

7/26/87

Doris:

Please make 2 copies of this --  
one for me, and one for Dr. Larson.  
Give the original to Dr. Hammond,  
and a copy to Larson and me. Thanks.

W.H.C.



June 22, 1987

TO: Phil

RE: Characteristics of a Santa Barbara "School" of Religious Studies

From time to time, we've all given thought to ways in which our program ought to be characterized, particularly in terms we could use to distinguish what we do from what is done by others. In the past several weeks, I've been thinking about all of this all over again, particularly in light of the Larson-NEH project (which is coming to completion) as well as the Self-Study process in which we are currently involved. I'm making the following observations and suggestions as a possible contribution to this ongoing conversation.

First, the other "schools" that are known this way -- one thinks specifically of Chicago and of Harvard, within the U.S.A. -- are defined in large part by the influence of particularly prominent individuals. Chicago had Eliade, after having had Joachim Wach. Harvard had Wilfred Cantwell Smith, and now John Carman. We, by contrast, have had a goodly share of prominent and influential scholars, but they have not stamped our program with the same degree of individual influence that pertains elsewhere. A positive characteristic!

Second, the other "schools" that are known this way -- again, one thinks of Chicago and of Harvard -- are schools specifically within the history of religions. When we talk of "the Harvard School" we know we are referring to the work of Smith and Carman, and others who have been trained under them, but we are not being as inclusive as to be referring, say, to Harvey Cox or other faculty members in other-than-history-of-religions fields of endeavor. And the same is true at Chicago: the "Chicago School" refers to a certain way of conducting history-of-religions inquiry.

Thus, by contrast, the "Santa Barbara School" (1) is defined not so much by the influence of any single person (though such influence has been and is considerable), and (2) is more inclusive in its representational range than history of religions.

Now, these two factors being true and accurate, we can begin to define ourselves: (1) by emphasizing our collectivity as distinct from any advertised individuality; and (2) by shifting interest away from any single field (or sub-field) of concentration and emphasizing our dependence upon the humanities and social sciences, as these are made available to us within an incomparable and energetic state-university system. [Here, by the way, is where I would prefer to talk about the influence of theology; both Harvard and Chicago schools remain somewhat dependent upon theology -- whereas we do not, and cannot, and would not if we could -- in that their history of religions programs have grown up side by side, as it were, with ongoing theological studies.] Our second distinguishing characteristic -- our dependence upon the full complement of the humanities and social sciences as distinct from wanting to be known as a history-of-religions operation -- was made manifest from the beginning in our determination to be both cross-cultural in scope and interdisciplinary in method.

So far so good (I think).



Question: How do these emphases manifest themselves? How do they translate into distinctive characteristics?

The response must be something like this: Our emphasis upon the necessity of a collective undertaking translates, first of all, into a requirement that all graduate students, regardless of particular field of interest, be thoroughly acquainted with the history of the study of religion, which includes knowing the history of the theoretical and methodological development of that study. Not bad. Everyone must take the year-long first-year course which we employ both as an introduction to the study of religion and as an orientation to what our department is here to do. This means that everyone, to greater or lesser extents, understands that whatever more detailed work he or she becomes involved in will be undertaken in the knowledge of this basic intellectual history. A person working in psychology of religion, for example, will also be working within the knowledge of the more comprehensive history of the development of the field. The person working on Hebrew biblical texts, for another example, will be working within the influence of this more comprehensive intellectual history. And so it goes.... But we have here the makings of an approach that can hold the collective endeavor together.

Next, by applying "Santa Barbara School" to the entire endeavor, and not simply to the activities taking place within one of its components, we have also given rather large prominence to the free play of cultivated individual intelligence in identifying the subject foci upon which our approach might shed light. In this regard, I understand "tailor-making" to be a positive feature (though I'm not keen on the terminology) because I think it emphasizes the dynamic quality and character of the educational enterprise. The history of cognition (of which the history of education is some effective mirror) has come to the same conclusions, as continuing commentaries on Immanuel Kant's insight that "concepts without percepts are empty, and percepts without concepts are blind." We have enough formal structure to enable the student to undertake research projects knowingly, but we resist pre-setting the intellectual undertaking at both ends. There is much of the spirit of Alfred North Whitehead's Adventures of Ideas in the model that I believe is becoming operational for us.

