

**SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS**

**Committee on Academic and Student Affairs**

**AGENDA ITEM: III – B (1)**

**DATE: April 1-2, 2015**

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**SUBJECT: New Program: SDSU Minor in Legal Studies**

South Dakota State University (SDSU) requests authorization to offer a baccalaureate minor in Legal Studies. The minor consists of existing courses and provides a focus for students interested in preparation for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and law school.

SDSU estimates adequate student demand for the minor based on an understanding that 1/3 of the school's 25 Political Science majors go on to law school. The minor would also appeal to students in other majors. SDSU estimates 7-10 graduates with the minor per year after full implementation.

The proposed curriculum does not require the addition of any new courses. The minor will consist of 18 credit hours. SDSU is not requesting new resources for the proposed minor.

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**RECOMMENDED ACTION OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Approve SDSU's new program proposal for a Minor in Legal Studies as described in Attachment I.

**South Dakota Board of Regents  
New Baccalaureate Degree Minor**

<b>University:</b>	South Dakota State University
<b>Title of Proposed Minor:</b>	Legal Studies
<b>Degree(s) in which minor may be earned:</b>	B.A./B.S.
<b>Existing related majors or minors:</b>	Political Science, Philosophy, Accounting, Criminal Justice, Sociology, Speech Communication
<b>Proposed Implementation (term):</b>	Fall 2015
<b>Proposed CIP Code:</b>	22.0000

**University Approval**

To the Board and the Executive Director: I certify that I have read this proposal, that I believe it to be accurate, and that it has been evaluated and approved as provided by university policy.

*David L. Chicoine*

2-4-2015

\_\_\_\_\_  
President of the University

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

After approval by the President, a signed copy of the proposal should be transmitted to the Executive Director. Only after Executive Director review should the proposal be posted on the university web site and the Board staff and the other universities notified of the URL.

**1. Do you have a major in this area?**      \_\_\_\_\_ Yes        X   No

**2. If you do not have a major in this area, explain how the proposed minor relates to your mission.**

South Dakota State University (SDSU) requests authorization to offer a minor in Legal Studies. Based on the interest of students and their needs, this minor takes existing courses and provides a focus to help those interested in Legal Studies prepare for the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) and the intellectual rigors of law school. It also supports those students who would benefit from a greater familiarity with legal issues, but are not interested in pursuing a JD.

The proposed minor in Legal Studies is within the statutory mission of South Dakota State University as provided in SDCL 13-58-1:

*Designated as South Dakota's land grant university, South Dakota State University, formerly the state college of agriculture and mechanical arts, shall be under the control of the Board of Regents and shall provide undergraduate and graduate programs of instruction in the liberal arts and sciences and professional education in agriculture, education, engineering, home economics, nursing, and pharmacy, and other courses or programs as the Board of Regents may determine.*

The minor will contribute to the economic development of the state and region by providing legal expertise to national, state and business interests. While it is true that the number of law school graduates has increased dramatically, so too have the legal needs of business, agriculture, research/development and constituents in South Dakota. There is actually a shortage of lawyers in rural sectors of South Dakota. The legislature passed an act to provide for the transfer and appropriation of funds upon the occurrence of certain events and to assist rural counties in the recruitment.<sup>1</sup>

SDSU is well-positioned to offer a minor in Legal Studies given the existing expertise and courses. SDSU does not intend to request new state resources. All the courses necessary already exist.

### **3. How will the proposed minor benefit students?**

The purpose of the proposed minor is to better serve the needs of the students already interested in a law-related career path by providing focus and intentionality to their course choices. Currently, SDSU only offers a pre-law emphasis that suggests courses for those interested in law. The Legal Studies minor would replace this. There are two main advantages to the student: 1) While it is true that law schools want a pool of applicants from diverse backgrounds, one's choice of major will provide that. The purpose of this minor is to provide the student with foundational skills meant to better their performance on the LSAT and in law school. Because the current pre-law emphasis only suggests courses, many students will miss key skills and likely perform lower on the LSAT. 2) It could provide additional legal skills for those not going on for a JD, but would need these tools in their line of work, including criminal justice, business, agriculture, health, counseling, engineering, paralegal support and other fields.

