

FACULTY SENATE PROPOSAL

Proposition: 23-08/09

Sponsors: Brown, Alexander (A & S), Prentice (Education), and Schultz (HHS)

Proposed Committee

Assignment: Faculty Affairs

Actual Committee

Assignment: Faculty Affairs

Approvals: ADAC (March 2009)
ADC (March 2009)
Graduate School/Council (March 2009)

Title: Proposal for Master of Arts Degree in Latin American and Border Studies

Proposal:

Establish a Master of Arts Degree in Latin American and Border Studies. This degree will be administered by the Center for Latin American Studies, which is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Rationale:

Emerging issues of globalization argue that NMSU provide graduate training and education on current international issues, and Latin America and the U.S.-Mexico border region are becoming increasingly important to the U.S., and especially the Southwestern U.S. and border region. NMSU has extensive expertise and institutional capability to advance teaching and research on Latin America and the U.S.-Mexico border. The Center for Latin American and Borders Studies does extensive research and outreach activity in this area, with over 35 faculty members supporting the extensive mission of the Center. In addition, the Office of International and Border Programs provides considerable support for the activities of the Center and other researchers and activities on campus with interests in Latin America and the U.S.-Mexico Border.

Faculty members within the College of Arts and Sciences have developed a proposal for a new Masters Degree in Latin American and Border Studies, and approval of this proposal has been granted by ADAC, ADC, and the Graduate School/Council. By this proposition, the Faculty Senate endorses and approves this proposal and asks that NMSU's Central Administration work to advance this degree program so it may be offered to students at the earliest opportunity. The target date for students to begin the Program is Fall of 2010. The NMSU faculty members that

have proposed this degree have secured funding support from the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and a letter documenting this support is attached to the packet.

Overview of Program

The interdisciplinary M.A. in Latin American and Border Studies will prepare students for careers related to Latin America and the U.S. Mexico Border.

Students will graduate with a broad background and interdisciplinary understanding of Latin American culture by taking core courses, and courses drawn from the following colleges: Agriculture, Arts and Sciences, Health and Social Services, Business, and Education. These include the following disciplines: agriculture, anthropology, art, criminal justice, economics, education, geography, government, history, languages and linguistics, sociology.

The program will offer a thesis or an internship option, and will consist of 37 credits, including coursework in one of the following concentrations:

- **Environment and Development on the U.S. –Mexico Border** - An emphasis on environment and development on the U.S. Mexico border, with a special focus on the region of the El Paso del Norte Border, broadly defined as encompassing Southern New Mexico, Northern Chihuahua, and Southern West Texas. Students in this concentration will apply the broad themes and topics studied in the core seminar and course offerings to practical problem-solving on the border and to the study of the development of the border region.
- **Culture Politics and Society in Latin America** - Students will study the culture, politics and society of Latin America. With the help of the Center's academic adviser, students will select themes and pursue them from multiple disciplinary perspectives.

Specific objectives of the Program

- To train students in the study of Latin American issues through a variety of disciplinary approaches that will provide them with a wide range of skills for understanding the region, and for future employment.
- To give students an understanding of and exposure to Latin American cultures in order to develop their cultural sensitivity in a way that will have a life-long impact on their careers.
- To use NMSU's advantageous location near to the US-Mexico border to give students hands-on experience and professional training that will enable them to promote sustainable economic and community development.
- To train students to understand Latin American and US-Mexico border issues in a global context, in order to operate in an increasingly globalized environment.

Benefits of the M.A. in Latin American and Border Studies to the University, the State and the Community

The program will attract top quality graduate students to NMSU and establish the university as a leading institution for the study of Latin America and the Border. The program will produce trained professionals with advanced language skills and interdisciplinary knowledge of Latin America and the Border.

The program will benefit New Mexico State University by promoting goals 1 and 4 of “Living the Vision,” as noted below:

- To be nationally and internationally recognized for its academic programs at all levels – in particular, as one of the few programs focusing on the border we would attract well-qualified international and out-of –state students (goal 1), and send graduate students for thesis research and internships to Latin America, and
- To serve as an engine for economic, social, educational and community development in New Mexico – in particular through the concentration area titled “Environment and Development on the U.S. Mexico Border.”

Graduates in Latin American Studies are particularly well-placed to pursue careers in a wide range of areas, including education, public service, international business, diplomacy, tourism, law enforcement, non-governmental organizations, the media and inter-American and US-Mexico relations.

This program responds to New Mexico’s need for strengthening its ties with Mexico and Latin America, particularly in the areas of economic development and trade, environmental protection, inter-governmental relations, health and education, and border resource management. The University of New Mexico also supports our proposal since it complements rather than competes with the existing M.A. in Latin American Studies at UNM.

The program will contribute in particular to the Las Cruces community by training students in skills that can help to meet local development needs related to border issues. In addition, the M.A. will further energize the already vibrant outreach programs that exist at the Center for Latin American and Border Studies.

A full version of the proposal has been forwarded to Dr. Joe Pfeiffer, Chair of the NMSU Faculty Senate, and is also available to Senators who have interest in reviewing the entire document.