A year ago at this time, May 2002, the Department of Religious Studies and the
Academic Program Review Committee signed a Memorandum of Agreement that
committed both Department and DePaul Administration to five activities during the
2002-2003 academic year. This memo is a report on those five activities.

I. Revise the Curriculum
This project has been accomplished.

Over the course of the year, the departmental Curriculum and Assessment Committee (C&AC) took time at nearly every departmental meeting to explore, with the entire Department, factors of student migration, comparison with other religious studies programs and the admission requirements of various graduate schools of religious studies and theology. The C&AC was simultaneously working on a revision of the requirements for the major and minors in religious studies. On April 12, 2003, the C&AC led Department in a day-long planning session, presenting and refining the propose mew curriculum for majors and minors. In late April and May the C&AC made further emendations to the April 12 proposal and presented them to the Department in regular departmental meetings. At the regular meeting of the Department of Religious Studies on May 30, 2003, final corrections were made and the revised curriculum approved.

During Summer, 2003, the final copy of the new curriculum will be prepared and, in September, 2003, sent to appropriate College and University committees for approval. We expect the new requirements for majors and minors to take effect sometime in the 2003-2004 academic year.

II. Explore ways to recruit majors
An ad hoc committee was to have been formed to explore way to recruit new major and report those methods to the full department.

In light of other departmental projects (e.g. teaching, research & service, curriculum revision, etc.), the absence of several key members of department due to leaves of various sorts and the addition and enculturation of three new full-time faculty, this project was delayed till the 2003-2004. It is our hope that the new curriculum for majors will be an important element in the recruitment project.

III. Resolve issues regarding the number of full-time faculty
While no resolution regarding the number of full-time faculty members was reached, the situation was addressed: two new full-time professors were hired in 2002-2003. In May 2003, a conversation between the Dean and the Chair of Religious Studies included the possibility of adding two more lines in the 2003-2004 academic year.
The four one-year appointments of the 2002-2003 academic year will become five in 2003-2004.

In light of the increase in student population in the University, the number of sections offered by REL also increased. In Fall, 2003, REL will offer 63 sections in the Loop or in Lincoln Park. The Department will also teach 3 sections in the Honors program (HON 104), 5 sections of Discover/Explore Chicago, 2 Multiculturalism in the U.S. seminars, and 1 non-cross-listed course in Catholic Studies.

Of those 63 REL sections in the Loop and at Lincoln Park, 24 (38%) will be taught by full-time, tenure-trackers, 15 (24%) by one-year appointments, 3 (5%) by teaching associates, and 21 (33%) will be taught by part-time faculty.

To improve the connection between part-time faculty and the mission of the Department of Religious Studies, all new part-time faculty and one-year appointments will be expected to attend a one-day orientation session and to do on-going, in-service training sessions throughout the year. The orientation day is scheduled for September 3, 2003. The ongoing, in-service sessions will be coordinated with regularly scheduled departmental meetings. Departmental funds will be used and a Quality of Instruction Council grant will be sought to pay for this training.

IV. Improve Technological Training and Resources
A technology training session was linked to the Fall, 2002, opening departmental meeting. All full-time faculty and one-year appointments attended. Rather than use people from ITD, the Department used it own members. The full-time faculty now knows how to use Blackboard.

The hiring of new, part-time faculty and one-year appointments for 2003-2004 was made contingent on the candidate’s willingness to learn Blackboard and use it as part of their class.

In the orientation for new faculty scheduled for Fall, 2003, people from ITD will be invited to present Blackboard and experienced faculty from REL will also speak of how they use technology in the classroom. Later in year, additional sessions on the use of film, internet and other technologies in the classroom will be scheduled as part of the ongoing, in-service education of part-times and one-year faculty.

In 2002-2003, the Student Worker took up part of the slack in putting material on the departmental website. While this situation may be less than ideal, it worked.

No material was forwarded to the LA&S office chronicling its experience with the AV department. No complaints were made to the Chair regarding AV shortcoming in the 2002-2003 academic year.

V. Explore diversity issues
We dropped the ball on this issue. Since so much time was spent on revising the curriculum, there was no time at departmental meetings to address the diversity issues raised in the Memorandum of Agreement.

In 2003-2004, REL will discuss this.

In Summary
While some of the issues raised in the Memorandum of Agreement - May 2002 were not addressed in 2002-2003, the most important issue – curriculum reform for the majors and minors – was successfully accomplished. As the original APR document said, the Department of Religious Studies was very busy, probably overextended.

In 2003-2004, with curriculum revision behind us, the other items of the memo of 2002 can now be addressed.