

## Ball State University

1. **Presenting question:** How do we increase the appeal, visibility, and value of the connections in our curriculum to the students' intellectual and personal goals/development?
  - a. **Goals:** (1) Increase enrollments; (2) Increase the number of majors/minors; (3) Create a more positive image of our program by working with campus religious organizations, as well as other stakeholders; and (4) Help students in our courses discern and articulate the connections between our curriculum and their personal goals for growth/development.
2. **Description of what we did:**
  - a. With the help of Gene Gallagher, we refined our plan
  - b. Integrated classroom exercises into our respective courses that responded to the issue of "faith/religious commitments in the classroom"
  - c. Overhauled our curriculum
    - i. Developed new courses, revised others, and dropped a few
    - ii. Completely redesigned the sequencing of courses for the major and minor
  - d. Revived former "Religious Studies Club" as "Religion Conversation Hour" – meets more frequently, has new focus, and a set of dedicated student-leaders
  - e. Met regularly with Council of Religious Advisors, a group of local religious leaders who advise BSU student religious groups
  - f. Started – and stopped – a program blog; same thing with Twitter
  - g. Realized (at Wabash meeting in Oct. 2016) that our project resembled a 10-year plan more than an 18-month plan – hence, continued adjustments
  - h. Had an external consultant (from BSU) lead us through a workshop to revisit our stated goals, set new ones, and continue refining our program's vision – additional reason for workshop: to integrate a new colleague into our grant-related work (as well as include him because he is our colleague, period), which has led to:
    - i. Designing series of meetings (with majors, minors, and anyone interested in religious studies) focused on preparing for life after graduation (e.g. what can one do with a religious studies degree? We are working closely with a representative from the campus career center)
    - j. Contacting the Honors College to teach their 3-semester Humanities sequence – in the past, teaching in the Honors College has led to more of their students taking our courses and/or becoming majors/minors
  - k. Saw the number of religious studies double – not sure this was related to our work; it's too early to know; also: our numbers were at an all-time low (still, we are moving in the right direction!)
3. **What you learned overall in relation to your question:**
  - a. Our initial plans were overly ambitious (see "g" above!)
  - b. We still have lots of work ahead of us, including refining long term plans, but we have begun that work (see "h-j" above)
  - c. We are optimistic about our future work