As a result of the third cycle of DePaul University's Academic Program Review Process (Cycle 3), the participants in the process enter into the following agreements. The participants understand that this document will be available to be made public once all the signatures are in place.

Actions agreed upon for the coming academic year (2002-2003)

1. *Revise the curriculum.* In the coming year, the department’s Curriculum Committee, assisted by other department members, will work to re-configure the curriculum to better meet the program’s current needs. The revision efforts will include the following:
   a. Student migration study. In the Fall of 2002, the Curriculum Committee will examine student transcripts to determine how students have moved through the program. Findings will inform discussions of curriculum at the faculty retreat to be held in the Spring 2003 (see below).
   b. Comparisons with other programs. The EVP recommended that the department broaden the examination of its curriculum to include Religious Studies programs at other institutions, particularly ones like DePaul (Catholic, or large, faith-based universities). The department will consult the AAR study, which has information on religion programs around the country, and will enlist the help of OIPR in identifying peer programs for comparison.
   c. Requirements for students intending to pursue advanced study. In the Fall of 2002, the Curriculum Committee will become familiar with a variety of graduate programs in Religious Studies at other institutions to determine how best to realign the department’s own curriculum so that students are prepared for graduate-level work. The dean advised the department that there should be a critical mass of students intending to pursue graduate study in order to justify a specialized curriculum, and that in its curricular deliberations, it should not focus exclusively on the needs of majors planning to do graduate work.
   d. Curriculum Retreat. The Curriculum Committee will plan an off-campus retreat for the department’s full-time faculty to be held in the Spring of 2003 to discuss how to reconfigure the curriculum, with the goals of curricular coherence and a better fit with current students’ needs and plans. The dean is committed to supporting the department’s efforts to revise the curriculum and will consider funding support for this retreat.

2. *Explore ways to recruit majors.* The department will form an ad-hoc committee to investigate different ways to recruit Religious Studies majors. The committee will then report its findings to the faculty.
   a. The dean recommended that the department continue to focus on post-enrollment recruitment and noted that faculty have the opportunity to generate student interest in Religious Studies through the two-course religion requirement of General Education.
   b. The department will also consider ways to build on the interest in religion among local high school students, such as inviting students to a day of classes in Religious Studies (or to special events aimed at them), similar to the Modern Language department’s "Italian Day."

3. *Resolve issues regarding the number of full-time faculty.* The department is concerned that the increased number of one-year appointments and adjunct faculty erodes the long-term stability of the department, as well as the continuity of the curriculum and of students’ experience of it. In the coming year, the department will discuss with the dean ways to achieve the appropriate number of full-time, tenure-track faculty in order to maintain coherency and continuity in the program.
a. The dean notes that special circumstances this past year have reduced the number of full-time, tenure-track faculty available to teach in the program, but that in his view these circumstances do not warrant the hiring of more full-time faculty. The dean notes that faculty appointments are formula-driven (based on credit hours); in the coming year, he will look at the enrollment data for the Religious Studies department in considering the appointment of full-time, part-time, and adjunct faculty.

b. The department recognizes that a course-load reduction for current full-time tenure track faculty has been deemed by the administration to not be possible, given the broader financial implications for the university of a reduced teaching load.

c. The department agrees to explore ways to improve the connection of the adjunct faculty to the department, such as improved orientation sessions and communications, similar to what the Department of Communication does. The dean agreed to consider support for the department in these efforts, in light of some contextualizing information on how the department currently helps part-time faculty.

4. Improve technological training and resources. The department will work to improve training and support for faculty in the area of technology. Possible avenues for improvement:
   a. Faculty workshop. The department will work with ITD to schedule a workshop just before the Fall quarter begins for faculty to receive individual and group training in such things as Blackboard, Smartroom Use, and Digital Imagery.
   b. Staff assistance. The department will consider using student workers, such as those with Project Connect, to help faculty with technology, since the dean cannot increase the half-time technology assistant to a full-time position. The dean would be responsive to the department’s request for more student-worker funding, based on documented needs and a specific plan.
   c. Improved assistance from AV department. The department will forward information about its faculty’s experiences to document the need for additional AV assistance for evening classes, and may suggest to other departments that they do the same. The information will be channeled through the Dean’s Office to the appropriate university-level offices, to be addressed at a systemic level.

