

## LEVEL II MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** August 22, 2014

**TO:** Chief Academic Officers, Montana University System

**FROM:** Neil Moisey, Interim Deputy Commissioner for Academic, Research, & Student Affairs  
John Cech, Deputy Commissioner for Two-Year & Community College Education

**RE:** Level II Submission Items

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The campuses of the Montana University System have proposed new academic programs or changes under the Level II approval process authorized by the Montana Board of Regents. The Level II proposals are being sent to you for your review and approval. If you have concerns about a particular proposal, you should share those concerns with your colleagues at that institution and try to come to some understanding. If you cannot resolve your concerns, you need to raise those concerns at the Chief Academic Officer's conference call on **August 27, 2014**. Issues not resolved at that meeting should be submitted in writing to OCHE by noon on **Friday, August 29, 2014**. That notification should be directed to Elizabeth Baker, Assistant to the Deputy Commissioners. If Elizabeth does not hear from you, in writing, by noon on 8/29, OCHE will assume that the proposals have your approval.

### **The Level II submissions are as follows:**

#### **Montana State University-Billings:**

- Request to establish a Women's and Gender Studies Center  
[ITEM #164-2701-R0914 | Level II Request Form | Curriculum Proposal Form](#)

**September 17-18, 2014**

**ITEM 164-2701-R0914**

**Request for authorization to establish a new Women's and Gender Studies Center**

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**THAT**

The Board of Regents of Higher Education authorizes Montana State University Billings to establish a new Women's and Gender Studies Center

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**EXPLANATION**

Montana State University Billings proposes to continue, maintain and revitalize the concept of Women's and Gender Studies Center on campus that has existed since 1970 by developing and supporting a Women's and Gender Studies Center. By integrating existing expertise within different MSUB academic units, the Women's and Gender Studies Center will provide resources to students and community on issues related to women's health, career opportunities, elevating the image and self-esteem of women and advancing the status of women. The Center will offer support programs and research that examine the status, expectations and achievements of women on a local, regional and national level.

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**ATTACHMENTS**

LEVEL II REQUEST FORM

CURRICULUM PROPOSAL

**Montana Board of Regents**  
**LEVEL II REQUEST FORM**

Item Number: 164-2701-R0914 Meeting Date: September 17-18, 2014  
Institution: MSU Billings CIP Code: 05.0207  
Program Title: Women's and Gender Studies Center

Level II proposals require approval by the Board of Regents.

**Level II action requested (place an X for all that apply and submit with completed Curriculum Proposals Form):**

Level II proposals entail substantive additions to, alterations in, or termination of programs, structures, or administrative or academic entities typically characterized by the (a) addition, reassignment, or elimination of personnel, facilities, or courses of instruction; (b) rearrangement of budgets, cost centers, funding sources; and (c) changes which by implication could impact other campuses within the Montana University System and community colleges. Board policy 303.1 indicates the curricular proposals in this category:

- 1. Change names of degrees (e.g. from B.A. to B.F.A.)
- 2. Implement a new minor or certificate where there is no major or no option in a major;
- 3. Establish new degrees and add majors to existing degrees; and
- 4. Any other changes in governance and organization as described in Board of Regents' Policy 218, such as formation, elimination or consolidation of a college, division, school, department, institute, bureau, center, station, laboratory, or similar unit.

**Specify Request:**

Montana State University Billings proposes to continue, maintain and revitalize the concept of Women's and Gender Studies Center on campus that has existed since 1970 by developing and supporting a Women's and Gender Studies Center. By integrating existing expertise within different MSUB academic units, the Women's and Gender Studies Center will provide resources to students and community on issues related to women's health, career opportunities, elevating the image and self-esteem of women and advancing the status of women. The Center will offer support programs and research that examine the status, expectations and achievements of women on a local, regional and national level.

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**1. Overview**

This proposal is to develop and support a Women's and Gender Studies Center (WGSC) at MSU Billings. The WGSC will support programs and research which examine the status, expectations and achievements of women on a local, regional and national level. The WGSC is also committed to working closely with community members to provide support, programs and resources related to women's health, career opportunities, elevating the image and self-esteem of women and advancing the status of women.

It is the aim of the WGSC to continue, maintain and revitalize the concept of Center for women's Studies on campus that has existed since 1970. Under the leadership of professors, administrators and community members, the women's studies program sought to provide courses related to women's studies and "offer needed assistance and advice for both currently enrolled and prospective students." Due to retirements, the program remained dormant for some time. In the last few years, MSUB has hired several new women faculty in History, Art, Philosophy, Sociology and other disciplines who are willing to bring the center out of the two decades of its dormancy and contribute to its success. Under the current leadership, MSUB now has a Women's Studies Minor, a Women's Studies Advisory Board and a designated physical space on campus.

