

DATE: May 11, 2017

SUBJECT: New Academic Program
Middle Tennessee State University
Africana Studies, Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science
(CIP 05.0201 - African-American/Black Studies)

ACTION RECOMMENDED: Approval

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The proposed baccalaureate program in Africana Studies at Middle Tennessee State University seeks to build upon the African Studies minor that has been in existence for close to 30 years. Since 2013, the minor has expanded its curriculum with a more interdisciplinary approach. The Africana Studies program will prepare students to become well-informed, independent, and creative thinkers equipped with the methods and theories necessary to study race, socio-economic and political institutions, and culture/traditions of people of African descent throughout the diaspora in a systematic way, synthesize findings, and critically analyze findings. The proposed Africana Studies BA/BS program will be housed in the Department of History within the College of Liberal Arts. As an interdisciplinary program, faculty from all 11 departments in the College of Liberal Arts plus faculty from the School of Journalism will provide the instructional workload.

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNING BOARD APPROVAL

The proposed Africana Studies BA/BS program was approved by the Tennessee Board of Regents on March 31, 2017.

PROPOSED IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Fall 2017

RELEVANCE TO INSTITUTIONAL MISSION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Middle Tennessee State University is committed to preparing students to thrive in their chosen professions and a diverse and ever-changing global society. Given the distinctive role race relations have played and continue to play in domestic and global culture, the Africana Studies program will provide students with cultural literacy and historical knowledge that are invaluable in our increasingly multicultural society. Within the next 30 years, a majority non-white national demographic will populate American society. By mid-century, an intense examination of diverse interpretive frameworks combined with a cultivated appreciation of multi-racial perspectives will be an invaluable skill set for all students to acquire. As the middle Tennessee region continues to expand in its diversity, a key component of MTSU's

institutional responsibility is to use scholarship to enhance public service and contribute to the development of an educated public that has the ability to both benefit from that diversity and participate in civil society as informed citizens.

CURRICULUM

The proposed 120 semester credit hour curriculum includes the mandatory general education courses and the 24 semester credit hour core curriculum combined with a large number of course offerings throughout the university which will ensure the majors have the interdisciplinary breadth in the foundation of the humanities and social sciences to foster a high level of critical thinking and analysis. Students seeking the Bachelor of Arts will complete 12 semester credit hours in a foreign language. All students are required to complete a minor and a research project that will demonstrate the knowledge and skills in analysis, critique, research and writing competencies in the proposed Africana Studies program.

PROGRAM PRODUCTIVITY

Enrollment projections were developed based on student interest surveys and students who had declared a minor in African Studies. Attrition is projected at 20%.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Enrollment	11	19	31	43	52
Graduates	--	--	4	7	10

PROGRAM DUPLICATION

The proposed Africana Studies program will be a unique program offering in the middle Tennessee region. There are two other related Africana Studies programs offered at public universities in Tennessee. The University of Tennessee – Knoxville offers a Bachelor of Arts program in Interdisciplinary Studies (with a concentration in Africana Studies). The University of Memphis offers an African and African American Studies program.

EXTERNAL JUDGMENT

External review of the program was conducted during an institutional site visit on February 20, 2017. Dr. Glenn Chambers, Director of the African American and African Studies Program and Associate Professor of History at Michigan State University served as the external reviewer. Dr. Chambers stated in his written report that "...there is much potential in adding the African Studies major to the existing (minor). MTSU has the student population and the faculty to support it. The curriculum is strong and the will is there."

STUDENT DEMAND

Students both inside and outside of MTSU have long expressed an interest in majoring in Africana Studies. The race relations and cultural literacy this proposed program provides is an invaluable contribution to MTSU's diversity commitments to stimulating courses that "cover historical, cultural, and social bases of diversity and community, and create

opportunities for cross-cultural interactions which have been demonstrated to contribute to self-confidence, motivation, cultural awareness, and an appreciation of equality for all.” Additionally, the major will also enhance intercultural diversity on campus as students will have an opportunity to learn and study with professors and students across disciplines and research the history and contributions of people of the African diaspora. Enrollment projects are based on student survey results.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROGRAM GRADUATES

The proposed Africana Studies program will offer students an invaluable foundation for a wide range of careers that emphasizes strong written, communication and critical-thinking skills; cultural awareness; and interpersonal skills. With a degree in Africana Studies, students will be able to pursue graduate education, as well as an array of employment opportunities in professional fields such as education, journalism, law, business management, city planning, international relations, psychology, public health, and social work. In addition, students could pursue careers in public history, which includes archival and cultural resource management, historic preservation, and museums. The curriculum for the proposed Africana Studies program has outlined several guided electives for possible career paths that will enhance a student’s marketability for potential jobs. Graduates of the proposed Africana Studies program will be well prepared to enter into a highly competitive workforce.

As the field of Africana Studies is not tied to particular occupations and workforce trends, it is not specifically subject to the ebb and flow of workplace shifts. However, it does prepare students to work in a diverse work environment, given its interdisciplinary focus. This proposed program also responds to larger trends of the American public and students who have an interest in cultural studies.

INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO DELIVER PROGRAM

MTSU recognizes the importance of expanding this dialogue beyond the simple creation of a degree program in Africana Studies. One strategy for bringing contemporary issues to the larger campus community is the creation of a campus-wide lecture series dedicated to discussion of these issues, facilitated by recognized scholars and leading figures in the field. As such, the university has budgeted recurring funds to support a distinguished lecture series in Africana Studies.

No new faculty lines or facilities are required. Library resources are adequate. A half time support position is budgeted. The program director will have a one course reassignment during each semester of the academic year and will receive a stipend during the summer to support administrative duties.

The proposed Africana Studies program will be funded through additional tuition revenues generated by the program and no institutional reallocation of funds is necessary for program implementation.

ASSESSMENT AND POST-APPROVAL MONITORING

An annual performance review of the proposed program will be conducted for the first five years following program approval. The review will be based on benchmarks established in the approved proposal. At the end of this period, the campus, institutional governing board, and Commission staff will perform a summative evaluation. The benchmarks include, but are not limited to, enrollment and graduation, program cost, progress toward accreditation, and other metrics set by the institution and agreed upon by governing board and Commission staff. If benchmarks are not met during the monitoring period, the Commission may recommend that the institutional governing board terminate the program. If additional time is needed and requested by the institutional governing board, the Commission may choose to extend the monitoring period.