

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

**REQUEST FOR NEW PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA:  
BACHELOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN SOCIAL JUSTICE**

**Action Requested:** Consider approval of the request by the University of Iowa to establish a new Bachelor of Arts Program in Social Justice in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed program will provide educational opportunities for students interested in less traditional helping professions. This proposal was reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. No concerns were raised when it was presented to the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education. The proposed program addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan priorities to "provide educational excellence and impact as well as economic development and vitality" and Goal #8 – "Iowa's public universities and special schools shall be increasingly efficient and productive."

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of proposed program.** The proposed program is an interdisciplinary program that promotes equity, social justice, and global citizenship. It will be located in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) because of the department's history of integrating civic engagement and social activism into the core experiences of undergraduate students. The proposed program will require a minimum of 120 semester hours, including 39 semester hours of work in the major. Students will explore the intersections of race, class, gender, culture, economics, history, nationality, and human rights. Student will expand their knowledge by integrating theory and engagement with "real world" field experiences. They will approach social justice through the arts, history, literature, comparative religious studies, political science, philosophy, health education, and gender, women's, and sexuality studies.
  
- ◇ **Academic objectives.** The following student outcomes have been identified:
  - ⇒ Explore through both coursework and fieldwork how the intersections of geography, race, class, gender, sexuality, health, economics, and history create networks of privilege and oppression across the globe.
  - ⇒ Read, write, listen, and act through both coursework and fieldwork in order to understand how conditions are created for change on the local, regional, and national level historically, ethically, politically, and personally.
  - ⇒ Learn about selected history of social movements, how those movements emerged, and the impacts those movements had on policy, populations, the environment, and culture through engagement in a core course.
  - ⇒ Develop a deeper understanding of issues, practice, research, and theory related to social justice in one or more areas of study within the traditional disciplines of the liberal arts through nine hours of coursework in an area of specialization.
  - ⇒ Prepare for employment and/or for graduate study in various fields through high quality internships and educational experiences including anthropology, political science, law, criminology, health, the cultural sector, social services, business, non-profit management, or public history projects.

- ◇ Need for proposed program. Today's students often think in interdisciplinary terms and are interested in studying one field through multiple disciplinary lenses. This is confirmed at SUI by data collected by NCES showing majors earned in multi/interdisciplinary studies has grown 38% from 2001-2011.<sup>1</sup> A growing number of students enrolling at SUI are interested in service to society and in helping others. The proposed program speaks directly to students not interested in the more traditional helping professions related to the health sciences and to teaching. Careers related to social justice could, for example, include assisted living directors and other personnel (23% growth); marketing consultants (32 % growth); and environmental health and safety (15%), based on data collected by PayScale, "an online salary, benefits and compensation information company" that mines data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The proposed program also will provide a foundation for graduate or professional study in criminology, criminal justice, sociology, psychology, law, social work, urban planning, education, social policy, and similar areas. The major will pair well with majors in other disciplines, such as psychology and social work, and provide students a competitive edge when applying to graduate school in forensic psychology or social work with a corrections emphasis.
  
- ◇ Link to institutional strategic plan. The department is committed to a liberal arts education as well as to building career paths for students through practicum experiences, internships, partnerships, and coursework. Goal I of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS) strategic plan is focused on student success, with a primary aim of providing "a rich and challenging undergraduate experience that develops in student the skills and understanding that contribute to rewarding person lives, satisfying and productive work, and informed participation in a diverse, multi-cultural society." The proposed program encourages students to acquire experiences and transferable skills that are useful in many professions, with a particular focus on interdisciplinary research opportunities, connections with activist scholars, and the types of real life experiences at the heart of social justice that can be gained only through high quality internships and practica.
  
- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at SUI. Social Justice is an interdisciplinary and "intersectional ideal" that involves theory and practice in the areas of equity, justice, and global citizenship. The proposed program would be especially strong in the Department of Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies (GWSS) because the department is composed of faculty with appointments across CLAS who teach courses for the proposed major, thus existing resources of many units to help support the curriculum.

