes in a way that is reasonable and meaningful.				5
3. The program has an appropriate assessment plan for measuring students’ progress in attaining the outcomes.			2	3
4. The program collected a variety of appropriate assessment data allowing judgments about the extent to which students are achieving learning outcomes.			2	3
5. Program faculty consider assessment data in making changes to the curriculum, students’ learning outcomes, and/or other aspects of the program.			3	2
6. Results of assessment efforts have been shared with appropriate internal and external constituencies.			1	4

Comments:

#1.

- This is a lot in one statement
- I’m assuming that the “program objectives” are intended as student learning outcomes, correct? The exact terminology isn’t important, but I tend to think of program objectives as broader (e.g., including things like increasing enrollment, advertising the program, reviewing the mission, etc.) although they may include development/revision of SLOs.
- Clear mapping of SLOs to courses.

#2.

- Good mapping to LEAP. Nice emphasis on CT and on diversity.

#3.

- It’s highly valuable to assess value-added through pre and post tests.
- Need some clarification on the overall assessment plan.

#4.

- Assessment for this minor may be a hit-and-miss effort until you increase enrollment, which I think is a laudable and achievable goal.

- Some of the responses on the SOAS seem on the low side. Is there some basis for comparison that could be helpful to interpret the data? It might make sense to average the responses across all 5 years since the N/year is small.
- I particularly like the questions on the program's Senior Exit survey that ask students for recommendations for program improvement.
- How were the scores arrived at (pg 18-19)? That is, did course instructors apply a rubric then report the scores to the program? Did the program have evaluator/s in addition to the course instructor on a subsample of student work to ensure a reliability check? Need a little more info on the process.
- pg. 19. What is the "weighted" average? Please clarify.
- Interesting that there's good congruence between the self-perception data and performance data (pg. 20). This sometimes does not happen!

#5.

- The process for discussing data is described but it's not clear how the data are being used. I'm ambivalent here though, because I agree with the program that the results to date are best considered baseline data. It's difficult to know what to conclude with such small Ns. The analyses that are presented in the self-study are thorough and thoughtful, with good consideration of possible problems (e.g., self-selection of sample; 'self-starter' nature of the students; difference in scope of the questions). And the program is clearly thinking about possible implications of the data, if these results are substantiated in future assessments (pg. 20).
- Can you update us on the results from the Chair's analysis of the achievement scores and SOAS data? (pg. 21)
- The program did reflect on the assessment data, especial the survey on Second Life.

#6.

- Is there a more proactive way to share the data with students (e.g., in the required courses, preferably at the beginning of the program)? What other groups might have interest in the results?

III. Student Recruitment, Enrollment, Retention, and Graduation

A. Trend Data

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1-2. Five-year enrollment and graduation trends reflect program vitality and sustainability.	1	1	2	1
3. [Majors Only] Credits-to-degree show that students can complete the degree in four years, or reasonably efficiently.	4			
4-5. [Majors Only] Program has strategies to recruit and retain diverse students. Composition of students approximates or exceeds the diversity of students at the University.	3	1		
6. Students can enroll in appropriate courses and proceed without delaying graduation.				5
7. Claim that the program is oversubscribed, undersubscribed, or at optimum level is justified or supported by examples or data.	1			4

Comments:

#1-2.

- What is the program's view on the enrollment trends? Is it happy with current enrollment or do you want it grow? Any specific strategies being considered to recruit students?
- This is a new program. Although it currently has small enrollment, it has potential to grow. The program does not require a lot of additional resources.
- The very presence of this minor encourages students to explore different cultures and religious systems, and this is definitely of value for our students and our campus.
- This minor is a nice inducement for faculty. They know they'll have at least a handful of students who are deeply interested in the topics being taught.

#4-5.

- It is politically and economically important to understand religion/divinity-based societies. This minor helps students understand these perspectives. Highlighting this could be a helpful recruiting tool.

#7.