Then, in addition to these formal intellectual characteristics, we have added some other positive features that probably distinguish our effort from those of others. I see two prominent areas in which this is true: (1) in the larger expectations we place upon our graduate students; and (2) in our ongoing involvement in the wider intellectual, educational and public communities.

In the first place, we train our graduates to be good teachers. Several of our graduates (I think specifically of Fred Tonsing at California Lutheran University, Judy Saltzman at Cal Poly, Ed Linenthal at the University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh -- and there are undoubtedly more) have already received "outstanding teacher" awards on their respective campuses. (I am confident that the same will happen to John Simmons in a year or two at Western Illinois University -- he is already



an unusually accomplished teacher.) They are good teachers because they are required, when studying with us, to teach the full range of courses within the religious studies curriculum. At other institutions, where the tracks and sub-fields are more specifically laid out, such experience is hardly possible. Many of our graduates can do a creditable job of teaching any course in a basic undergraduate curriculum. Again, I say, not bad!

In the same context we can emphasize our deliberate attention to good writing. Again, I think it is remarkable how many of our recent Ph.D. awardees have published their doctoral dissertations. (I think, of course, of the ones with whom I have worked closely -- Linenthal, Saltzman, Wright, Chidester, again with strong prospects for Simmons and Kjell Lejon -- but I recognize that there are a number of others who fall into the same category.) It isn't true that we counsel our students to "write books, not dissertations," because their completed works qualify fully as dissertations in the most rigorous sense. But we do counsel and urge them to write readable -- indeed, eminently readable --- dissertations, even dissertations that might be read by non-specialists in their respective fields with interest and understanding. Again, I say, nothing wrong with this!

And then it seems that all of our students get some sense that religious studies belongs to a variety of working contexts, many of which are not circumscribed by the fourth floor of South Hall. We encourage our students -- the record confirms -- to get out and away from Santa Barbara, that is, to be involved in the University's Education Abroad Program. We give them opportunities to become involved with public education, particularly at the secondary-school level; and here I think specifically of the Contours Project. And there are a number of additional examples.

In all of this -- as Allan reminded us when we met at Juan's house -- we have probably produced doctoral recipients who would not qualify for jobs here at UCSB, and who would not be equipped to replace any one of us after our time here. This is probably the price we are paying for the approach we have cultivated. This would not be true at Harvard, or at Chicago. But the other side of the equation is that our "specialists with general-duty capability" (as Phil refers to them) are no doubt well suited for the majority of kinds of employment opportunities that come our way. If one wants to be a research scholar at Harvard some day, the shortest path to the destination would probably not be a doctorate from UCSB (though it isn't unthinkable). But we have seemed to know enough, in situations like this, to "tailor-make" such possibilities in the plans we devise for students, even when this means that they will study somewhere else, for example, after having received their master's degree from us. For the time being, we are not in good position to place our graduates in the finest research institutions in the land. But we ought to be able to get our share of appointments at places like Cal Poly, Western Illinois University, and the like. And it is significant that Tomoko Masuzawa went from Cal Poly to Middlebury and then to the University of North Carolina at Chapel



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Hill. It took her a couple of jumps, but she got there. There are others who could make similar moves. And our hiring rate over the past five years is 82%. Again, not bad.

