



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Department of Afro-American Studies

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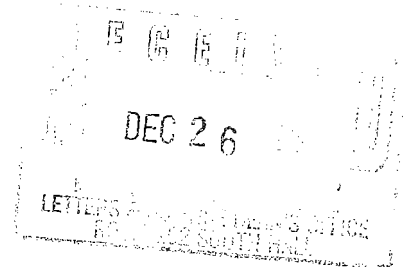
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December 20, 1996

To: Dean Phillip Certain
102 South Hall
University of Wisconsin, Madison

From: Nellie McKay, Chair *NMK*

Attached please find the Afro-American Studies Department's plan for "Assessing the Undergraduate Major."



ASSESSING THE UNDERGRADUATE MAJOR
IN AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

Nellie McKay, Chair

December 1996

The Department of Afro-American Studies offers a BA with emphases in the areas of History, Culture, and Society. During the 1997-98 academic year, we will institute a new Honor's track which allows students to combine requirements from several areas. We intend to focus the first stage of our Assessment on one of our major areas and develop specific plans for assessing the other areas once we have completed this stage. This plan has been developed by Professors Nellie McKay, Craig Werner and William Van Deburg and circulated among the rest of the Department's faculty. This document reflects both the committee's deliberations and revisions requested by the Department.

ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

The Chair will appoint a committee consisting of the Chair, the Chair of the Area being assessed, one additional faculty member from the Area being assessed, and one member from each of the other two Areas. This committee will gather information and evaluate each of the courses offered within the Area. In addition, it will evaluate existing requirements for majoring in the Area and, if appropriate, make suggestions for altering requirements. In accord with existing Department policy, such suggestions will be submitted first to the Curriculum Committee and then to the Department's Executive Committee for further action.

In evaluating each Area, the Assessment Committee will consider how well the existing curriculum meets the following goals:

****To provide students with a comprehensive foundation of knowledge concerning African-American experience;**

****To place such knowledge in the contexts of both American and diasporic experience;**

****To provide students with a firm understanding of the methodologies of the mainstream discipline or disciplines most closely connected with their area of concentration within the major.**

****To develop the ability of students to communicate their knowledge clearly and forcefully both orally and in writing.**

It is our understanding that no individual course can hope to accomplish all of these goals and that the Assessment will focus on how well the Area of Concentration as a whole realizes them.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Assessment Committee will assemble a comprehensive set of materials regarding the experience of students within the Area being assessed. These materials will include:

****A list of students who are majoring in the Area and a list of those who have completed majors in the Area within the last five years;**

****A list of the courses taken by each of these students;**

****Syllabi, exams and other handout material from each course;**

****A random sample of student work submitted in each class during the period of assessment;**

****A sample of written work from each senior major in the Area of Concentration who takes a class in the Department during the period of assessment.**

In addition, all senior majors in an Area will be asked to write an assessment of their experience as an Afro-American Studies major. The Assessment Committee will also seek input from faculty members in the area, asking them to articulate their feelings about how well the current curriculum realizes the specific goals of the Area and the overall goals of the Department.

EVALUATION

At the end of the assessment period, the Committee will report its findings in writing to the Chair of the Department. This report will include a specific recommendation on an appropriate time period for implementing recommended changes, if such changes approved by the curriculum committee and the executive committee. It is our expectation that assessment should occur at intervals of approximately four years, allowing us to establish a rotation between the three Areas of concentration and the Honors curriculum.