2026-27 Comprehensive Program Review

Program: Religious Studies

Division: Arts and Humanities

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SLO/SAO Point-Person: Kimberly Tomlinson

Email your completed form to Karin Spirn and your dean by November 2, 2026.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts and info for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Discipline Data Packets – institutional research about disciplines and student services
- ★ Course Success Rates Dashboard – allows you to research your program's success rates

Detailed information and instructions appear at the end of this form. For help, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu.

Section 1: Program Reflection and Planning

These questions appear on all Program Reviews including comprehensive and updates.

1. Please describe your program's most important **achievements** in year 25-26.

- Program Growth and Enrollment Stabilization*:* Following post-Covid challenges and faculty sabbatical leave, the Religious Studies program has successfully rebounded in student enrollment and headcount. Headcount and course enrollments have demonstrated strong recovery, moving from prior lows of 103 students to 159 students Fall 2026 and growth of 76 students to 142 Spring 2026. This demonstrates a 53% increase in student headcount in the Fall 2025 with similar increases in Spring 2026.

  The program has also employed strategic scheduling practices capturing student headcount through Fast Trak, Winter Intersession and Summer enrollment. The program continues to provide flexible, compressed term options that help students meet general education and transfer requirements efficiently.

- Expanding and Updating Mindfulness Curriculum: The program expanded and updated the Mindfulness Curriculum to include a new MIND course, MIND 10: Mindfulness in Everyday Life and updated MIND 15 to specifically include Mindfulness, Meditation and Self-Compassion. Both of these courses included Non-credit options for older adult learners, and set the foundation for the creation of a Certificate.

- RELS 3: Women's Spirituality has continued to grow in enrollment and student interest. The class is consistently filling both Fall and Spring semesters, giving students access to more variety of RELS courses.

- The RELS program deepened its commitment to holistic student support by consistently utilizing the program's canvas Labyrinth to offer students opportunities to Walk the Labyrinth each semester. This provides students access to support curricular requirements on campus.

- The RELS program has also increased its FTEF allocation to include additional courses for Summer and Winter Intersession, providing students additional opportunities to complete their transfer pathway.

2. Please describe your most important **challenges** in year 25-26

- While DE has become the predominant mode of RELS instruction post-Covid, managing asynchronous student retention and engagement remains an ongoing focal point. This also becomes more noteworthy in Fast Trak and late-start course formats where close monitoring of student progress is imperative to support student retention.
- While we are growing the MIND curriculum, the program is also working to build recognition and increase enrollment. Students who complete the class, report positive outcomes but student enrollment in this building phase of the program has struggled to solidify.

3. What are your upcoming **plans**? Please note any ways that these support student achievement and equity.

- Developing new course proposals for Asian Religions and Film and Religion. These additions expand academic opportunities for students to broaden their comparative perspectives, deepen engagement with world philosophical and religious traditions, and cultivate critical global literacy. These courses provide fresh, engaging options to fulfill General Education and lower-division transfer requirements.

- Advocating for the installation of a permanent painted Chartres-style Labyrinth in the turnaround of the fire access road. This will provide a designated, accessible physical space for mindfulness, self-reflection, and stress reduction directly on campus.

- Expanding campus-wide participation and community events centered around World Wide Labyrinth Day (held annually in May). Creating experiential learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom actively bridges academic study with personal well-being, helping to close equity gaps for students seeking inclusive community spaces and holistic campus support.

Section 2: SLOs/SAOs

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review, with brief annual check-ins on the Program Review Updates. The following resources will be useful when completing this section:

- Three-Year Assessment Template
- Aggregated and Disaggregated Data from the following sources:
    - ELumen (if saved--no longer available online)
    - CurrIQunet
    - Student Success Dashboard

1. During the 2023-2026 three-year assessment cycle that just concluded, what did your program set out to learn through your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessments?

The RELS program set out to learn more information about the following SLO's

RELS 1*:* Evaluate how effectively students demonstrate foundational global literacy by assessing their ability to:

- Compare and contrast the teaching of major religious figures.
- Identify the core beliefs of each major world religion.

RELS 3: Assess student depth of understanding in cross-cultural perspective taking, specifically measuring their ability to:

- Articulate the various ways in which women have expressed and enacted their spiritual experiences, insights, and understandings.

MIND 15: Measure student learning in both somatic practice and academic analysis by evaluating their ability to

- Demonstrate the practical skills of mindfulness meditation, including deepening concentration and building resilience.

