

## Building Bridges Clemson, MTSU, & UNF

### PRESENTING QUESTION AND GOALS

We aimed to 1) Create a collaborative relationship among MTSU, Clemson, and UNF religious studies programs in order to share intellectual resources; 2) Evaluate and/or create measurable learning outcomes for institutional and regional stakeholders that map to authentic and meaningful assessments originating in dynamic classroom learning experiences; and 3) Establish a pedagogically coherent identity within a multidisciplinary context.

### ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

- Surveys, Campus-wide and Senior-exit
- Wabash Consultations Workshop with MTSU, Clemson, and UNF
- Dinner with Deans
- Clemson Gala
- Website
- Developing Promotional Material
- In-services
- Meeting with Professional Advising

### REFLECTIONS

The grant-related activities have provided a great venue to share information across institutions and within programs. Workshop attendees reported that the joint workshop gave them ideas on how to build allies across the university and in communities, discuss strategies for reworking intro courses, fundraising, and time to revise program mission statements.

At UNF, we primarily focused on developing a religious studies identity at UNF. RS faculty have met three times in the past two years; previously, we have never met. We were able to simplify our major requirements to better reflect our course offerings. We also revised our mission statement to have a greater impact for administration and students. We also revised our website and updated promotional material, which campus surveys indicated were the best ways to reach students.

At MTSU, we utilized grant funds to increase the strength and visibility of our brand new Religious Studies program. We evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of our Religious Studies curriculum; composed student learning outcomes, program goals, and assessment strategies and measures; and reported our progress to university administrators. We also organized events and interviews to increase the knowledge and awareness of Religious Studies with students, college advisors, university recruiters, administrators, and faculty.

At Clemson, the grant provided space for the RS faculty at Clemson to learn more about our students' experience within the major, to get a sense of the perception of RS on campus, and to begin crafting a tight message to deliver up and out to the various constituencies that will help to make RS at Clemson successful. A special invite-only gala event helped to broadcast our message to local stakeholders, including local congresspersons, school administrators, local clergy, foundation board members, and other key university constituencies. The data from the campus-wide survey was particularly useful in helping us to identify a need to revamp our 1000-level courses.