- At this point, the program definitely is undersubscribed. The goal of getting 70 minors seems ambitious, but it's worth working for. What, besides posters, is the program doing to get the word out?

B. Demand for Graduates

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. [Majors Only] Placement information indicates that program graduates find employment or continue their education.	4			
2. Data suggests that employment opportunities for graduates of this program will remain strong.	1	4		
3. The program systematically tracks graduates of the program.	1	2		2

Comments:

#2.

- It is the supreme irony of higher education that employers advertise for people with hard technical and quantitative skills, then complain that too many college graduates can't think critically or write persuasively. This minor may be more "practical" than we think. I don't think it would be crass of you to use that argument in promoting the program.
- Agreed this is an excellent minor for adding knowledge based, direct employment opportunities are not described for minor.
- Might also add that the minor is intended to help foster students' critical thinking skills.

#3.

- Given that this is a minor so they don't get help from Career Services, I'm not sure what level of tracking can be expected. The self-study did present anecdotal evidence.

C. Comparative Advantage(s)

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program has unique features that distinguish it from competing programs—giving it a competitive edge.	1			4

Comments:

- As you note, it's the only one of its type in the state. Can you capitalize on that?
- Excellent
- It's the only WR minor in the UW System, and there are no WR majors available in the system.

IV. Resource Availability & Development

A. Faculty Characteristics

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. Information is provided about the composition of the department faculty & instructional academic staff (e.g., gender, ethnicity, expertise, academic rank, etc.).				5
2. Context is clear for understanding the expectations regarding faculty and staff support of the program.			1	4
3-4. The program has identified staffing changes and anticipated areas of potential future need.				5

Comments:

#1.

- Very little diversity in faculty even though it is better looking.
- One female, no ethnic diversity among the faculty. I'm sure this is not for lack of trying to recruit in these areas. Are there/what might be the implications of these faculty characteristics on student learning? But the program is offering students a wide diversity experience through the courses offered.
- Small pool of people to recruit from, which makes diversifying the faculty more difficult. But there is great diversity in what they're teaching.

#3.

- Great faculty pictures!

B. Teaching & Learning Enhancement

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. Faculty & instructional academic staff are engaged in activities to enhance teaching and advising.				5
2. The context is clear for understanding expectations for faculty & instructional academic staff to enhance their teaching and advising.				5

Comments:

#2.

- The program faculty seem to have a heavy advising load, but they also have a well-structured "mentoring" system in place to help junior faculty develop good advising skills.

C. Research & other Scholarly/Creative Activities

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited	Some/Partial	Sufficient

	Evidence	Evidence	Evidence
1. Faculty (and staff, if relevant) are active in research and/or scholarly or creative activities.			5
2. The context is clear for understanding faculty engagement in scholarly/creative activity.			5

Comments:

#1.

- Impressive that the academic staff (who are not expected to engage in research and have a heavier teaching load) do engage in research activities.

D. External Funding

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. Faculty and staff (if relevant) pursue funding through grants, contract, and/or gifts.			1	4
2. The context is clear for understanding faculty expectations for attracting grants, contracts, and/or gifts.			1	4

Comments:

- Awards don't belong in this section.

E. Professional & Public Service

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. Faculty (and staff, if relevant) are active in professional and public service, beyond the department.			1	4
2. The context is clear for understanding faculty engagement in professional and public service in ways that benefit internal and external constituencies.				5

Comments:

#1.

- Most activities listed in Table 5 are University and College Service and not Professional and Public Service.

F. Resources for Students in the Program

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program has adequate personnel, student help, and service and supplies to serve its undergraduate students.		2	1	2

Comments:

1. It was difficult to differentiate the resources for the department from the resources for the program.

G. Facilities, Equipment, & Library Holdings

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
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	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. The program has adequate facilities, equipment, and technological resources to effectively serve its students.				5

Comments:

V. Conclusions and Recommendations from the Department or Program

Criterion	Patterns of Evidence			
	N/A	No/Limited Evidence	Some/Partial Evidence	Sufficient Evidence
1. Program strengths are discussed.			1	4
2. Areas of improvement and continued progress are discussed.			2	3
3. Recommendations and resources are discussed.			3	2
4. Other comments by program (not rated)		----	----	----

Comments:

#1.