2. Based on your analysis of your PSLO/CSLO/SAO assessment data, what conclusions did you draw about student outcomes and equity in your program?

- **RELS 1** (Compare and contrast the teaching of major religious figures and Identify the core beliefs of each major world religion)**:**
    - Assessment reflections reveal strong overall performance in foundational religious teachings. Students successfully demonstrate comparative reasoning when analyzing primary teachings across world traditions.
    - Emphasizing core comparative frameworks helps online learners build critical thinking skills while maintaining high overall course completion rates (76.6% in AY 25–26) across diverse student groups.
- **RELS 3** (Articulate the various ways in which women have expressed and enacted their spiritual experiences, insights, and understandings):
    - Student work demonstrates exceptional depth in analyzing how women across diverse historical eras and global cultures actively express spiritual insights through writing, art, and community practice.

    - Focus on this CSLO fosters an inclusive environment where students analyze voice, agency, and gender, resulting in strong student engagement and heightened cross-cultural empathy.
- **MIND 15** (Demonstrate the practical skills of mindfulness meditation including deepening concentration and building resilience):
    - Qualitative course reflections indicate that students consistently achieve high proficiency in applying somatic mindfulness tools to manage stress, deepen focus, and develop emotional resilience.
    - Integrating these practical, skill-based competencies directly into the curriculum serves as an important equalizer, providing students from all demographic backgrounds with accessible tools to support their mental health and academic persistence.

3. Explain potential plans to improve student outcomes and close equity gaps.

- Enhance Canvas rubrics and provide clear model responses for writing-intensive CSLOs.
- Offer varied formats (audio reflections, structured online discussion prompts, video check-ins) to support students in communicating their personal meditation experiences and comparative insights.
- Develop additional interdisciplinary pathways, such as Asian Religions and Film and Religion, to complement core CSLOs focus of deepening comparative perspectives, and foster inclusive learning environments.

4. Describe any obstacles that you encountered in your assessment process and any supports that would be helpful.

- The unavailability of archived historical eLumen quantitative reports during the transition to updated system created some challenges in generating multi-year disaggregated CSLO data for the 2023–2026 cycle.
- Navigating assessment platforms while managing ongoing curriculum updates, course launches, and active instruction creates administrative friction, making regular quantitative data entry challenging to maintain alongside core teaching responsibilities.

Supports That Would Be Helpful:

- Automated and Simplified Data Collection: Institutional support in providing automated, reporting dashboard exports for course-level CSLOs so faculty can spend less time manually inputting data and more time focusing on student instruction.
- Meaningful, Qualitative Assessment Frameworks: Guidance on streamlined ways to document continuous improvement and student outcomes that give equal value to both qualitative course reflections and quantitative entry

Section 3: Data Discussion

This section is completed every three years as part of the Comprehensive Program Review. Workshops and office hours will be offered in Fall 2026 to support Program Review writers.

1. RPIE Data Review: Discuss any significant trends in the data provided by the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (or any other data you use for decision-making and planning).

*(**Note**: Not all Programs have RPIE data available; if your program does not have a data packet or dashboard data, you may note that in the response box and reach out to the RPIE team.)*

Data may come from:

- RPIE Data Packets
- Transfer data
- Succes Rates Dashboard (scroll down on page)
- Requested data from the Office of Research, Planning, and Institutional Effectiveness (RPIE)
- SLO/SAO data
- Data from program-created surveys or investigations
- Any other relevant source of quantitative or qualitative data

- Enrollment and Headcount Recovery: Following post-COVID shifts and faculty sabbatical leave, student headcounts and course enrollments in Religious Studies have experienced a steady recovery. Enrollments rebounded from prior lows up to 324 total enrollments in AY 24–25, and reached 436 total enrollments in AY 25–26.
- Racial & Ethnic Distribution: Review of institutional data packets for Religious Studies demonstrates a rich, multi-ethnic student population. The student body is notably diverse, with White students comprising approximately 30% to 35% of enrollment, while Latin and Asian students combined make up a substantial portion (approximately 43% to 47%). African American and Multi-Ethnic students represent an additional vital segment (~18%) of the program's demographics.
- Gender Demographics: Disaggregated data indicates that female students consistently outnumber male students across the vast majority of semesters, aligning with broader humanities trends.
- Student Educational Goals: Institutional data consistently shows that approximately 76% to 77% of RELS students list Transfer as their primary educational goal. This highlights the critical function the program serves in fulfilling lower-division General Education and transfer pathways.
- Demographic Diversity: The discipline continues to serve an ethnically and age-diverse student body, with traditional college-age learners forming the foundation, and strong representation across Latin, Asian, White, and multi-ethnic student populations.

