

OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS

Agenda Item 3.8 Cleveland State University, Bachelor of Arts in Women's 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 Cleveland State University Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degree in Women's Studies is approved.

BACKGROUND

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies

Cleveland State University seeks approval for a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies. The Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies will be offered by the College of Arts and Sciences and administered by the Women's Comprehensive Program and the Women's Studies faculty. The proposed degree program builds on the existing minor in Women's Studies, established in 1986 through a multidisciplinary collaboration among departments and colleges in the University. This interdisciplinary program offers a broad-based liberal arts curriculum as well as the opportunity to focus on particular areas of interest. Existing courses in Women's Studies are taught in ten departments and have demonstrated sufficient stability in terms of student interest, enrollment and department support.

Women's Studies, an interdisciplinary approach to the study of women's experiences, is a thriving academic field that offers many new outlets for new scholarship. Women's Studies teaches students to transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries to analyze the role of gender in shaping human societies of the past and the present. As a field of inquiry that has been nourished by social activism, Women's Studies encourages students to consider ways to restructure social institutions and interactions on a more equitable basis.

By addressing past and present social inequities, Women's Studies promotes intellectual and practical problem-solving, on both the individual and societal levels. Students develop written and oral communication skills and the analytical and critical thinking skills needed to prepare them for a variety of careers in an increasingly diverse economic and political environment.

Students in the proposed B.A. in Women's Studies will receive a well-rounded Liberal Arts education. A wide range of intellectual skills, applicable to many career and educational interests, will be fostered by the program. In particular, Women's Studies graduates find employment in a variety of fields such as work with hospitals and foundations, human resources and personnel, politics and government, law and social services. Additionally, Women's Studies graduates are able to continue study at the graduate level in both women's studies and in a range of related disciplines.

Cleveland State University anticipates enrollments of 5-10 students during the first year of the program, growing to more than 30 students in four years, based upon student interest surveys and past enrollments in the existing Women's Studies minor. A Women's Studies major degree program is not currently offered at any public institution within 50 miles of Cleveland. Oberlin College is a private liberal arts college and the nearest institution to offer such a program.

The Bachelor of Arts degree in Women's Studies will require a minimum of 38 semester hours in Women's Studies courses, including an established core set of courses. At least 21 hours must be taken at the 300 level or above. Courses must be distributed over 3 departments with at least six hours in the humanities and six hours in the social sciences. Students are advised in developing a more specialized curriculum from the interdisciplinary courses offered in response to their particular career interests.

Cleveland State University is working with local community colleges to develop articulation agreements for Women's Studies courses.

As a result of the existing faculty resources that support the Women's Studies minor, no additional resources will be required for the B.A. in Women's Studies.