### **4. Provide estimated enrollments and completions in the table below and explain how the estimates were developed.**

The current estimates are based on input from former and current academic advisors who work specifically with students interested in pre-law. SDSU advisor puts the current number of pre-law designees at 24 students. It is also estimated that about 1/3 of Political Science majors go on to law school (about 25 students in Political Science).

	Fiscal Years*			
	1st	2nd	3rd	4 <sup>th</sup>
Estimates	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19
Students in the minor (fall)	10-15	10-15	25-30	25-30
Completions by graduates	0	0	7-10	7-10

\* Do not include current year.

### **5. What is the rationale for the curriculum?**

The curriculum is tailored to meet both the skill sets desired by law schools as well as augmenting existing majors by providing complementary analytical, financial, legal, research

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<sup>1</sup>[http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative\\_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?File=HB1096ENR.htm&Session=2013&cookieCheck=true](http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/Bill.aspx?File=HB1096ENR.htm&Session=2013&cookieCheck=true)

and communication skills. The American Bar Association (ABA)<sup>2</sup> identifies the following core skills, values, knowledge, and experience as a sound foundation for law school:

- Problem solving
- Critical reading
- Writing and editing
- Oral communication and listening
- Research
- Organization and management
- Public service and promotion of justice
- Relationship-building and collaboration
- Background knowledge
- Exposure to the law

There are several courses which provide a student interested in law school with excellent preparation for the LSAT and law school. First is PHIL 200, Intro to Logic. The ability to “think like a lawyer” are the same analytical and reasoning skills developed in Logic. According to a study of LSAT scores by Michael Niesdaomy, Philosophy and Economics tied just after Math for highest among all majors.<sup>3</sup> SPCM 222, Argument and Debate, would hone the ability to speak clearly and persuasively. A familiarity with the American political system, in particular the Constitution, is essential background for law school. Constitutional Law, POLS 430, is best suited to providing that background, together with critical reading, writing and editing skills sought by the ABA. The ABA also desires exposure to ethical issues, provided by one of the following: PHIL 220 or PHIL 320. Because having a basic familiarity in economic principles is sought, but often overlooked by potential law students, the minor will include a choice of Principles of Microeconomics, ECON 201, or Principles of Accounting I, ACCT 210. The University of South Dakota Law School Dean was consulted on the course selections and agrees these courses would be helpful for entering law students.

These courses will likewise benefit those who are not intending to go to law school, but need some of the basic skills of the legal trade for their primary profession. Such professions would include paralegal work, which may require legal research, client and witness interviews, case investigation and document preparation. Those going into criminal justice would benefit from not only a basic understanding of the constitution and law, but also the analytical skills offered by a legal studies minor. Such careers include police officers, FBI agents, CIA analysts, forensic scientists, victim/ witness advocates, probation officers, corrections officers and other positions. Similarly, social work requires analytical problem-solving skills together with a familiarity with the law. Other law-related career that would benefit from a legal-studies minor includes contracts administrator, accountant, real estate broker, risk manager, compliance officer and others. Some fields require specialized education, while others are learned on the job training.

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<sup>2</sup> [http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal\\_education/resources/pre\\_law.html](http://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/pre_law.html)

<sup>3</sup> *Ranking of majors with 2000+ students taking the exam.* Source: Michael Nieswiadomy, “LSAT Scores of Economics Majors: The 2008-2009 Update.”

**6. Complete the tables below. Explain any exceptions to BOR policy being requested.**

**A. Distribution of Credit Hours**

Legal Studies	Credit Hours	Percent
Requirements in Minor	15	83%
Electives in the Minor	3	17%
Total	18	100%

**B. Required Courses in the Minor**

Prefix	Number	Course Title	New*	Hours
PHIL	200	Introduction to Logic	N	3
PHIL	220	Introduction to Ethics	N	3
OR PHIL	320	Professional Ethics		
POLS	430	Constitutional Law	N	3
SPCM	222	Argument & Persuasion	N	3
ACCT	210	Principles of Accounting	N	3
OR ECON	201	Principles of Microeconomics	N	
Subtotal, required				15

\* New: Y= yes, N = no.