2. Equity: Did your data reveal any patterns of inequity? If so, please explain those patterns and any actions that should be taken at the program or college level.

- Equitable Success Rates: Overall course success rates for the broader discipline remained robust at **76.6%** for AY 25–26, reflecting solid baseline achievement across the student population.
- Inclusive Pedagogy & Curriculum: To foster student belonging and success, course materials are intentionally designed around diverse global traditions and include opportunities for direct experiential learning. Furthermore, expanding accessible learning options, such as non-credit and credit Mindfulness courses tailored for diverse age groups and lifelong learners actively reduces barriers to participation and supports institutional equity goals.
- Gender and Distribution: Female students consistently outnumber male students across the vast majority of semesters, aligning with broader trends seen in the humanities. Female enrollment typically runs at around 60% to 65%+.
- While the RELS program skews visibly female, driven in part by courses like *Introduction to Women's Spirituality* (RELS 3) and Mindfulness offerings, the overall campus population at Las Positas College tends to be slightly more balanced overall between genders.

3. Course Modality (Instructional Programs Only): In reviewing your program's data packet and Succes Rates Dashboard, are there differences in success rates by modality (i.e. face-to-face, asynchronous, synchronous, hybrid, or hyflex)? If so, reflect on what might account for differences and any actions that should be taken. (Non-instructional programs may also choose to reflect on online vs. in-person services if applicable).

These are some of the broad themes in course modality that stood out in the data:

- Distance Education (asynchronous online) has become the primary mode of instruction for RELS courses, providing essential scheduling flexibility for our heavily transfer-bound student demographic.

- Asynchronous online courses inherently experience higher initial volatility and withdrawal rates compared to traditional face-to-face formats, driven by the demands of independent time management. Additionally, RELS classes that are offered in the Second Fast Trak session (starting in October or March) have a higher attrition level then the full semester course. Two caveats to the alternative modalities include Winter Intersession and Summer 5-week classes. These session offerings have maintained high success and completion rates.

- Faculty actively combat modality challenges by implementing Regular Substantive Interaction (RSI), utilizing transparent Canvas structures, providing instructor-created video guidance, and deploying proactive outreach tools to support persistence and close achievement gaps in online environments. In the Fast Trak courses, the program regularly provides text materials for the first four modules to support students that may be struggling to have all the materials right away in an 8-week course.

4. Program-Set Standard (Instructional Programs Only): The program-set standard is a baseline that alerts programs if their student success rates have dipped suddenly below 95% of the rolling 5-year average. There is no punishment for not meeting the standard, and many valid reasons this may occur. When a program does not meet this standard, they are asked to examine possible reasons and note any actions that should be taken, if appropriate. | Program-set standard data can be found on this page

5a. Did your program meet its program-set standard for successful course completion in AY25-26?

Yes_x___ No____

5b. If your program did not meet your program-set standard, discuss possible reasons and how this may affect program planning or resource requests. Success rates for individual courses can be found on the Success Rates Dashboard.

Section 4: Special Topics

These questions have been chosen for this year's Comprehensive Program Review to meet reporting mandates (for accreditation, Ed. Code, or other sources).

1. Mission: Describe 1-3 examples of how your program's work has aligned with the college's mission, vision, values, and/or educational master plan over the past three years. (Possibilities might include new initiatives, resource allocation/use, program improvements, or other activities).

- Mission, Vision, and Values
- Educational Master Plan

- The creation and launch of new curriculum within the Mindfulness discipline, including foundational courses (MIND 10/NMIN 210, MIND 15) and specialized offerings tailored for older adults (NMIN 210, NMIN215, directly support the college's values of inclusivity, community engagement, and serving diverse student populations across all life stages.
- Integrating the Canvas Labyrinth and organizing on-campus labyrinth walks provide tangible, experiential resources for stress reduction, mental wellness, and community belonging, aligning with institutional priorities around student mental health and support services.
- Maintaining robust scheduling and high course success rates in core general education courses (RELS 1, RELS 3) directly supports the Educational Master Plan by ensuring

transfer-bound students (~76% to 77% of the program's base) efficiently achieve their academic and transfer goals.

