

WGSS Program for Academic Department Designation
REPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

Brief History of Issue - why the issue is being considered:

The Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) program is requesting the establishment of an academic department and department name change: Change the name of the program/department from "Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies" to "Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" for the next possible catalog. The rationale for the change includes increasing campus visibility and elevating program distinction externally within UW-System and beyond. The evolution of the program as an academic field of inquiry continues to expand and requires a name change that corresponds with this level of involvement (see inserted table below). Establishment of the department would assist with both student and faculty recruitment; enhance communication with internal (e.g., participation in shared governance) and outside stakeholder (e.g., UW System distinction). The renaming better captures the wide program array and exhibits the intersectionality that serves as the framework of the overall program.

Historical Evolution of the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) Program has undergone significant changes over the last forty years. The following gives a timeline of the numerous key changes.

- The Women's Studies Program was referenced in the catalog in 1981.
- A minor was implemented in fall 1984.
- A certificate was implemented in fall 2002.
- A standard major was implemented in fall 2006.
- An LGBTQ Studies Certificate was implemented in fall 2012.
- The Critical Hmong Studies (CHS) Certificate Program was relocated from the Department of Languages to the Women's Studies Program in fall 2017.
- The Women's Studies Program was renamed the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program in keeping with trends in the field that emphasize intersectionality as a core analytic (see further explanation of intersectional theory below). The major, minor and certificate programs were renamed to match this effective fall 2018.
- A Women of Color Feminisms Certificate is being proposed to be implemented in fall 2022, consistent with trends in the field that center the historical and contemporary contributions of women of color feminists who bring Critical Race Studies and Ethnic Studies lenses to the study of gender and sexuality.

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Points Discussed by Committee:

1. Functional and fiscal impact on university. Already functions as a department within College of Arts & Sciences. No additional funding will be provided for FTE, will have to go through request for position process.
2. Will department designation come with representation on University Senate. Designation will allow for representation on University Senate (currently no representation on senate).
3. Impact on major, minor, & certificate in terms of student enrollment.
4. Will major, minor, and certification prefixes change with department name change? Prefixes (i.e., WGSS, HMNG) will not change because a new major or minor is not being created.

Pros of Recommendation:

1. Supported by faculty and affiliated in the Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WGSS) program.
2. The proposal was also supported at the College of Arts & Sciences level.
3. Departmental status and name change more accurately reflect the many institutional contributions made by the program.
4. Distinctiveness of program to external stakeholders.

Cons of Recommendation:

None

Technology/Human Resource Impact:

None

Committee Recommendation:

The committee approved the establishment of the academic department and name change: Department of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and a name change of the program/department from "Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies" to "Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies" for the next possible catalog, starting 2023-2024 AY.

MOTION FOR THE UNIVERSITY SENATE

The University Senate Committee: Academic Policies Committee

by a vote of 9 for to 0 against on March 15, 2022 (Date)

Recommends that:

The establishment of the academic department: Department of Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; and a name change of the program/department from “Women’s Gender, and Sexuality Studies” to “Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and Sexuality Studies” for the next possible catalog, starting 2023-2024 AY. Due to the timing of request and subsequent approval of motion, changes to catalog can’t be made during the 2022-2023 AY, however the program/department will be permitted to use their new name/status for purposes other than the catalog.

Implementation Date: 23/24 catalog

Signed: _____
Chair of the Committee

Send to: University Senate Office