

Office of the Dean

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October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2004

Professor Vivek Goel  
Vice-President and Provost  
Simcoe Hall, University of Toronto  
27 King's College Circle  
Toronto ON M5S 1A1

**RE: Relocation of the religion program and departmental name changes at the University of Toronto at Mississauga**

Dear Prof. Goel,

I am writing to seek approval for the reorganization and renaming of two departmental units, as follows.

- 1) The name of the *Department of Anthropology and Religion* to be changed to the *Department of Anthropology*; and
- 2) The name of the *Department of History and Classics* to be changed to the *Department of Historical Studies*.

These changes stem from the proposed relocation of the discipline of the study of religion to a new departmental home. (Curricular revisions in our program in religion will be submitted later in the year, with UTM's other curricular revisions.) This reorganization is intended to support those changes, as well as build on other interdisciplinary synergies of members of the proposed Department of Historical Studies. The above changes pose no resource implications over and above what has already been allocated in *UTM Steps Up* (the UTM plan), specifically the increase in faculty complement in key areas, to be funded by UTM's enrolment growth income.

The background to this proposal is as follows. The Religion program at UTM is at a pivotal juncture. Its complement is very small (2.6 FTE), it has not been successful in making new appointments, and it is facing the loss of its two senior faculty due to their impending retirement.

During last year's planning process - *Stepping Up* - the Provost emphasized two primary objectives for programmatic choices: the achievement of critical mass and excellence.



With this in mind, the UTM Executive Planning Committee seriously considered the future of the study of religion at UTM, taking into account the Provost's criteria as well as the strong demand for religion courses from our diverse student body. In the midst of these discussions, an opportunity arose to recharge the program through the recruitment of a world renowned scholar in ancient Judaism, a recruitment which enjoyed the enthusiastic support of the graduate chairs of Classics, Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, and Religion.

A sustained consultative process followed concerning the development of a program in the history of world religions and about the housing of that program within the Department of History and Classics, two disciplines with which the proposed program has close affinity. Consultation with UTM faculty in religion elicited both positive and negative feedback, respectively concerning the commitment to faculty growth and the historical emphasis of the proposed program. The current faculty in religion have been given the option of remaining in the Department of Anthropology and continuing their teaching in the anthropology of religion. In the numerous discussions which took place with the graduate chairs of Religion, Classics, and NMC, one concern arose: the possibility of the replication of St. George strengths on the UTM campus. This concern has since been allayed and the proposal enjoys the support of all three chairs. The upshot of this consultative process was that the following motion was approved at the September 14, 2004 meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee and at the October 6, 2004 meeting of Erindale College Council.

Be It Resolved

and                    THAT the program in religion be moved from the Department of Anthropology and Religion to become part of the Department of History and Classics.

                         THAT resulting from the above change, the name of the *Department of Anthropology and Religion* be changed to the *Department of Anthropology* and THAT the name of the *Department of History and Classics* be changed to the *Department of Historical Studies*.

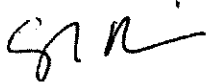
*UTM Steps Up* invests significant resources in the proposed history of world religions program and in the rebuilding of this subject area. We plan appointments in the following areas in the next two years:

1. Early Christianity/Hellenistic Thought
2. Ancient Bible (49% NMC, 51% UTM)
3. Islam
4. South Asian
5. Buddhism

I believe that we will produce an intellectually robust program that will also contribute to the diversification of our faculty and our curriculum. We also will have built wonderful synergies in our proposed Department of Historical Studies, building on the recent recruitment of two mid-career internationally renown scholars. We have, in addition, provided resources to mount a public series of panels at UTM, with leading scholars of Islam, Judaism, Christianity, and Asian religions speaking to each other about a wide variety of scholarly topics. Students are already seeing the fruits of the proposed program, as the department of History and Classics has already initiated this series of panels, to great student applause.

In summary, we are putting in place at UTM a truly diverse, broad, and intellectually first-rate program. The reorganization of our departmental units in accordance with this memorandum will strongly support this interdisciplinary program.

Sincerely,



Cheryl Misak,  
Dean, Vice-Principal: Academic  
University of Toronto at Mississauga

cc: Prof. Safwat Zaky, Vice-Provost, Planning & Budget  
Helen Lasthiotakis, Director, Policy and Planning  
Office of the Vice-President and Provost



Professor Cheryl Misak  
Dean and Vice-Principal Academic  
University of Toronto at Mississauga  
3125 South Building  
Mississauga, Ontario L5L 1C6

5 October 2004

Dear Dean Misak,

With much conviction, I support moving the Study of Religion Program at the University of Toronto at Mississauga to the Department of History & Classics, which is proposed to be renamed the Department of Historical Studies. As cognate disciplines with shared interests in historical inquiries, the clustering of Classics, History, and Religion will contribute to a more efficient sharing of resources and will enhance our students' educational experience at UTM. With a weekly Historical Studies Seminar Series, it enables us to foster a vibrant transdisciplinary community that brings faculty and students into closer intellectual interaction.

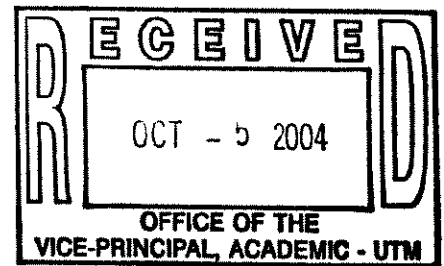
This move will invigorate the Study of Religion and will allow us to develop a unique and coherent program in the History of Religions, a kind of curriculum that will best serve our highly diverse student body. UTM's thriving program in Classical Civilizations already offers courses related to Judaism and Christianity and many History courses also explore the formation of various religious traditions in Europe, Latin America, North America, South Asia, and the Middle East. With the recent hiring of Professor Hindy Najman who specializes in the interrelations of Judaism and Christianity and the planned hirings in Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism in 2005-06, UTM will be in the unique position of offering a cutting-edge program that explores the reciprocal historical relations of various world religions. Rather than imitating larger departments, our newly devised History of Religions curriculum will enable our students to respond positively to the rapid diversification of Canadian society.

Sincerely,

Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi  
Chair, Department of History and Classics



October 1, 2004



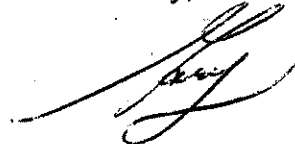
Dean Cheryl Misak  
Office of the Dean  
Room 3125 South Building  
University of Toronto at Mississauga

Dear Cheryl,

The anthropologists at UTM support the move of the UTM's Religion programmes to the Department of History and Classics. We have no objection to the creation of a Department of Anthropology.

Our department currently consists of biological, cultural and linguistic anthropologists as well as archaeologists. Although we felt we could make a link with religion work, our social science approach is a less than ideal fit with humanities oriented religion programmes. The recent Religion hire brings a significant historical dimension to Religion programmes and distances the focus further from Anthropology. The focus, in our view, is much better suited to History and Classics.

Sincerely,



Gary W. Crawford  
Chair

GWC/mdm