- Over 150 Senior Theses supervised—wow!

#2.

- Given the development of other programs and limited resources, is there sufficient resource to support the program? Is there a better way of utilizing resources?
- pg. 37. I like the framing—see opportunities rather than faults.
- What is/will be the balance between overseeing the Liberal Studies program and the WR minor? Will LS still tend to overshadow the minor?

#2-3.

- Clarify: Are the comments/desires related mostly to the program or to the department as a whole? How does the department/program balance these needs?
- Many of the things listed are necessary for the *department* to function (e.g., promotion, hiring) but they don't give a clear sense of the vision for the program.
- We realize the unique challenge of the program due to the size of the minor, but we'd like more information on the vision and future for the program specifically.
- Is development of new courses essential? It seems that there are already a lot of courses to choose from. Developing more courses may stretch existing resources, already thin, even further.
- The 100 level course could be a good recruiting tool

#3.

- I'm sure the "A&R wounds" will be nonfatal! (pg. 39)
- Good use/plans to use existing campus resource to support the program (e.g., coordination with the L&S Lecture Series).

Strengths of the Program:

- The program promotes a global perspective, critical thinking and appreciation of diverse cultures and beliefs. Its individual classes also are a strong contributor in helping students fulfill UWW's Gen Ed requirements.
- Program gives students a variety of course options.
- The program fulfills a niche academically that is needed and which is not offered throughout the UW system.
- Good opportunities for students

- The program provides a good emphasis on critical thinking
- Faculty are very willing to work with individual students and support individualization for students (e.g., on senior theses, in advising to individualize)
- This minor is well-positioned to help students realize a Liberal Arts education. It helps students achieve a broader education and consider broad, complex problems without clear-cut answers.

Areas for work or improvement:

- The program's biggest challenge right now is increasing its visibility
- Program needs to work on boosting enrollment. Determine desired enrollment level, develop recruitment strategies to achieve it.
- Assessment efforts should focus on improving student performance in higher-order critical thinking.
- Finish development and implementation of the assessment plan
- Develop a balance of attention to this minor in relation to the Liberal Studies major, other minors in the department

Other comments/questions:

- I enjoyed reading this self-study. The questions were clearly addressed, the self-study was well-organized, and several of the points made were supported with information from philosophy scholars—thanks!

Recommended Actions:

1. Complete the development and implementation of the assessment plan. In particular:
 - a. Collect direct data on student performance.
 - b. Track and clearly specify how assessment data are used to impact the program (e.g., impacting course assignments or focus, instructional strategies or emphasis, curricular changes, etc.).
2. Determine a target level of enrollment.
 - a. Work with the Dean and Provost to determine resources needed to support the desired enrollment.
 - b. Develop recruitment strategies to achieve target enrollment (e.g., consider developing a checklist of requirements for the minor and sending it to chairs of likely majors).

Recommended Result:

- _____ Insufficient information in the self-study to make a determination; revise self-study & resubmit.
- _____ Continuation without qualification.*
- X Continuation with minor concerns.*
- _____ Continuation with major concerns in one or more of the four areas; submit annual progress reports to the College Dean & Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs on progress in addressing the major concerns.
- _____ Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years, at the Committee's discretion.
- _____ Withhold recommendation for continuation, place on probation, recommend placing in receivership within the college, and require another complete Audit & Review self-study within 1-3 years at the Committee's discretion.
- _____ Non-continuation of the program.

***Next full self-study is due Fall 2018. Due dates are October 1, 2018 to the Dean of Letters & Sciences and November 1, 2018 to the chair of Audit & Review Committee.**