



Senate Committee on Academic Development
Report to Senate – Meeting of November 26, 2009

**Proposal to change the name of the Department of Women's Studies to the
Department of Gender Studies**

Introduction

A proposal to change the name of the Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender Studies was considered by the Senate Committee on Academic Development at its meeting on November 4, 2009. L. Ratcliffe, Associate Dean, Arts and Science, was present to speak to the proposal. Supporting documentation is attached to this Report.

Analysis and Discussion

Members of SCAD noted the following:

- The proposal to change the name of the Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender Studies was approved unanimously by the Arts and Science Faculty Board on September 25, 2009 and has extensive support from students, staff and faculty within the Department;
- The request for a name change from Women's Studies to Gender Studies points to an opening up of gender categories and reflects current research and debate in the fields of Women's Studies, Feminist Studies and Gender Studies;
- Investigation into feminist departments at peer institutions reveals a sea change shift to the use of "Gender Studies". This change recognizes how the field is moving towards a multi-faceted approach to gender categories that encompasses racial, gendered and sexual diversity;
- The Master of Arts in Gender Studies was approved by Senate in 2009. The Department is building strong links between the graduate and undergraduate programs and naming the Department "Gender Studies" will demonstrate academic, intellectual and institutional coherence.

Conclusions/Recommendation

Recommendation:

that Senate approve the proposal to change the name of the Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender Studies and inform the Board of Trustees of this change.

SCAD expects a separate proposal from the Faculty of Arts and Science to change the undergraduate degree names to Gender Studies from Women's Studies at a future meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick Deane
Chair, Senate Committee on Academic Development

Committee Members:

Members

N. Chesterley
P. Deane (Chair)
J. Emrich
P. Fachinger
N. Fulford
A. Jack-Davies
P. Oosthuizen
T. Shearer
D. Stockley
R. Ware
P. Watkin (Secretary)

As Associate Dean for the Department of Women's Studies, I'm pleased to forward the motion for departmental name change (see below) that was approved at Faculty Board on Friday September 25, 2009. I understand you will pass this to SCAD for their meeting on October 21, and all going well, it would then go to the November meeting of Senate.

10. Name Change – Department of Women's Studies – Appendix B – for approval

Moved by Ms. Baines, seconded by Mr. McDonald, and carried, that "the Faculty Board of Arts and Science approve the change of name for the Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender Studies."

Appendix B

Women's Studies Departmental Name Change

Rationale: All core faculty, staff, and the DSC representative in the Department of Women's Studies have recently voted to change our departmental name from Women's Studies to Gender Studies. Our rationale for this change is as follows:

- Noticing the recent shift from Women's Studies to Gender Studies and/or Women's and Gender Studies, which has occurred in multiple academic institutions, naming ourselves Gender Studies signals the most recent and cutting edge debates in the fields of Women's Studies, Feminist Studies, and Gender Studies.
- The shift to Gender Studies, importantly, points to an opening up of gender categories—thus encompassing racial, gendered and sexual diversity. Notably, women do not go missing in Gender Studies, but rather are understood in relation to and necessarily part of complex social networks and heterogeneous political identities.
- With the first cohort of Gender Studies MA candidates arriving to Queen's University in Fall 2009, we will maintain strong linkages between the undergraduate program and the graduate program; naming both the undergraduate and graduate programs Gender Studies will demonstrate academic, intellectual, and institutional coherence.
- The Department of Women's Studies has researched the proposed name change for roughly seven years. Investigations into other feminist departments by faculty, from year to year, as well as student demands (one of which resulted in a questionnaire and follow-up analysis), also reveal that the proposed departmental name, Gender Studies, speaks to contemporary debates in social theory and emphasizes the foci through which many faculty and students are thinking about their research projects. The proposed name change also points to our already existing openness to diverse intellectual approaches to the ways in which gender is constituted in our global world—as seen in departmental vision, our curriculum, our administering of the Sexuality and Gender Diversity Certificate, and our campus events (invited speakers, student activities, and publications).