

MEMORANDUM

To: Board of Regents
From: Board Office
Subject: Proposal for a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Women's Studies at the University of Iowa
Date: March 12, 2001

Recommended Action:

Approve the University of Iowa's proposal to establish a Bachelor of Arts degree in Women's Studies.

Executive Summary:

The University of Iowa requests approval of a Bachelor of Arts degree in Women's Studies. Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field that incorporates perspectives from across the humanities, social sciences, arts, and natural sciences. This program supports Goal #4 of the University's 2000-2005 Strategic Plan to facilitate interdisciplinary interaction in teaching, research, and service, including providing interdisciplinary opportunities for every student.

Few Iowa colleges and universities offer a women's studies or gender studies option to students at the undergraduate level. The University of Northern Iowa has a Master's degree in Women's Studies. Iowa State University offers both BA and BS degrees. However, in keeping with its mission, the focus of ISU's programs is on science, technology, rural life and international development. The proposed major at the University of Iowa will be more focused on feminist anthropology, cultural studies, and women's history, which are areas of strength and specialization of SUI's faculty.

The University currently offers a minor in Women's Studies. The proposed program will provide an opportunity for students to convert their minor into a major. It will also provide an opportunity for students to undertake a double major. The curriculum will draw on courses that already exist but will also require development of two new courses: a lower division introductory course on Gender, Race, and Class in the United States and a senior research seminar. Current resources will be sufficient for the first three years of the program.

The Board Office and the Interinstitutional Committee on Educational Coordination (ICEC) have reviewed the University's responses to the Board of Regents questions on program duplication and new program approval and recommend approval.

The University's responses to the Board of Regents questions on program duplication and new program approval are provided on pages 3-9 (Attachment A).

The proposed program was reviewed and "accepted" by the Iowa Coordinating Council on Post High School Education at its meeting on March 7, 2001.


Diana Gonzalez

Approved: 
Frank J. Stork

h:aa/new programs

Regents' Board Policies section "6.09 Principles and Standards for Program Duplication."

1. ***Does the institution have personnel, facilities, and equipment adequate to establish and maintain a high quality program or should the program be located in another institution where adequate resources are available?***

We believe that the College of Liberal Arts and the Department of Women's Studies do have the personnel, facilities, and equipment adequate to establish and maintain an excellent undergraduate major in women's studies. The program proposal outlines the faculty and courses already in place, and the letters of support from participating units attest to their shared commitment to this interdisciplinary program.

2. ***Does student demand for the proposed program justify its development or expansion?***

As the proposal mentions, there has been continuing student demand for a B.A. major. Professor Lewin notes that there have even been petitions from students. While we do not expect demand to be as great as for some other majors, we believe there will be an immediate and steadily increasing number of majors.

3. ***Do adequate employment opportunities for graduates exist, and is it likely that they will continue to exist?***

As indicated in the proposal, the new B.A. in Women's Studies, like many other liberal arts degrees, is not intended as training for a specific career. Nevertheless, we are confident that the degree will prepare students for a number of different career paths, including especially employment in the non-profit sector where there are many different types of organizations serving women's needs. Students will also be prepared for further study in a number of fields.

4. ***In fields in which one university already offers a substantial program, but in which another university is proposing a new or expanded program, could the first institution reasonably accommodate the necessary expansion or would its resources and facilities be so taxed that such an expansion would reduce educational quality?***

Currently, the Iowa State University program leading to a B.A./B.S. in Women's Studies is one of the smaller majors at ISU (Ellen Heywood, Assistant to the Registrar at the University of Iowa says that her information is that there are four majors currently in the ISU program). While the ISU program cannot be called "substantial" in number of majors, it is a fully developed program with a distinctive approach and philosophy different from that of the proposed major in Women's Studies at the University of Iowa. The experience of the UI major could not be duplicated by the ISU program without unnecessary duplication *throughout that institution* of faculty and research strengths already in place at the University of Iowa. Interdisciplinary programs like Women's Studies draw on the existing strengths and the unique offerings of the entire College of

Liberal Arts—and in the case of Women's Studies the entire University—and represent a synthesis of many and varied resources that would be impossible to duplicate at any other institution.

