

**Academic Business Plan for Master of Science in Human Rights Program**  
**Department of Human Development**  
**College of Community and Public Affairs**  
**December 2017**

*Overview*

The Binghamton University College of Community and Public Affairs (CCPA) and Department of Human Development propose the development of a Master of Science in Human Rights program. The MSHR program will offer students preparation for engaging in the multi-layered contexts of human rights practice and for conducting interdisciplinary applied research and evaluation in community settings. Currently, there are no graduate human rights programs offered in the SUNY system.

*Context*

A MSHR program would be a good fit for the Department of Human Development and CCPA and for the needs of New York State. There is a strong need for this program based on the educational and economic needs in the Greater Binghamton area, New York State, nationally, and internationally. Vulnerable groups in need of skilled support, advocacy, and leadership are growing fast. For example, the number of immigrant children in New York State has nearly doubled since 1990 (Migration Policy, 2014). With the increasing projected diversity in New York and the US population by 2020 (US Census, 2010), the proposed human rights program will address the educational and economic needs of students preparing to work in this transdisciplinary field in the local Binghamton area, New York State, nationally, and internationally. Demographic changes in immigration patterns at the municipal and state level will require practitioners with human rights knowledge to address pressing social, economic, political and environmental issues within the local, national, and international arena.

Locally, basic economic and social rights are threatened in a context of impoverishment.

family income is \$45,958 compared with the NYS average of \$58,003. Census data indicate that 17.4 % of the BC population lives below the poverty level as compared with the NYS poverty level percentage of 15.3%. BC Report Card statistics (Data NYSED.gov) indicate a total of 248 students dropped out of high school in 2013-2014 and only 61 of those students entered an approved high school equivalency preparation program. Another important statistic that affects the BC community is the high number of single-

level for community based organizations, which will in turn improve their economic prospects.

The Department of Human Development of the CCPA is well-placed to meet this educational need. The Department of Human Development (specifically the Bachelor of Science in Human Development) provides an interdisciplinary curriculum that examines individual, social and structural aspects of the human life cycle. The curriculum encourages students to engage in critical exploration of social, cultural, economic, historical and political frameworks and the ways in which individuals, families and communities are situated within them. Diversity is highly valued in the Department of Human Development, and students examine issues of equity and social justice in the classroom and in community service activities. The proposed M.S. program builds on our existing curricular strengths in social justice and human rights at the undergraduate level, both of which are integrated throughout the M.S. curriculum. Students will develop career-ready professional skills for working in human rights organizations at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Students will develop competencies in community organizing, social innovation, applied research, and program evaluation.

### ***Benefits***

In addition to generating more revenue for the department, college, and university, the establishment of a MSHR program will enhance all academic components

In addition to expanding opportunities for current Human Development majors, the MSHR



justice and human rights issues locally, nationally, and internationally.

The M.S. in Human Rights is a transdisciplinary program that builds on current strengths of the Human Development faculty in the College of Community and Public Affairs, as well as faculty across disciplines associated with the *Citizenship, Rights, and Cultural Belonging* Transdisciplinary Area of Excellence at Binghamton University. This transdisciplinary M.S. will also draw from the strong faculty and departments College- and University-wide. The program is expected to attract students not only from New York State, but also from around the country and throughout the world. In so doing, the international reach of the degree will serve to enhance the local, regional, and global profile of Binghamton University.

### ***Institutional Support***

The faculty and staff of the Department of Human Development and CCPA have stated that they support the immediate development of a MSHR program. We have received approval from the BU Graduate Curriculum Committee and Graduate Council. The Provost has offered his verbal support and faculty in Philosophy, Geography, and Political Science have offered to cross-list classes with the Program.

