PART 1: MISSION, GOALS AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. MISSION AND AREAS OF FOCUS

The Institute for Judaic and Near Eastern Studies is an interdisciplinary program for studies of Jewish religion, culture, history, and literature as well as the politics and international relations of the Near Eastern region. It supports a certificate program, a lecture series, study abroad opportunities, student activities, and outreach and community events. The program covers a wide range of historical material from the ancient to the modern period as well as a range of geographical areas including Judaism in America and Europe, and religion and politics in Israel and the Near East.

B. ORGANIZATION, EXTERNAL TRENDS AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

1. ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES. The Institute has reported directly to the Provost. Through a restructuring that is taking place, it now reports to the Director of the Center for Transnational and Comparative Studies (TCS). The Institute has a Director, an Executive Committee, and a Faculty Steering Committee.

2. ADVISORY BOARD. The Director is Steven Heine (Religious Studies), and the Executive Committee consists of three associate directors -- Oren Stier (Religious Studies) for Judaic studies, Charles MacDonald (International Relations) for Near Eastern studies, and Zion Zohar (Religious Studies) for a new program in Sephardic Studies. The Faculty Steering Committee consists of Nina Caputo (History), Steve Fain (Education), Mitch Hart (History), Marilyn Hoder-Salmon (English), Fred Kaufman (Music), Nathan Katz (Religious Studies), Erik Larsen (Religious Studies), Abe Lavender (Sociology), Asher Milbauer (English), Meri-Jane Rochelson (English), Howard Rock (History), Mark Szuchman (History).

3. EXTERNAL TRENDS. Judaic and Near Eastern Studies is being developed in the context of an emphasis on area studies and international studies programs so that Jewish religion and culture is related to global social, political and economic trends of the region in comparison with other religions.

4. STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND AREAS OF EMPHASIS. Judaic
Studies has recently been reconfigured as part of a new Institute for Judaic and Near Eastern Studies in order to accentuate the context of globalization and international studies as well as to help FIU gain a presence in an academic approach to the Middle East. In addition, a new endowment supports a faculty position in Sephardic Studies. A program on this topic will become a branch of the Institute, and there is a new initiative for a joint degree program with Gratz College.

C. ANNUAL AND LONG RANGE GOALS

1. Sponsor Speakers and Workshop Series I, II, IV, V, VI
Objective: To construct a vigorous lecture series
Outcome: Half a dozen major events, including cultural and community activities, such as a conference on Biblical archaeology and speakers on Jewish mysticism
2001-2002 Goal: Continue and expand these activities, including a conference on Holocaust Studies

2. Outside Funding I, II, III, IV, V
Objective: Secure funding to develop program activities
Outcome: An endowment for Sephardic Studies has been achieved
2001-2002 Goal: Research and apply for additional funding opportunities

3. Curriculum Development I, II, IV, V
Objective: Administer and advise certificate program, increase enrollment
Outcome: 6 students signed on, first graduate of program in spring 2001
2001-2002 Goal: Continue to emphasize student advising in the certificate

4. Study Abroad I, IV, V
Objective: Develop new study abroad program
Outcome: Program in Israel proposed for summer 2001 was cancelled due to political conditions
2001-2002 Goal: Explore new linkages especially in Israel and other countries

D. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The restructuring has been successfully undertaken, so that the unit is now known as the Institute for Judaic and Near Eastern Studies housed under and reporting to the Director of TCS. This process will facilitate the growth of the program in several directions through enhanced opportunities for clerical support, organizational structure, funding, and synergetic interaction with other area studies programs. There is a certificate program dedicated to Judaica. The plan is to create a second certificate dedicated to contemporary issues in the Near East, with Hebrew as well as Arabic offered to fulfill the language requirement. At the same time, the program will continue its academic lecture series and expand its study abroad and student-oriented activities, in part through connections with the Hillel organization.