

TO: Barbara D'Ambrosia, Chair, Faculty Council (FC)
FROM: Committee on Academic Policies (CAP)
RE: CAP Report on the Proposal for Change to the Core Curriculum: Jesuit Heritage Requirement in Theology & Religious Studies (the Proposal)
DATE: March 13, 2017
CC: Jeanne Colleran, Provost and Academic Vice President
Margaret Farrar, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences (CAS)
Anne Kugler, Associate Dean for the Humanities & Coordinator of CAS Graduate Programs, CAS
Peter Kvidera, Director, Integrative Core (I-Core) Curriculum
Sheila E. McGinn, Chair, Department of Theology & Religious Studies (TRS)
Alan Miciak, Dean, Boler School of Business

Charge from FC: FC forwarded the Proposal submitted by Dr. Sheila E. McGinn, Chair of TRS, to CAP, an FC committee. Furthermore, FC recommended that CAP work with both administrative contact persons, Dr. Anne Kugler and Dr. Peter Kvidera.

Procedure that CAP followed: CAP used the section: Theology and Religious Studies from "Faculty Guidelines – Integrative Core Curriculum – Jesuit Heritage" (Core guideline, Appendix 1) as a guideline to review this Proposal. Note that the "Protocol for Requesting Approval of a New Academic Program," revised on November 22, 2013, was not used because the Proposal is not a new academic program. More specifically, CAP had two discussions about the Proposal on 1/25/17, 2/1/17; provided written feedback (Appendix 2) to Dr. McGinn; had a second round of discussions on the Proposal on 2/15/17 and 3/1/17 after receiving an updated Proposal from Dr. McGinn and the response from Dr. Kvidera (Appendix 3). During this process, Dr. Kugler, Dr. Kvidera, and Dr. McGinn were informed of our findings. They were invited to and joined our full or part of discussions on 1/25/17, 2/1/17, and 3/1/17. CAP had one-hour open hearings for the Proposal on 2/13/17 and 2/14/17, respectively. Meanwhile, FC organized an online forum on Canvas running until 2/24/17. Two faculty members came to the open hearings and 20 questions/replies were posted online (Appendix 4).

Summary of the proposal: In the current I-Core, students need to take two TRS Core courses: TRS101 and a 200- or 300-level course. TRS101 is a pre-requisite of other TRS courses. In the Proposal, students need to take two TRS Core courses: one lower-division TRS course (one 100- or 200-level Core course) and one 300-level Core course, typically in any order and without a prerequisite.

Before discussing the proposal, CAP would like to thank TRS department for its time and effort in developing this proposal. The department is addressing a very important issue that is relevant to all students taking the TRS core. From our discussions, open hearings, and online discussion, it is clear to CAP that TRS faculty members have considered a variety of approaches, with their benefits and challenges, before proposing the current version.

During its review, CAP focused on the academic (or curricular) merit of the Proposal and asked two questions: 1) Does the proposed TRS core address the learning outcomes (LOs) satisfactorily? 2) If so, how does the proposed TRS core compare with the current one (or does it offer more academic benefits to students?) In the following, we will first report our findings on LOs; then we will present potential academic benefits offered by the proposed TRS core followed by concerns raised by CAP and other faculty members and responses from the TRS department and the I-Core Committee. Finally, we will summarize our findings and present our recommendation to FC.

First, does the proposed TRS core address the LOs satisfactorily? There are five LOs presented in the Core guideline. The I-Core Committee has approved the revised TRS student LOs that reduces the five LOs to two student LOs (See the Proposal and Appendix 5). Note that the Deans and the university assessment officer have been apprised of this.

Furthermore, all the 100- or 200-level TRS core courses must address both student LOs, while 300-level TRS core courses must address one of the two (Appendix 5). In the proposed TRS core, students are required to take two courses of their choice: one 100- or 200-level Core course and one 300-level Core course. Hence, both student LOs and thus the five LOs in the Core guideline will be satisfied

Next, we clarify the following points before presenting a comparison of the proposed and the current TRS core curricula. They may help the faculty when they evaluate the Proposal.

1) Regarding the nature of TRS101: TRS101 is not a survey of world religions, but rather a survey of main methodologies used in TRS. In the current TRS core, students will take TRS101 and then one TRS 200- or 300-level course; in which they use one or two of those methodologies. In the proposed core, students no longer take TRS101; however, 200- and 300-level TRS courses still introduce students to the relevant methodologies used in the courses.

2) Regarding the content of TRS101: In TRS101, students are exposed to both Christianity and another religious tradition because it has a comparative element (perhaps 20%) and the study of methods cannot be separated from the content. In the proposed core, students who choose courses devoted to other religious traditions will still be introduced to some aspects of Christianity because TRS faculty constantly draw comparisons between other religious traditions studied and Christian views. In addition, the TRS student LOs require every core course to address issues of religious diversity within and across religious traditions and also within and across cultural contexts. So, students will continue to be exposed both to Christianity and other religious traditions.

3) 200-level TRS core courses are more broad surveys while 300-level TRS core courses are topical. Generally speaking, the TRS 200- and 300-level core courses can be taken in any order, although a few 300- TRS courses do have prerequisites.

Now, we compare the proposed TRS core with the current one. The proposed core can offer the following benefits to students:

1. Because of their narrower scope, the 200- and 300-level TRS core courses are more effective in developing students' skills in critical thinking and information literacy. They also allow better skills transfer to other contexts. Thus, the proposed core will be more effective in meeting the LOs.
2. Students would be able to take TRS courses that relate to their majors or potential career interests, which will increase the modes of cross-curricular integration.
3. Allowing two TRS Core Courses of the students' choice will provide more flexibility for students in curricular planning and implementation. This is particularly helpful to transfer students and students who study abroad.
4. Students will be much more likely to be taught by full time or by part time faculty with terminal degrees and long-standing relationships to the university. The language of "lower-division plus a 300-level Core course" implies that students should spread out their TRS Core requirements. Both are more effective pedagogically.

Meanwhile, concerns have been raised during CAP's discussion, open hearings, and online discussion. Faculty members from TRS and I-Core Committee have responded to those concerns. We

only summarize the major concerns and responses related to the curriculum and to this proposal alone as follows. For a complete list of concerns and responses, please see Appendix 4.

Concern 1: The Core guideline states: “Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition.” Meanwhile, both TRS student LOs use the phrase “culturally and globally diverse.” The course description for TRS 101 in the 2015-2017 Undergraduate Bulletin states: “Introduction to the areas of scripture, theology, ethics, and non-Christian religious traditions.” How will the proposed TRS core address both Christian and non-Christian religious traditions as well as the cultural and global diversity?

Response:

1. Both the current and the proposed TRS core allow students to graduate without taking a single *course* on Christianity or a survey of world religions. Note that TRS101 is not a world religions course; it is a methodology course of which 20% is the comparative element.
2. This is not a change to the *status quo*. “Particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition” does not require all students to take a course with focus on the Roman Catholic tradition. Students who choose courses devoted to other religious traditions will still be introduced to some aspects of Christianity because TRS faculty constantly draw comparisons between other religious tradition studied and Christian views. Also 1/3–1/2 of TRS offerings in a given semester are “Catholic Studies” courses, so ample opportunities are available for students who wish to develop a deeper understanding of Catholic Christianity.
3. The TRS student LOs require every TRS Core course to address the issues of religious diversity within and across religious traditions and also within and across cultural contexts.
4. The main consideration for approving courses is the learning goals, and a focus on the Roman Catholic tradition is not in the goals.

Concern 2: 300-level course without a prerequisite seems very advanced for Core. How can a 300-level course be appropriate for most of our first-year students without comprising the quality? Can TRS require one 100 and one 200 level course instead?

