

QUEEN'S SCHOOL OF RELIGION
REPORT TO SENATE
May 2010

A New Name and Identity

The Queen's School of Religion (formerly Queen's Theological College) was officially launched on March 23, 2010, the result of a joint decision by the school's Board of Management and faculty to assume a broader mandate for the university and beyond. A year-long strategic planning process identified that the Department of Religious Studies, operated by the "College" since the 1970's, serves as a national, international and university resource for increasing understanding of religious diversity. Understanding and working in a context of religious diversity will be a key capability needed by the university for it to be successful as an institution functioning in an intercultural and multi-religious milieu.

The School's purpose is now defined as:

- *Providing exceptional undergraduate and graduate teaching, learning and research in religious and theological studies;*
- *Engaging a pluralist and global world by increasing understanding of and respect for religious difference;*
- *Shaping citizens and leaders who can respond effectively to a changing world.*

The Queen's School of Religion is the first School of Religion in Canada and the only school to house both a Department of Religious Studies and Theology Programs.

Through its royal charter (1841, 1912, revised 2005), the School legally remains "Queen's Theological College." However, the School of Religion is now operated by the legal entity. "Queen's School of Religion" will be used in practice and recognized as a school among other schools on the university campus.

Rationale for becoming the School of Religion

With religion increasingly in the news, it is important to provide opportunity for the academic study of religion as a human phenomenon. The School of Religion affirms the diversity and relevance of religion in the world and the important contribution the study of religion can make for students at Queen's University who are preparing to become global citizens and leaders.

The change also recognizes the increased demand for Religious Studies by students. Undergraduate enrolments in the Department of Religious Studies doubled from 1999 to 2009; now 1480 students are taking courses in Religious Studies, with 125 major, medial and minor concentrators. In 2001, the department added a successful MA Program in the field of Religion and Modernity.

Over the same decade, enrolment in theology programs declined. This is a trend in North America, reflecting the increasing secularization of society and an aging and declining membership in main-line Canadian denominations. At the same time, the reality of a shrinking and aging clergy (76% currently between the ages of 55-69), combined with a growing need in Canada for persons equipped to provide spiritual care with multi-faith competence, were persuasive factors in the school's decision to preserve academic programs in theology and a program for professional ministry practice. Graduate Theology Programs include the Master of Divinity (with a specialization available in Restorative Justice) and a Masters of Theological Studies (with a specialization available in Spiritual Care). Theology Programs also include a Bachelor of Theology, A Bachelor of Theology in Native Ministry, a Certificate in Theological Studies and Diplomas in Restorative Justice and Transformational Leadership. Through a multi-year grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc., the School also runs a two-week theological program annually in the summer for high school youth.

The Queen's School of Religion anticipates increased synergy and collaboration for teaching and research within the School itself and through increased interaction with other cognate disciplines at the University.

A Revised Organizational and Administrative Structure

By establishing the Queen's School of Religion, faculty and staff are brought into one administrative unit, streamlining operations and increasing efficiency. A structural and organizational review was conducted by means of an external consultant and led to a new structure that was adopted by the faculty, staff and Board of Management in May 2008. The resultant structure streamlined administrative positions, removed redundancies in committee/board structures and effected alignment with the purposes of the School of Religion by operationally bringing two previous small departments (religious and theological studies) into one operational unit.

Within the unit, Religious and Theological Studies will continue as separate programs with discipline-specific learning outcomes. Students taking religious studies courses are exposed to critical understandings of religion as a cultural, historical and human phenomenon, while students of theology programs encounter a critical and inter-cultural approach to the study of theology and education for professional ministry and multi-faith spiritual care. As at other universities, the approach to religious studies at Queen's is non-confessional, pluralistic and multidisciplinary. Theology Programs focus on the Christian tradition and professional ministry in Christian and multi-faith contexts.

Before 1990, the Principal of the School was also the Head of the Department of Religious Studies. From 1990 until the present, the two positions were distinct. In 1996, the School established a Head of Theological Studies who oversees theology degrees, certificates and diploma programs. Beginning in 2011, the Principal of the Queen's School of Religion will also serve as Head of the Department of Religious Studies and an Academic Director/Chair of Theology Programs will be appointed by the Principal/Head.

The Principal/Head serves a five-year term, renewable for a second five-year term. The Office of the Principal, Queen's University, appoints a representative to the Search Committee for the Principal/Head of the School of Religion and the Dean (or delegate) of the Faculty of Arts and Science also serves on the Search Committee.

