Proposal for a Women’s Studies (WMST) concentration in MAIS

This concentration builds on the graduate certificate in Women’s Studies, allowing students to design a more complete graduate program in women’s issues and the interdisciplinary study of gender. The graduate certificate is new this year, but has already generated quite of bit of interest from students from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds. Eight students were enrolled in the first offering of one of our core courses and at least ten other students have contacted our office about enrollment for next fall.

While students can do an MA in many departments in CAS (History, English, Sociology) while fulfilling many of the requirements for the Women’s Studies certificate, an interdisciplinary program is likely to make more intellectual sense to prospective applicants who are interested in looking at women's issues from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. An interdisciplinary program also creates the opportunity for students in a wide range of fields in both the College and the University to develop expertise in Women's Studies. Prospective applicants have expressed interest in combining the WMST certificate with work in ICAR, COMM, NURS and PUAD, for example but are not necessarily committed to pursuing MA work in any of those distinct fields. The flexibility such a program offers would, in addition, fulfill a need with respect to other MA programs in Women's Studies in the area, most of which have a specific orientation (for instance, Georgetown's emphasis on public policy).

The MAIS program would offer the option of at least 12 credits in a discipline (plus a research methods course), and at least 15 credits in WMST core or cross-listed courses, culminating in a Women's Studies project or thesis. Applications will be reviewed by the Women’s Studies Executive Committee as well as by the relevant department. An admitted student will be assigned an advisor in his or her discipline from the Women's Studies faculty. Each student would have the endorsement of the department as well as WMST. Collaboration between WMST and MAIS is both academically sound and could support enrollment in both programs without requiring additional resources from the University.

Each student will be required to take:

1. the 2 WMST graduate certificate core courses:
   WMST 630 Feminist Theories across the Disciplines (3 credits)
   WMST 640 Women and Global Issues (3 credits)

2. 12 credits in a disciplinary concentration, including at least 3 credits in a course cross-listed with WMST.

   [In spring 2003 seven graduate courses are cross-listed as WMST 690, including courses in Conflict Analysis and Resolution, English, Environmental Science and Public Policy, History, Social Work, and Sociology.]

3. at least 3 credits of research methods.
4. 9-12 credits of electives, including at least 6 credits in courses cross-listed with WMST that are not part of their disciplinary concentration.

5. 3-6 credits of MAIS 798 (project) or 6 credits of MAIS 799 (thesis). Students will also be required to do some kind of presentation of their work to the GMU Women's Studies community.