

OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS

Agenda Item 3.11 University of Toledo, Bachelor of Arts in Law and Social Thought

**RESOLUTION**

BE IT RESOLVED: upon the recommendation of the Chancellor and with the concurrence of the Initiatives Committee of the Ohio Board of Regents that the University of Toledo Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Law and Social Thought is approved.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO**

#### Bachelor of Arts in Law and Social Thought

The University of Toledo seeks approval for a Bachelor of Arts in Law and Social Thought. The Bachelor of Arts in Law and Social Thought is an interdisciplinary program and will be housed in the Department of Philosophy of the College of Arts and Sciences.

The baccalaureate program in law and social thought will provide students with an opportunity to learn about ideas that inform legal institutions and legal processes. The concentration is designed to provide students with the intellectual tools necessary for the reasoned appraisal of U.S. and other western and non-western legal systems and the policies, practices, and philosophies that underlie them. The proposal is based on the view that the study of law and justice is well pursued when located within a rich humanistic and social science tradition.

The proposed B.A. in Law and Social Thought is not designed to prepare students for admission to law school or to provide paralegal training. The American Bar Association and the American Association of Law Schools are consistent in recommending that no specific pre-law course of study will enhance a student's chance of gaining admission to law school. Both organizations, however, emphasize the acquisition and development of analytic and problem solving skills, critical reading abilities, and a high level of competence in written communication. The B.A. in Law and Social Thought will provide students with the opportunities to develop such skills.

The B.A. in Law and Social Thought is an interdisciplinary program that will be located in the College of Arts and Sciences (within the Department of Philosophy), with strong connections to the College of Health and Human Services (with its programs in Criminal Justice and Paralegal Studies) and UT's College of Law. Students who graduate with the B.A. in Law and Social Thought will be well prepared for success in masters and doctoral programs in a number of humanities or social science fields, for admission into law school, and for positions in law enforcement or administration/government service.

Initial student interest in the program has been high, with survey results indicating interest in the major. In addition, student enrollment was very strong in the existing course that will serve as a gateway course for the program. It is anticipated that up to 50 new majors a year will be enrolled over the course of the next five years, with additional students choosing a minor in Law and Social Thought.

No program of this type currently exists at any of Ohio's public universities. Only sixty institutions nationwide (including Kenyon College and Oberlin College in Ohio, and Wayne State University in Michigan) now offer majors or minors focusing on the study of law. The development of an interdisciplinary

Law and Social Thought program promotes the exploration of law as a complex historical and cultural phenomenon and will include faculty and coursework available through such departments as Communication, Economics, English, Foreign Languages, Geography and Planning, History, Philosophy, Political Science and Public Administration, Psychology, Sociology and Anthropology, and Women's and Gender Studies.

The program will call for 3 semester hours in a gateway introductory course, 3 semester hours in an interdisciplinary seminar, 18 hours in courses that fit within four pathways within the program: 1)law, history and theory, 2)law, difference and social practices, 3)law, institutions and public policy, and 4)comparative law. Students will be required to take 9 semester hours in upper division seminars and 3 hours in a field experience consisting of community activism and outreach, study abroad or an internship. Majors in the program will be required to engage in a field experience in collaboration with a LST faculty member. Juniors and Seniors may work for an additional distinction of honors in law and social thought with the completion of additional requirements (term paper, advanced seminar, honors thesis).

An assessment scheme has been devised for the proposed B.A. in Law and Social Thought. Students will be assessed through a variety of mechanisms. In addition, student performance will be tracked after graduation and enrollment/retention will be tracked with regard to participation in the program.

The B.A. in Law and Social Thought is structured around courses already taught by University of Toledo faculty. At this time, no additional resources are required.