

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Establishment of a Graduate Certificate Program in Law and Society Studies in the Comparative Law and Society Studies Center

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 Comparative Law and Society Studies Center to offer the Graduate Certificate in Law and Society Studies, effective immediately. The graduate certificate program will have provisional status with a review to be scheduled in the 2009-2010 academic year

BACKGROUND

In November 2005, the Graduate School received a proposal from graduate faculty in the Comparative Law and Society Studies Center to offer a Graduate Certificate in Law and Society Studies. Upon the Graduate School's recommendation, the proposal was revised and resubmitted for review in January 2006.

In autumn 1999, the UIF proposal to establish the Comparative Law and Society Studies (CLASS) Center in the College of Arts and Sciences was approved. The CLASS Center was founded to promote the theoretically ambitious and comparatively oriented study of important contemporary socio-legal transformations around the world. Graduate education is a key component of the CLASS vision and its practice. The graduate certificate proposal is consistent with the Center's long-term vision.

The graduate certificate program meets student demand in socio-legal studies for both intellectual and pragmatic reasons. An increasing number of academic positions are in interdisciplinary programs, and law and society studies programs are among the fastest growing of these. Most social science departments at top universities include several faculty who specialize in some form of socio-legal studies. Demand has increased rapidly for scholars with expertise in socio-legal studies in regions around the world and related to globalizing processes, but few graduate programs offer training in those areas. Faculty that are involved in the CLASS Center are the first to develop a curriculum focused on comparative and international socio-legal study at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Establishment of a Graduate Certificate Program in Law and Society Studies in the Comparative Law and Society Studies Center (continued p. 2)

The Comparative Law and Society Studies graduate certificate program is aimed primarily at doctoral students in the Departments of Political Science, History, Geography, Women Studies, Philosophy, Sociology, and Anthropology, although the program is open to the very small number of Ph.D. students in the School of Law and the

Evans School of Public Affairs. The program will enhance the capacity of graduate students to compete for faculty positions in top university research institutions, undergraduate legal studies and criminal justice programs, and law schools nationally by “certifying” their expertise in this area, broadening and enriching their professional socialization, and developing connections to law and society scholars both on and off campus.

The curriculum is divided into three areas of study: a) Rights and Resistance; b) Law and Social Control; and c) Comparative Legal Institutions. These tracks parallel the Law, Societies and Justice undergraduate curriculum and reflect areas of faculty strength in research and scholarship, and are consistent with traditions of the international Law and Society Association.

On January 26, 2006, the Graduate School Council considered the graduate certificate proposal and recommended that it be approved. The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School concurred with the Council’s recommendation.

The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Provost have reviewed and approved the recommendation. Review and approval by the Higher Education Coordinating Board is not required. The Graduate School will inform the HECB that the program has been established if it is approved by the Board of Regents.