

## VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

## A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies – Establishment of the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality and Queer Studies

## RECOMMENDED ACTION:

It is the recommendation of the administration and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee that the Board of Regents grant authority to the graduate faculty of the Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies to offer the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality and Queer Studies, effective immediately. The graduate certificate program will have provisional status with a review to be scheduled in the 2015-2016 academic year. At such time that continuing status is granted, the ten-year review cycle would begin.

## BACKGROUND:

In October 2010, the Graduate School received a proposal from the graduate faculty in the Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies requesting authority to offer the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality and Queer Studies. The graduate certificate program will require twenty (20) student credit hours. Student learning goals will include: analyzing the multiple genealogies of queer scholarship and political practice through courses centered on the foundational work of queer scholars and scholars of queer studies; being able to interrogate and analyze the complex intersections of sexualities and other dimensions of social power through courses that address sexuality, race, political economy, and other dimensions of inequality; learning skills of effective communication about sexualities and queer studies through both writing and speaking; and developing skills in collaboration with the provision of opportunities for cross-disciplinary teaching, student projects, and coalitional communities projects.

Duke University, the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University, and the City University of New York, Yale University, and UCLA have been at the forefront of establishing the intellectual depth and rigor of Sexuality and Queer Studies by offering undergraduate majors and minors in this field. Recently, several of these universities have begun to offer a graduate certificate to recognize and systematize the extensive research available in this area in the form of an academic graduate program. The department has assessed the curricula at universities in Washington, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. None of these institutions offer a graduate degree, a graduate certificate, or an undergraduate major in sexuality and/or queer studies. Washington State University, Western Washington University and the University of Oregon do offer an undergraduate minor in queer studies. The proposed certificate program

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#### Department of Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies – Establishment of the Graduate Certificate in Sexuality and Queer Studies (continued p. 2)

will enable training at the graduate level in this field that is not available in the Pacific Northwest region.

Former UW President Richard McCormick established a LGBT Task Force in 1999. The Task Force's final report included a recommendation that the University "develop a LGBT studies curriculum at both the graduate and undergraduate levels on the Bothell, Tacoma, and Seattle Campuses." Creation of a graduate certificate in Sexuality and Queer Studies at the UW represents a step toward the development of a cohesive curriculum as proposed by this Task Force. As LGBT, Queer, and Sexuality Studies gain academic currency, professional academic positions in this area are becoming more frequent. This certificate will strengthen UW graduates' competitiveness for such positions, both in traditional disciplines and in interdisciplinary programs.

The Governing Board of the graduate certificate program will be interdisciplinary, to include faculty from the three University of Washington campuses representing the social sciences, humanities and natural sciences. No additional budgetary support is required for the program to be sustained as an on-going program. The core and elective coursework are offered currently in the UW curricula.

On November 4, 2010, the Graduate School Council considered the Graduate Certificate Program in Sexuality and Queer Studies proposal. The Council recommended unanimously that the proposed certificate program be forwarded to the Board of Regents for approval.

The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Interim Provost have reviewed this recommendation. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will be informed of the Board of Regents' action on the proposed Graduate Certificate Program in Sexuality and Queer Studies.