New faculty in the areas of Criminal Justice & Sociology, History, Art, Art History, New Media, Philosophy, English, the sciences and other areas have already demonstrated their enthusiasm for the program. Many new professors are involved in the Spring 2014 program, women's studies courses and other activities. Already women's studies has been invited to participate in a variety of campus activities and programs, including the successful "Power of One" program for Martin Luther King week, the Phoenix Center (Sexual Assault Advocacy and Help-line), and a series of panels related to advancing the status of women and girls this March (Making *Her* story: Honoring Global Achievements of Women Past and Present & Inspiring Change). The administration, faculty and community have made clear their support for a Women's and Gender Studies Center on the MSU Billings campus.

**2. Provide a one paragraph description of the proposed program. Be specific about what degree, major, minor or option is sought.**

Through close cooperation with faculty, staff, students and the larger community, the WGSC is dedicated to promoting equality and social justice in all forms while focusing on the needs of women at MSU Billings and the community. The WGSC will support programs which hope to end discriminations against gender, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, race, sexuality and socioeconomic class. In support of these goals, the WGSC promotes cooperation with faculty and students across campus as well as community members to share their concerns, experiences and expertise to promote equality through seminars, special speakers, panel discussions and referral services. The WGSC will also work closely with faculty members, students and community members to create and implement the course Women's Studies 499 (WS 499), which partners a student with a community organization on a semester-long project. This service learning project is intended to combine academic goals of the course and serve the larger community and region.

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The WGSC will also support student, faculty, staff and the community in relation to the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies minor.

**3. Need**

**A. To what specific need is the institution responding in developing the proposed program?**

Current enrollment trends and demographic features suggest that the development and implementation of the WGSC is especially important to MSU Billings. The percentage of female students at MSU Billings (62.3 %) includes women from a variety of socioeconomic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including the increase in the number of female international students. The diversity of women on campus speaks to the need to provide services and resources applicable to a variety of women's experiences and needs related to educational success, career opportunities, community engagement, women's health and everyday lives. The WGSC would be interested in developing collaborative relationships with programs to focus on the needs of Native American students, female veterans and international students.

**B. How will students and any other affected constituencies be served by the proposed program?**

The WGSC will not only serve the needs of students on campus, but be closely linked to the community by inviting speakers who are experts in their field as well as providing support for the required service learning project which link the university and the community.

**C. What is the anticipated demand for the program? How was this determined?**

Feedback from the Women's Studies Advisory Board, students whose minor is Women's Studies and initial survey results from MSUB students reveals that the WGSC would provide valuable services to both the university and the community. In particular, a survey undertaken in Fall 2013 reveals that students are specifically interested in information related to women and educational opportunities and women's health. The majority of students also noted that the WGSC should provide programs that support gender equality and social justice, alongside hearing special speakers talk about important issues. To this end, the WGSC has already developed a program for Spring 2014 to address these issues in a series of brown bag lunches and special events.

**4. Institutional and System Fit**

**A. What is the connection between the proposed program and existing programs at the institution?**

The Women's and Gender Studies Center will work closely with faculty and students across the university, including those involved in the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies Minor. This includes a wide range of fields including: Art and Literature, Communication, Philosophy, History, Education, Psychology, Sociology and Criminal Justice, Native American Studies, Social Work and Counseling, Advocacy, Community Organization, Public Relations, Public Administration, Languages, Economics, Math, and Biological and Physical Sciences. Moreover, the CWS would work closely with other programs, departments and institutions on campus to support student success and support female students.

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**B. Will approval of the proposed program require changes to any existing programs at the institution? If so, please describe.**

N/A

**C. Describe what differentiates this program from other, closely related programs at the institution (if appropriate).**

The Women's and Gender Studies Center recognizes the variety of campus programs and organizations that provide support for students. The Women's and Gender Studies Center is focused on educating students and the community on the status of women and providing resources tailored to the needs of our students and with therefore not duplicate established programs. Moreover, the Women's and Gender Studies Center is committed to working closely with the larger campus community and will provide referral information related to services the center does not offer. We are committed to connecting female students to individuals and institutions across campus and the wider community.

**D. How does the proposed program serve to advance the strategic goals of the institution?**

"Promoting and Engaging in Civic Responsibility" and "Enhancing the Community" are two of the four core themes of the MSU Billings Strategic Plan, which promotes active involvement with the community. The WGSC is committed to MSUB's commitment to be a "civic-minded institution that encourages students to embrace civic responsibility, celebrate diversity and develop a determination to make a difference." The capstone service learning course, the WGSC advisory board including community members and projects that involve leaders and experts in the community demonstrates the desire of the WGSC to foster university/community relationships as well as carefully consider the needs of the wider community.

