

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST TO SUSPEND ADMISSIONS TO THE Ph.D. PROGRAM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA**

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to suspend admissions to the Ph.D. Program in Women's Studies.

Executive Summary: The request to suspend admissions to the Program is based on the fact that the Department of Women's Studies is undergoing a transition as it merges with the certificate program in Sexuality Studies. Suspension of admissions to the Ph.D. Program will allow the Department to complete a curriculum revision. Current students will not be affected by the proposed suspension of admissions. This request was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan strategy (4.1.1) to "pursue opportunities to realize greater efficiency in operations, consistent with best practices in the delivery of education and other services."

Background:

- ◇ **History of program.** The Ph.D. Program in Women's Studies was approved by the Board of Regents in August 1997. Although there are other universities and colleges that offer certificate programs, the University of Iowa is one of only a few institutions that offers a "free-standing" Ph.D. Program in Women's Studies.
- ◇ **Description of program.** The Women's Studies Program is committed to feminist research, teaching, and scholarship. It emphasizes the application of theoretical and methodological models developed in the pursuit of the broad range of cultural issues affecting both women and men.
- ◇ **Reason for proposed suspension.** The proposed suspension will allow faculty to focus on offering the B.A. program, on curriculum revision, mentoring the nine currently-enrolled graduate students to the completion of their degree programs, and rebuilding faculty. As a result of faculty resignations, there are currently six tenure-line faculty members with only partial appointments, resulting in fewer than 2 FTE in Women's Studies.
- ◇ **Task Force recommendations.** Following a review of the Department of Women's Studies in 2006-07, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences appointed a task force to examine faculty expertise, curriculum, and student options in the broader area of gender studies. In December 2007, the Task Force recommended that Women's Studies be merged with the certificate program in Sexuality Studies. The combined faculty will develop a unified core curriculum leading to a revised degree and certificate programs in gender studies, broadly defined.
- ◇ **Date of suspension.** If the proposed suspension is approved by the Board, it will become effective immediately.