SPECIAL REPORT

of the

ACADEMIC MATTERS AND GRADUATE COUNCILS

concerning an

ACCELERATED MS IN LABOR STUDIES

Presented at the
752nd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
November 12, 2015

COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL


GRADUATE COUNCIL

ACADEMIC MATTERS COUNCIL

The Labor Relations and Research Center is proposing to establish an accelerated option for the MS in Labor Studies. In the proposed option, students will take nine credits of graduate-level courses in Labor Studies while they are undergraduates – these will be applied to the MS and are in addition to the credits required for the Bachelor’s degree. Students complete an internship (required for the MS degree) in the summer after finishing the Bachelor’s degree. They then take 27 credits of courses (including a 6-credit research and writing seminar) in the following year to complete the MS. The proposal satisfies all requirements for an accelerated Master’s option, except that it calls for 36 credits applied to the MS while the existing MS in Labor Studies requires 42 credits. The Labor Studies program has proposed reducing the number of credits required for the MS to 36.

At its meeting on September 16, 2015, the Academic Matters Council voted to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the proposed accelerated option, once the proposal to reduce the credits required for the MS degree has been approved. It was submitted as proposal #1402 in the Course and Curriculum Management System.

GRADUATE COUNCIL

The Academic Standards and Curriculum Committee (ASCC) of the Graduate Council met on October 7, 2015 and reviewed the proposal for an Accelerated MS in Labor Studies, proposal #1402 in the Course and Curriculum Management System. The ASCC recommended this proposal for approval.

On Wednesday, October 14, 2015, the Graduate Council unanimously approved the Accelerated MS in Labor Studies.

MOVED: That the Faculty Senate approve the Accelerated MS in Labor Studies, as presented in Sen. 04-16 Doc. No. 16-009.
Proposal Development

A. Briefly describe the Proposal.

We propose a new five-year accelerated degree program with a BA in Sociology (or other undergraduate major) and MS in Labor Studies.

B. Provide a brief overview of the process for developing the Proposal.

The Labor Studies faculty developed the proposal in consultation with Sociology faculty and staff. We looked at other accelerated Master's degree programs and spoke with their creators. We then met with Sociology staff, Undergraduate Program Director, and academic advisors to discuss the details. We also met with faculty and staff in STPEC and in Economics to discuss how this pathway could work for their students.

Purpose and Goals

Describe the proposal’s purpose and the particular knowledge and skills to be acquired and provide a rationale for creating this accelerated degree program.

UMass Amherst is lucky to have the premier Labor Studies graduate program in the United States. Our full-time and part-time Master's degree programs both attract students from all over the U.S. and Canada because we have a strong reputation as the best academic program in Labor Studies, situated in an outstanding Sociology Department renowned for its expertise in work and labor, inequality, and race and gender issues. The students most likely to choose a 5-year BA/MS are students with interests in social and economic justice, inequality, globalization, social movements, and labor issues. This includes students who have studied these issues in Sociology and other social science classes, as well as student activists from other majors who are interested in careers in social justice. The Labor Studies program combines theory and practice, and promises expertise in the range of skills needed to work in labor movements, policy or advocacy arenas in the U.S. or internationally. Students will learn skills including economic analysis, power analysis, collective bargaining and contract administration, organizing, labor law, and strategic research methods. Our job placement rate is close to 100 percent. Recruiters from labor unions, NGOs, government agencies, and workers-rights organizations know that our graduates are well-prepared for careers in the field and come to UMass when looking to hire staff. For this reason, we believe that an accelerated graduate degree in Labor Studies is a very attractive option for undergraduates. Our graduates have found careers with organizations including the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB); the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland; the Immigrant Worker Center Collaborative; the International Labor Rights Forum; Service Employees International Union; Union of Food and Commercial Workers; the International Association of Machinists; the National Education Association; and many more.

Accelerated Master’s Information

Does this accelerated master’s option apply to all master’s degrees in this field, or only to certain tracks or concentrations?

There is only one Master of Science degree in Labor Studies.

What type of degree program does this accelerated master’s option pertain to?

Note: second and third require separate approval.

Describe the projected timeline for this degree.

Years 1 and 2: Students work toward the BA degree. Labor Studies 201, 204, and 280 are recommended and can be taken in fulfillment of General Education, Global Education, or Sociology elective requirements.

