

Date: January 31, 2012

Submitted by: Richard B. Ellis Director LinC

SUBJECT: Civic Engagement-Poverty Studies Minor

Description: Students who choose to complete the Civic Engagement - Poverty Studies Minor will have the opportunity to combine their passion, curiosity, knowledge, and skills to understand and be a part of the world as civically engaged citizens who are aware of and can ethically and humanely address the complexities that emerge in their field as a result of poverty and inequality. The minor will consist of 18 credit hours. Nine credit hours will be new courses and nine will be chosen from a list of existing course from departments across campus

Rationale: Washburn University enriches the lives of students by providing opportunities for them to develop and to realize their intellectual, academic, and professional potential, leading to becoming productive and responsible citizens. We are committed to excellence in teaching, scholarly work, quality academic and professional programs, and high levels of faculty-student interaction. We develop and engage in relationships to enhance educational experiences and our community.

Consistent with the mission of the university LinC promotes an opportunity for Washburn students, faculty, and staff to engage in meaningful service experiences that enhance the educational experience while improving the community. Through ongoing interaction with students LinC provides opportunities for leadership and engagement that result in the development of productive and responsible citizens. The proposed Minor in Civic Engagement - Poverty Studies is designed to provide students with the theoretical and experiential background to effectively work toward the goal of eliminating poverty. The coursework proposed parallels the existing service experiences of the students.

The Civic Engagement - Poverty Studies Minor will be open to any student at Washburn who wishes to enroll. Students who choose to complete the Civic Engagement - Poverty Studies Minor will have the opportunity to combine their passion, curiosity, knowledge, and skills to understand and be a part of the world as civically engaged citizens who are aware of and can ethically and humanely address the complexities that emerge in their field as a result of poverty and inequality. Poverty is complex and as such, no single academic discipline can provide a holistic examination of the issue or solution for addressing the poverty that exists. It takes people from different backgrounds, with differing academic preparation, working together to bring a collaborative understanding of the issue and to make a real difference in the world in which they live. Therefore, the minor, by the nature of its focus, is interdisciplinary. This means that each student can have the experience of collaborating with peers who hold different pieces of the puzzle of how to effectively address poverty.

Learning in the Community (LinC): The Center for Community Service and Civic Engagement has been providing an AmeriCorps Education Award program to students for the past ten years. Through the

Literacy Education Action Project or the LinC Scholar/Bonner Leader Program the Center has engaged Washburn students in meaningful service outside the classroom. Currently the Center has over 100 students providing service to organizations that address issues related to the elimination of poverty. In October 2010 the U.S. Congress passed the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. This new legislation made changes to the rules for AmeriCorps. In the past student AmeriCorps members were prohibited from receiving college credit for the service they were providing as part of their AmeriCorps responsibilities. The new legislation now allows AmeriCorps members to be enrolled in an academic program and receive academic credit for their service. This new ruling offers the Center the opportunity to provide credit programming for those students in our AmeriCorps projects. For the past ten years those students participating in any of the Center's AmeriCorps programs have been required to attend reflection meetings to explore the implications and issues related to their service experiences for no credit. The implementation of the proposed minor will provide the academic framework for the AmeriCorps students while offering them both academic credit and the opportunity to complete a minor that reflects the focus and ambitiousness of their work in the community.

The Civic Engagement – Poverty Studies Minor is not meant to be a stand-alone academic experience, but rather to supplement each student's major area of study, for example, a biology major seeking to become a doctor in underserved areas or with underserved populations; a business major wanting to specialize in sustainability for nonprofits or microfinance; an English major eager to use stories to support the voices of people who are poor; an education major who wants to be a public school teacher and wants to gain a deeper understanding of the connection between poverty and learning, etc. Given the nature of this minor, therefore, students are encouraged to and supported in designing their own emphasis from a diverse list of offerings available from various academic units across campus.

The addition of the Civic Engagement – Poverty Studies Minor will place Washburn University in a unique position within the state. Although most of the universities in Kansas have community service programs, other than those who use service learning as a component of a variety of courses, none has a full academic curriculum to parallel the service experiences like the one in this proposal.

Financial Implications: None

Proposed Effective Date: Fall 2012

Request for Action: Approval by AAC/.FAC/FS/ Gen Fac, etc

Approved by: AAC on date

FAC on date

Faculty Senate on date

Attachments Yes X No