5. *Would a comparable program development or expansion at the first university (see Point 4) require new capital construction producing a higher cost alternative to that proposal?*

See above. We do not believe that it is possible to develop/expand the ISU program to replace the proposal being made here, certainly not in a cost effective way.

6. *Would the proposed development enhance other programs already in place at the university?*

Yes, as we stated in our responses to 1b of the "Academic Program Review" questions, we believe there will be immediate benefits to a number of programs at the University of Iowa.

7. *Is the proposed program consistent with the institutional mission statement?*

Yes. The Regents Procedural document notes in 6.03 Role and Scope of Regents Institutions [part a] that "the full panoply of liberal arts and science courses" is within the mission of the University of Iowa.

8. *Has it been determined that independent colleges in Iowa do not offer programs similar to those proposed and at comparable quality and cost?*

We have not made an exhaustive study; but we have reviewed on-line College catalogs. Very few Iowa colleges and universities offer a women's studies or gender studies option to students. Coe College offers a "Gender Studies" major; Cornell College offers an interdisciplinary Women's Studies B.A.; Drake has a "concentration" in women's studies; Grinnell has a "concentration" in women's studies; St. Ambrose has a minor. In no case is there a program of comparable *quality and cost* to what we are proposing. Few institutions nationwide can offer undergraduates a similar education in women's studies. Our women's studies faculty and affiliated faculty are highly distinguished experts in their fields; our new Ph.D. in Women's Studies is attracting excellent graduate students who will also contribute to undergraduate education.

**Response to “Academic Program Review” Questions
Proposal for a new B.A. in Women’s Studies
Prepared by the Department of Women’s Studies
The College of Liberal Arts
The University of Iowa
December, 2000**

1. Need

a. *How will this proposed program further the educational and curriculum needs of the students in this discipline?*

Students who major in women’s studies become acquainted with the broad scope of feminist scholarship, the theories and methodologies it has put forward in the humanities and social sciences, and the implications and possible applications of these ideas for enhancing the lives of women across the globe. While the primary focus of women’s studies has historically been on “women,” the field actually stimulates questions about the stability of that category, and encourages students to think about “gender” in a more nuanced and informed way. The Women’s Studies major would resemble those in other liberal arts fields in that knowledge is structured in terms of breadth and increasing students’ ability to engage in complex and subtle analysis and interpretation rather than the notion of a gradual, hierarchical accumulation of skills that is more pervasive in the physical and natural sciences. As an interdisciplinary field, women’s studies incorporates perspectives from across the humanities, social sciences, arts, and to some extent, natural sciences, and students will be encouraged to explore the diversity of these approaches as thoroughly as possible.

b. *How does it further the educational and curriculum needs of other units in the college or university?*

The proposal includes the development of a new course that will be co-sponsored by the Department of African American World Studies and will be submitted to the General Education Curriculum Committee for consideration to become part of the General Education Program options available to all students. Existing ties between students and faculty in American Studies, African American Studies, and the other units represented by the affiliated faculty will be strengthened. The new program will benefit the graduate college’s programs in that graduate students will have more opportunities to develop teaching skills by assisting in courses in the undergraduate program.

2. a. **What programs in this field of study are available in other colleges and universities in Iowa? (Identification of other programs available in this field at other institutions should be made within a broad definitional framework. For example, such identification should not be limited to programs bearing the same title, the same degree designation, having the same curriculum emphasis, or purporting to meet exactly the same needs as the proposed program.)**

Iowa State University offers a Women's Studies major, while the University of Northern Iowa has a graduate program at the M.A. level.

- b. **With what representatives of these programs have you consulted in developing this proposal? Provide a summary of the reactions of each institution consulted.**

Our sister institutions are in complete support of our proposal. Letters from the chairs of the ISU and UNI programs are included with the proposal (appendix A: Letters of Support).

- c. **In what ways is this proposed program similar to those mentioned in 2a? In what ways is it different or does it have a different emphasis? (In describing program similarities and differences, consider such factors as curriculum, prospective student groups to be served, and career or other types of goals to be emphasized.)**

The UI program requires approximately the same number of hours as does the ISU program, and it, in a way similar to the ISU requirement, will encourage students to combine the major with a second major or minor in another field. One of the strengths of the UI program will be the emphasis on international study, as well as the requirement that every student develop a four-course specialization area.

