April 13, 2009

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Schwab
    Interim Dean, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences

FROM: Phyllis Peres
    Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT: Proposal to modify the B.A in African American Studies (PCC log no. 08002)

At its meeting on March 27, the Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula and Courses approved your proposal to modify the curriculum of the B.A. in African American Studies. A copy of the approved proposal is attached.

The changes are effective Fall 2009. The College should ensure that the changes are fully described in the Undergraduate Catalog and in all relevant descriptive materials, and that all advisors are informed.

CWR/

Enclosure

cc: Carmen Balthrop, Chair, Senate PCC Committee
    Sarah Bauder, Office of Student Financial Aid
    Reka Montfort, University Senate
    Barbara Hope, Data Administration
    Denise Nadasen, Institutional Research & Planning
    Anne Turkos, Archives
    Linda Yokoi, Office of the Registrar
    Scott Wolpert, Undergraduate Studies
    Katherine Pedro Beardsley, College of Behavioral and Social Sciences
    Odis Johnson, African American Studies
    Valencia Skeeter, African American Studies
THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

DIRECTIONS:
- Provide one form with original approval signatures in lines 1 - 4 for each proposed action. Keep this form to one page in length.
- Early consultation with the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning & Programs is strongly recommended if there are questions or concerns, particularly with new programs.
- Please submit the signed form to Claudia Rector, Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs, 1119 Main Administration Building, Campus.
- Please email the rest of the proposal as an MSWord attachment to pcc-submissions@umd.edu.

DATE SUBMITTED February 12, 2008

COLLEGE/SCHOOL Behavioral and Social Sciences

DEPARTMENT/PROGRAM African American Studies

PROPOSED ACTION (A separate form for each) ADD ____ DELETE _____ CHANGE____ X

DESCRIPTION (Provide a succinct account of the proposed action. Details should be provided in an attachment. Provide old and new sample programs for curriculum changes.)

The African American Studies Department proposes to change both concentrations for the BA degree in AASD. Specific Curriculum Changes are detailed in Attachment A.

JUSTIFICATION/REASONS/RESOURCES (Briefly explain the reason for the proposed action. Identify the source of new resources that may be required. Details should be provided in an attachment.)

New resources are not required for this proposed change.

APPROVAL SIGNATURES - Please print name, sign, and date

1. Department Committee Chair
   Melinda Chateauvert
   2/21/08

2. Department Chair
   Darrell Gaskin
   2/21/08

3. College/School PCC Chair
   Martha E. Good
   5/30/08

4. Dean
   Kahemar S. Baptiste
   6/2/08

5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required)

6. Chair, Senate PCC
   3/27/09

7. Chair of Senate
   4/1/09

8. Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost
   4/1/09

VPAAP 8-05

BSS 08-07
Rationale/Justification

1. Addition of AASP 395 to the Social/Cultural Analysis track

The African American Studies faculty feel strongly that all students who major in AASD should have some exposure to quantitative research; currently only those students who follow the Public Policy concentration take courses in Statistics and higher level quantitative methods. Rigor needs to be increased in the cultural/social analysis track to be comparable with the Policy concentration.

Issues that would be of interest to students in the cultural/social analysis track—racial identity, gender and family, inequality—require basic skills in quantitative research. This course will provide students with both quantitative skills and an understanding of how these skills can be most effectively applied to research problems specific to African American Studies. There are now a significant number of AASD faculty in both the Policy concentration and the Social/Cultural track who are trained in and conduct quantitative research; therefore the curriculum can be linked directly both to ongoing faculty research and to familiar issues in the field, which helps greatly in student comprehension of course material. As a combination research methods and introductory statistics course, emphasis is on quantitative “literacy” rather than production of quantitative research (though students will be introduced to statistical software).

Proposed prerequisite: MATH 110, (the College requirement) or higher. The requirement for AASP395 may be waived for students with the appropriate statistics and research methods background on a case-by-case basis.

2. Reduction of elective credits in the Public Policy track

Reducing the number of elective credits in the Public Policy track from nine to six will provide for more “balance” between the two concentrations, maintaining rigor but becoming more consistent with other BSOS undergraduate major requirements.
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**TOTAL** | 39-42 | 43-46 | 50-54 | 47-51 |

*Additions and/or Changes are Highlighted*
AASP395- Fundamentals of Quantitative Research in Socio-Cultural Perspective

This course is designed to introduce quantitative research to African-American Studies majors in the cultural and social analysis track. The aim of the course is to provide the necessary skills to understand, interpret and critically assess quantitative research. The learning outcomes of the course are:

- Understanding conceptual basis of quantitative research
- Understanding the use of quantitative research in understanding social processes at the micro level
- Understanding basic statistics
- Understand basics of survey design and experimental design
- Ability to present data through tables and charts
- Ability to critically interpret data, its limitations and its implications
- Familiarity with public use data sets on issues pertaining to African Americans and people of African descent.

Through readings, lectures and exposure to data, students will develop quantitative literacy which is essential to understanding much of the research that is published on issues of relevance to African-American studies majors. There is a weekly discussion session that all students must attend. Discussion sessions will focus on applying the concepts and methods learned in class to critical analysis of published articles, become familiar with statistical results and to work on assignments.

Evaluation Based On:

Assignment 1: 10%
Assignment 2: 10%
Assignment 3: 10%
Mid Term: 30%
Final Examination: 30%
Class Participation: 10%

Proposed Textbooks:


All books are available in the bookstore. Additional readings will be posted on Blackboard or handed out in class.

You must do the assigned readings before the start of class and be prepared to discuss them in class. I will be using Blackboard (elms.umd.edu) extensively to post readings, assignments, guidelines, documents, grades, and other important information for the course. Please become familiar with this resource and make a habit of checking the course Blackboard site regularly, so that you are unlikely to miss an important posting.
List of Sessions

Week 1: Overview of major social issues facing communities of color
  : familiarize students with various forms of disparities (education, health, income), issues
  contributing to the instability of families and communities (incarceration), family
  dynamics, demographic characteristics and trends;
  : demonstrate how quantitative research can be used to study them

Week 2: The Nature of Scientific Knowledge
  : how scientific knowledge is developed

Week 3: Positivism and its critiques
  : understand the epistemological underpinnings of quantitative approaches

Week 4: The Nature of Causality
  : power and limitations of quantitative research in establishing a causal relationship

Week 5: Conceptualization and Measurement
  : how to move from concepts and theory to actual measurement; validity issues

Week 6: Basic Statistical Concepts I – Normal Distribution, Univariate Measures

Week 7: Basic Statistical Concepts II – Bivariate relationships, Statistical Difference

Week 8: Use of Secondary Data Sources
  : familiarize students with existing data sources that can be accessed to answer research
  questions; opportunities and limitations;

Week 9: Mid Term Exam

Week 10: Sampling Theory

Week 11: Basics of Survey Design
  : asking good questions, validity issues, pre-testing

Week 12: Understanding survey results
  : coding, summary statistics, presentation

Week 13: Basics of Experimental Method
  : case/control studies

Week 14: Understanding results of experimental design

Week 15: Wrap Up and Review for Final Exam