

Contact: Diana Gonzalez

REQUEST FOR A PROGRAM NAME CHANGE AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
BACHELOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES TO
BACHELOR OF ARTS PROGRAM IN AFRICAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Action Requested: Consider approval of the request by Iowa State University to change the name of the Bachelor of Arts Program in African American Studies to the Bachelor of Arts Program in African and African American Studies.

Executive Summary: The proposed name reflects the current development in the field and creates the framework to develop and enrich the Program further. African American Studies programs are undergoing changes to make them more responsive to cross-disciplinary and intercultural issues. The proposed name will not de-emphasize the traditional black American focus nor will it have any negative effect on students. This request has been reviewed by the Board Office and the Council of Provosts and is recommended for approval. This request addresses the Board of Regents Strategic Plan objective (1.1) to “offer high-quality programs through ongoing program improvement for undergraduate, graduate, professional, and non-degree students and special school students.”

Background:

- ◇ **Description of program.** African American Studies is a cross-disciplinary program in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences that offers students the opportunity to explore the history and experiences of Blacks in America, Africans, and people of African descent across the globe. Students in the program analyze the experiences of these groups through the study of history, literature, art, religion, political science, psychology, anthropology, economics, and sociology.
- ◇ **Interdisciplinary studies.** The interdisciplinary studies major includes 36-48 credits of coursework chosen to provide a coherent, carefully planned program in an area of interest that bridges two or more departments.
- ◇ **Current name.** When the discipline was institutionalized in the 1960s, the name(s) adopted underscored the contextual and historical challenges of confronting the heritage of racism that legitimized misrepresentations of Black history, culture, and experience. The two common names were “Afro-American Studies” and “Black Studies.”
- ◇ **Proposed name.** The proposed name will continue to advance the study of the Black American experiences within the dominant, but changing, white society, while simultaneously promoting other ethnic and cultural experiences occurring on a global scale.

- ◇ Comparable name at other institutions. The proposed name has been adopted by departments, programs, and centers at a number of institutions, including Harvard University, Ohio State University, Temple University, University of Massachusetts, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, University of Kansas, and University of Indiana.
- ◇ Emerging names. As the discipline has developed and expanded, new names have emerged, including “Africana Studies,” “African American Studies,” and, most recently, “African and African American Studies.”
- ◇ Goals of proposed name change. The proposed name will accomplish two goals: (1) merge the two essential elements of the field, Africa and Black America; and (2) expand and enrich the curriculum because the study of Africa extends beyond the continent to the global Diaspora context.
- ◇ African Studies program not available. Currently, there is no African Studies Program at Iowa State University. The proposed name change will address this gap in the curriculum by additional course offerings in African studies.
- ◇ Outcomes of program graduates. Program graduates will have not only a solid grounding in Black American history and experience but also the experiences of Black Americans, Africans, and people of African descent.
- ◇ Endorsements. The proposed name change has been endorsed by the three African American Studies student organizations (Band of Brothers, Circle of Trust, and the African American Studies Society); and the African Students Association.