One of these faculty members is the Chair of the Department of Sociology, which currently offers a track in criminology preparing students to pursue careers in criminological research, the law, policing, probation, parole, and other areas. Because of the growth of the track and the student demand for this area of study, a program Criminology, Law and Justice was recently approved by the Board (April 2016, ASAC 5b). The proposed program would allow students to pursue either both majors or a major in one area with a minor in the other, thus strengthening the knowledge of the field from many perspectives. The Center for Criminology and Socio-Legal Studies complements this undergraduate major since it has a focus on Criminology, Law and Justice, giving students a chance to participate in some of the Center's activities for graduate students, including research.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nces.ed.gov/fastfacts/>.

The College of Law offers a certificate in Human Rights, as well as a student conference and opportunities for travel abroad. Many students may also enroll in the proposed program. Students may also combine the proposed program with studies in political science, religion, anthropology, and the arts. Cross-appointed faculty represent many areas of study at the university; the diverse faculty will help mentor students toward how to best combine programs of study.

- ◇ Relationship to existing programs at other colleges and universities. There are no programs explicitly focused on social justice or human rights in any post-secondary institution in Iowa. Many institutions offer programs in related areas that would help students to pursue such an interest with a goal of working on a global or national social issue. These majors include education, social work or human services, sociology, criminal justice, women's studies, and others that focus on inequality, differences in economic status, and global issues, such as climate changes, water purity, and pollution.

ISU offers a program in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, called Global Resource Systems, which educates students on agriculture and international resources, preparing students to work with the development of resources or on other specific problems, such as water or food scarcity. ISU also offers a program in Child, Adult and Family Services that "provides a broad emphasis in theory, research, and application in child, adult and faculty services, including attention to community issues and public policy." ISU is known for other programs leading to careers in social justice, such as criminology, environmental stewardship, and education.

Grinnell College administers a program in Global Development Studies as an interdisciplinary concentration. Students "explore strategies for addressing global problems and development's social and environmental implications," preparing students for "hands-on work for organizations worldwide in areas, including health, poverty reduction, and human rights."

UNI's School of Applied Human Sciences offers a program in family services "to prepare professionals to work in a variety of organizations, businesses or agencies. Specializations within the school integrate aspects of science, social sciences, fine arts, business, education and economics in addressing a shared mission of equipping students with knowledge and skills that enable them to improve the lives of individuals and families, both at home and in the workplace." It also offers a program in Gerontology, with two tracks. Both of these prepare students to work in particular areas of social justice. The Social Work major at UNI teaches students to recognize "the types and processes of discrimination and oppression," helping students to learn about creating "social and economic justice through advocacy and social reform."

Many schools address the intended outcomes of study in this area by a different name because of the interdisciplinary nature of social justice. A focused, intentional major providing a clear pathway for students interested in serving others and society is part of the proposed program which will appeal to students.

- ◇ Unique features. The Women's Studies Program was established at SUI in 1974 as one of the first programs in the U. S. The initial strength in joint appointments in the social sciences made the program unique within an interdisciplinary field most often drawn from the humanities. Recent appointments provide strength in the social sciences, arts, and humanities and provide the breadth of interdisciplinary strength necessary for a strong gender, women's, and sexuality studies program.

Recently, the department has begun seeking people with appointments in the health sciences expand scholarly discussions in the areas of reproductive health, transgender health, and the health of women and ethnic, racial, and sexual minorities. Faculty and students engaged with the Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies community recognize the intellectual advantages of its interdisciplinarity. In 2000, Women's Studies gained departmental status, and in 2010, the Board of Regents approved the proposal to unite with the existing Sexuality Studies Program and become the new Department of Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies (GWSS). The department offers a major and minor in Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies and a graduate certificate that can be combined with a disciplinary graduate degree. The department has grown in the last 15 years. Starting with one half-time faculty member, the Department now has many faculty with joint appointments. About 55 other faculty at the University are affiliated with GWSS and regularly cross-list their courses, supervise graduate students, or serve on GWSS committees. The range of what we the department offers includes courses that examine race, sexuality, transnationality, post-colonialism, and the diverse philosophical cores each discipline brings to bear on a subject. Faculty and courses have been added, especially those that reflect the new title of the department.