### ***Operating Plan***

#### **Curriculum Design**

The M.S. degree in Human Rights offers students preparation for engaging in the multi-layered contexts of human rights practice and for conducting interdisciplinary applied research and evaluation in community settings. Unlike most human rights programs that focus heavily on the legal aspect of the field, this unique program will give equal attention to human rights theory and also train students to conduct rigorous community-based research. This program builds on our existing curricular strengths in social justice and human rights at the undergraduate level, both of which are integrated throughout the M.S. curriculum. Students will develop career-ready professional skills for working in human rights organizations at the local, regional, national, and international levels. Students will develop competencies in community organizing, social innovation, applied research, and program evaluation. The program offers social justice and human rights approaches to issues such as education, health, violence, children, family, poverty, incarceration, and immigration, evaluated critically through the diverse lenses of race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, place, community, and/or nationality.

The proposed MSHR degree curriculum requires the completion of 36 credits, to be completed over 3 semesters. Requirements includes 12 credits on the theory and practice of human rights and social change, 8 credits on community-based research methodologies, a community-based experiential learning practicum, and a major capstone project. For students interested in international practice, the capstone project could be organized around a summer

internship opportunity which will be developed in collaboration with MSHR faculty. The proposed MSHR curriculum is located in Appendix A.

## **Recruitment**

students recruited regionally, nationally, and internationally. However, we anticipate the enrollment to a substantial number of students from New York State and the northeast region. As this field incorporates a human rights-based approach that addresses macro- and micro-level inequities, the faculty anticipate to enroll a high proportion of women, people of color, and international students.

The MSHR is likely to attract applicants from the outstanding undergraduate student body at Binghamton University. A needs analysis conducted by the Office of Institutional Research indicates 27% of Human Development students are very interested in pursuing an MSHR offered by the Department of Human Development (HDEV has around 125 undergraduates graduating every year.) Departments in Harpur and the HRI will also help to feed into the Program; the minor in Human Rights, which is currently being developed by the HRI and is projected to be offered in the fall of 2018, will be particularly helpful in connecting students to the MSHR program.

Our undergraduates, with grades and SAT scores that place them in the top 5% of college applicants nationwide, come from 100 different countries as well as almost every state in the USA. At present, 36% of them represent diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and they are evenly split between men and women. While students will be recruited for the program from other colleges and universities both in and beyond New York, our own exceptional undergraduates are likely to be among the first in line for this innovative program, and

The enrollment of students from historically underrepresented groups will be encouraged by a recruitment program designed to produce a diverse applicant pool and supported by scholarship aid through the Clifford D. Clark Fellowship program for underrepresented students. In addition, social equity is an important dimension of human rights. We will reach out to undergraduate majors at institutions that have large numbers of under-represented students in order to inform them about the opportunities offered by the new degree program (e.g., Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUS), Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-

Graduate School. Application materials include an application form, transcripts, two letters of recommendation, personal statement, writing sample, and curriculum vitae or resume. International applicants must also submit results from either TOEFL (minimum score of 100) or IELTS (minimum score in Band Seven) unless they have received a college or university degree from a U.S. institution or an institution in a country whose native language is English. Admissions materials will be reviewed and decisions will be made by the Program Committee. Applications for the fall semester are due April 15 and are considered on a rolling basis until the April deadline; any applications received after April 15 are accommodated on a space available basis or are deferred until the spring semester.

Each applicant is evaluated based on his/her undergraduate GPA, letters of recommendation, personal statement, essay, and work experience. When evaluating the letters of recommendation, the admissions committee looks for evidence of academic achievement, community involvement and personal characteristics that suggests the applicant has the capacity to foster an institutional culture that advances human rights principles and practice and succeed in a demanding graduate program. In the personal statement, the committee

ability to communicate in writing. The essay allows the admissions committee to review a non-generic piece of writing for structural and grammatical quality.

Significant work experience (3 or more years in the government or non-governmental sector) is; however, the lack of work experience does not result in a penalty.

requirement.

### **Staffing**

**MSHR Program Director:** The position of MSHR program director, who will serve as the chief administrator, will be filled by current faculty, who has a doctoral degree in human rights or a related field. The Program Director will be granted one course release per semester, to ensure sufficient assigned time to provide educational and administrative leadership. The proposed director is Suzy Lee, J.D., Ph.D. (Sociology) who joined the Human Development faculty in the fall of 2017.

