

Contact: Rachel Boon

**REQUEST FOR A PROGRAM NAME CHANGE AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY:  
FROM WOMEN'S STUDIES PROGRAM TO WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES PROGRAM**

**Action Requested:** Consider recommending approval of the request by Iowa State University to change the name of the Women's Studies Program to the Women's and Gender Studies Program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

**Executive Summary:** The proposed department name change will better reflect the expertise, teaching and research of many faculty in the department and aligns with department names at peer institutions. No other Regent university has a department with this name. The Board Office reviewed this request and recommends approval.

**Background:**

- ◇ **Description of program.** In 1977, the Women's Studies Program was established at Iowa State University. The Program currently has two core faculty, five lecturers, one academic undergraduate adviser and four graduate teaching assistants. There are over 30 affiliate faculty in various departments and colleges across the university which enhances the interdisciplinary spirit of the Program. As of Fall 2016 there were approximately 32 undergraduate students majoring in the program (11 first majors, and 21 second majors). Students can choose from a curriculum of core and cross-listed courses. The undergraduate and graduate curricula were revised in May 2013 to keep up with current research and curricula in this field. This program focuses on the study of issues and scholarship relevant to women and gender, challenges existing systems of knowledge, and forges new scholarship based on the centrality of gender as a category of analysis.

The Program currently offers courses to over 1,500 students a year; nearly three-fourths of the Women's Studies courses meet the University's US Diversity requirement. The table below illustrates significant growth in credit hours taught during a six-year period.

	Total Credit Hours	% Change
FY11	3,296.00	
FY12	3,954.00	20.0%
FY13	4,177.64	5.7%
FY14	4,368.07	4.5%
FY15	4,682.06	7.1%
FY16	4,972.00	6.2%
<b>5-yr change</b>	<b>+1,676.00</b>	<b>+50.8%</b>

\*Includes: Summer, Fall, and Spring

- ◇ **Proposed name.** Women's and Gender Studies Program
- ◇ **Reason for proposed name change.** In 2011 the Faculty Senate approved a request from the Program to change the administrative unit name from Women's Studies to Women's and Gender Studies; this proposal continues this progress, requesting to also change the name of the program and its associated BA and BS major to Women's and Gender Studies.

The proposed change represents a more accurate description of the teaching, research, and outreach goals of this program, is in keeping with national trends in the field, and will better serve ISU students. While women's studies was the appropriate name in the 1970s, current

work in women’s studies is no longer focused solely on women. The discipline has broadened and a name that focuses on a biological category such as “Women” does not represent the critical conversations about social constructions of gender such as femininity and masculinity or the way gender intersects with issues of race and class in complex ways.

The addition of “Gender” to the name also reflects current course offerings that are in support of growing student interest in the diverse ways in which society is defining and applying gender identity. For example, growing enrollment in courses such as Gender Justice, Introduction to Lesbian Studies, Women in International Development and a cross-listed course with Sociology, Masculinity and Manhood, leverage the expertise of our faculty and give students the opportunity to learn about a variety of issues in areas such as politics, communication, history, world languages, literature, and sociology. Adding “Gender” to the major name, while keeping “Women’s,” preserves the origins of the program, more accurately reflects the breadth of the curriculum, and is consistent with names of similar majors at peer institutions.

- ◇ Comparable name at other institutions. Several other programs in the state of Iowa, at both public and private universities, have names that include gender and/or sexuality in the title. The requested major name change of the Iowa State Program is in line with other programs around the state.

<b>Iowa Universities</b>	<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>Name of Degrees</b>	
University of Northern Iowa	Program in Women’s and Gender Studies	MA and Graduate certificate in Women’s and Gender Studies	Undergraduate Minor in Women’s and Gender Studies
University of Iowa	Department of Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies	Graduate certificate in Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies	BA in Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies
Grinnell College	Program in Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies	No graduate programs available	BA in Gender, Women’s and Sexuality Studies
Drake University	Women’s and Gender Studies Program	Women’s and Gender Studies Concentration	

At the national level, there has been a widespread movement to change names of programs, departments and majors to include gender and/or sexuality. The following table lists several peer land-grant universities with names of the departments, programs, and degrees in this field.

<b>Peer Land-Grant Universities</b>	<b>Name of Program</b>	<b>Name of Degrees</b>	
University of Arizona	Department of Gender and Women's Studies	PhD in Gender and Women's Studies	BA in Gender and Women's Studies
University of California-Davis	Program in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies	Graduate Emphasis in Feminist Theory & Research	BA in Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies
University of Illinois-Urbana	Department of Gender and Women's Studies	Graduate minor in Gender and Women's Studies	BA in Gender and Women's Studies
Michigan State University	Program in Women, Gender, and Social Justice	Graduate specialization in Women, Gender, and Social Justice	BA in Women's and Gender Studies
University of Minnesota	Department of Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies	PhD in Feminist Studies	BA in Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies
North Carolina State University	Program in Women's and Gender Studies	Graduate minor in Women's and Gender Studies	BA in Women's and Gender Studies
Ohio State University	Department of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies	PhD and MA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies	BA in Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison	Department of Gender and Women's Studies	PhD minor and MA in Gender and Women's Studies	BA in Gender and Women's Studies

- ◇ Consistency with accreditation requirements. The National Women's Studies Association does not accredit programs. This requires no change to HLC accreditation.
- ◇ Effect on program configuration. There is no effect on program configuration.
- ◇ Effect on students. The proposed change will be beneficial to current students since the new name of the major will appropriately represent the breadth of their studies. Given the national trends, having this name of the major on the transcript and diploma will also be in keeping with peer institutions. This change may also help in recruiting students to the major and minors since it is more inclusive, reflecting the broad areas of study encompassed by Women's and Gender Studies.

Broadening the name of the major and the name of the course designator through which students register for the courses offered by the program, will also better signal the breadth of material studied in the courses taken annually by hundreds of ISU students interested in becoming better prepared to engage increasingly diverse workplaces and communities. The **50.8% growth in SCH between 2011 and 2016** (from 3296 to 4972) is a strong indicator of student interest in these courses.

- ◇ Effect on resources. No costs will be incurred beyond the time needed to update university records, systems, and catalog to reflect the name change.
- ◇ Proposed name consistent with College mission. This is a proposal to change the name of an undergraduate major. The requested change reflects the commitment to diversity evident in the mission statement of the Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) College and the Strategic Plan of the University. The Program provides a variety of courses at both the undergraduate and graduate level that address diversity issues.

The LAS College mission states, "*The primary mission of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is to prepare students to become knowledgeable, contributing citizens in a world of diverse cultures.*" In line with this mission, the Program, major and courses, focus on the diversity of individuals in expression of gender and sexualities at both domestic and international levels. It encompasses a wide range of the social sciences and humanities with both stand-alone and cross-listed classes offered in cooperation with other departments. The proposed change will better reflect the inclusive nature of the coursework and assist the college in its work to promote and sustain a diverse and welcoming environment for all. The Program embraces its role in advancing these key features of the College and University missions and strategic goals. This proposal to change the name of the major will help us better fulfill our role.

- ◇ Date of implementation. If approved by the Board of Regents, the name change will be implemented in July 2017.