Moreover, the WGSC will also meet the other two themes of the core plan: "cultivating teaching excellence" and "providing an environment for learning" by promoting faculty engagement with the WGSC and supporting the Interdisciplinary Women's Studies minor. Already, in Fall 2013, the Women's Studies program sponsored a special film viewing and panel discussion related to questions of media and violence. We also sponsored an "advising lunch" for the women's studies minor. We were open five days a week (Monday - Friday) for students. The center also served as a space for the Women's Studies Club and the LGBTQ group to meet. Dr. Jennifer Lynn and Dr. Jennifer Scroggins (History and Sociology) were invited to speak at a recent faculty forum and discussed "Women and Equality: The Status of Women in Montana."

In accordance with student interests, the proposed program for Spring 2014 will include a discussion of women and the media, a brown-bag lunch series (special topics include domestic violence and women in business), alongside a special series with the MSU Billings Library. This program, in March 2014, will include three panels of experts to discuss women in history, as well as women and gender issues related to health, ecofeminism, the criminal

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justice system and women and diversity. MSUB students and faculty, with community partners, are working together closely to create an environment of learning and encourage students to be civic minded.

- E. Describe the relationship between the proposed program and any similar programs within the Montana University System. In cases of substantial duplication, explain the need for the proposed program at an additional institution. Describe any efforts that were made to collaborate with these similar programs; and if no efforts were made, explain why. If articulation or transfer agreements have been developed for the substantially duplicated programs, please include the agreement(s) as part of the documentation.**

The MSU Billings WGSC is designed to meet the specific needs of students and community organizations in Billings and would be linked to needs of students, faculty and community in and around Billings. The MSU Billings WGSC will provide on-campus resources and be directly involved with Service Learning projects in Billings.

**5. Program Details**

- A. Provide a detailed description of the proposed curriculum. Where possible, present the information in the form intended to appear in the catalog or other publications. NOTE: In the case of two-year degree programs and certificates of applied science, the curriculum should include enough detail to determine if the characteristics set out in Regents' Policy 301.12 have been met.**

N/A

- B. Describe the planned implementation of the proposed program, including estimates of numbers of students at each stage.**

The WGSC, while providing support for female students is also open to all students on campus. MSU Billings already has a usable and working space for the WGSC in the Liberal Arts Building (RM 201). The first stage of the program includes enhancing the presence of the WGSC on campus, including reasonable open-hours for the center supported by work-study students, the director of the WGSC and volunteers. The WGSC has provided space for activities, film-screenings, book discussions and organization for community services. The WGSC would also provide referral services for students, a lending library and study space. During the first year, the WGSC will not only work with faculty and students involved in the interdisciplinary Women's Minor but organize speakers, panel discussions and film viewings. The enthusiastic response in Fall 2013, attendance at our programs and community partnerships demonstrates that the campus and community support this endeavor.

**6. Resources**

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**A. Will additional faculty resources be required to implement this program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.**

Yes. One course release time per year for the Director will be necessary to implement the Women's and Gender Studies Center.

**B. Are other, additional resources required to ensure the success of the proposed program? If yes, please describe the need and indicate the plan for meeting this need.**

At the present moment, the Dean's office (College of Arts and Science) is providing financial support for events organized at the Women's and Gender Studies Center as well as support for Work Study students. It is the goal of the WGSC to develop outside funding, including external grants, to help fund the activities of the Center.

**7. Assessment**

**How will the success of the program be measured?**

The Center for Women's Studies will include annual reviews by the current Women's Studies Advisory Board, comprised of university faculty and staff and community members. The WGSC will also depend on frequent input from students and faculty at MSU Billings and will chart student, faculty and community involvement with the WGSC.

**8. Process Leading to Submission**

**Describe the process of developing and approving the proposed program. Indicate, where appropriate, involvement by faculty, students, community members, potential employers, accrediting agencies, etc.**

The Women's Studies Advisory Board met to discuss the program and student and community interests. Student surveys were collected and analyzed to determine the priorities of the Women's and Gender Studies Center. In particular, we paid close attention to the interests of the students. MSUB students stressed their interests in services related to women's health and educational opportunities, organized film screenings and discussions, special panel discussions with experts from the community and all programs that support gender equality and social justice. Members from the community have also expressed interest in working with MSUB and have volunteered time and materials for the center.