

**The University of Tennessee
Diversity Plan**

College/Dept. A&S Religious Studies

Goal One: Create and sustain a welcoming, supportive and inclusive campus climate.

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>a. We will continue to promote diversity and excellence and to incorporate diverse perspectives in all of our campus and community activities and communications.</p>	<p>Contribute through 1) teaching</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>all faculty</p>	<p>1) all of Religious Studies courses contribute to the international and intercultural education of our students. In June of 2006 we created a very large document describing the contribution of Religious Studies courses to the QEP (Ready for the World) which was sent to Mary Papke.</p>
	<p>2) research</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Shepardson, Levering, Schmidt</p>	<p>2) Our faculty participate in the Humanities Initiative by giving presentations for other faculty in the College of Arts and Sciences, and by creating interdisciplinary seminars and workshops for faculty who share the same interests. A) Shepardson's seminar on ancient mediterranean 2005-6, renewed for 2006-7; Levering's workshop on Medieval Chinese poetry 2005-6; Schmidt's seminar on German identity.</p>
	<p>3) outreach</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>majority of faculty</p>	<p>3) Most members of the faculty are members of the College Speaker's Bureau. We are also called upon by outside church and civic groups to share our expertise, ORICL in Oak Ridge, and schools in the larger Knoxville community. RS faculty give between 5 and 10 public service talks each per academic year.</p>
<p>b. Improve communication about the diversity of the department by developing a media relations committee, including a proactive media strategy.</p>	<p>1. Revive the Religious Studies newsletter</p>	<p>spring 06</p>	<p>Hackett, Reynolds</p>	<p>1. Completed spring 06</p>
	<p>2. Update Religious Studies website</p>	<p>fall 2005</p>	<p>Hackett</p>	<p>2. Completed spring 06</p>

c. Involvement of departmental Board of Visitors in dialogue on diversity to aid in identifying priorities in fund-raising in areas of African-American, Asian, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian studies.	3. Continue producing annual Judaic Studies newsletter	fall 2005, fall 2006	Schmidt, Schmidt	completed fall 2005, completed fall 2006
	4. Update Judaic Studies website	spring 06	Schmidt	in progress
	5. Revive Religious Studies Association	fall 05	Fitzgerald	done. Had 6 events in 2005-6; 6 meetings in 2006-7.
	6. Provide community forums such as lectures, workshops, symposia, conferences on issues of religion and ethics relevant to diversity and international issues .	ongoing	all faculty	2005-6 sponsored and co-sponsored events.
	1. Create small groups to educate board members on significance of continued diversity in department	fall 2005	Schmidt	1. Identified participants for small group dialogue in fall 2005
	2. Ongoing small group meetings	2005	Schmidt	formed sub-committees on Arabic, African-American, and Asia in fall 2005; formed sub-committee on Religion and the Public Sphere in fall 2006. a. Arabic met 6 times in 2005, 2 times in 2006, and Schmidt with the assistance of committee members has written and submitted a federal grant for Arabic as well as a proposal for the creation of a Center for Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations in the Department of Religious Studies
		2006	Reynolds Fitzgerald Hackett	b. African-American sub-committee met 4 times in 2005 c. Hindu/Asian sub-committee met 3 times in 2005 d. Sub-committee for Religion and the public sphere has been constituted.
	3. Annual meeting of the full Board of Visitors, to showcase faculty research in different cultures, and to expose board members to undergraduate students, faculty, and administrators.	2006	Schmidt	a. Full board meeting in March 2006 to showcase African-American research by Associate Professor John Hodges. b. full board is meeting on December 4, 2006. Miriam Levering will showcase Chinese literature and culture.

Goal Two: Attract and retain greater numbers of individuals from under-represented populations into faculty, staff, and administrative positions (particularly department heads, directors, deans, and vice chancellors).

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>Retain diversity of faculty and staff in department by creating supportive work</p> <p>The Department of Religious Studies has the largest number of women faculty of any department in the College of Arts and Sciences, we also represent categories of African-American, age, and handicap among faculty and staff.</p>	<p>The department of Religious Studies currently employs a majority of underrepresented faculty and staff. We make every effort to sustain and build on our current composition</p> <p>We have extensive contacts with diverse communities on campus and off.</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>ongoing</p>	<p>Schmidt</p> <p>all faculty</p>	<p>a. Supporting diversity of orientation of faculty</p> <p>b. supporting faculty activities in various campus organizations such as Women Faculty Association, Amnesty International</p> <p>c. networking with diverse communities on campus and off,</p> <p>d. advertising positions in publications popular with diverse populations,</p> <p>e. nominating faculty to committees of interest</p> <p>f. hiring work study students from diverse backgrounds, among them a large percentage of women, as well as members of the Sikh community and a Pakistani Muslim</p>

Goal Three: Attract, retain, and graduate increasing numbers of students from historically under-represented populations and international students.