Response:

1. The new Core is to be pursued throughout a student’s entire undergraduate career; the language of “lower-division plus a 300-level Core course” implies that students should spread out their TRS Core requirements.
2. Some first-year students thrive while the poor readers/writers would not do well, but we also find this to be the case in TRS101.
3. To foster skills in critical analysis, the more focused 300-level course will reinforce what was done in the 200-level survey.
4. The department is working with various programs and with Academic Advising to provide adequate support for advising students.
5. In the JH-PL requirement, students can take 200- or 300-level courses in any order. TRS considered something similar to JH-PL requirement of PL-KR and PL-VS, but early conversations with the Registrar and Advising led to the current proposal.

Concern 3: If this Proposal is accepted by the faculty, its implementation should be delayed until the end of the First In The World (FITW) grant. It doesn’t seem fair to tell one group of incoming freshmen (Gold group in FITW) that they are required to take TRS 101, while their peers are not required to take that course.

Response: TRS developed this proposal in consultation with the FITW directors and Academic Advising. The students who will take TRS101 will have been classified as “at risk” for success at JCU.

Such students routinely are placed in other academic support courses, so the requirement of TRS101 is not unique. Furthermore, these TRS101 classes are smaller (15–18 students) and consist of a service learning component, which is one of the engaged learning strategies that have been shown to be beneficial to “at risk” students.

Concern 4: Moving away from introductory courses in disciplines may have negative, unintended consequences on majors.

Response: This proposal changes the focus of introductory courses in TRS to make them more specific to the various sub-disciplines within the field. TRS is a broad field that involves a variety of methodologies. The 200-level courses in TRS introduce students to the specific methodologies used. This already is the case for TRS majors, so will have no detrimental effect upon them. For non-TRS majors, it also is an improvement. Because of their narrower scope, the 200-level TRS courses are more effective in developing students’ skills in critical thinking and information literacy. Also, students can learn to transfer those critical-thinking skills to other contexts, which will benefit them across the curriculum.

If this Proposal is accepted by the faculty, CAP highly recommends that TRS department work together with respective constituents such as Academic Advising, Registrar, and etc., and make sure proper academic advising information is given to faculty and students. The information should 1) make it clear what level of reading and writing skills is expected in TRS core courses and specify appropriate pre-requisites when necessary (for example, students have reading/writing skills that are comparable to those being placed in EN125); 2) describe the nature of 200- and 300-level courses and how they may connect with other majors when appropriate; and 3) highlight the benefits of spreading out the TRS Core requirements beyond the first year. The information can be given in a variety of formats, but we recommend such information at least appear in the *Bulletin* related to the TRS core and in individual course descriptions as necessary.

In summary, the Proposal addresses a very important issue in the TRS Core. The proposed TRS Core meets the LOs. The proposed TRS Core can offer a number of advantages over the current one. Meanwhile, the TRS department and the I-Core Committee have carefully addressed the major concerns. We believe that the Proposal is ready to go out for a vote of the Faculty, if FC wishes to do so.

CAP

Peggy Finucane
Rick Greci
Greg Farnell
Roger Purdy
Linda Seiter
Dianna Taylor
Peifang Tian (Chair)

Appendix 1: Guidelines
John Carroll University
Integrative Core Curriculum

JESUIT HERITAGE

As a Jesuit university, John Carroll values the essential principles of Ignatian pedagogy. While the entire Core Curriculum addresses elements of Ignatian teaching, this component of the curriculum underscores fields of study traditionally part of the Jesuit heritage in higher education: philosophy, theology and religious studies, issues in social justice, and the creative and performing arts.

Philosophy (2 courses, 6 credits)

These courses provide students the opportunity to reflect on the most fundamental questions of our lives that often go unexamined. They acquaint students with the intellectual and moral traditions of world civilizations and aim to develop the critical thinking skills necessary to question assumptions, to weigh propositions fundamental to personal responsibility, and to consider ethical implications of their decisions. An understanding of philosophy is one of the hallmarks of Jesuit education. PL courses will address the following learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of human and natural worlds
 - Acquire knowledge about human experience
2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation
 - Identify and understand the fundamental elements of a problem
 - Demonstrate the ability to analyze multiple forms of expression (such as oral, written, digital, or visual)
 - Develop critical thinking skills
7. Apply a framework for examining ethical dilemmas
 - Identify ethical questions
 - Analyze and assess ethical theories
 - Apply ethical frameworks to personal, professional, and institutional dilemmas
9. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience
 - Recognize the importance of fundamental questions of human existence

In addition:

- Students will complete this Core requirement by taking one from the “Knowledge and Reality” list of courses and one course from the “Values and Society” list of courses;
- Students may take courses in any order and can take any combination of 200-level and 300-level courses;
- A philosophy course that is used to fulfill another Core requirement (Integrated Courses, ISJ, etc.) may not be used to fulfill the PL requirement for Jesuit Heritage; no double-dipping of Core courses.

Theology and Religious Studies (2 courses, 6 credits)

These courses provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for the analysis of religion; for investigation of the historical development and contemporary practice of particular religious traditions; for critical reflection on personal faith as well as sympathetic appreciation of the beliefs of others; and for resources to understand and respond to the religious forces that shape our society and world.

Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition. TRS courses address the following learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of human and natural worlds
 - Acquire knowledge about human experience
2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation
 - Develop critical thinking skills
5. Act competently in a global and diverse world
 - Examine the global impact of actions or issues
6. Understand and promote social justice
 - Examine the conditions that have given rise to injustice
 - Understand the consequences of injustice
9. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience.
 - Recognize the importance of fundamental questions of human existence
 - Examine religious beliefs' response to the fundamental questions of human existence
 - Examine religious beliefs' relevance to other fields of knowledge
 - Discover spiritual dimensions in art, literature, and science

In addition:

- Students will first take TRS 101, which is a pre-requisite for other TRS courses; their second course may be at the 200 or the 300 level;
- A TRS course that is used to fulfill another Core requirement (Integrated Courses, ISJ, etc.) may not be used to fulfill the TRS requirement for Jesuit Heritage; no double-dipping of Core courses.

Issues in Social Justice (1 course, 3 credits)

Courses focusing on issues in social justice ask students to understand and interrogate concepts of inclusion and empowerment and to analyze systems and structures of oppression and marginalization. These courses may pose questions about equality, access, multiculturalism, economic and social barriers, or discrimination based on gender, sexuality, class, age, race, and/or ethnicity. They challenge students to recognize institutionalized impediments or de facto assumptions that result in an individual or group having less than full voice and participation in societies. The courses may focus on historical issues or contemporary problems or both. Social Justice courses address the following learning outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of human and natural worlds
 - Acquire knowledge about the human experience. Included herein may be how the natural world has shaped the human experience, particularly as it applies to issues of social justice

2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation
 - Demonstrate the ability to think critically about a real-world problem, issue, intellectual question, or idea (critical thinking includes identifying and describing the fundamental elements of a problem/issue/question/idea and interpreting relevant data)
5. Act competently in a global and diverse world
 - Understand and respect human and cultural difference
6. Understand and promote social justice
 - Examine the conditions that have given rise to injustice
 - Understand the consequences of injustice

Creative and Performing Arts (1 course, 1 credit minimum)

From their beginnings Jesuit colleges and universities were distinguished by their attention to the arts and architecture, painting, sculpture, music, theater, dance and poetry as methods of religious communication. These courses will all students to practice an art form that will give them a new mode of expression and a new voice. These courses may also include experiences off campus, taking advantage of the rich cultural resources of the Cleveland area, as long as there is a creative/productive assignment in the course. Creative and Performing Arts courses address the following learning outcomes:

2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation
 - Demonstrate the ability to interpret, analyze, and evaluate artistic forms and representations—whether verbal, visual, musical, or literary
 - Develop critical thinking skills
 - Articulate an understanding of the arts through a consideration of or engagement in the creative process
3. Apply creative and innovative thinking
 - Respect innovation and creativity by demonstrating a basic conceptual analysis of aesthetic expression
4. Communicate skillfully in multiple forms of expression
 - Understand and demonstrate the diverse nature, meanings and functions of creative endeavors through the study and practice of literature, music, theatrical and visual arts and related forms of expression

Appendix 2: Feedback from CAP

February 7th, 2017

Dear Dr. McGinn,

Thank you for submitting the Proposal “TRS Change to the Core”! CAP had two discussions over this proposal on 1/25/17 and 2/1/17 based on the following documents: the proposal dated 1/18/17 (for 1/25/17 discussion) and 1/30/17 (for 2/1/17 discussion). The criteria that CAP used to review the proposal are those listed in the Faculty Guidelines.Integrative Core Curriculum.Jesuit Heritage (Appendix I) sent to us by Dr. Peter Kvidera, director of the Core. (Note that this part of the guideline: “Students will first take TRS 101, which is a pre-requisite for other TRS courses; their second course may be at the 200 or the 300 level.” will be changed by the Core. So we do not use this part in our discussion.) The administrative contact persons that Faculty Council recommended are Drs. Anne Kugler and Peter Kvidera. In both discussions, CAP members, Drs. Sheila McGinn (Chair of TRS Department), Anne Kugler, and Peter Kvidera were present.

Note that this proposal involves both TRS and the Core. Both versions of the proposal (1/18 and 1/30) were approved by the Core before respective CAP discussions.

The current I-Core specifies the Jesuit Heritage (JH) TRS Core requirement as TRS 101 and one additional TRS course. TRS proposes the following changes in the proposal:

1. Change the JH-TRS Core requirement to *one lower-division* (a 100- or 200-level) *TRS Core course and one 300-level TRS Core course*.
2. The two courses could be taken in either order; typically, neither would require a prerequisite.
3. TRS101 would cease being a prerequisite for 200- and 300-level JH-TRS Core courses.
4. The effective date for this change would be backdated to Fall 2015, to the inception of the I-Core.
5. Students in the I-Core who already will have taken the TRS101 before Fall 2017 can take either a 200- or 300-level TRS course to complete their JH-TRS requirement.

Here we provide our feedback and hope that it may help strengthening your proposal. CAP will host opening hearings (2/13 and 2/14) and online discussions until 2/24. Subsequently, CAP will send the report regarding your proposal to FC.

The criteria require that the JH TRS courses address five different learning outcomes (see Appendix I). TRS has two core student learning outcomes (SLOs) which address the five different learning outcomes. Meanwhile, the proposed two courses (one 100- or 200- level) and one 300- level course meet those two core SLOs. Hence, the proposed courses meet the learning outcomes set out by the criteria. In the proposal, TRS lists a number of benefits. Hence, the proposed changes may benefit the students, TRS, and the university. CAP wishes to point out the following:

- 1) The criteria state: “Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition.” For Theology and Religious Studies. CAP has two questions:
 - a. What does it mean to “pay particular attention to the Roman Catholic tradition”?
 - b. Does TRS Core need to fulfill this? If yes, how will TRS Core fulfill it? If not, where else will this be fulfilled?

- 2) In the current Core, TRS101 is a required course and a pre-requisite for the second TRS core course. In the proposed changes, it will not be a required course and a pre-requisite either. Dr. McGinn offered the explanation: Current TRS101 is a survey of widely used methodologies in TRS. On the other hand, 200- and 300- level TRS courses use one or two methodologies which will be addressed in the respective courses. Therefore, these 200- and 300-level courses do not rely on knowledge from TRS101. It may benefit readers if this point is made clear in the proposal.
- 3) 200- level courses cover a broader topic while 300- level courses are more focused. In addition, there are more discussions and writing in 300-level courses. Because of the writing skills required in 300-level courses, CAP recommends either co-requisite with EN125 or pre-requisite with EN120 for 300-level TRS core course.

If faculty adopts the proposal, we recommend that description of 200- and 300- level courses, their nature, and writing skills involved be given in relevant places (such as the JH TRS core description in the Bulletin and for advising). This way, students and their advisers have clear expectation.

In summary, we believe that the proposal is ready for open hearings.

Appendix 3: Response from Dr. Peter Kvidera to questions raised by CAP in Appendix 2

Dear Peifang,

At its meeting this past Monday (2/13/2017), the Core committee discussed the recommendations from CAP, and the proposal as revised in response to the recommendations.

The committee first addressed the language of the Core document, which states, “Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition.” In its interpretation, the committee agreed that the phrase “particular attention” does not require all students to take a course with focus on the Roman Catholic tradition. Rather, the committee felt that this language suggests that within the courses offered, students should have the opportunity to study the Roman Catholic tradition. The clarification Dr. McGinn added to the proposal indicates that students have ample opportunity to study the Roman Catholic tradition in the types of courses offered overall. The committee accepted this clarification. I should add that the committee also discussed the fact that the main consideration for approving courses has always been the stated learning goals, and a focus on the Roman Catholic tradition is not included in those goals.

Regarding the second issue, the committee decided not to include a policy of co-requisites (EN 125) or pre-requisites (EN 120/121) in the proposal. TRS-JH has not had such a policy in the past, and the committee believes that this should be handled by advising. We agreed that we will need to make the recommendations prominent in advising materials and in the bulletin. The committee also expressed concerns that adding the co-requisite or pre-requisite adds another layer of complexity to an already complex Core. And we noted that, in reality, the majority of incoming freshmen are placed in EN 125. We usually have only three-four sections of EN 120 each fall.

In sum, the Core committee endorsed the TRS-JH proposal, as revised in response to the CAP recommendations.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Peter

Appendix 4: Summary of Open hearing on 2/14/17 and online discussion

Q – How will core learning objectives involving student exposure to global and cultural diverse dimensions of religious experience be addressed if no TRS101?

A – TRS101 is not a world religions course, so it does not necessarily expose students to a variety of religions. TRS101 is a methodology course, not survey of world religions course. TRS101 covers 5 subfields: Bible, Historical, Theology, Ethics, Pluralism. Without TRS101, the core learning objectives will be covered in the 200 and 300 courses. Any course dealing with a Catholic subject will have some comparative component that looks at least one other religion. Students will have more opportunity to choose courses that explore non-Christian religions.

Q – A comparative religions course is beneficial for students who may not have had such an experience in high school. Given that TRS101 is a methodologies course, that sounds particularly beneficial for TRS majors as well.

A – Providing more choice of TRS courses will be helpful for students who have already had one or more theology courses in high school. The new requirements will allow such students to pursue other TRS courses that might fit well with their majors such as pre-health, pre-law, environmental science. In the old core, first-years might instead take SC101, PO101, or other introductory courses during their first semester. The new core is causing students without adequate reading and writing skills to be packed into TRS101 in the Fall semester.

Q – Why is 3xx required? How do 2xx and 3xx differ?

A - 2xx-level are broad survey courses or introduction to a topic, 3xx-level are focused.

Q – Should first-years not take TRS courses?

A – There is broad span of skills for incoming first-year students. Those who like discussion or have ADD would do better in 300-level courses (more focus, more engagement, less lecture). Students who can't write well should wait until completion of EN120 before taking TRS2xx or 3xx.

Q – What guidelines will be available for advisors?

A – First-year orientation will need to include information for advisors that clarify writing requirements, as well as differences between TRS2xx and 3xx.

Q – There aren't many open seats in this past year's enrollment of TRS3xx courses. How will we cover enrollment?