- ◇ Resources. The personnel, facilities, and equipment for the Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies program will also be used to support the proposed program, with room in courses to serve additional students at no extra cost. Instructors in the programs will be drawn from their home departments across the College, with many of the courses cross-listed among units, which will serve future students by offering seats in multiple formats and degree programs. No new facilities or equipment will be required for the proposed program.
- ◇ Student demand. The proposed program is a response to the changing and expanding interests of students in Iowa. In the past decade, there has been an increase in students who work as volunteers, activists, and advocates in movements related to politics, reproductive justice, environmental issues, LGBTQ issues, agricultural production and policy, and public safety. While they have found homes in traditional majors at the university, a number of undergraduates have expressed a desire to integrate academic work more deeply with activism and anticipated career paths, whether the student plans to work for non-profits, influence law and policy, or work in fields such as public health, education, and social services. The proposed program is a response to this perceived need.
- ◇ Duplication. There are no programs in any Iowa institution of higher education explicitly focused on social justice or human rights.
- ◇ Workforce need/demand. Iowa is confronting a number of social issues that are changing the face of the state: environmental issues; issues of food and poverty in a state supplying part of the country's food supply; an aging population; growing and diverse communities of immigrants; cuts in services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence and/or sexual assault; and an escalating mental health crisis. The proposed program will prepare students for employment and/or for graduate study in these areas through internships and educational experiences that teach problem solving using tools from many disciplines.

The proposed program will also prepare students for further studies in such areas as anthropology, political science, law, criminology, and health. Students will also seek employment in the social services, education, public health, business, non-profit management, or public history projects. As Spotlight on Careers points out, social justice concerns can be related to almost any field or area of employment, including education and research, law and public policy, communications and media, NGOs/nonprofits, social work, and community organizing. The site lists opportunities in each area, such as careers as teachers, lawyers, and social workers, but also those in marketing, media, and administration, starting with positions as a program assistant and manager.<sup>2</sup>

Careers related to social justice will include health care administration (23% growth); assisted living directors and other personnel (23% growth); marketing consultants (32% growth); environmental health and safety (15% growth), based on data collected by PayScale, “an online salary, benefits and compensation information company” that mines data from the Occupational Outlook Handbook. The proposed program will provide a foundation for graduate or professional study in criminology, criminal justice, sociology, psychology, law, social work, urban planning, education, social policy, and similar areas. The major will pair well with majors in other disciplines, such as psychology and social work, and afford students a competitive edge when applying to graduate school in forensic psychology or social work with a corrections emphasis.

- ◆ Consultation with representatives of other programs. The university consulted with ISU and UNI on the proposed proposal.
- ◆ Letters of support. Letters of support are provided in the Attachment.
- ◆ Cost. No new costs for the proposed program are anticipated for years one and two. The total costs necessary for the next three years will be covered from existing CLAS resources already allocated to the department. Additional costs will be covered by an increase in revenue of \$40,800 generated by additional credit hours. If needed, one part-time lecturer will be hired with this funding if enrollments grow beyond the expected numbers.

		New Costs	Total Costs
Year 1	Current GWSS allocation	\$0	\$0
Year 2	Current GWSS allocation	\$0	\$0
Year 3	Possible part-time lecturer	\$35,500	\$35,500
Year 4			
Year 5	No new costs expected after year 5		

- ◆ Projected enrollment. The enrollment is expected to be 25 students during year one, increasing to 110 by year seven.

<sup>2</sup> <http://spotlightoncareers.org/career/social-justice/employer-job-options/>

