ESTABLISHMENT OF A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve the establishment of a Doctor of Philosophy program in Social Work and Anthropology, effective Fall semester 2014.

Background

The School of Social Work, jointly with the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, proposes to establish a new Doctor of Philosophy degree integrating three existing degrees: 1) a professional degree (Master’s in Social Work); 2) a Ph.D. in Social Work; and, 3) a Ph.D. in Anthropology. The proposed Social Work/Anthropology (SWAN) Ph.D. program will cross-train anthropologists and social workers enabling graduates to engage global urban problems in a theoretically sophisticated and practical fashion.

Social Work and Anthropology share many similar competencies and research questions and have complementary strengths that can be deployed to address problems facing urban populations. Anthropologists seeking professional skills and concepts needed to implement their research findings through policy development and practice will be attracted to the SWAN degree. Social Workers interested in international careers will benefit from the enhanced cross-cultural expertise, qualitative methodology, and theory of the SWAN degree. SWAN will provide graduates with the skill set required to address the significant challenges facing urban populations locally and internationally. It will greatly expand academic job possibilities for anthropology students and international agency positions for social work students.

International aid organizations often have anthropologists running development programs, conducting research, and/or doing community assessments. Anthropologists are hired for their abilities in cross-cultural work and related analysis, language and research skills; however, they do not have the strong social work training in direct intervention. Social work can provide much “value-added” through their models of development and assessment that are often more sophisticated than those currently practiced in many developing countries.

The only other formal Ph.D. Social Work and Anthropology program in the U.S. is at the University of Michigan. The proposed SWAN program differs from the program at the University of Michigan in offering a joint degree rather than two separate Ph.D.s. In addition, the social work and anthropology programs at WSU differ from those at U of M because of their stronger focus on applied research.

Program Description

SWAN will be a new doctoral program distinct from the existing doctoral programs in the School of Social Work and the Department of Anthropology. SWAN students will follow a curriculum that draws from existing courses in each field with the addition of one new integrated core course, initially to be taught by the School of Social Work. Specific new
content will be added to the Master’s in Social Work (MSW) level practica, the qualifying exam requirements, and dissertation research to meet the educational requirements of this degree. The SWAN program will incorporate core features that are essential for grounding in the respective disciplines, along with key courses identified by the faculty as foundational.

Admission Requirements

Applicants must meet requirements for admission to the Graduate School. Consistent with all other graduate programs at WSU, admission to the proposed Social Work and Anthropology Program (SWAN) is contingent upon admission to the Graduate School. The deadline for applications to the SWAN program will be January 10th each year to start in the Fall semester, offers of admission will be made at the end of March.

Applicants to the SWAN program will meet the strongly preferred standard of a 3.7 or above undergraduate GPA and will be expected to have a background in social science courses at the undergraduate or graduate level. Students with a lower GPA or lower GRE scores may be admitted if the rest of their application file is exceptionally strong, especially if they have relevant experience.

Applicants are expected to include a personal statement and writing samples in their applications that show a theoretical awareness and capacity for conducting independent research. All qualified applicants will participate in a personal interview (in person or by phone/Skype) with members of the SWAN steering committee. Applicants must also provide three letters of recommendation attesting to their ability to perform doctoral level work. Applicants must take the GRE exam and should attain a combined quantitative and verbal GRE score of 300.

On the graduate application, students will be able to check a box indicating whether anthropology or social work will be recognized as their primary affiliation. Applicants will apply to the SWAN program, and admitted students will file a Change of Status form to add the MSW program if they do not already have an MSW.

Curriculum Requirements

Most students will enter the program with Bachelor’s degrees and a strong social science background. If a student has had no previous anthropology courses, they will either audit an introductory anthropology course or read an introductory textbook and take a test showing they have mastered the material. The majority are expected to enter without an MSW. To facilitate timely completion, all students admitted without an MSW must be full-time students.

Students will earn an MSW by the end of their second year of study as well as begin to establish the combined Social Work and Anthropology focus by taking some essential Anthropology courses. In addition, students doing SWAN research fieldwork in non-English speaking settings will be expected to have 3 semesters of a foreign language or demonstrate fluency in their field language.
All courses will be offered annually, with two exceptions that are offered bi-annually (ANT 7200, 7210). In order to minimize costs, the SWAN program will initially be based on existing courses, with one additional new course. Additional SWAN courses may be developed if program growth warrants new courses.

Because first year Social Work courses, Social Work practice courses, and Social Work internships do not count towards a Ph.D., the total graduate credit hours is greater than 90.

**Graduation Requirements**

All coursework must be completed in accordance with Graduate School and the regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students must complete requirements within seven years of admission.

**Program Administration**

The SWAN program will be jointly administered by the Social Work PhD Program Director and the Graduate Director of the Department of Anthropology or their designees as well as a combined steering committee consisting of two graduate faculty members from each program. This committee will meet regularly to oversee the program.

**Budget and Resource Requirements**

There will be no costs for courses or faculty time. The Graduate School will provide $10,000 for publicity and recruitment.

**Accreditation**

There is no accreditation of doctoral programs in Social Work or Anthropology. The MSW program includes classroom instruction in practice skills as well as supervised internships. Minimum course requirements are governed by the Social Work accreditation body, the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

**Approvals**

The proposal was approved by the faculty and Chair of the Department of Anthropology, the faculty of CLAS, the School of Social Work, the Deans of Social Work and CLAS, the Graduate Council, and the Dean of the Graduate School.