A – We will be shifting faculty out of TRS101 and into 2xx and 3xx courses for Fall 2017. TRS101 some sections had small class caps (service learning, FITW capped at 15–18). The TRS 2xx and 3xx will have larger caps of 20–25.

Q – Would it be possible to double-dip TRS courses in the core to alleviate faculty resource issue?

A – TRS department would not be in favor of that. The current core is helping to draw new minors.

Q: I have some objections to make regarding the TRS proposal. But I first want to clarify that I believe the problems TRS is trying to solve are real ones, with which I sympathize. I just fear that the proposed solutions may make things worse. Secondly, I came to JCU after the discussions and decisions about the new curriculum were made, so I am possibly missing out on crucial information about how the new core is supposed to work. I am glad to be corrected if so.

1. I think I understand the impetus to drop the TRS 101 requirement. But making TRS choices wholly elective means that our students could easily graduate without learning a single thing

about Catholicism or even Christianity. With this proposal, students could take one class on the sociology of religion, and one class on Eastern religions, or one on Islam and one on Buddhism—all great things to study ... but then why have they come to a Catholic campus? And why, to press the point further, do we lump such requirements under “Jesuit Heritage”? As a Jesuit, it seems odd to me that under this proposal, the multiple classes in this category could easily exclude a single mention of Christianity’s premises and answers to fundamental questions. (Perhaps we should just call “Jesuit Heritage” something else, then?) The difficulty of teaching this required class (TRS 101), which TRS proposes as a major reason for the change, is irrelevant: most departments at most universities have introductory-level courses that are required (such as EN 125 here). The solution to student resistance is good pedagogy, not changing the requirement.

2. I scratch my head, on technical and pedagogical grounds, upon reading the proposal’s requiring a lower-level class and then a 300-level class without a prerequisite. If freshmen can do well in a 300-level course, then that class is not being taught at a 300 level. We have a similar problem in a few other departments: they assign a private meaning for what 100, 200, 300 and 400 levels mean. All departments should be so lucky to find a loophole for filling seats in their major courses, but it’s confusing to students and advisors, and it plumps up TRS’s 300-level enrollment at the expense of freshmen who are expected to perform at a junior level. Conversely, it is unfair to junior and senior TRS majors, who should be able to expect upper-level work and strong conversation from their prepared peers. If having a class full of resentful freshmen is a problem, then having a class half-filled with motivated majors and half-filled with resentful freshmen is an even bigger problem. Advising is having enough trouble with the new curriculum; this seems to make it worse.
3. If others find my objections about lack of content (specifically, Christianity) irrelevant or unimportant, then could we bracket that issue, and try to solve the technical problem more simply: by requiring one 100 and one 200 level course? The 200 could be more specialized, without requiring a prerequisite. This solution solves many of the linked-course-prerequisite problems that TRS has identified in its proposal, though it does not solve the problem of helping their major-level courses to run. But this latter problem is one that many (humanities) departments struggle with (getting majors). TRS, because their requirements are protected by the new curriculum, suffers much less than other Arts and Sciences programs on this score.
4. Another issue the proposal addresses is the problem of increasing PT faculty teaching lower-level classes. Again, this is a problem many departments struggle with, not just TRS. This is an administrative problem: if the proportion of PT to FT faculty is out of whack, then it is the responsibility of the TRS department to make their case to the administration for more FT faculty, just as the other departments do.

Another issue the proposal addresses is the complexity of training PT faculty to teach 101.

While I sympathize with the chair’s responsibilities in this regard, again it seems to be an administrative problem, rather than a curricular one.

In short, I see TRS detailing a number of problems, all of which seem to be pedagogical and administrative in nature. It seems to me that such problems should be solved with pedagogical and administrative responses, not with curricular change.

The course description of TRS 101 seems to have been very carefully designed to solve lots of tricky problems, especially the question of how proudly to proclaim our Catholic-Christian heritage, while being deeply respectful of all other faith traditions:

“This course introduces students to the academic study of religion by exploring the various ways individuals and communities articulate their experience of the divine. We will move from a general consideration of the nature of religious experience to the ways in which this experience takes shape in various sacred scriptures, traditions, theologies,

and moral claims. (NOTE: This section qualifies as a Catholic Studies course. As such, it gives special emphasis to the Catholic Christian religious tradition, but with a generous openness to other religious traditions and all points of view.)”

Even with the understandable difficulties which TRS has outlined, I would be disheartened if we chose to throw away such a carefully designed course in favor of this new proposal.

A: Jayme, I want to thank you for the time and effort you have expended in reviewing the proposal and crafting your response to it. You make several good points here about factors beyond the control of the department (e.g., university investment in FT faculty hires, development and support of PT faculty). I share your concerns and see them as worthy of broader discussion. My present concern is the TRS proposal itself rather than these substantial college-wide issues, although obviously those factors have influenced the development of this proposal. I’ll try to respond to your concerns as you’ve enumerated them. Your first objection is that “making TRS choices wholly elective means that our students could easily graduate without learning a single thing about Catholicism or even Christianity.”

You are correct that this proposal would allow students to graduate without taking a single course focused on Catholicism or Christianity more broadly understood. However, this is not a change to the status quo. Students already can graduate without taking a course in Catholicism (or any other form of Christianity). However, even students who choose courses devoted to other religious traditions cannot complete the TRS core without being introduced to some aspects of Christianity. Because of our student population and the department’s understanding of mission, TRS faculty constantly draw comparisons between whatever religious tradition is the subject of their course and Christian views on that subject. Admittedly, this is not the same as an entire course, but the university hasn’t required a course on Christianity per se since about 1970.

The I-Core curriculum is based on the JCU academic learning outcomes (see <https://sites.jcu.edu/results/pages/learning-outcomes/>), which conclude with the broad goal of “Understand[ing] the religious dimensions of human experience.” The Core document assigns this and four other learning outcomes to the JH-TRS Core (see pp. 19–20 of the April 2013 Final APTF Curriculum Report). The university has no student learning outcomes with respect to any specific religious traditions (e.g., Catholic Christianity). The “Rationale” to the JH-TRS Core (p. 19) contextualizes the “legislative” section with the following statement: “Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition.” The TRS department addresses this concern both by maintaining a proportionally higher number of courses that focus on Catholic theology and/or the broader Catholic tradition (on average, 1/3–1/2 of our offerings are “Catholic Studies” sections) and by mainstreaming discussion of Christian tradition in comparative courses. The university has not made understanding of Catholic Christianity a learning outcome for our students, so this proposal does not alter the status quo. If I understand your second point correctly, you’re arguing that 100-, 200-, and 300-level courses should fit first-years, sophomores, and juniors, respectively. This is a traditional model drawn from the sciences, whose curricula are particularly incremental. Educators traditionally assumed that it is more “basic” for students to survey a field or topic and then move to a more focused analysis of a narrower topic. For students who are doing a connected course sequence (e.g., 16th–18th-century European history and then 16th–18th-century French history), that still makes good sense. The Core allows much more fluid connections between the two courses where such a logic isn’t as obvious, and a student’s individual learning style may play a more significant role in what course design (e.g., broad survey lectures vs. focused seminars) is best-suited to her/his success. Additionally, if we want to foster skills in critical analysis that are transferable to other fields and contexts, more focused courses better serve this need than do broad surveys.

We share your concerns about majors (and minors) needing the engagement and challenge of their peers, but the low number of TRS majors and constant pressure concerning class enrollments strives against this need. The current proposal retains the 400-level courses as the domain where majors

and minors get the kind of challenge you identify. That is far from ideal, but it is a start. We also provide co-curricular opportunities for majors (and minors) and are experimenting with other curricular solutions that do not impinge upon the university Core Curriculum.

