University Formalizes Gay History Class

Mayer Innovative Education Fund Sponsors Development of Gender, Race Courses

by CATHERINE MACDONALD
Observer Editorial Board

As a result of an allocation for President Jean Mayer’s Innovative Education Fund, the first permanent university course on homosexuality will be taught next semester. “Gay and Lesbian History,” a course formally offered by the Experimental College under the title “Gay and Lesbian History in America,” will be taught by History Professor Howard Solomon.

The course is one of four gender and race related courses made possible by the Innovative Education Fund. Other newly developed courses include “Women, Men and Development in Islamic Asia” in the Anthropology department which will be taught by Janet Bauer and “The Cinema of Emergent Societies,” an English course under the direction of Professor Clyde Talor.

In addition to the three new courses, Professor Charles Nelson was also awarded a grant for the revision of the course “Women in Medieval Literature.”

The grants, totaling $5000, were awarded to the four professors in response to a proposal made to Mayer last March by Sociology Professor Susan Ostrander for the Women’s Programs Board.

Nine applications for possible new courses and revised courses were submitted in April. According to Ostrander, only three were going to be selected for the awards but “because we got so many excellent applications, we gave out four [awards].”

Although Ostrander said there is “nothing new about focusing on race and gender, this is the first time Tufts has made money available to faculty members to do this revision.” However, she pointed out that awards are an “ongoing part of a larger project on curriculum transformation.”

Ostrander said that she, as well as Mayer, felt that faculty interested in issues of gender and race “needed to be given concrete support for those efforts.” Solomon sees the process of funding these courses as a “competition to encourage faculty to integrate issues of gender.”

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