5. Explore diversity issues. The department will discuss ways to improve understanding among students of the racial diversity among the faculty and the different teaching styles/classroom structures, and improve understanding among faculty on how to teach a diverse student body.
   a. In the Spring of 2003, the curriculum committee will examine student survey results on pedagogical practices within the department, and, depending on whether this issue is taken up at other levels in the university, may recommend that the department faculty hold a retreat on the subject of Pedagogical Diversity, possibly in the Fall 2003.
   b. The EVP supports the department’s pursuit of this issue and suggested that this may be a topic to discuss among a broader audience within the College and university (see below), such as at new faculty orientation, or seminars sponsored by the Humanities Center. It was also suggested that the College’s Teaching Committee could discuss the issue of pedagogical diversity.
   c. Regarding diversity education for incoming students, the department suggested that Academic Affairs consider supporting university-level coordination of diversity education for freshmen. The EVP noted that diversity education works best when it is approached in the context of a learning environment which respects students of all backgrounds and races. Perhaps First Year Program workshops or classroom discussions of diversity could provide such a context.

Issues on which there is joint commitment to continue working

1. University support for international faculty. The department requests assistance from Academic Affairs to provide better support for international faculty. The Religious Studies department notes that it has a number of foreign faculty who need assistance with things like dealing with federal...
immigration authorities and regulations, relocating to Chicago, filling out tax forms, financial issues, etc. and should receive support at least comparable to what international students get. The EVP agrees to follow up on this issue with Human Resources, to collect information from the Deans about needs for improvement in this area (such as ways to offer assistance to foreign faculty during the hiring process). The EVP is committed to focusing existing resources and bringing together people with experience in dealing with international faculty to address the problems.

University-level issues

During Cycle 3, the unit program review self-studies raised several issues that have important university-wide implications. In subsequent conversations about these major issues, the units, the deans, the Academic Program Review Committee members, and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs all have recognized the need for university-level coordination in the following areas: a) developing appropriate staffing models to support growth; b) assisting units in the transition to the PeopleSoft student administrative system and in getting the maximum benefits from it, such as identifying and counting double majors, enforcing prerequisites, and securing better information and support for student advising; c) providing research assistance to units through university-level research offices; d) improving support for advising, especially in light of PeopleSoft; e) facilitating cross-college collaboration within DePaul with respect to new programs of study. In order to meet these commitments, the University agrees to give high priority to fully implementing those aspects of PeopleSoft that deal with academic support and advising, and to provide for college and departmental faculty and/or staff the information and/or training necessary for colleges and departments to take full advantage of those PeopleSoft functions. To follow up on these common issues and determine the appropriate courses of action needed to address them at the university and unit level, the Academic Program Review Committee and the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agree to do the following:

1. The Academic Program Review Committee agrees to prepare a summary report on Cycle 3 to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs which discusses these and other issues that have important connections to other university-wide initiatives. That report will be made public, along with the Memorandum of Agreement.
2. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs agrees to direct the appropriate university-level offices to work with the units and their deans to determine how to effectively address these issues.
3. The Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs will require a progress report in June of 2002 from the appropriate university offices that will be shared with the Academic Program Review Committee.

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A hard copy of this document was signed by:

Chair of Unit Review Committee

Department Chair/Program Director

Chair of APRC Subcommittee

Chair of APRC
Dean of the College

Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs

Executive V.P. for Academic Affairs

*The hard copy with signatures is on file in the Office of the Associate V.P. for Academic Affairs and is available upon request.