We need more FT faculty in TRS, but no department controls whether it will get approved for new hires. We have been told what staffing level to anticipate, and it is insufficient to support the current core without an unsustainable and inordinate demand for PT faculty in the fall semester vs. the spring. When we had more FT faculty and served the D-Core, an average of 14–15 sections of the TRS101 each semester (about 385 students) required about 8 PT faculty; with the decline of the department and the initiation of the I-Core, TRS101 fall 2015 and fall 2016 enrollments averaged at 600 students (20+ PT faculty). This is unsustainable and the imbalance cannot be remedied by FT faculty hires. We have suggested other remedies, including appealing for an intervention to cap the number of incoming students placed in TRS101. Such factors beyond the department's control provided some of the impetus to find curricular remedies.

You mention “the complexity of training PT faculty to teach 101.” I’m sorry if the proposal gave the impression that this was our concern. The issue from the TRS standpoint does not have to do with training PT faculty to teach the course per se; the problem rather is the inordinate demand on the department administration (the chair and AA) to support the army of PT faculty required to offer 25 sections of the course each fall. While you’re quite right to observe that this is an administrative issue, the university’s current financial situation is such that we cannot anticipate when such additional administrative support might be feasible. The only available remedy, then, is to generate an alternate way to reduce the number of PT faculty (currently 20+) to a figure closer to the 8–10 we had in the past. We tried to achieve this by enlarging the class size to double the normal cap of 25, but students did not perform nearly as well in the larger classes.

Due to the dramatic (50%) attrition in FT TRS faculty over the last four years, we simply do not have the human resources to support the Core as it currently is designed and implemented. Even if the university can invest additional resources in TRS faculty hires to reach our target figure of 10 FT faculty, the projected pace of those hires relative to continued faculty attrition suggests that this deficit will continue for at least the next 5–10 years. Meanwhile, we need to take steps to ensure that we can continue to serve the university at an optimal level. In our view, continuing to invest time and money in TRS101 is not an optimal use of resources.

Your last (unnumbered) point quoted a course description from someone’s syllabus for TRS101, but it was not the actual Bulletin description. The official description is as follows:

Introduction to the academic study of theology and religion. Topics include the nature of religion; the human search for meaning; revelation; symbol, myth, and ritual; and faith as it relates to reason, experience, and morality. Introduction to the areas of scripture, theology, ethics, and non-Christian religious traditions. TRS 101 is designed to prepare students for courses at the 200 and 300 levels.

The description you quoted must have come from a Catholic Studies version of the course, hence the parenthetical note. I’m very happy to hear that you like the way that class was described. We intend to keep some version of that course as a 200-level Core course.

Q: I concur with Dr. Stayer on both points, particularly that the second course at the 300 level seems an unusually advanced requirement for core.

A: The new Core is supposed to be pursued throughout the four years of a student’s undergraduate career; it was designed to counter the common student attitude that the Core should be “gotten over with” early so one can focus narrowly on the “real” work of a major. Although this proposal eliminates the universal prerequisite, so one theoretically could take both TRS courses as a first-year student, I think the language of “200- + 300-level” at least implies that students should spread their JH-TRS Core requirements across their academic career. The JH-PL requirement functions in a similar way, so that

students can take 200- or 300-level courses in any order. We considered something similar to their structure of PL-KR and PL-VS, but early conversations with the Registrar, Advising, *et alii*, suggested a simpler solution was preferable, so we went with this basic numbering system instead.

One unnoticed advantage of dropping the TRS101 prerequisite is the way it eliminates the anomalies that have resulted with cross-listed courses: either the class is split between students taking the TRS section with the prerequisite and others taking the non-TRS section without the prerequisite; or TRS101 is made a prerequisite for both sections, so we've had a TRS prerequisite for a course in another department.

A: Sheila observes, "Because of our student population and the department's understanding of mission, TRS faculty constantly draw comparisons between whatever religious tradition is the subject of their course and Christian views on that subject." I want to confirm that, indeed, all of my non-101 courses include Christian content (though I admit that, as an Americanist, this is something of a given for me). More importantly, in most of those non-101 courses, I make a point of including a course unit specifically on Catholicism (alongside non-Catholic Christian traditions and non-Christian traditions)—which, as it happens, is more time than I spend on Catholicism in TRS 101. My non-101 courses are sociological in their orientation, and I choose my case studies from a practically limitless array. When I've taught versions of these courses at non-Catholic schools, I have not always included the Catholic content. I do so at JCU because, as Sheila suggests, my understanding of the mission compels it. I can't imagine I'm alone in this amongst our faculty. So, while it's true that a student will not be exposed to Catholic content in every single course the department offers, the preponderance of classes with Catholic content makes it highly unlikely that a student could get through two TRS courses without exposure and attention to Catholicism.

Q: I went to the open hearing today and presented Sheila with a question about whether this will save the university money; I also understand that money should not be the main driving force in these decisions. I will briefly frame the question as Sheila knows that I will post this.

It is unclear to me how moving from a 2-course Core requirement to a different 2-course Core requirement will cut 7-10 TRS sections. In Fall 2016, there were 23 non-Borromeo TRS101 sections with a total end-of-semester enrollment of 497 students. This gives an average of ~22 students/TRS101 section (Spring 2017 is ~24 students/TRS101 section). How will eliminating this requirement and replacing it with (essentially) a 300-level course at 23 students per section eliminate any sections from the TRS offerings?

A: Basically the savings has to do with maximizing enrollment in classes that typically have run at lower numbers. The average number of TRS sections offered each semester in academic years 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, and 2014-15 was 43, including 15 sections of 101, 15 sections at the 200 level, and 9 sections at the 300 level, plus 400-500s. The average number of TRS sections offered each semester in academic years 2015-16 and 2016-17 was 48, including 21 sections of 101, 13 sections at the 200 level, and 10 sections at the 300 level (again, plus 400-500s). I estimate that we could run an average of 38 sections in academic years 2017-18 and 2018-19 (with about 16 sections each at the 200 and 300 levels) and still meet the demands of the Core curriculum.

At least as important, in our view, is the fact that a much higher percentage of these sections would be offered by FT faculty as opposed to PT faculty.

Q: I have several concerns about this proposal, which I'll put in separate posts. My first is similar to one of Jayme Stayer's, but in the opposite direction. Both of the TRS learning goals use the phrase "culturally and globally diverse." Furthermore, the university's Strategic Plan, Goal 2, Objective 3 is "Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue: Enable all members of the University community to explore, deepen, and share their faith or worldview in dialogue with people of all cultural and faith

backgrounds.” The course description for TRS 101 in the 2015-2017 Undergraduate Bulletin includes the statement “Introduction to the areas of scripture, theology, ethics, and non-Christian religious traditions.” If we eliminate the TRS 101 requirement, will we be able to guarantee that our students are exposed to religious traditions other than their own? There doesn’t seem to be anything in the proposal that would prevent a student from taking two courses that focus on Christianity, or even more narrowly, on Catholicism. (My example focuses on Christianity simply because so many of the TRS courses listed in the Bulletin have that theme. But a determined student could also take two courses on Islam or two courses on Judaism.)

A: Barb, you’ve actually identified the key reason why we’ve repeated the language of “culturally and globally diverse” in both our student learning outcomes: neither our current core nor the original core document prevents a student taking two courses that focus on their “home” religion rather than engaging religious diversity.

As you know, TRS101 is not a world religions course; it’s a methods course. It does require a comparative element, but structurally that comprises a small part (perhaps 20%) of the course. Still, something is better than nothing, so we wanted to make sure not to lose that wider sense of the “religious world.”

