

MEMORANDUM


To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Name Change for the University of Iowa School of Religion to the Department of Religious Studies
Date: January 7, 2002

Recommended Action: Refer the University of Iowa's proposal to change the name of the School of Religion to the Board Office and the Interinstitutional Committee on Educational Coordination for review and recommendation.

Executive Summary: The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences requests permission to change the name of the School of Religion to the Department of Religious Studies. The change was strongly recommended by the external review team who recently met with the School. The new name, Department of Religious Studies, is the current disciplinary norm among major research universities.

Rationale for the Change The name, School of Religion, does not as accurately reflect the mission, general objectives and vision for the future, as does the name "Department of Religious Studies." The new name will more clearly articulate the mission of the Department and will prevent confusion with external audiences. The current name suggests to many people that the School of Religion engages in professional training and that it stands apart in some ways from other departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences as an independent unit with a self-sufficient curriculum. While Schools of Divinity and Theology at private institutions do possess both of these features, the School of Religion does not. The School of Religion engages solely in the academic study of religions within diverse human cultures. Further, it is profoundly interconnected with other departments within the College. The new name reinforces the Department as an integral part of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

No New Costs or Programs Both Iowa State University and the University of Northern Iowa have similar units. No new costs or programs are proposed as a part of this name change.


Robert J. Barak