

**UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
The Graduate School**

**Curricular Report from the Graduate Council to the Faculty Senate
Report No. 2006-2007 5A**

At meeting No. 416 held on 2 February, 2007, the Graduate Council approved the following proposal that is now submitted to the Faculty Senate.

SECTION I

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ABSTRACT

The Graduate Council approved a proposal from Women's Studies Program for a Post - baccalaureate Certificate Women's Studies. The proposed certificate program would use only currently existing courses and would require no additional University resources. Goals of the program will be "to develop expertise in women's studies theory and methodology, offer focused study of the relatively new scholarship on gender in its intersections with race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality, and to provide a professional credential to supplement other training."

BACKGROUND

From the proposal:

The proposed certificate is intended to prepare students for further study in a variety of fields and would also serve such working professionals as psychologists, social workers, nurses, librarians and teachers who wish to obtain information and skills in women's studies to aid them in their professions. A minimum of five (5) courses is required, chosen from the core WMS courses and related courses focusing on women's and gender issues in other graduate programs. All courses in the program will be drawn from currently existing courses, and it is recommended that all courses be completed within a three-year period.

The proposal was reviewed under the process established by the Faculty Senate in which the Graduate Council serves as the Coordinating and Review Committee. Announcements of the receipt of the proposal were sent to the Provost and the Council of Deans, the Budget Office, and Department Chairs and Graduate Directors. Recommendations were sought from each of these. Comments and recommendations have been kept on file in the Graduate School.

The Budget Office responded with the understanding that no additional University resources would be required for implementation of the program, and the Council of Deans endorsed the proposal with recommendations for changes that now have been made.

SECTION II

RECOMMENDATION

The Graduate Council approved the proposal for the Post Graduate Certificate in Nursing Education at its meeting number 416 held on 2 February, 2007, and forwards it to the Faculty Senate with a recommendation for approval in the category of programs that require no additional University resources.

Proposal for a Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies

A. General Information

1. Name of Department: Women's Studies Program
2. Title of Proposed Program: Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies
3. Intended date of implementation: September 2007
4. Anticipated date of granting first certificate: June 2008
5. Intended location of program: Kingston
6. Description of the program:

a. Rationale:

Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field offering a unified approach to the study of the ways in which gender interacts with race, age, class, sexual orientation and other social identity locations to shape human consciousness and determine the social, political, and cultural organization of human society throughout history.

Because gender systems exist in all cultures and many domains of life, women's studies scholars work across the disciplines and combine methodologies and theoretical paradigms in new, transformational ways. In the last quarter of the 20th century, feminist scholarship transformed the knowledge base in many disciplines.

The Women's Studies Program at URI has developed a genuinely interdisciplinary curriculum informed by the most advanced scholarship and by feminist pedagogical principles. Having offered an undergraduate degree program for over 25 years, the Women's Studies Program is now prepared to offer a graduate certificate program that will allow students to pursue interdisciplinary study in this flourishing field and thereby enhance their educational background and career opportunities.

Objectives: The graduate certificate will:

- Systematically add interdisciplinary breadth to the student's program.
- Develop expertise in women's studies theory and methodology.
- Offer focused study of the relatively new scholarship on gender in its intersections with race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality.
- Provide a professional credential to supplement other training.

b. Workforce or Professional Development Need.

The proposed new Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies will enhance the academic and professional preparation of its graduates. The certificate will prepare MA students or non-matriculated students in fields such as Communication Studies, English, History, and Psychology to continue on for the PhD in WMS programs or to pursue advanced study in their respective fields. It will enhance the breadth and depth of students enrolled in PhD programs at the University. Further, the certificate will enhance the pedagogical preparation of students who plan to enter the teaching profession. There is a demand for this program at URI. Several graduate students have inquired if such a certificate is offered here. (See e-mail from Johannah Price in the History MA program; letter from Gretchen Cohenour and e-mail from Erin Vachon in the English graduate programs). Several faculty members and graduate students at URI have obtained WMS Graduate Certificates from other institutions.

c. Existing graduate curriculum: As outlined below, all courses in the Graduate Certificate Program will be drawn from currently existing courses offered by the WMS Program and other graduate programs at URI. Students may choose from a wide array of courses related to women's and gender issues. The specific program of study pursued by individual students will be geared to meet the student's individual needs and interests, as determined by the student in consultation with the Director of the Women's Studies Program and advisors in the student's degree program.

d. Other potential benefits: More broadly speaking, a graduate certificate program in women's studies can help the university respond creatively to local, state, and regional needs. At a time when the understanding of diversity is recognized as essential to our strength as a nation, formalized course work in women's studies at the graduate level prepares students for careers not only in education at all levels but in social service work, health services, business, public policy, government, and nongovernmental organizations. The program is also intended for post-baccalaureate working professionals such as psychologists, social workers, nurses, librarians, and teachers who wish to obtain information and skills in women's studies to aid them in their professions.