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>The Department of Religious Studies already attracts, retains and graduates students historically under-represented populations as well as international students.</p>	<p>Students take Religious Studies courses for a variety of reasons besides fulfilling course and major requirements. For a number of them, a course in a given religion and culture teaches them more about either their own tradition or traditions they have a personal connection with through room mates, new relatives, partners, or sometimes grandparents. Offering the courses that we do is the best strategy to expose all types of students to diversity, including those from historically under-represented populations and international students.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>all faculty</p>	<p>We recruited a member of a historically under-represented group as the department's DSAC rep for 2006-07, we try to communicate our diversity in faculty and course offerings via our department web site and via the Religious Studies and Judaic Studies newsletters, we invite a dozen undergraduates and all of our graduate students to the annual board of visitors meeting.</p>

Goal Four: Develop and strength partnerships with diverse communities in Tennessee and globally.

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>The Department of Religious Studies already has developed partnerships with diverse communities in Tennessee, in the U.S. and globally. Our department will sustain and build on the relationships that already exist.</p>	<p>1. The Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies is housed in the Religious Studies Department. The chair, with support from the Judaic Studies Advisory Committee, continues to nurture the strong ties that exist to the Jewish community by promoting the productive exchange of ideas and resources through collaboration on speakers, conferences, symposia, and other academic and cultural programs of interest to the larger community.</p>	ongoing	Schmidt	<p>a. Annual lecture series funded by Knoxville Jewish Alliance, b. collaboration with Tennessee Holocaust Commission on which Schmidt serves as a Commissioner, c. Solomon/Schwartz Distinguished Lecture every other year, d. Named support funds established with financial contributions from local and national members of Jewish community. e. Partnering with non-Jewish institutions, such as East Tennessee Historical Society, for "Living On" exhibition in 2006.</p>
	<p>2. Africana Studies Program. Several of our faculty are involved in teaching and programming in the area of African and African American Studies. Faculty will continue to share their expertise through teaching, programming, speakers, conferences, and symposia of interest to the larger community.</p>	ongoing	Hodges, Hackett, Stiebert	<p>fall 2005 play "The Exonerated" Spring 2006 Footprints for Uganda fall 2006 Gulu Walk faculty service on many committees as minority representative faculty mentoring of African faculty who come to U.S., sponsorship of African faculty in various ways, support in the form of books for African universities, mentoring of faculty and advancing scholarly agenda of colleagues in Botswana, Uganda, Nigeria, and South Africa</p>
	<p>3. Faculty serve as advisors to student organizations</p>	ongoing	Gwynne Stiebert	<p>a. Gwynne serves as advisor to the Muslim Student Association b. Stiebert serves as faculty mentor for Amnesty International c. Hackett works with African Student Association, d. and Hackett and Stiebert collaborate with Highlander Research and Education Center</p>
	<p>4. Faculty members participate in IDPs</p>	ongoing	Schmidt, Stiebert, Shepardson, Gwynne, Fitzgerald, Levering, Hodges, Hackett, Hulsether, Jacobs,	Judaic Studies, Asian Studies, Global Studies, American Studies, Marco
	<p>5. Faculty members serves as adjuncts</p>	ongoing	Hackett, Fitzgerald, Stiebert, Shepardson	Classics and Anthropology

	6. International contacts are many by our colleagues who work literally all over the world.	ongoing	Hackett	Hackett works with African Student Association, and Hackett and Stiebert collaborate with Highlander Research and Education Center President of International Association for the History of Religions 2005-10. In that capacity Professor Hackett travels regularly to all parts of the world to support and participate in the business of national and regional religious studies organizations.
		ongoing	Levering	Professor Levering's work takes her to China, Japan, and Korea on a regular basis to give paper presentations and to consult with colleagues.
		ongoing	Fitzgerald	As a scholar on Hinduism, Professor Fitzgerald participates in many conferences from London to Dubrovnik and other places on Hindu scholarship.
		ongoing	Schmidt, Stiebert, Shepardson, Gwynne, Fitzgerald, Levering, Hodges, Hackett, Hulsether, Jacobs,	Schmidt's research takes her to Germany and to Israel annually.
	7. Center for Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations	2005 on	Schmidt, Stiebert, Shepardson, Gwynne	In collaboration with the Arabic committee of the departmental Board of Visitors, Schmidt and Gwynne created a vision statement for a Center of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations that resulted in the submission of a federal grant to the Department of Education for funding of the initiative.
b. Participate in College Speakers Bureau, as Media Contacts, and in the form of independent public speaking engagements.	1. Most of our faculty serve as media contacts on matters dealing with their respective expertise, and several serve on the College Speakers Bureau. We will continue to build on these commitments.	ongoing	most faculty	a. Media reps, see University Communications list of spokes persons,
		ongoing	most faculty	b. College Speakers Bureau
		ongoing	most faculty	c. Civic and religious groups and schools
		ongoing	diverse faculty	research findings are covered in the media (ex. Schmidt 2006)
		ongoing	Hackett, Gwynne, Schmidt	Faculty are consulted by both governmental and non-governmental agencies on questions in their area of expertise.

