



**University  
of Victoria**

Centre for Studies  
in Religion & Society

## **Enabling Documents**

Created January 1, 1991  
Revised 2004, 2013, 2015, and June 2018

**UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA**  
**CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN RELIGION AND SOCIETY**  
**ENABLING DOCUMENTS**  
**Revised, 2004, 2013, 2015, and 2018**

*The Centre for Studies in Religion and Society was established at the University of Victoria in 1991 at the initiative of Vancouver Island religious organizations and leaders. The core endowments to establish and maintain the Centre were provided by the Catholic Diocese of Victoria and lay members Allen and Loreen Vandekerckhove. Additional significant gifts were later received from the Anglican Diocese of British Columbia., the United Church of Canada and other private donors.*

## **1. Purposes**

The primary mandate of the Centre is to foster the scholarly study of religion in relation to any and all aspects of society and culture, both contemporary and historical. The Centre has a fundamental commitment to pluralism, and will pursue a broad range of research interests not limited to any specific time, place, religion, or culture. It embodies the understanding that religious traditions and value systems have been formative of human reality and experience, and are the proper object of creative, rigorous inquiry.

- 1.1. The Centre will contribute to the University's educational objectives by opening up new avenues of scholarship and generating new knowledge through:
  - 1.1.1 a fellowship program that encourages the participation of current and retired UVic faculty, graduate students from UVic and other institutions, visiting Canadian and international scholars, and artists in residence;
  - 1.1.2 an interdisciplinary research program that addresses the objectives set out in 1.2 below;
  - 1.1.3 educational programs such as lectures, seminars, workshops, conferences, publications and digital and material library acquisitions;
  - 1.1.4 the development of ongoing, as well as time-limited, research activities. These research activities will be devoted to the scholarly exploration of particular themes as they relate to 1.2 below.
- 1.2 The Centre will be especially supportive of projects and activities that:
  - 1.2.1 involve interdisciplinary approaches;
  - 1.2.2 explore connections among the world religions, including the spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples; explore connections between religious and other perspectives; and relate these connections to other aspects of society and culture;
  - 1.2.3 foster critical and rigorous intellectual inquiry into the diversity of values associated with religion, science, technology, culture and society, and the way these values affect global well-being;
  - 1.2.4 give special attention to key issues of concern to the community at large;

- 1.2.5 actively encourage the flow of knowledge between the community and the university;
  - 1.2.6 address the experience of marginalized, underrepresented, and excluded groups;
  - 1.2.7 critically examine how knowledge is produced and how it influences the inclusion or exclusion of certain people, questions and issues.
- 1.3 The Centre is committed to pluralism and dialogue. The Centre will therefore make every effort to ensure that it attracts participants whose beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences vary widely, reflecting both religious and secular points of view. Participants in dialogue seek understanding while respecting the integrity of those involved. Those who engage in dialogue do not seek to proselytize but rather will strive to welcome viewpoints critical of or contrary to their own.

## **2. Organizational Structure**

### **2.1 Administration**

- 2.1.1 The Centre is an approved Research Centre of the University of Victoria, subject to the University's direction and control as defined in Policy RH8100, Research Policy, as well as RH8300, Establishment, Review, and Closure of Research Centres.
- 2.1.2 The Centre will have a Director, a Program Committee, and an Advisory Council.
- 2.1.3 The Director will submit a bi-annual report on the activities of the Centre to the Vice-president Research, the Program Committee and the Advisory Council of the Centre.

### **2.2 The Director**

- 2.2.1 The Director must hold a tenured appointment in an academic department at the University of Victoria.
- 2.2.2 The Director will be appointed for a term of five years (renewable).
- 2.2.3 The search for a Director or re-appointment of an incumbent, including ratification by the Members of the Centre who hold regular academic appointments at the University of Victoria, will be conducted in accordance with UVic Policy GV0705 Procedures for the Appointment and Re-appointment of Research Centre Directors.

### **2.3 Director Search Procedures**

#### **2.3.1 Members of the Search Committee**

Members of the search committee will include all current members of the Program Committee (except the CSRS Director), a representative of the staff of the Centre, the Dean of Humanities, a representative from the Advisory Council, and the Vice-President, Research or Associate Vice-President, Research. The Vice-President, Research, or designate, will chair the search committee and will provide organizational support to the committee. The search committee may, if needed, invite additional members to sit on the committee.

### 2.3.2 Ratification

The recommendation of the search committee must be ratified by the Members of the Centre who hold regular academic appointment at the University of Victoria. A minimum of 60% of submitted ballots must support the candidate for ratification to take place.

## 2.4 The Program Committee

2.4.1 The Program Committee is the primary governing body of the Centre. It will have four main responsibilities:

2.4.1.1 establishment of procedures for appointment of fellows to the Centre and review of all applications for academic fellowships at the Centre;

2.4.1.2 review of all programs of the Centre;

2.4.1.3 review of the financial statements of the Centre on an annual basis;

2.4.1.4 reporting of policy and management decisions to the Vice-President Research.

2.4.2 The Program Committee will consist of not fewer than seven members, including the Director, who will serve as Chair.

2.4.3 The Program Committee will be drawn from regular faculty at the University who are also Members of the Centre. At least three Faculties or Divisions of the University must be represented on the Committee, and members will serve for staggered terms of three years. The Committee must include at least one Dean and up to three Deans or their designates representative of faculties that predominate in the membership of the Centre. The Vice-President Research or designate will sit as an ex-officio member of the Program Committee.

2.4.3.1 In exceptional cases, and with the agreement of the Director and the Committee, non-regular faculty members, graduate students, and university employees, may be appointed to the Program Committee.

2.4.4 The Chair of the Advisory Council shall be an ex-officio member of the Program Committee.

## 2.5 The Advisory Council

2.5.1 The Advisory Council will be a community-based forum for interdisciplinary dialogue and philosophical reflection on the purposes of the Centre. It will have the following roles:

2.5.1.1 to advise the Centre where appropriate on its activities;

- 2.5.1.2 to assist the Centre in its relations with the community outside the University, with particular reference to the promotion and funding of the Centre's activities.
- 2.5.2 The full Advisory Council will meet once a year with the Program Committee to review the activities of the Centre. The Director of the Centre will attend all meetings of the Advisory Council.
- 2.5.3 In consultation with the Director, the Advisory Council will select its own members, who will serve for terms of three years, renewable for one additional term. When vacancies occur, the Chair of the Council will solicit and receive nominations. In selecting members, the Council will give special attention to the Centre's goals of pluralism and dialogue. The members will include individuals from those religious, social, cultural, legal, educational and scientific communities with special interests in the work of the Centre. The Council will elect its own Chair, who will remain in this position for a period of three years, renewable for one additional term.

### **3. Membership in the Centre**

- 3.1 Membership is open to all continuing (i.e., tenured or tenure-stream) Faculty Members of the University of Victoria who wish to contribute to the activities of the Centre. Members are expected to demonstrate an interest in: the activities of the centre; the scholarly study of religion and society; both the collegiality and citizenship that animate the centre's ethos.
- 3.2 Non-regular faculty (e.g., adjunct, emeritus, or sessional) at the University of Victoria who demonstrate an interest in the Centre and a capacity to contribute to its activities may also be appointed as Members.
- 3.3 Members, who are also regular UVic faculty, shall retain voting rights in the ratification of Director appointments and re-appointments.
- 3.4 To maintain their status, individuals will be asked periodically to affirm their interest in being Members of the centre.