

OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS

Agenda Item 3.13 Wright State University, Bachelor of Arts in African and African American Studies

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 Wright State University Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in African and African American Studies is approved.

BACKGROUND

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Arts degree in African and African American Studies

Wright State University seeks approval for a Bachelor of Arts degree in African and African American Studies. The B.A. in African and African American Studies will prepare students to teach African American history and culture in public schools and/or to pursue graduate degrees in this area. It is also consistent with the university's mission and commitment to the ongoing development of a curriculum and a campus community that are diverse and appropriately responsive to and appreciative of the rich diversity of the peoples and cultures of the human community. The degree program builds upon a successful minor in African and African American Studies that has been in existence at Wright State for a decade. Over the last ten years, 35 students have graduated with a minor in African and African American Studies. As noted in the University's proposal, the average of slightly more than three graduates per year is on par with the annual rate of some long-established departmental majors at WSU.

A number of other Ohio universities have similar majors or programs. The Ohio State University African American and African Studies Program was established in 1969 and graduates approximately 20 students per year. Ohio University has an African American Studies major (established 1969), Miami University has a Black World Studies Program and Bowling Green is just beginning a African Studies major. The University of Cincinnati has a well established program, an African American Studies major, established in 1970, and currently has 45 majors with more anticipated during the coming year. It should be noted that the proposed B.A. degree in African and African American Studies is part of a broader Wright State University mission to serve the academic and cultural needs of the urban community of Dayton. Dayton's population is 50% African American. WSU's enrollment of African American students for Fall 1999 was 1561, out of a total student body of 15,702. The first-year retention rate of African American students is currently 72%, equal to or slightly higher than the retention of all students. Wright State University is already a diverse community. The African and African American Studies degree program will ensure that this diversity is represented in the University Curriculum.

The proposed B.A. in African and African American Studies will be housed in the College of Liberal Arts, and represents an interdisciplinary program across various departments of the University. A total of 192 credit hours is required for graduation with a African and African American Studies degree. These hours are consistent with Liberal Arts requirements, program and course content requirements. In addition, the hours represent a supervised student service component. The program requirements include 57 credit hours of General Education, 59 credits of departmental requirements, 24-32 credit hours of foreign language and 44-52 credit hours of other college and University

electives. At least ten courses must be at the 300 level in order to provide an appropriate balance of upper and lower division courses.

Students will be required to complete a culminating Senior Research Project in order to demonstrate, in written and oral form, that they have acquired both the theory and the concrete praxis of African and African American history and life experiences.

The proposal for a B.A. in African and African American Studies will not require additional faculty resources. While four new foundation courses will be added to the major as well as the Senior Research Project and the Service Expectations requirements, the University has sufficient faculty and library resources to support the degree program.