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Mount Mercy Academy Adds Women in Social Sciences Program

Mount Mercy Academy is well-known for its prestigious Academy of Science and Healthcare, a program which provides experiences for those students who have an interest in the sciences. Realizing that not all students have an interest in science, Principal Margaret Staszak suggested that the social studies department design a program for the students who are interested in the social sciences. Bridget Feyes, a member of the social studies department, developed a program to provide a rigorous program for students whose interests lie in those areas. “We are hoping to provide a program that will appeal to a broader group of students. We have many students who are interested in the social sciences, so this program will enhance their educational experience,” Feyes remarked.

The students in the program will be required to complete certain courses and to participate in various experiential learning opportunities. These opportunities will allow students to develop connections within the student body as well as with outside contacts in the field. There is also an opportunity to earn an Honors designation for the students who choose to challenge themselves with Advanced Placement courses in the social sciences.

Based on their field experiences, students will be able to earn one of several distinctions at graduation. These specialized diplomas will enable the Social Sciences Program to help students narrow their interests and create lifelong friendships with other students who are seeking similar certificates at graduation. These distinctions will help shape the field experiences available to the girls. Within the Social Sciences Program, students will be able to earn the following distinctions: Women in Law, Women in History, Women in Government, Women in Social Work and Women in Psychology.

The program will be comprised of four parts; Field Experiences, Challenging Academic Courses, Independent Experiential Learning and Higher Education Plans. During their freshmen and sophomore years students will complete the field experience aspect of the program. They will attend at least four field trips which will introduce students to the various career fields in the social sciences. The second requirement is to take at least two elective classes in the social sciences area. Students may choose from psychology, sociology, The Holocaust and Women’s Rights/Civil Rights. As a junior or senior, students will be required to complete at least one independent learning experience. The experiences they choose will dictate which “Women In” distinction title they will earn at graduation. Finally, students must apply for at least one social sciences scholarship and be accepted into a college with a social sciences major.

Additionally, students may opt to complete this program on the Advanced Placement (AP) track. This will allow the student to obtain a designation of honors in their selected distinction. To obtain this status students must take at least two Advanced Placement level courses in addition to the two electives. Students may take Advanced Placement classes in World History, United States History, Psychology or Government. Another requisite for honors designation is to obtain at least a three on the AP exams and to attain mastery in both the Global and United States Regents exams.

Although the program has only been in existence for a month, it is progressing rapidly. There are currently twenty eight students enrolled and the first phase of the program has already begun. Earlier in February the students were able to attend a presentation from Dr. Kathryn Kendall, the Senior Assistant Dean for Enrollment and Online Programs in the School of Social Work at the University at Buffalo. She spoke about the course requirements and careers that are available in her specialty. Later this month the group will attend a program at the Buffalo History Museum. The group will tour the museum and hear a presentation about the careers available for a historian. Feyes is trying to finalize a date to have the group attend a murder trial and then meet with Federal Judge Elizabeth Wolford, the only female Federal Court judge in Western New York.

Mount Mercy Academy

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