The department wanted to prevent students graduating without having to engage religious diversity. As we were developing this core proposal, we considered stipulating a “theology” and a “religion” course; however, we quickly determined that this would pose an invidious and untenable distinction (since, e.g., we have courses on Islamic theology), so we abandoned that strategy and instead determined to revise the JH-TRS SLOs to ensure that students would have to contend with religious diversity in every core course. The added advantage here is that even students who transfer a course would have to take one of the core requirements here, so we’d have a chance to reach every student by mainstreaming this outcome.

The two revised SLOs (approved by the I-Core Committee last fall) require every JH-TRS Core course to address the issues of religious diversity within and across religious traditions and also within and across cultural contexts. This means, for example, that the “Intro to Judaism” course introduces students to the spectrum of contemporary Jewish faith and practice in various cultural contexts (so “internal diversity” issues) and also looks at Jewish-Christian relations across time, particularly in a post-Shoah environment. The “Intro to Islam” course addresses variations within Islam and also Muslim-Christian relations, including contemporary collaborations and dialogue. “Contemporary Catholic Theology” includes discussion of various movements within Roman Catholicism as well as Catholic attitudes toward non-Christian religions and inter-religious engagement. These features already exist in the core courses; the revised SLOs highlight them and require assessment of how well students are grasping the complexities of these interrelations. We believe that this recurrent modeling of cross-cultural and inter-religious engagement will be more effective than two separate courses on two different religions that are not brought into conversation with each other.

Q: I’m also concerned about prerequisites, or lack thereof, in the TRS courses.

Near the beginning of the TRS portion of the 2015-2017 Undergraduate Bulletin, we find this information: “TRS 101 is a prerequisite to all other courses offered in the department ... Courses at the 200 and 300 level are open to all students except where prerequisites are specifically stated ... Enrollment in 400-level courses typically is restricted to TRS majors and minors.” This information appears a full two pages before the descriptions of individual TRS courses; the course descriptions typically do not contain prerequisite information. As an advisor, I’ve looked at TRS course descriptions in the past, but I don’t think I’ve ever noticed that preliminary information before. I think it’s safe to say that most students haven’t read it.

If the TRS 101 requirement is eliminated, I strongly urge the TRS department to add prerequisite information to the description of each of its 100-, 200-, and 300-level courses. That

information might be specific courses (e.g., EN 125 or TRS xxx), or it might simply be a statement like “This course is recommended for junior and senior level students.” I don’t think students and advisors should be expected to just “know” which courses are appropriate for freshmen who have or have not completed their foundational writing requirement.

Along those lines, I would like to make sure that there are still reasonable opportunities for students to take a TRS course during their first year, and preferably during their first semester, at JCU. **A:** Similar points concerning advising have been raised by a number of folks, and we’d certainly like to assist however we can. Some comments in the in-person open hearings suggest that the “notes for advisors” I’ve produced for the last few years aren’t as helpful as a permanent record such as the Bulletin. As you say, however, there’s material in the Bulletin that many people skip over, so we have to figure out how to make it appear in the right places. We’re certainly open to suggestions on this point.

As for the prerequisites, few of our 300-level courses require a specific TRS prerequisite (other than 101), so you probably found them all. (Basically, it’s been unique to the 300-level scripture seminars.) It’s not clear whether TRS actually has the right to require EN125 for individual JH-TRS Core courses; it would be helpful to have the I-Core Committee’s ruling on this. As you know, there’s an ongoing discussion of making EN125 placement at least a strongly recommended precondition for taking JH-PL or JH-TRS courses, because of the Core document’s stipulation (p. 20) that JH-PL and JH-TRS courses “will require and vigorously stress students’ abilities to articulate clearly both orally and in writing.” I appreciate all your suggestions and the TRS Undergraduate Committee will come up with some additional strategies to make sure students and advisors have the information they need when registering for their JH-TRS Core courses. I’ve already sent Maryclaire a “memo for advisors” concerning this potential change in the Core, and the CAS chairs reviewed it last fall. Whether the Bulletin or a website is the handiest (and least evanescent) record for students and advisors to consult, we’re very concerned to ensure that students have a successful experience in their TRS Core courses. As for first-year students, yes, there certainly will be ample opportunities for them to take a TRS course. (On the other hand, we aren’t going to be able to handle 60% or more of the FY class as we’ve had to do the last two fall semesters.) Students come with such varied backgrounds, we’ll probably create an “if-then” set of advising guidelines to fit different situations.

Thanks for sharing these concerns. Again, I’m happy to hear any suggestions about how to “get out the word” to advisors and students.

Q: I’d like to echo the concerns raised by Phil, Jayme, and Barbara, above, regarding the absence of prerequisites for 300-level TRS courses -- or, at least, the notion that a 300-level course is “freshman-ready.” How can a 300-level course be appropriate for most of our first-year students? I have placed freshmen in some 3xx HS courses, but only after consulting with them (and usually their parents, during summer orientation) about the challenges endemic to these classes -- advanced materials, smaller class sizes (usually), discussion-oriented classrooms, and lots of analytical writing. Some take the plunge, whether enthusiastically or reluctantly, and many (wisely) wait a year or two. During the first semester of the core I taught a 300-level ISJ class with twenty or so freshmen. I didn’t change the requirements at all. All but one of the freshmen survived, but it was only because they were a good group and I went the extra mile in reading drafts, holding hands, hammering home deadlines, etc. I look upon that class as the exception that proves the rule -- freshmen can thrive in 300-level classes, but it’s a risk, and it places extra responsibilities on the instructor.

A: Dan’s raises an important concern about whether a 300-level course is “first-year friendly.” As he says, this depends upon the first-year student, some of whom would do quite well, but others not. It will be important to advise students about these matters. The fact is that we already do have a number of first-year students in 300-level courses, and many prosper in that environment (especially if they enjoy discussions and other types of classroom engagement). The poor readers/writers would not do well

there, but we also find this to be the case in TRS101. There never has been one simple advising solution for all first-year students, but that has gone more-or-less unnoticed given the TRS101 requirement. The department is working with various programs and with Academic Advising to make sure we provide adequate support for advising for new and current students.

Q: This comment applies to the TRS 101 issue (I agree with the concerns raised in this thread), as well as, the elimination (or the future elimination) of introductory courses in other majors since we adopted the Integrative Core. Not only are we possibly doing our students a disservice by expecting them to integrate in upper-level courses without sufficient foundation, we may also be doing them a disservice by making it more difficult for them to choose a major. Introductory course can stimulate students' interest in a discipline. Moving away from introductory courses in disciplines may, therefore, also have negative, unintended consequences on majors that decide to eliminate introductory courses.

A: While I understand the concern about intro courses broadly, this proposal does not involve eliminating intro courses in numerous disciplines. Such matters beyond the scope of the proposal itself are worthy of our attention. Still, I cannot speak to them here; I can speak only about this proposal. This proposal involves changing the focus of introductory courses in TRS to make them more specific to the various sub-disciplines within the field. Expertise in some disciplines requires mastery of basically one methodology, whereas TRS is a broad field that involves a variety of methodologies (e.g., hermeneutics, literary analysis, history, social science, ethics, archaeology/material culture) that are used by the various sub-disciplines of TRS. The 200-level courses in TRS introduce students to the specific methodologies used in, e.g., religious ethics, or scripture, or social-historical studies, or theology. This provides students with a limited scope of material, granted, but that more limited scope can be scaffolded and repeated and drilled to a point where students actually are able to do historical or ethical or exegetical analysis by the end of the course, as opposed to just having skimming the subject in the wide-ranging intro that has been TRS101. Educationally, this is an improvement. Also, students who gain skill in one such analytical method can learn to transfer that critical-thinking skill to other contexts, which benefits them across the curriculum. Thus, the approach to TRS in this proposed core revision will be more effective in meeting our designated core student learning outcomes.