2. Regular Substantive Interaction (Instructional Programs Only)

To meet our college, ACCJC, state, and federal standards, **all online instructors** must demonstrate "**regular and substantive interaction**" (RSI) with students. That is, we must be clearly providing instruction and interacting with our online students, just like we would in an on-campus class. The following reflection questions allow us to capture how RSI is occurring in our classes.

The following documents explain requirements and best practices for RSI:

- ACCJC Quality Continuum Rubric for Distance Education
- Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements

2a. If your program offers DE courses, how are Regular and Substantive Interaction (RSI) requirements met in your area? Examples appear on the DE addendums of your Course Outlines of Record. Place an X next to each method used in your courses.	
x	Course materials make clear to students how often and when the instructor will interact with students (e.g. syllabus/home page lists email/office hours/other ways to communicate and typical response times)
	Provides direct instruction over Zoom (e.g. regularly scheduled live online class sessions in synchronous/hybrid/hyflex courses)
x	Provides direct instruction through instructor-created videos (e.g. lecture videos created using Studio in asynchronous courses)
x	Provides additional information from various sources/mediums to engage students with course content (e.g. instructor-curated content in Canvas pages that help deepen students understanding of course content)
x	Facilitates discussions (e.g. through Canvas discussion boards, Pronto, Studio, or Hypothesis)
x	Provides feedback on students' coursework (e.g. through detailed rubrics and/or assignment comments in Speedgrader; note: a grade alone does not quality as RSI, nor does auto-graded feedback students may get through completing publisher content)
x	Responds to students' questions (e.g. through timely responses to student messages in Canvas Inbox, discussion boards, social annotation assignments)
x	Facilitates student success through ongoing outreach (e.g. posts announcements; uses "Message Students Who" to encourage struggling students to attend office hours or access free tutoring)
	Other [explain]:

2b. What challenges if any have you faced in implementing RSI? What additional training or resources might instructors in your program need to increase the quality of RSI in online courses?

- A primary challenge in asynchronous Distance Education courses is maintaining consistent, individualized student engagement and overcoming the isolation that online learners sometimes experience, particularly in writing-heavy religious studies and contemplative courses.
- Another challenge is instructor workload. Creating individualized feedback, grading qualitative assignments and conducting outreach require significant, ongoing time investments. High enrolled Religious Studies classes creates an additional challenge.
- Continued access to advanced Canvas integration tools and workshops focusing on scalable RSI strategies and effective asynchronous community-building are highly beneficial for maintaining consistent and effective RSI strategies.

Section 5: Program Review Feedback

What questions or suggestions do you have about this year's Program Review forms or process?

- *Write responses here*
- *Add or remove bullets as needed*

Detailed Instructions

Instructions

1. Send an electronic copy of this form to Program Review chair, Karin Spirn, and your Dean by Monday, November 2.
2. Please respond to questions with enough detail to present your information; it doesn't have to be long.
3. If the requested information does not apply to your program, write "Not Applicable."
4. Even if you don't have much to report, we want to hear from you, so your voice is part of the college planning process.
5. Optional/suggested: Communicate with your dean while completing this document.

Sections: There are five sections to the document:

1. Program Reflection and Planning
2. SLO/SAO Review
3. Data analysis
4. Special topics
5. Feedback on the PR template and process

Time Frame: This Program Review should reflect your program status during the 25-26 academic year. It should describe plans starting now and continuing through 2026-27. It is fine to discuss topics beyond these time frames, but please specify the time frame in your responses.

Audience: Deans, Vice Presidents of Student Services and Academic Services, All Planning and Allocation Committees. This document will be available to the public.

Uses: This Program Review will inform the audience about your program. It is also used in creating division summaries, determining college planning priorities, and determining the allocation of resources. The final use is to document the fulfillment of accreditation requirements.

Equity: Here is the LPC definition of equity, which is a guiding principle in reviewing programs: "Equity is parity in student educational outcomes. It places student success and belonging for students of color and disproportionately impacted students at the center of focus."

Please note: Program Review is NOT a vehicle for making requests. All requests should be made through appropriate processes (e.g., Instructional Equipment Request Process) or directed to your dean or supervisor.

Helpful Links:

- ★ Tools for Writers - with contacts for help with specific sections.
- ★ Program Review Glossary - defines key terms you can review when writing.
- ★ Fall 2023 Program Reviews
- ★ Program Review FAQs

For help with your program review, please contact Karin Spirn at kspirn@laspositascollege.edu