

June 7, 2013

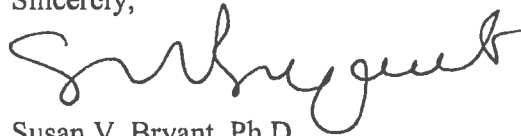
**MARY GILLY, CHAIR
ACADEMIC SENATE – IRVINE DIVISION**

Re: Proposed Name Change for the Department of Women's Studies

I have received a request from the Dean of the School of Humanities to change the name of the Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies. The Department makes a reasonable case for the change as being consistent with the current interests of the faculty, and the Humanities Executive Council supports the change.

The full request is attached here for Senate review; please forward the Senate's comments to this office as soon as is practical.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan V. Bryant".

Susan V. Bryant, Ph.D.
Interim Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost

Attachment

C: Dean Van Den Abbeele
Vice Provost Clark

Sue Bryant
Interim Executive Vice-Chancellor and Provost

June 4, 2013

RE: Proposed Name Change for the Department of Women's Studies

Dear Sue,

I'm writing in support of the proposed name change for the Department of Women's Studies. The proposed new name, "Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies," is unanimously supported by the department's faculty and has received the full support of the Humanities Executive Council. More than a mere name change, however, the proposal addresses the changed role and function of the field itself, from its early incarnation as an academic program dedicated to the social, historical and cultural role of women to today's expanding set of concerns about how gender is understood in different cultures and different times, the ways in which sexual activity and orientation is likewise differentially understood and practiced, and the manifold ways in which these differences play out in legal, medical, bioethical, and psychological terms. The name change is this also a redefinition of the program in ways that are utterly consistent with its evolution, as evidenced not only by UCI but by numerous other institutions that have likewise adopted similar name changes. Finally, the change signifies a new openness for the department in terms of its ability and desire to interact with other campus sectors to move this important area of knowledge forward. I thus most strongly and unreservedly support the department's name change, and should you have any questions, I am most happy to respond at your convenience.

Yours,



Georges Van Den Abbeele
Dean, School of Humanities

HUMANITIES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE APRIL 25, 2013 MEETING

Members Present: Jami Bartlett, Andromache Karanika, Bonnie Kent, Lilith Mahmud, Annette Schlichter, Anne Walthall (Chair)

Also present: Sharon Block, Raschel Greenberg, Glen Mimura, Penny Portillo

1. THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 28, 2013 HEC MEETING WERE APPROVED.

2. NEW SPECIALIZATIONS IN ENGLISH FOR FUTURE TEACHERS AND HISTORY FOR FUTURE TEACHERS

A question was raised about the History specialization: how could History 192W function both as a writing-intensive course and as a "capstone" experience enabling students to develop a curricular unit appropriate for a middle or high school classroom?

The specializations in both English and History were approved pending resolution of the question about History 192W. The Committee voted 5 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 abstaining.

3. NEW COURSE: WRITING 197

The course was unanimously approved.

4. NEW COURSES: E ASIAN 11, E ASIAN 12, E ASIAN 25, E ASIAN 50, E ASIAN 60, E ASIAN 70

The courses were unanimously approved.

5. NEW COURSE: HUMAN T1

The course was approved by a vote of 4 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstaining.

6. DEPARTMENT NAME CHANGE – WOMEN'S STUDIES

The change was unanimously approved.

This agenda concluded at 5:01p.m.

Proposal for Name Change
Submitted by the Department of Women's Studies

April 2013

As a Department, we are proud of the accomplishments that have distinguished it as one of the top departments of Women's Studies, particularly in terms of transnational feminist studies. However, we also recognize the need to transform and to adjust to new times and to new conditions in order to remain vibrant and cutting-edge as we reconfigure our analytical tools. As a symbol of the transformations we have undergone in recent years, we propose to change our name from the "Department of Women's Studies" to the "Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies." The core departmental faculty have discussed this issue at length and have voted unanimously to proceed with this proposal.

Generally speaking, the trend in the field now involves addressing more broadly themes pertaining to gender and sexuality, in addition to studies that examine women's lives and rights. We now reach a broader range of students and are able to market our program to students interested in sexuality studies, gender studies, and studies of femininities and masculinities, in addition to those interested in more traditional women's studies themes and transnational feminisms. Indeed, the title "Women's Studies," while rooted in an important history, no longer accurately reflects the scholarship of the field of inquiry it names. Women's Studies programs today engage not only in restoring the history of women's thought and lives, but also in the construction of gender and sexuality. The changes in the scholarship of the field of Women's Studies reflect an evolution in the field which should be embraced and named as such.

Specifically, gendered power structures cannot be understood without an inquiry into the forces of sexuality. Gender Studies necessarily includes a study of sexuality, whereas Women's Studies, traditionally configured, often neglects such concerns. The change to Gender Studies encourages those concerned with solely women's issues to consider and work in tandem with sexuality and masculinity issues, to recognize the relationships between broader constructions of gender and sexuality in defining women's concerns. Finally, job descriptions on the NWSA website reflect a fairly equal distribution of jobs for Women's Studies programs and Women's and Gender Studies (among other) programs. However, many of the strictly "Women's Studies" job descriptions seek applicants with a range of knowledge in gender, sexuality, and race issues. Indeed, there is national evidence of this trend: Institutions such as Yale University, University of Richmond, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, University of Kansas, and Macalaster College (to name only a few), have all changed their department and degree title names to reflect expanded scholarly and curricular coverage to "gender and sexuality" broadly.

We believe that the name change would also better reflect our strength in Feminist Transnational Analysis, which has been a distinguishing feature of our department, recognized for its excellence both by external reviewers and by the feminist studies community on a national and international level. Our groundbreaking feminist transnational analyses have focused on the networks of connections and inequalities arising from newer forms of globalization and from older histories of imperialism, colonialism and slavery. A distinctive hallmark of our department

is that our research and teaching mission is not to provide broad coverage of discrete areas of the world but rather to scrutinize key discursive and institutional sites through which gendered and sexualized subjects and forms of knowledge are produced and circulated. We believe that thinking transnationally goes against regional divisions, as constructed within traditional Area Studies or nation-based programs, and also against the chronocentrism of globalization studies because it examines the shifting histories of gender and sexuality as a result of cross-cultural encounters and political-economic exigencies.

Ultimately, we intend to pursue new hires in specific subfields of feminist scholarship that have become crucial to the field at large, and in which we too must invest if we are to regain the title we used to hold as one of the leading centers for the study of gender in the country. In so doing, we hope to work alongside the other units in the School of Humanities and to contribute to its excellence with our efforts. We are ready to move forward and to embrace new directions of study and new opportunities to prove ourselves, once again, as the leading Department of Gender and Sexuality Studies.