Q: Another concern I have about this proposal is the way it affects the First in the World students in the "Gold" group. If this proposal is accepted by the faculty, I'd like to see its implementation delayed until the end of the FITW grant. It doesn't seem fair to tell one group of incoming freshmen that they are required to take TRS 101, while their peers are not required to take that course.

Part of the rationale for changing the TRS requirement is related to numbers of students taking TRS 101. I don't think the problem is as urgent as proposal suggests. Let's assume that the TRS 101 requirement doesn't change, and do a comparison: Under the old core, roughly 25% of the student body took TRS 101 in any given year. Once the new core is fully implemented, roughly 25% of the student body will take TRS 101 in any given year. What's changed is the percentage of freshmen taking TRS 101, and so there has been a bubble of extra students in TRS 101 over the last two years. Starting in 2018, TRS should see a return to the pre-2015 enrollment numbers for TRS 101 (with more freshmen, but fewer upper classmen in the course). If, in 2035, we implement a new new core in which students don't typically take TRS 101 in the first year, we would see a temporary dip in enrollment in TRS 101, but once that core is fully implemented, the numbers would again return to "normal."

A: TRS developed this proposal in consultation with the Registrar, the FITW directors, Academic Advising, and a variety of other campus constituencies. With respect to FITW, Graciela Lacueva and Terry Mills both have assured us that implementing the change this fall—as long as we keep the TRS101 intervention sections—will not detrimentally affect the current study. The students who will take TRS101 will have been classified as "at risk" for success at JCU. Such students routinely are placed in other academic support courses, so the requirement of TRS101 will be far from unique. Also,

the grant intervention is designed to give such students more personalized attention and structural supports so they can succeed here. Perhaps devoting more resources to at risk students is “unfair”; but it certainly does not disadvantage the students who receive those resources.

As for whether the enrollment figures will change, that’s certainly possible although difficult to predict with so many “moving parts” to the Core at present. And the faculty numbers in TRS may improve, but again the details of that are difficult to predict. Meanwhile, what we do know is that TRS simply does not have enough FT faculty and staff to deliver the curriculum as currently designed, and it is unethical to keep “outsourcing” the Core—and now our major and minor programs as well—to more and more PT faculty. This is especially the case given that the university presents itself to prospects as a place where students are taught by faculty with whom they can anticipate making personal, long-lasting connections. Moreover, even if TRS does get new FT faculty lines approved, we also will continue to have retirements and other forms of faculty attrition. I estimate that, given recent changes to faculty hiring patterns, it will take 10 years to establish a stable balance between FT and PT faculty in TRS. Meanwhile, we cannot do our job as a department without this curricular change. This should sound familiar to faculty in a number of other departments, which is a key factor in the other proposals to change the Core.

Faculty typically (and I include myself in this group) dislike the idea of changing the curriculum due to non-academic, “pragmatic” pressures. I totally understand why faculty are raising this question, and I would be doing it myself if I were in another department. Please keep in mind that, while non-curricular factors were taken into account in producing this proposal and we are convinced this curricular reform will provide practical relief to current demands on TRS, the primary objectives here are to improve student’s experience of the TRS Core curriculum and to improve their mastery of the assigned TRS core student learning outcomes.

Q: This is possibly going to open up a big can of worms, but I’m posting it anyway. If we go back to the original Core Proposal that was passed by the faculty, we see the TRS requirements on page 11 listed as “2 RL courses: one 100-level, the second at any level.” Further description of this requirement is on pages 19-20, but similarly does not mention the 101 course specifically.

The Undergraduate Bulletin lists TRS 101 as a core requirement, presumably because there are no other 100-level TRS courses.

Clearly, the TRS department believes that students can succeed in upper level TRS courses without having had the “methods” experience provided by the current TRS 101, since the department is proposing eliminating the TRS 101 requirement. Would it be possible to either change the content of TRS 101, or to develop several 100-level courses that are designed as introductory TRS experiences, suitable for freshmen who may not have completed a composition course, and that are in line with the language of the core document (page 19) “... critical reflection on personal faith as well as sympathetic appreciation of the beliefs of others.... Because of its commitment to the Catholic and Jesuit heritage of the university, there is particular attention paid to the Roman Catholic tradition”? If the TRS department wishes, the 200- and 300-level courses could have “any 100-level TRS course” as a prerequisite.

If I’m reading the original core proposal correctly, the change that I’ve described here would not require a vote of the faculty. I hope someone will correct me if I’m wrong.

A: We considered this option of simply developing multiple intro-level courses (which would have required a vote of the TRS faculty and of the Core Committee, but not the whole faculty), but we went this other route for three key reasons.

1. Such a change would have no advantage whatsoever for students. The curricular benefits to students are not contingent upon the number of the course; they flow from the actual course design and intended student learning outcomes.

2. It would provide no redress for the current staffing problems in TRS.
3. Finally, re-numbering courses would create a nightmare for the Registrar's Office. We'd just subjected them to a similar ordeal a few years ago with the switch in letters from RL to TRS, and it seemed unreasonable to ask again for such intensive work when there'd be no clear benefit to students or the department.

I should also point out that the proposed revision does not preclude the department adding 100-level TRS courses in the future, if our FT faculty numbers improve. The proposal requires students to take a lower-division (i.e., a 100- or 200-level) course, so a 100-level still would count toward the Core requirement, but 101 would be removed as a specific requirement.

This gives the department some degree of control over our own curriculum so we can make modifications as suggested by our assessment practices without necessarily requiring a full faculty vote for those modifications to go into effect. Such already is the case, of course, with our major, minor, and graduate programs, but support for the Core affects a huge proportion of our curricular offerings. By the time the faculty vote on this proposal, from start to finish the process will have taken two full years. A more flexible definition of the TRS Core means TRS can be more nimble in addressing curricular needs—always with the oversight of the Core Committee, which includes representatives across the faculty body.

Q: Foremost, please recognize that I am participating in this discussion with less than adequate familiarity with all the related issues, so my contribution is of a more general, mission-oriented, marketing perspective. As we strive to attract millennials who are trying to understand a complex world, that we as faculty find hard to interpret let alone understand, perhaps it's time to rethink our foundational offerings, in this case TRS101. Think about the perspective of a 16–17-year-old, and their parents. Why come to a Catholic university? Why a Jesuit one? How will it impact my future? What is the value I should expect in exchange for higher tuition? A TRS101 experience that answers these questions will deliver on our “brand promise” as a Jesuit Catholic institution of higher education. The following statement from the proposal may be accurate for some, but wouldn't students take their lead from the faculty?

“Currently students object to TRS101 merely on the grounds that it is required. This creates a relatively hostile pedagogical situation, which requires faculty to spend substantial time helping students get over this resentment concerning their lack of agency and choice.” If the faculty understand why they are doing what they are doing, and the deeper impact on our students' lives as global citizens working toward the common good, with respect for the dignity of all others, then students will follow suit. This perspective is what they will have agreed to by selecting a faith-based institution over a public one. Thus, students anticipate an “orientation” to faith-based learning, and many if not most, have been educated in faith-based settings prior to considering and/or selecting JCU. Our ability to deliver on the tenets of Ignatian pedagogy can only serve to enhance interest in Jesuit education and subsequently deliver on our mission and core outcomes of intellect, character, leadership and service. This approach has worked for nearly 500 years, and perhaps taking a Context -> Experience -> Reflection -> Action -> Evaluation approach to the analysis of faith traditions (religions) might be helpful to part-timers.

Also, we do need to keep the FITW Gold group in mind. It may be best to wait for changes until there is greater consensus, and potentially greater energy toward this core experience and its developmental opportunity for our students and faculty.

