

**University of Massachusetts  
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Amherst, Mass.--An Afro-American studies department at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst, named for the noted black scholar W.E.B. DuBois was approved Wednesday (4/22) by the UMass Board of Trustees.

The department is designed to offer an undergraduate major in Afro-American studies and courses in black humanities for non-majors. Its creation follows many months of planning by a faculty-student University Committee on Black Studies, working with the University administration.

W.E.B. DuBois was born in Great Barrington in 1868 and died in Ghana in 1963. He was a founder of the NAACP, the first editor of Crisis magazine and the author of some 20 books, among them "The Philadelphia Negro," "The Souls of Black Folk," and "Black Reconstruction." His doctoral dissertation, "The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to America," was published as volume I of the Harvard Historical Series in 1896.

The plans call for a fully-staffed department to be in operation by the fall of 1972 with a full-time faculty of 20, a director, an administrative staff and a library collection in Afro-American studies. The department will offer a series of course sequences in various disciplines which will in combination present the social, cultural and political history of the Afro-American people in a comprehensive and structurally integrated manner.

Disciplines involved will be African languages, literature, history, anthropology, political science, economics, psychology, music and fine arts.

The Afro-American studies major, a maximum of 60 credit hours, will be recommended, according to the committee, "only to students intent on a career in teaching or advanced scholarship in Afro-American studies in one of the relevant professional disciplines." For non-majors, the general introductory courses in the department will be the black humanities sequence.

Until the department is fully operational and staffed, an interim director will head the program, recruit faculty and work on the establishment of the black cultural center. The director will be assisted by interim staff members recruited from the present UMass faculty. The cultural center, particularly through films and lectures, will complement the limited academic programs at the initial stages of the department's development.

The committee has already initiated some Afro-American study courses taught by UMass faculty and by visiting lecturers Cherif Guellal, Playthell Benjamin and Ivanhoe Donaldson. Many of the courses are taught by Afro-American Studies Committee members.

Faculty committee members are Michael Thelwell, English; Roslyn Walker, art; Sidney Kaplan, English; William J. Wilson, sociology; Bernard Bell, English; Esther Terry, English; Ben Wambari, linguistics; and Cass Turner, assistant CCEBS director.

Student members are Nate Sims, a doctoral candidate, and Robyn Chandler, Stephan Bowden, Steve Moore, Carlton E. Brown and Rockwood Green, all sophomores.

The committee has sketched out five general principles for the Afro-American studies department. One is that it will be interdisciplinary, crossing traditional boundaries in areas relevant to black experience and that it will be international in scope. Another aim is that the department emphasize independent research and non-traditional work-study programs in the black community.

Two other essential principles are continued negotiations for a Five College Black Studies Department with neighboring Amherst, Hampshire, Mount Holyoke and Smith Colleges, and the development of a black cultural center at UMass.

According to the committee, the department is designed "to move into the existing vacuum and become a focus for the expression of black academic and cultural concerns."