From: Mark Perlman, Chair, Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

To: WOU Curriculum Committee

Re: Proposal to add language about transferring religious studies courses to the WOU catalog.

Date: January 20, 2012

There is a need for clarifying language in the WOU catalog regarding transferring courses in religious studies. The faculty of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies have been asked to provide a short statement of our current policy for upcoming WOU catalogs, to make the current policy clear and explicit to students, faculty, and advisors.

There is no current catalog description. This is to be a replacement for previous catalog language about transferring religious studies courses which was eliminated in 2009. For many years (over 20 years, back from before 1990) until 2009, the WOU catalog (2008-9 catalog page 48) contained a special note about transferring religious studies courses for the LACC. This note stated:

Note: WOU, as a public institution legally committed to church-state separation, cannot accept as fulfilling the humanities requirement those doctrinally-oriented courses in religion, scripture study and theology which are taught at Bible schools, seminaries and theological institutes or which are directed primarily toward training clergy and lay missionaries in a specific faith or set of religious beliefs.

In 2009 this paragraph was deemed by the WOU administration to be legally unacceptable and was eliminated beginning with the 2009-10 catalog. When this change was made, the faculty of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies met with the Provost, and we determined that our policy regarding religious studies transfer courses would be that they must be broad in scope, encompassing multiple religious traditions, to count as LACC equivalent courses, as both of the WOU courses are comparative in this way. Religious studies (and religion) courses focused on a single religious tradition can transfer as R399 and serve as elective credit, but will not count as fulfilling the LACC Philosophy/Religious Studies requirement.

The LACC is intended to broad exposure to large areas of a subject, which both of these our courses do.

WOU’s **R201 Introduction to the World’s Religions: Eastern** covers Confucianism, Taoism, Hinduism and the Buddhism of India, Tibet and Japan (Zen).

WOU’s **R204 Introduction to the World’s Religions: Western** covers Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

So, since 2009, with full agreement of the Dean and Provost, our policy for accepting transfer courses to fulfill the LACC Philosophy/Religious Studies requirement has been that courses which are comparative are accepted as fulfilling the LACC, whereas those courses focused on a single religious tradition can count as R399 and serve as elective credit, but will not count as fulfilling the LACC Philosophy/Religious Studies requirement.

We propose to add a passage to the catalog, which in the 2011-12 catalog would be at the end of on page 44, which will clarify and make explicitly clear the current policy for transferring religious studies courses.

The proposed text is this:

**Religious Studies transfer courses**

For a transfer course in religious studies to count as broad enough to fulfill the LACC requirement for Philosophy and Religious Studies, that course must be a comparative course, covering multiple religious traditions, comparable to WOU's R201 or R204. A course which covered a single religious tradition can count as an elective in Religious Studies, but will not fulfill the LACC Philosophy and Religious Studies requirement.

This is not a policy change – it is merely making clear the current policy, so that students can clearly see it in the catalog, and faculty and advisors can know more exactly the policy currently in place. Since this is merely clarifying language, and not a program or policy change, we see little controversy and would like to see this implemented as soon as possible.