



University of Toronto

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT AND PROVOST

TO: Committee on Academic Policy and Programs

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DATE: November 24, 2005

AGENDA ITEM: 3

ITEM IDENTIFICATION:

School of Graduate Studies: Proposal for a Master's Program in Women and Gender Studies

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:

The Committee has authority to recommend to Academic Board approval changes which establish a new degree program.

PREVIOUS ACTION TAKEN:

HIGHLIGHTS:

This proposal is for a course based MA program in Women's Studies and Gender Studies (see attached documentation). The program will be 12 months in duration, designed for students who have completed a four-year Bachelor's degree or equivalent in Women's Studies or Gender Studies with at least a B+ standing.

Scholarship in Women's Studies and Gender Studies has developed so rapidly over the last 30 years that free standing MAs and PhDs are increasing yearly in the US and Europe. Early in the discussions regarding this initiative, the SGS Associate Dean for Social Sciences undertook to determine the manner in which other universities were approaching the topic of Women's and Gender Studies. It was noted at that time that both master's level and PhD level programs had been established at peer institutions, both in Canada and the US (Appendix 3 of the attached documentation). Women's Studies has articulated its own canon as evidenced in a variety of scholarly domains such as dedicated journals and press series, research institutes and curricula.

The Women and Gender Studies Institute at the University of Toronto currently houses a successful Collaborative Program for graduate students enrolled in over 25 academic units. In the fall of 2000 the Collaborative Program underwent a successful review by OCGS. However, innovative Women's Studies and Gender Studies scholarly work requires a focus on Women's or Gender Studies, not just Women's or Gender Studies as a component or analytical dimension of other disciplines. A Master's degree in Women's Studies and Gender Studies is a key ingredient in realizing the potential of such scholarship at the University of Toronto. It will be seen as the core of a multi-dimensional graduate program in Women's Studies and Gender Studies. The MA will be complemented by the Collaborative Program for those students enrolled in other Programs who want a focus on Women's Studies and Gender Studies.

It has been proposed that Women's and Gender Studies constitutes a discipline, or an emerging discipline, because of its intellectual contributions. The scholarship of this field has led to the re-

framing of intellectual questions, the re-positioning of the contributing lines of thinking, such that innovative approaches develop. This new set of eyes has allowed scholars to see social issues in a new light, and has supported innovative solutions. It can be argued that such a new way of thinking forms the basis for a new discipline. The new program will require a scholarly foundation in the field of Women's Studies or Gender Studies and as such is different from the Graduate Collaborative Program in Women's Studies, which does not require significant prior course work in Women's Studies and/or Gender Studies.

The proposal has been reviewed extensively within the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Women and Gender Studies Institute faculty and graduate studies. The proposal has been approved by the School of Graduate Studies Council on November 22, 2005.

FINANCIAL AND/OR PLANNING IMPLICATIONS:

The program will be offered through the Women and Gender Studies Institute (WGS), an Extra-Departmental Unit Type-1 in the Faculty of Arts and Science, with autonomy as a hiring unit and full authority over graduate appointments. The resources needed for the MA program will be provided by the Arts and Science.

The proposal will be presented to the Planning and Budget Committee on December 6, 2005.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs recommends to the Academic Board:

THAT the Master of Arts in Women and Gender Studies at the Faculty of Arts and Science be recommended to Governing Council for approval, effective September 2006.