The program will also contribute to life-long learning of adults who wish to avail themselves of the opportunity. Mature students are often reluctant to make the commitment required by a full-fledged Master's degree program. At the same time, the completion of non-degree coursework provides students with little recognition and, consequently, fewer incentives to pursue post-graduate education. It is anticipated that the Graduate Certificate will encourage some of these students to pursue further academic development. Furthermore, it is expected that some students will apply to Master's degree programs subsequent to their completion of the Graduate Certificate Program.

e. Admissions requirements: A Bachelor's degree is required for admission. Both students who are already matriculated in graduate programs at URI and students who are not matriculated will submit a letter of intent, a transcript and two letters of recommendation for admission to the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies. The WMS Program will evaluate prospective applicants for admission to the Certificate Program.

f. Completion requirements: A minimum of five (5) courses is required, chosen from the core WMS courses and related courses focusing on women's and gender issues in other graduate programs. It is recommended that all courses be completed within a three-year period, and it is required that the Certificate be completed within a five-year period. A GPA of at least 3.0 is required. All rules respecting scholastic standing as promulgated by the Graduate School and described in the University Catalog are applicable to the certificate program.

g. Faculty: Full-time and adjunct faculty associated with, and teaching in, the WMS Program and related graduate programs.

h. Delivery Format: Initially traditional, although the WMS program expects to explore the efficacy of alternative delivery formats such as distance education methods in the future.
i. Monitoring of student progress: Students will complete a program of study in consultation with the Director of the Women's Studies Program. The Director will monitor the student's progress toward the completion of that program and advise the student accordingly.

j. Program Administration: The Director of the Women's Studies Program will administer this certificate program as part of her existing duties.

k. Assessment and Evaluation of Program Outcomes: Program outcomes will be evaluated on the basis of application and completion rates, and on the extent to which Certificate recipients apply for further graduate study at URI. In addition, structured interviews will be administered to determine student satisfaction with the program and the achievement of individual learning objectives. Follow-up surveys of students will assess program success in achieving relevant program outcomes.

l. Time Frame of Program Initiation: Fall Semester 2007

Institutional Role: The Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies is related to the role and mission of URI and intersects significantly with other programs and activities of URI. Because it is an interdisciplinary program, the Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies will utilize graduate courses in related disciplines at URI. The certificate program may add 5 credits to a student's graduate coursework. Some Departments might allow these 5 credits to count toward the graduate degree in their program.

Program Description:

The program requires 14 credits of work related to women's and gender issues (5 credits of core courses in WMS and 9 credits in the student's primary or other discipline or disciplines). This is a nationally recognized standard and one adhered to in current certificate programs at URI such as the Gerontology and Geriatrics certificate program (approved by the Graduate Council on 26 March, 2004) or the Labor Relations and Human Resources Graduate Certificates. Similar certificate programs in WMS exist at more than 40 U. S. universities, including the University of Connecticut, Duke University, and University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Core courses (a total of 5 credits in WMS courses)

WMS 400 Critical Issues and Feminist Scholarship	
or WMS 490 Advanced Topics in Women's Studies	3 credits
WMS 500 Colloquium in women's studies	2 credits

Electives:

A total of nine (9) credits of electives that may be drawn from graduate courses in the WMS Program, from a student's major field, or from two fields in addition to WMS.

In order to count toward the certificate program, courses require approval from WMS program. The courses must focus on or contain substantial attention to women's and/or gender issues. Student research, where appropriate, must be on topics related to women's and/or gender issues.

One program example of electives might be:

English graduate student:

ENG 485 Henry James and Edith Wharton	3 credits
ENG 615 Seminar in Authors: Emily Dickinson and Gertrude Stein	3 credits

ENG 550 British Texts Before 1700: Gender and Genre in Comedy 3 credits

The WMS 400 or 490 would be taken early in the program; the WMS 500 would be taken in the last semester of the program.

WMS 500 Colloquium in Women's Studies 2 credits

The Graduate Certificate in Women's Studies is an elective option for matriculated graduate students or non-matriculated students. If the students are non-matriculated, they may take 9 credits of graduate study in any relevant graduate program or combination of programs (such as Communication Studies, English, History, Human Development and Family Studies, Nursing, or Psychology), subject to approval by the WMS program Director.