**C. Elective Courses in the Minor: List courses that may be taken as electives in the minor. Indicate any new courses to be added specifically for the minor.**

For the remaining three credits, students would be able to choose from the following list of classes to gain exposure to legal and social issues in their specific fields, for either a legal or non-legal career.

Prefix	Number	Course Title	New*	Hours
AIS	417	American Indian Government & Politics	N	3
AIS	462	Formation of Federal Indian Policy	N	3
AGEC	350	Environmental Law	N	3
AGEC	352	Agricultural Law <i>(Prerequisite: BADM 350, Junior Standing)</i>	N	3
BADM	350	Legal Environment of Business	N	3
CM	473	Construction Law & Accounting <i>(Prerequisite: ACCT 210)</i>	N	3
CJUS	201	Introduction to Criminal Justice	N	3
CJUS	431	Criminal Law	N	3
ECON	467	Labor Law <i>(Prerequisite: ECON 201 or ECON 202)</i>	N	3
HLTH	322	Public Health Law	N	3
MCOM	430	Media Law	N	3

SOC	150	Social Problems	N	3
SOC	240	The Sociology of Rural Studies	N	3

**7. What outcomes will be expected for all students who complete the minor? How will these outcomes be achieved?**

As a result of completing the minor in Legal Studies, students will:

1. Demonstrate a basic familiarity with the American political and legal systems, especially the constitution;
2. Demonstrate proficiency in clear and persuasive speech and writing;
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the formal study of argumentation, including forms of logic, inductive and deductive reasoning, proofs, refutations and fallacies;
4. Demonstrate financial literacy, either basic economic concepts or basic accounting principles and procedures;
5. Demonstrate a familiarity with the law as it relates to one's field of interest;
6. Demonstrate an understanding of social and ethical issues.

The outcomes will be achieved through coursework in specific concentrations and internships in facilities that support the individual student's interests and career goals.

Please see Appendix A.

**8. What instructional technologies will be used to teach courses in the minor? *This refers to the instructional technologies used to teach the new courses in the minor and NOT the technology applications students are expected to learn.***

Standard instructional technologies will be used.

**9. Is the University is requesting authorization to provide the minor to students at an off-campus location or by distance delivery? If yes, explain. *If off-campus or distance delivery authorization is not requested, enter "None."***

None

**10. Costs, Budget & Resources: Explain the amount and source(s) of any one-time and continuing investments in personnel, professional development, release time, instructional technology and software, other O&M, facilities, etc needed to implement the minor.**

None. The minor will make use of existing classes.

**Appendix A**  
**Legal Studies Minor - Student Learning Outcomes**

Individual Student Outcome	Required					Electives																	
	PHIL 200	PHIL 220 OR PHIL 320	POLS 430	SPCM 222	ACCT 210 OR ECON 201	AIS 417	AIS 462	AGEC 350	AGEC 352	AGEC 356	AGEC 366	BADM 350	CJUS 201	CJUS 431	CM 473	ECON 467	ENTR 203	ENTR 205	ENTR 206	HLTH 322	MCOM 430	SOC 150 OR SOC 240	
Demonstrate a basic familiarity with the American political and legal systems, especially the constitution.			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Demonstrate proficiency in clear and persuasive speech and writing.		X	X	X																			
Understand the formal study of argumentation, including forms of logic, inductive and deductive reasoning, proofs, refutations and fallacies. Be able to think and read critically.	X	X	X																				
Demonstrate financial literacy, either basic economic concepts or basic accounting principles and procedures.					X																		
Demonstrate a familiarity with the law as it relates to one's field of interest.						X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Demonstrate an understanding of social and ethical issues as well as the promotion of justice.		X																					X