Year 3: Students apply to the BA/MS program and are accepted provisionally (contingent upon finishing their BA). Students may also apply in the beginning of their senior year.
Year 4: Students complete the requirements for their BA degree. Students also take any three of the following courses:
- Issues and Debates in Labor Studies
- Labor History
- Labor Economics
- Labor Research
- Labor Law
- Any 500- or 600-level elective offered in Labor Studies

(Students may take these courses in any year if approved by the instructor. Nine credits of Labor Studies courses must be completed before graduation.)

Summer after Year 4: Students complete internships. These must fulfill the requirements for the MS degree (as well as the BA degree if it requires an internship.) Students do not pay for summer credits; they receive credit only upon completion of the fall semester research and writing seminar.

Year 5:
Fall: students complete 9 credits in the MS in Labor Studies program, plus the 6-credit research and writing seminar
Spring: students complete 12 credits of credits in the MS in Labor Studies program

What undergraduate degree program is this accelerated master’s associated with, if any?
Sociology, STPEC, and possibly other undergraduate degree programs.

Resources

If this proposal requires no additional resources, say so and briefly explain why. If this proposal requires additional resources, explain how they will be paid for. For proposals involving instruction, indicate how many new enrollments are expected and whether the courses have room to accommodate them.

No additional resources are required. All of these courses are currently taught in the MS in Labor Studies program, using existing faculty members. We hope for an initial cohort of ten new BA/MS students, and we have space for at least ten more students to join the program each year.

Curriculum

Provide a curriculum to the applicable master’s degree as it currently appears in the Graduate Bulletin and explain how this curriculum will be scheduled over the student’s undergraduate and graduate careers. Note that total number of credits must be 30 plus the minimum number required for undergraduate degree (generally 120, making total number of credits required 150).

NOTE: For Master’s programs under 36 credits, a maximum of 9 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees. For Master’s programs over 36 credits, a maximum of 12 graduate-level credits taken as an undergraduate may be applied to both degrees.

Graduate Bulletin 2014-15:
Master of Science in Labor Studies Degree Programs
This unique program is designed to equip students for careers in the labor movement, related social justice organizations, or further academic work. The multidisciplinary program combines coursework, labor research, and an internship in which students gain experiential knowledge of the field. Graduate courses provide not only the skills necessary to work in and with the labor movement—expertise in research, organizing, collective bargaining, and union leadership—but also an opportunity to examine the larger theoretical and strategic issues confronting workers. Students may focus their research in areas including globalization, labor and communities, women and work, labor education, and strategic corporate research, in order to explore in depth these cutting-edge issues.
The requirements for the degree are:

1. Forty-two graduate credits of which no more than six may be transferred from other accredited institutions.

2. An internship with a labor organization, non-governmental organization, or agency, usually in the summer between the first and second year.

3. A research and writing seminar. Six credits are granted upon completion of the final paper, related to the internship or another topic.

Students admitted to the Master of Science in Labor Studies degree program come from a wide range of undergraduate majors in the social sciences and humanities. They bring different kinds of experience, including work in the labor movement, campus organizing, organizing against sweatshops, and other types of community-based work experience.

The core curriculum includes the following required courses: 605 Labor Research, 741 Introduction to Labor Studies, 742 Labor Law, 697 Special Topics — U.S. Labor History, Labor in the U.S. Economy, Organizing, and Collective Bargaining. Electives are offered in a wide range of fields within Labor Studies. In addition, many students take related courses with affiliated faculty in Economics, Sociology, History, Public Health, and other departments and programs within the University. Full-time students typically complete the program in two years. Students’ courses of study are planned in consultation with their advisors, to fit their individual needs and interests.

(*Note: we have applied for a minor program revision, to change the number of required credits to 36. This would be in line with the part-time M.S. in Labor Studies program offered through CPE.)

-- Students in the accelerated program would take 9 graduate-level credits during their undergraduate years, in addition to the 120 credits required for the BA (129 credits total in the first four years).
-- Students would complete the required internship in the summer after completing the BA degree.
-- Students would then complete 27 graduate credits in Labor Studies during their fifth year.
-- Total credits: 129 in Years 1-4 plus 27 in Year 5 = 156 total credits for BA/MS degrees

Who can apply to pursue this accelerated master’s degree?
(UMass students, Five College Students, Students in specific degree programs, etc.)

UMass students, Five College Students, and students from other colleges and universities that do not have Labor Studies programs.

Are there any admissions exceptions to this degree program, such as a waiver of the GRE requirements?

Yes

Comments: The M.S. in Labor Studies currently does not require GRE scores. We have found them to be a poor predictor of success in the graduate program. Instead, we use undergraduate records, recommendations, resumes, and personal statements to evaluate a candidate for graduate school.