

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PROGRAM FOR GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN MUSEUM PRACTICE

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors establish a new Graduate Certificate program in Museum Practice in the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences effective Fall term, 2022.

Background

The Department of Anthropology, which houses the Grosscup Museum of Anthropology, proposes the creation of a new Graduate Certificate (GC) in Museum Practice. The certificate program will target currently enrolled graduate students and incoming, post-baccalaureate students interested in pursuing a career in museums or other cultural institutions. With this program, the department seeks to strengthen and leverage the Grosscup Museum of Anthropology, a campus resource and student training ground for more than 60 years, by increasing student access to and use of our collections, their research potential, and our exhibition spaces. The Grosscup Museum maintains strong, long-standing connections with dozens of museums and cultural institutions in Michigan and the Great Lakes region. The department intends for the GC program to build upon these connections to facilitate partnerships, internships, and to recruit students for the certificate program.

Program Description

Museums are community anchors, economic drivers, and often cherished local institutions. In the state of Michigan, we have over 550 museums of varying types ranging from archaeology and art to science and technology, with everything from historic house to maritime museums in between. In southeastern Michigan alone, we have some 150 museums, with two-thirds of these located in the tri-county area.

The Graduate Certificate program in Museum Practice meets an important local, regional and national need by providing students with critical knowledge in various facets of museum operations and practical experience that will help them to enter this burgeoning and culturally rewarding area of employment. The 12-credit hour curriculum purposefully packages a set of two required and two elective courses that together introduce and build upon a set of core museum-related competencies, including collections management skills, artifact analysis, exhibition design, museum education, grant-writing, and public engagement.

The Graduate Certificate program objectives are to: (1) advance the knowledge and skills of post-baccalaureate and WSU graduate students wishing to gain employment in museums or other cultural and heritage organizations; (2) enhance the knowledge and skills of persons who already work within a museum or cultural heritage sector; (3) advance the urban mission of WSU by augmenting the skilled labor force available to museums and cultural heritage organizations operating in Detroit and the greater tri-county region; and (4) increase the number of people from historically underrepresented backgrounds working within the museum and cultural heritage sectors. By expanding and diversifying the pool of skilled museum practitioners, this program will have a positive and lasting impact on communities at the local, regional, and national levels.

To ensure the viability of the certificate program, the Department will maintain and grow existing strong relationships with our Detroit-area neighbors and stakeholders. The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences (CLAS) already has formal internship arrangements in place with neighboring cultural institutions, and students in these internships can opt to receive additional training towards this important professional credential. The certificate program will also tap into the strong cadre of Anthropology alumni working in cultural and heritage sectors to network and place our students.

Admission Requirements

Eligibility for admission to the Graduate Certificate program in Museum Practice is limited to those holding a bachelor's degree from an accredited educational institution, or those who are actively pursuing a master's or doctoral degree at Wayne State University. Admission to this program is contingent upon admission to the Graduate School. To be considered for regular admission:

1. Applicants must submit a resumé or curriculum vitae, a personal statement describing their reasons for pursuing the Graduate Certificate and their career plans or goals, and transcripts of previous work.
2. Applicants holding bachelor's degrees must have earned a 3.0 undergraduate GPA, and applicants holding previous graduate degrees must have a 3.0 graduate GPA.

Curriculum Requirements

Students must complete 12 graduate-level credits including (1) two required courses: ANT 5600-Museum Studies and ANT 7422-Museum Practicum; and (2) two elective courses from a list of options in Anthropology and allied fields, one of which must be at the 7000-level. Electives are bundled to create tracks in five essential areas of museum practice: Object Research & Curation, Collections Management, Exhibit Design, Museum Development, and Museum Education.

Graduation Requirements

All coursework must be completed in accordance with the WSU Graduate School and the regulations governing graduate scholarship and degrees. Students must maintain a 3.0 GPA and complete requirements within three years of admission.

Program Administration

The Graduate Certificate will be housed in the Anthropology Department in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Specific administrative tasks will be overseen by a standing Anthropology Museum Committee together with the Grosscup Museum Director and a graduate certificate program coordinator. The program coordinator will manage marketing and recruitment, admissions, advising, annual evaluations of student progress, and program assessment.

Federal Student Aid Eligibility

The program is not seeking Title IV federal student aid eligibility. Students seeking the certificate will need to self-fund.

Budget and Resource Requirements

No additional budgetary resources are required for the certificate program. Core courses will be taught by full-time faculty with museum backgrounds and expertise in the department of Anthropology. Electives will be taught by faculty in Anthropology and allied departments. The program will be administered as described above.

Accreditation

No specialized accreditation is required for the certificate program.

Approvals

The proposal was approved by the faculty of the Department of Anthropology, the CLAS Faculty Council, CLAS Faculty Assembly, the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences, the Graduate Council, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the Provost.