**MSHR Faculty:** The program requires one additional full-time faculty member, in addition to a 20% commitment from a third faculty member to cover the two additional courses required in the final semester of the program. Both faculty members should have Ph.D. or other terminal degree in human rights or a related field.

### **Community-Based Experience**

The MSHR has a significant fieldwork component, requiring students to obtain community-based experience, not only in their second-year course work, but also as a component of their capstone project. The Department of Human Development currently oversees a practicum

requirement for its undergraduate majors, which requires and community-based internship placement. Each year, Human Development faculty coordinate over a hundred such placements for its students. The relationships and expertise that the Department of Human Development has developed through this practicum program, not only in the local Binghamton area but in nongovernmental and community-based organizations in the New York metropolitan area, will be deployed to connect MSHR students to community-based experience opportunities.

For students interested in gaining community engagement experience internationally there will be an option during the summer for internships in international settings with human rights and community based organizations.

### **Program Evaluation**

As part of the regular assessment cycle for all programs at Binghamton University, student learning outcomes will be assessed at regular intervals in courses selected from the curriculum by the **Program Committee**. Program achievements will be assessed through self-study and external review every seven years, beginning in the fifth year after the program is started. The



## **Cost and Financing**

Initially, there would need to be funding for one administrative staff position: an Administrative Assistant. The MSHR Program Director is a current faculty member who receives course releases

## Appendix A

### MS Human Rights Curriculum

Term 1		Term 3	
Course Title	Credits	Course Title	Credits
HR 500: Human Rights Theory and Practice I HR 504: Inte	4	Elective	4

## **Appendix B**

### **MS Human Rights Financial Plan**

#### **Assumptions and Method for Enrollment Projections**

Our enrollment projections for the first five years are based on the following data and rationale:

- 1. undergraduates**

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After the first year, these totals include both first and second year students. Second year students are derived from first-

Prior to initiating this proposal, our department requested a study, from the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, on demand for a Masters level program in Human Development in

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(n=85), 27% answered they and 21% answered that the Human Development undergraduate program has approximately 150 graduating seniors every year, significant interest in a graduate Human Rights degree from Binghamton University. To fill our first year class, we would require a relatively conservative 10% of those interested students to apply.

In addition, the Introduction to Human Rights undergraduate course offered in the department is always filled to capacity, and there is strong student interest from within and outside of Human Development.

## **2. Significant interest in Human Rights in the greater Binghamton University undergraduate community.**

We believe that, in addition to applicants from Human Development major, we can expect applicants from the greater Binghamton undergraduate student body. Currently, our course in Human Rights are cross-listed with other Binghamton Colleges, primarily Harpur, and each semester, a significant number of students are drawn from beyond the Human Development major. In addition to their specific interest in Human Rights, these students will be exposed to

More importantly, Binghamton University current houses two institutes specifically related to Human Rights the Human Rights Institute (HRI) and the Institute for Genocide and Mass Atrocity Prevention (IGMAP). Both of these institutes have helped to foster awareness of Human Rights among the student body.

The HRI is currently planning a minor in Human Rights, to begin in the fall of 2018, with an expected enrollment of 50 students. The Human Development faculty already works closely with the HRI, serving on its steering committee and coordinating events. The HRI has agree

M.A. in Social Justice and Human Rights, has reported that approximately 60% of its incoming class each year are classified as out-of-state. Their primary recruitment tool is the cultivation of their web-presence, through a detailed, accessible web-site. (Julie Murphy Erfani (personal communication, January 2018))

which is housed in

We anticipate that with the growing reputation we will be able to draw from an even larger highly qualified applicant pool, and the now experienced faculty will be able to teach, mentor, and advise a larger number of students. Therefore, we think the program will be ready to reach its target size of 30 by Year 5.

We also anticipate that by Year 5, we will have an applicant pool with a very significant proportion of out-of-State example suggests that we can estimate out-of-state student rates as high as 60%, however, we use a more conservative 33%. The Arizona