All tenured and adjunct faculty members in the School are members of the Department of Religious Studies. The Department of Religious Studies is responsible for all academic matters and Theology Programs are considered by means of a departmental sub-committee. All tenured faculty members teach in the Department of Religious Studies, which is a department within the Faculty of Arts and Science. The majority of the tenured faculty also teach in Theology Programs (with 4.0 FTE allocated annually to Theology Programs). The school's nine tenured faculty come from a variety of religious and intellectual backgrounds. Teaching and research range over major religious traditions of the world (including Buddhism, Chinese Religions, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism) and address various aspects of contemporary culture that have religious import (secularism, violence, ecology, gender, for example).

On March 25, 2009, the Queen's School of Religion faculty certified as a bargaining unit within the Queen's University Faculty Association. Collective bargaining will result in a collective agreement between QUFA and the Board of Management of the Queen's School of Religion. The Board of Management is the employer for all faculty and staff serving in the School of Religion and maintains all fiduciary and fiscal responsibility for its tenured faculty.

Despite its legally separate and chartered status, over the years the School has remained affiliated with the university. Although in 1912 the "college" was given the authority to confer on students its own academic degrees, it has never assumed that authority. It is the Senate that officially confers all of the School's degrees, on the recommendation of the faculty of the School. By charter, the Principal of the School is a member of Senate, where its students and faculty are also represented and the School has followed Senate procedures with respect to introducing new degree programs and reviewing existing programs. By recent action of the Queen's University Board of Trustees to downsize Board membership, the "college" voted in support of the motion that included removal of a "college" representative to the Board of Trustees.

Graduates of programs in the Department of Religious Studies are included in the University Convocations for Arts and Science (Humanities) and the School of Graduate Studies. Graduates of Theology Programs participate in a separate spring University Convocation for Theology Programs, which includes the awarding by Queen's of an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree.

The Queen's School of Religion has a multi-year financial and administrative agreement with Queen's University, in recognition of the undergraduate and graduate teaching and research contributed to the university. In an appendix to the agreement, the nature of the relationship between the School of Religion, the Department of Religious Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Science is detailed.

Strength of Teaching and Learning in Religious and Theological Studies

Faculty at the School of Religion are known for their teaching and research strength in the following areas:

- Biblical Studies
- Religion and Modernity
- Asian Religions (specific expertise in China, India and Iran)
- Religion in Canada

Both religious and theological studies programs are implementing curricular revisions effective 2010-11. In the undergraduate curriculum in Religious Studies some new courses have been added, particularly in the fields of biblical studies and the history of Christianity.

Common to both programs is a new cross-listed course in Research Methods for Religion and Theology.

In Theology Programs, the School of Religion recently streamlined and revised its degree programs. Some courses were dropped and some added. New emphases include pluralism in the Canadian context, multi-faith competencies for spiritual care and professional formation for ethical ministry practice. In order to enhance flexibility for students (the majority of which are second career), an accelerated 24-month option is now available for the Master of Divinity, restructuring a three year program into six back-to-back semesters). Theology Programs have also moved to a credit weighting system, anticipating the direction the University will be taking.

The School has a commitment to ensuring that any faculty member delivering a course through on-line methodology is adequately educated and trained in pedagogy appropriate for on-line delivery. To date, four faculty members have undergone training. Presently, on-line courses are offered only in Theology Programs.

Our graduates pursue many different careers including education, counselling, community and international development, spiritual care and chaplaincy, human resources, journalism, law, leadership in religious communities, library science, public administration and policy research.

Fundraising

The Queen's School of Religion carries out its own advancement work, in close cooperation with the Advancement Office of the University. In 2009-10, over \$600,000 was raised in support of annual operations and designated endowment. In December, 2009, the School was awarded \$675,000 (USD) in a third major funding grant by the Lilly Endowment Inc. to continue to sustain the School's annual summer theological youth program (first launched in 2003). In December 2009, the School was given

\$200,000 (from the sale of the Queen Street UC in Kingston) to establish an endowment fund in support of the education of theology students. The School, in cooperation with the University, is actively cultivating a donor who has expressed interest in restoring and renovating Theological Hall.

New Website

A new website for the School of Religion was launched in the spring. For further information about the school, its programs, faculty and students go to:

www.queensu.ca/religion.

Respectfully submitted by
Principal Jean Stairs
Queen's School of Religion