What it tells me is that the program has evolved in a way that intends to protect the spirit of the enterprise. Maybe it sounds corny, but it must be true that the dominant impulse has been to create and sustain a working context in which all faculty members -- and, if possible, all graduate students -- are active participants in collective and cooperative work. This conviction has been challenged from time to time, and the program-matics it requires have not always been easy to devise and maintain. But I think this has been the driving force. And I believe that it articulates well with the goals of the University of California, the particular ambience of the Santa Barbara campus, our involvement in the Pacific world, the support we receive from a society in which, by 1990, minorities will be the majority. It wouldn't have worked very well for us to have taken a Morning-side Heights or a Cambridge or New Haven educational model, and tried to transplant it, without significant modification, to this particular section of the Pacific Rim. But we have also recognized that we're not located in Manoa or Kyoto either.

It is also significant that all but one or two of our faculty appointments, over a twenty-five period, are either still on the faculty or have retired from it. Two have died (O'Dea and Wendell), and two (J. Z. Smith and Robert Gimello) -- are there more? -- have left UCSB for positions in other institutions. And the others are still here. I would wager that other institutions do not have this kind of record. What it tells me is that the makings of a Santa Barbara School, though never over-articulated, have grown up amidst the working interrelationships between faculty members and has been transmitted from here into other important contexts.

Anyway, this is where I am on this topic for the moment. And if Walter Harrelson, Jim Dittes, or Stan Lusby were to ask me today to describe the distinctiveness of the place, I would respond in these kinds of terms.

Walter *W.H.C.*

cc - Gerry Larson



May 9, 1989

TO: Faculty Colleagues

I have attached a longer statement concerning the School of Religious Studies about which I wrote a brief memo a few weeks ago. The description remains a sketch only, but we can take the next step if you like what is being proposed so far.

*W. A. A.*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA — (Letterhead for Interdepartmental Use)

ties not simply in demonstrating that what we are doing is markedly different from programs whose fundamental orientation remains in theology, but, more constructively and dramatically, in taking the next steps that belong intrinsically to our professional work.

I envision this, secondly, as a deliberate extension of our educational activities into professional areas that remain relatively untouched at the present time and/or require some disciplined attention. The first of these areas includes professions that deal directly with the subject of religion, but oftentimes in a manner that does not exhibit the influence of professional religious-studies education. I think, first, of the fields of elementary and secondary education, and specifically of the interest that school teachers have exhibited in our subject. The Religious Contours of California is a compelling example in point. So too are the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Seminars that Ninian



## A SCHOOL OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT UCSB

In sketch, this is what I have in mind when speaking about a new School of Religious Studies at UCSB:

First, such an institution will take advantage of the incomparable status the religious studies program at UCSB enjoys within American higher education. Over the past twenty five years we have acquired an enviable position within undergraduate and graduate programs in the academic study of religion. We are currently ranked among the top half dozen such programs in the nation, regardless of how such programs are classified. And when the list of such programs is restricted to those belonging exclusively to state and/or public universities, we are at the top. From this vantage point, I think it is time that we exercise our abilities not simply in demonstrating that what we are doing is markedly different from programs whose fundamental orientation remains in theology, but, more constructively and dramatically, in taking the next steps that belong intrinsically to our professional work.

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Smart, Phil Hammond, Giles Gunn and I have conducted during the summer months. For this year's seminar I received over seventy applications for fifteen positions, not counting several from foreign countries; this has been the pattern since 1983 when the seminar program was initiated at the Endowment. Professor Gunn has had similar responses. The California Council for the Humanities would be interested in working with us in creating programs for California teachers.

In addition to educators, I would expect members of the journalism profession, and other writers, to be interested in attractive programs in the study of religion. Ruel Tyson and John Shutz at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill offered a one-time program of this kind years ago, and received considerable attention and numerous accolades for it. Our ongoing relationship with persons like John Dart of the Los Angeles Times, and currently with John Miles of the Times, would seem to auger well in this regard. My idea is that we would call upon such resource persons to help us conceive the program.

I can easily envision doing something similar in the field of law. Bob Michaelson's current work, for example, illustrates the extent to which current court cases reflect interest in as well as knowledge of the subject of religion; so too the work that Phil Hammond has been doing concerning cases that involve relationships between church and state. I am citing obvious examples. There are numerous additional compelling ones that are rooted at UCSB.