- ◇ Anticipated sources of students. Some students will move from other university programs or will declare this program of study as a secondary major, such as those students in sociology, psychology, ethics and public policy, public health, political science, and related areas. The proposed program will appeal to students who want a vocation related to helping others but are not necessarily interest in teaching or social work. It will also appeal to those seek hands-on and experiential learning.
- ◇ Articulation agreement. The proposed program will attract new first-year students as well as transfer students who completed an associate degree from an Iowa community college, including Eastern Iowa Community College and Kirkwood Community College. The proposed program will be suggested for the 2+2 Plan to ensure a smooth transfer of credits and completion of a baccalaureate degree.
- ◇ Off-campus delivery. The proposed program will be offered on campus.
- ◇ Accreditation. The proposed program will not apply for accreditation because it does not exist in this field.
- ◇ Opportunities for internships. The proposed program will provide opportunities on and off campus. Students will participate in interdisciplinary research opportunities, connections with activist scholars, and the kinds of real life experiences at the heart of social justice that can only be gained through high quality internships and practica. GWSS is prepared to offer all of these options in the proposed program. Social Justice is an interdisciplinary and intersectional ideal that involves theory and praxis in the areas of equity, justice, and global citizenship. Consequently, the major requires a capstone experience. Students in the department are currently involved in practica, internships, and volunteer experiences in various sites including the Department of Corrections and the Department of Community Corrections, the Rape Victim Advocacy Program (RVAP), the Domestic Violence Intervention Project (DVIP), Emma Goldman Health Care Clinic, Mecca Drug Treatment Program, the Shelter, and the Crisis Center. The department will expand these experiences to Des Moines through the John and Mary Pappajohn Education Center.
- ◇ Marketing plan. Upon approval of the proposed program, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will work with Admissions and the Office of Strategic Communication to develop a marketing plan; generally, a new major is added to the application, to all relevant materials, and web sites to inform students about the major. Additionally, campus visit days highlight new majors as do special open houses and visits with high school counselors. Admissions will plan special events for future students to attend, such as talks and research discussions. Most importantly, faculty will meet with students to discuss the major.
- ◇ Evaluation plan. Each year, every major at the university participates in campus-wide assessment of programs, with departments submitting their annual plans and steps taken for improvement to the Office of Assessment. Additionally, the College reviews new programs after the third year, asking the departmental chair or the program director to review with the Undergraduate Educational Policy and Curriculum Committee (UEPCC) the enrollments, course offerings, progress toward degree, assessment outcomes, and other details.

UEPCC then makes recommendations to the College on any needed changes to the program of study. Departments are also reviewed every five years by the College and by outside reviewers who are experts in the field and, at that time, all existing majors within a department are also reviewed, with curricular offerings and requirements discussed, with changes recommended.

- ◇ Date of implementation. Creation of the proposed program will become effective upon approval by the Board of Regents and will be included in the University's General Catalog. The anticipated implementation date is Fall 2016.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT

**IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Office of the Dean  
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DATE: February 24, 2015

TO: Helena Dettmer, Associate Dean  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa

FROM: Amy Slagell, Associate Dean   
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Iowa State University

RE: Proposed BA in Social Justice

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences supports our colleagues at the University of Iowa in their proposal for a new BA degree in Social Justice offered through the Gender, Women's and Sexuality Studies Department. This interdisciplinary major will allow students a major within which they can integrate their learning across a wide range of disciplines with deeper learning about the history and dynamics of social change.

Our College of Human Sciences offers a Certificate in Social Justice administered in the School of Education, so this proposal was also shared and reviewed by Human Sciences Associate Dean Linda Hagedorn and the School of Education Director, Marlene Strathe; they also joined me for our phone conversation with you about the proposal. They were interested to learn about the proposal and did not have concerns about overlap. As a graduate certificate in an education context, their social justice program is quite distinct.

Our state, our nation and our world can certainly benefit from students whose passion for social justice is supported by a rigorous academic program. We wish you success with your efforts and look forward to hearing more about the accomplishments of students who engage in this new major as a way to achieve their future goals.

Women's and Gender Studies



February 18, 2015

Dr. Helena Dettmer  
Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum  
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, University of Iowa

Dr. Dettmer:

With this letter please accept my declaration of support for the proposed Social Justice undergraduate major at the University of Iowa. The program is a timely, appropriate, and welcome offering for undergraduate students.

After discussing the details with the Senior Director of Academic Programs and Student Development, I anticipate a fruitful relationship between the UNI Women's and Gender Studies and the new UI Social Justice major as administered by the UI Department of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Working together on shared experiences for students will enhance both programs, and enrich student learning on both campuses by extending their scope of understanding.

Social-justice related work is increasingly important to our incoming Women's and Gender Studies students, who seek to address inequalities and make changes in their communities. Looking at issues from a WGS perspective involves sensitivity to the role gender plays in society, while a Social Justice perspective will highlight legal and institutional aspects of society can shine a light on those practices with regard to gender as well as other categories of oppression. Students of both disciplines would benefit from a knowledge of the other, as in practice they are inseparable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Catherine A. F. MacGillivray".

Dr. Catherine A. F. MacGillivray  
Director, Women's and Gender Studies