- d. **How does the proposed program supplement the current programs available? (In some instances, this question should go beyond how the program will supplement others within the state. If the justification for the program involves special regional or national needs, a description of existing programs within the region or the nation and the relation of the proposed program to these should be provided.)**

Insofar as our doctoral program--one of fewer than ten in the U. S.--places us in a leadership position nationally, our failure to offer an undergraduate degree is difficult to justify. At present, among the CIC institutions, only the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana and the University of Illinois, Chicago, do not offer a major in either Women's Studies or Gender Studies. The existence of the ISU undergraduate program does not vitiate the need for opportunities for undergraduates here.

- e. **Has the possibility of some of interinstitutional program or other cooperative effort been explored? What are the results of this study? (Consider not only the possibility of a formally established interinstitutional program, but also how special resources at other institutions might be used on a cooperative basis in implementing the proposed program solely at your institution.)**

While no formal interinstitutional program is contemplated, we expect that the current good relationships among the Women's Studies faculty at the three Regents institutions will continue.

- f. **Please list the Iowa institutions in which articulation agreements are being developed for the proposed program (NOTE: This applied only to community college degree programs which may transfer students to this program.)**

Not applicable.

- g. **Please provide the Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) Code for the proposed program.**

05.0207

3. Please estimate the enrollment in this program for the next five years as follows:

a. **Undergraduate**

	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	Year Four	Year Five
Majors	5	10	15	20	25-30
Nonmajors	300	375	450	525	600-675

- b. **Graduate:** Not Applicable

c. **On what basis were these estimates made?**

Numbers of majors were extrapolated from the number of students who have devised women's studies majors within the College of Liberal Arts Interdepartmental Studies B.A. (15 over the last five years); the number of students who chose to minor in Women's Studies [at least a portion of which would probably have chosen to complete the major if it were available] and a presumed number of new students who would be attracted to the new major after taking introductory courses, and because its availability will be widely known and publicized.

Nonmajor enrollment is based on extrapolating an increase from the current enrollments in undergraduate courses offered through the Department of Women's Studies.

- d. ***What are the anticipated sources of these students? (For example, persons currently enrolled in other programs within the institution; persons currently attending other institutions, in state or out of state; persons not currently enrolled in institutions of higher education.)***

Most students will be drawn from the current undergraduate population; some will add the major as a second major; others will choose Women's Studies over some other current choices in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Some students considering The University of Iowa will have their decision confirmed by the availability of the major. We do not expect an appreciable number of transfer students, however.

4. Please provide any available data or information on employment opportunities available to graduates of this program in Iowa and nationally. *(Such information is available from U. S. government labor sources as well as many professional associations.)*

Like other liberal arts undergraduate programs, a B.A. in Women's Studies prepares students either for employment in business, public service, and education, or for advanced academic or professional study, including graduate study in Women's Studies.

5. Are there accreditation standards for this program? a. *What is the accreditation organization:* b. *What accreditation timetable is anticipated:* *(Please provide a copy of the accreditation standards.)*

Not applicable; there are no accreditation bodies for Women's Studies undergraduate programs.

6. Does the proposed program meet minimum national standards for the program, e.g., Council of Graduate Schools or other such bodies?

Not applicable; there is no national body providing standards for Women's Studies undergraduate programs.

7. Please report any reactions of the Iowa Coordinating Council for Post-High School Education.

None

Additional Resource Needs

1. ***Please estimate the probable marginal increases in expenditures that may be necessary as a result of the adoption of this program for the next three years.***

Current resources will be sufficient for the first three years of the program's life. If, at the end of three years, student demand has increased far beyond our expectations, we may need to request additional faculty and graduate student resources; additional general expense funds, and corollary space, library, and computer resources, through the College of Liberal Arts' regular process of internal allocation and reallocation.

2. ***Describe the nature and justification for the additional resource needs.***

See above.

3. ***How is it anticipated that the additional resource needs will be provided? (For programs planning to use external grants, what would be the effect of the grant termination?)***

See above.