A. Let me begin by affirming that TRS does understand and care about our teaching effectiveness, which is why are asking the rest of the faculty to allow us the liberty to do it more effectively.

Some students come to JCU because of the faith-based setting; others come for a variety of reasons. We cannot make curricular decisions based on an ideal student audience rather than the actual

one we have. In addition, the issues regarding university mission cannot be relegated to one department alone. TRS alone cannot carry the JCU mission; the university as a whole is responsible for mission.

TRS is asking the faculty for what we view as the necessary leeway *to make our contribution to the university mission* (e.g., as defined in the Core document) *pedagogically more effective*. TRS is focused on *what works for student learning*. The digital natives who are coming to JCU today have different academic skills and needs than their predecessors even 10 years ago. TRS aims to get our students jump-started on critical thinking and information literacy, both of which are fundamental student learning outcomes for the I-Core. An expansive survey course (like 101) does not lend itself to that agenda, but more constrained introductions to the sub-fields of TRS certainly can.

To put it more bluntly, the old-fashioned broad-survey-of-a-field intro does not fit the current styles of student learning, and does not address student needs in a highly-connected world. Students need to be able to research issues, evaluate evidence, and draw connections across knowledge domains, not just memorize facts that they can look up on their phones. Such research and analytical skills are best developed in a course that focuses on a particular topic and research process, not a broad survey course.

In addition, students may be proud of their ability to “multi-task,” but they have little or no training in *focused* work. A survey feeds this lack of durable attention; it does not provide students with the skills to overcome it and take a deep gaze into a subject or question. Even 10–15 years ago, students came to JCU with some of that ability to focus, but now it is rare indeed. Yet they cannot succeed in life without that skill and the concomitant dispositions of patience and endurance. The TRS101 does not fit these needs of our current students, and neither would another broad survey course. Students today need focus, not more incitement to multi-tasking.

Appendix 5: Mapping of TRS Core LOs with Department Student Learnings Outcomes (SLOs)

TRS STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES —Revision approved by ICC on 14 November 2016				
JCU Learning Goals Assigned	JCU Learning Goals Subcategories	TRS Program SLOs (2015 Bulletin)	Revised TRS SLOs (2017 Bulletin)	Implementation (beginning Spring 2017)
1. Demonstrate an integrative knowledge of human and natural worlds. 9. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience.	1a. Acquire knowledge about human experience. 9a. Recognize the importance of fundamental questions of human existence. 9b. Examine religious beliefs' response to the fundamental questions of human experience. 9c. Examine religious beliefs' relevance to other fields of knowledge. 9d. Discover spiritual dimensions in art, literature, and science.	1. Understand the religious dimensions of human experience, history, and cultures.	1. Critically analyze the culturally and globally diverse dimensions of religious experience as expressed in sacred texts, art, ritual practice, and ethical commitments.	TRS 101 will meet both SLOs. The second JH-TRS course will meet one of the two SLOs at a more in-depth level. See Matrix (below) for details about which courses will be required to meet which of the two outcomes.
2. Develop habits of critical analysis and aesthetic appreciation.	2d. Develop critical thinking skills.	2. Critically analyze religious expressions in sacred texts, art, ritual practices, and ethical commitments.		
5. Act competently in a global and diverse world.	5d. Examine the global impact of actions or issues.	3. Recognize cultural and religious diversity globally, with particular awareness of Catholic approaches to interreligious dialogue.	2. Appreciate how culturally and globally diverse religious traditions provide resources for responding to injustice and living ethically.	
6. Understand and promote social justice.		4. Appreciate the relationship between religious commitment and efforts to address injustice and live ethically.		

New Mapping for Proposed Revised TRS Core

Updated for CAP 10 March 2017

Alignment with TRS Learning Goals

Through ongoing review of programs and curricula, TRS has refined its Core Student Learning Outcomes for the 2017–2019 Undergraduate Bulletin. There are two SLOs:

1. Critically analyze the culturally and globally diverse dimensions of religious experience as expressed in sacred texts, art, ritual practice, ethical commitments, and social structures.
2. Appreciate how culturally and globally diverse religious traditions provide resources for responding to injustice and living ethically.

The 100- or 200-level TRS courses must address both SLOs, while 300-level TRS courses must address one of the two SLOs.

TRS Matrix of Core Course SLOs

The following chart specifies precisely which of the foregoing SLOs are to be met by each TRS core course. Instructors may add one or two additional course-level SLOs, but the syllabus must include whichever of the following SLOs has been designated for the course.¹

Course Number: Title	Goal 1	Goal 2
101: Introduction to Theology & Religious Studies	X	X
200: Introduction to Hebrew Bible	X	X
205: Introduction to New Testament	X	X
210: Introduction to Judaism	X	X
220: History of Christianity	X	X
222: American Christianity	X	X
223: African-American Religion	X	X
224: Minority Religions	X	X
225: Religion in Popular Culture	X	X
226: Religions of Ohio and the Western Reserve	X	X
230: Contemporary Catholic Theology	X	X
231: Contemporary Catholic Theology: Global Perspectives	X	X
232: Jesus: History and Theology	X	X
233: Saints and Society	X	X
234: Theology Behind Bars	X	X

¹ *NB:* This list is current for the date of this document. However, the TRS department reserves the right to add/subtract courses to/from this list, with the approval of the TRS Core subcommittee but without the approval of the full Core Committee, as long as the additional courses are designed to achieve the stated learning outcomes.

Course Number: Title	Goal 1	Goal 2
235: Catholicism in a Digital Age	X	X
236: Church and Ministry	X	X
240: Introduction to Islam	X	X
252: Religions of India	X	X
253: Chinese Religions	X	X
254: Japanese Religions	X	X
260: Moral Decision Making	X	X
261: African-American Christian Social Ethics	X	X
268: Catholic Moral Theology	X	X
270: Figureheads, Founders, Visionaries	X	X
271: Christian Spirituality	X	X
272: Soul Food, Food for the Soul	X	X
299: Special Topics in TRS	X	X
300: History of the Ancient Near East	X	
301: Archaeology and the Bible	X	
302: The Bible through the Eyes of the Hungry		X
306: Jesus in Film and History	X	
308: Healing in Early Christianity & the Greco-Roman World	X	
309: Special Topics in Biblical Studies	X	
315: The Holocaust and its Meaning		X
319: Special Topics in Jewish Studies	X	
321: History of the Papacy	X	
322: Women in Christian Tradition	X	
323: Life, Times, & Theology of Martin Luther King, Jr.		X
324: History of Christmas	X	
326: History of the Idea of Evil		X
328: The Franciscan Movement	X	
329: Special Topics in Christian History	X	
330: Models of God	X	
331: Sin, Grace, and Wholeness		X
332: Christology	X	
333: Understanding Church	X	
334: Sacraments	X	
335: What Happened at Vatican II	X	
336: African-American Theology		X
339: Special Topics in Systematic Theology	X	
341: Islam in America	X	
342: Islam and the Environment		X

Course Number: Title	Goal 1	Goal 2
349: Special Topics in Islamic Studies	x	
350: Tuohy Seminar	x	
351: Silk Road Religions	x	
359: Special Topics in Asian Religions	x	
361: Liberation Ethics		x
362: Religion, Ethics, and Public Policy		x
363: Social Justice and the Economy		x
364: Christian Sexuality		x
365: Religion, Terror, and Culture Wars		x
366: Religion, Freedom, and Law		x
368: Christian Social Justice		x
369: Special Topics in Religious Ethics		x
371: Ignatian Spirituality: Origins & Development	x	
372: Theology of African-American Sacred Music	x	
373: Dorothy Day and Thomas Merton		x
379: Special Topics in Spirituality	x	
389: Special Topics in Pastoral/Practical Theology	x	
399: Special Topics	x	