Were such kinds of activity (in the fields of education, journalism and law) to be encouraged, we would also have the makings of a steady source of interest in contemporary public-policy issues. Here I can



envision a number of public (or semi-public) meetings throughout the year, with some of them carrying C-SPAN public-communication possibilities, and others of them being suitable for other forms of publication. Here, too, I would welcome the partnership of UCSB's stellar History Department, with its accomplished but still relatively embryonic interest in public policy, as belongs to public history. I am cognizant of other campus colleagues who regret the demise of the program of the Hutchins Center (if not of the Hutchins Center itself). I am confident that they would find such public-policy issues compelling and interesting enough to invite their attention and participation.

When dealing with our expanded role as educators within the professions (education, journalism, law, and perhaps public policy itself), I can see ourselves creating certificates of appropriate kinds to award to those who have completed specific programs. We do this on a regular basis, for example, in the NEH programs. Of course, with certification comes revenue: none of these programs would be offered gratis, but would require tuition payments of appropriate sums, portions of which would both require and invite extra-mural support.

All of this could be accomplished without altering our present program. It would be essential that our current undergraduate major, M.A. and Ph.D. programs continue as they are currently defined. I see the programmatic expansion as functioning in a complementary way. But the complementation could be quite significant. Graduate students, for example, might wish to become rather heavily involved



in the School's educational programs. So too, resource persons could be invited for one purpose or another, and their expertise channeled into more regularly religious studies scholarly ventures. Perhaps a special terminal M.A. program could be devised for persons who do not see themselves to be on a professional teacher/scholar track, from which revenues would come which could be used to strengthen the overall religious studies program. Conferences could be scheduled on subjects that would be of interest to the entire religious studies community, wherein scholars would take the intellectual lead. In addition, as a direct side benefit, we would all learn much, for example, about how the study of religion relates to contemporary social and cultural issues and currents, how moral values are defined and/or transformed within societies, how such values and ideals can appropriately be taught within the schools, et al.

We can fill in the blanks....

The important point, however, is that there is a compelling "window of opportunity." The campus is conducting an ongoing conversation about professional schools, and the desirability of creating one or two of them in the next several years. My thought in this regard is twofold: (1) assessed from a national educational perspective, Religious Studies at UCSB is in prime position to create such a distinctive institution, and, in the process, broaden the scope of the academic study of religion; and (2) assessed from the perspective of current campus resources as well as current campus intellectual disposition, Religious Studies at UCSB is in unusual position to help pull some vital academic resources together. I can envision our taking a bold educational step in a manner that would



strengthen the campus' interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary capacities, and, in the process, might even do a little good.

Walter Capps  
May 8, 1989



November 14, 1989

TO: R.S. Faculty  
FROM: Phil Hammond  
RE: Walter Capps' first draft of a  
possible professional school proposal

Attached is Walter's first go at developing a statement. At least two things are to be noted: (1) The name of the school, while crucial, is at this point very tentative, almost fictitious, until a fitting label becomes apparent. (2) We would not be submitting this proposal (or even a greatly expanded proposal) without the cooperative effort of some other department(s).

Please read these pages carefully, however, and prepare for a subsequent meeting (maybe the next faculty meeting on Jan. 12?) during which they will be discussed.

In case you're interested, the model followed by Capps (for the School of Environmental Science and Management) is available through Jean Burrey.



23 January 1990

To: Professor Walter Capps  
From: Ninian Smart and Walter Capps  
Religious Studies Department

We are thinking about the possibility of creating a new professional school on campus, relating to values and public policy. It would be excellent if you could come to an informal brown-bag meeting at 12:00 noon on Tuesday, Feb 6, in the chair's office (within Religious Studies main office, South Hall 4607). If you cannot attend yourself, possibly you might nominate a colleague.