<p>c. Attention to global issues. Faculty in the Department of Religious Studies are extensively involved in issues and organizations on a global scale. We will continue to nurture and build on these efforts.</p>	1. Offices in International organizations	ongoing	Hackett	2005-10 President of the IAHR
	2. Faculty participation in international conferences as organizers, speakers, and respondents.	ongoing	all faculty	Faculty read numerous papers at professional conferences.
	3. Faculty liaisons, formal and informal, with universities and academic programs, museums, libraries, and archives in other countries around the world	ongoing	all faculty	<p>a. Gwynne with scholars of Arabic and Islam, Hackett especially with Nigeria, but also all of Africa, and really globally, Fitzgerald with scholars of Sanskrit and Hinduism, Levering with Korea, China, and Japan, Schmidt with German archives and Israeli archives and museums, Scott with South Asian Buddhist monasteries, Shepardson with Turkey and scholars of early Christianity, Stiebert with Africa, New Zealand, and Germany. A formal linkage exists with Ile-Ife; with Bonn, and other German universities, and Swansea in Wales.</p> <p>b. Hackett with Nigeria especially, but all of Africa, and globally,</p> <p>c. Fitzgerald with scholars of Sanskrit and Hinduism,</p> <p>d. Levering with Korea, China, and Japan,</p> <p>e. Schmidt with German archives and Israeli archives and museums.</p>

Goal Five: Ensure that curricular requirements include significant intercultural perspectives.

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>a. The curriculum of the Department of Religious Studies is already infused with intercultural perspectives. We are actively involved in preparing our students for a diverse world. All of our courses at all levels incorporate one or more diversity perspectives such as race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, physical abilities, and social and economic backgrounds. Religious Studies introductory courses fulfill general education requirements. We house one IDP, the Fern and Manfred Steinfeld Program in Judaic Studies, in the department.</p>	<p>The department will continue to sustain and build on our current offerings to support the university's goal of educating students on diversity.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>all faculty</p>	<p>Extensive report to Mary Papke on all Religious Studies courses with significant intercultural perspectives. (attached)</p>
<p>b. Increase student study abroad participation. Many of our students participate in study abroad programs or go abroad to study language and culture on their own, notably during the summer.</p>	<p>1. Faculty will encourage more students to participate in study abroad programs in their areas of interest and nurture these interests to fruition by sharing information about places, programs, and events that will strengthen students' understanding of other cultures.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>all faculty</p>	<p>Professor Hackett especially shares with her students in all classes her intercultural experiences as she travels around the globe in her capacity as president of the IAHR, also other faculty as the opportunity arises for them to participate in research projects and professional meetings on a global scale.</p>
	<p>2. Overseas program in Swansea, Wales</p>	<p>1998, 2008</p>	<p>Hulsether, Stiebert</p>	<p>Faculty participate in semester-long overseas program in Wales.</p>
	<p>3. Semester "theme" programs</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Hackett, Gwynne, Schmidt, Levering</p>	<p>The faculty members mentioned as well as others are regularly asked to contribute to theme semesters where cultural performances on a given area occur.</p>
	<p>4. Literary Colloquy</p>	<p>spring 2006</p>	<p>Gwynne, Schmidt</p>	<p>Schmidt and Gwynne were asked to contribute to a literary colloquy focusing on the Middle East.</p>
<p>c. Added and broadened contribution to Ready for the World</p>	<p>More faculty hires to broaden areas which are already strong. These will build on the work supporting intercultural perspectives in the curriculum that we are currently doing.</p>	<p>ongoing</p>	<p>Schmidt and faculty</p>	<p>Ongoing opportunities to add appropriate faculty, fund-raising efforts through departmental Board of Visitors</p>
		<p>fall 2006</p>	<p>Schmidt and Gwynne</p>	<p>Federal grant proposal for seed money for a teacher of Arabic and a proposed Center for Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations</p>

Goal Six: Prepare graduate students to become teachers and researchers in a diverse world.

Objectives	Strategy/Tactics	Date	Responsible Party	Benchmarks
<p>a. Graduate students in the Department of Religious Studies are already part of a pluralistic learning community and serve as teachers and researchers not only in a diverse setting, but in an international setting, studying and teaching cultures and religions from around the world.</p> <p>b. Ensure that graduate students with teaching responsibilities are acquainted with the diverse range of learning styles found in today's classroom.</p>	<p>Expose students to additional new cultures</p> <p>Students are not only taught about diversity but they also are a diverse student body.</p>	<p>ongoing</p> <p>fall 2005, fall 2006</p>	<p>Graduate committee, Schmidt</p> <p>graduate committee, Schmidt</p>	<p>Graduate students working towards an M.A. degree in the Department of Religious Studies are constantly exposed to new directions in the study of different world religions and cultures, whether their focus of research or not. This occurs as part of the graduate curriculum which requires them to know the history and the texts of different world religions, as well as in their research and through mentoring by faculty who match the students' interest.</p> <p>a. Graduate TAs participate in a Practicum for teaching.</p> <p>b. Graduate TAs work side by side with senior faculty in large-enrollment Introduction to World Religions course (RS 101), they are responsible for two 25-student recitation sections once a week, so that their theoretical learning in the classroom translates to teaching diversity in the classroom as well as experiencing diversity in the classroom.</p> <p>c. Head requested all TAs to attend Best Practices in Teaching Workshop at the beginning of the semester.</p>

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