


MEMORANDUM

TO: Matt Hudelson, Executive Secretary, Faculty Senate

FROM: Elizabeth S. Chilton, Provost and Executive Vice President 

SUBJECT: Proposal to Rename the Degree and Course Prefix, Women's Studies

DATE: July 6, 2021

On September 20, 2018, the Faculty Senate approved a proposal to change the name of the Program in Women's Studies. The new unit name, the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, represented the broader mission of the unit and reflected national trends in the field.

This past spring, leadership in the program and college submitted the attached proposal to rename the degree and the course prefix to align with the name of the unit. The Provost's Office has received positive feedback and recommends that the Faculty Senate consider this for approval to be effective fall 2021.

With support from the Faculty Senate, the fall 2021 graduating class will reflect the new name, the **Bachelor of Arts in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies**. In addition, the course prefix abbreviation will change to **WGSS** (with the formal description being Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies).

Thank you in advance for your consideration.

June 7, 2021

Dr. Elizabeth Chilton
Provost and Executive Vice President
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164

Dear Provost Chilton,

On behalf of the Affiliate Faculty of the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and with the approval of Todd Butler, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, and the endorsement of Donna Potts, Chair, Department of English, I am writing to formally request Provost approval for a change to the Course Subject (formerly "Course Prefix") for the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies from "WOMEN_ST" to "WGSS," effective fall 2021.

As you know, Women's Studies reorganized in 2018 and became the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, administratively relocating to the Department of English while retaining a BA in Women's Studies and minors in both Women's Studies and Queer Studies. Along with creating a formal [Affiliate Faculty](#) system from across the WSU system, the Provost and Dean-approved restructuring proposal included updating the name of the unit and the curriculum—the major and two minors. The rationale for these changes included better alignment with recent developments in the field nationally and internationally (to include the study of masculinity and other genders, as well as sexualities outside normative heterosexuality), more accurate representation of the range of courses offered in a robust cross-listed curriculum, and a streamlined program structure. The curriculum revision was completed in 2019-2020 and is in place. In March 2021, materials, including a rename degree form and a formal request, were submitted to rename the BA from Women's Studies to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, effective fall 2021, which will align it as well with developments in the field and better reflect coursework that students currently take as requirements and electives for degrees in WGSS.

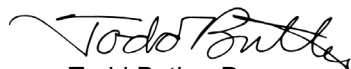
I now write to complete the process of aligning program name, curriculum, degree name, and course prefix so that they all accurately reflect the updated range of courses that are offered through WGSS, including both those parented in WGSS and those that are cross-listed with other units. I understand from the Registrar that the Catalog Subcommittee has approved both the request to rename the BA to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and the request to change the course subject to WGSS.

Thank you, and if you have any questions or concerns about the course subject change for WGSS, please contact me at pthoma@wsu.edu.

Sincerely,



Pamela Thoma, PhD
Associate Professor of English
Director, Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies



Todd Butler, Dean
College of Arts and Sciences

21 March 2021

Dear Dean Butler,

On behalf of the Affiliate Faculty of the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, I am writing to consult about and seek signature support for the proposed name change of our undergraduate degree from "BA in Women's Studies" to "BA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies."

As you know, Women's Studies reorganized in 2018 and became the Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, administratively relocating to the Department of English while retaining a BA in Women's Studies and minors in both Women's Studies and Queer Studies. Along with creating a formal [Affiliate Faculty](#) system from across the WSU system, the Provost and Dean-approved restructuring proposal included updating the name of the unit and the curriculum—the major and two minors. The rationale for these changes included better alignment with recent developments in the field nationally and internationally (to include the study of masculinity and other genders, as well as sexualities outside normative heterosexuality), and to streamline the curriculum for the new structure with a goal of building the major. The curriculum revision was completed in 2019-2020 and is in place. The degree is now ready for its updated name: the BA in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, which will align it with developments in the field and better reflect coursework that students now take as requirements and electives.

Some additional relevant background: when the BA in Women's Studies was still housed in the Department of Women's Studies in what was then the College of Liberal Arts, and in recognition of changes in the field and newly hired tenure-stream faculty with appropriate expertise, the chair of the unit surveyed students, and then the faculty agreed to change the name of the unit, followed by a change to name of the degree, to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. However, the creation of the College of Arts and Sciences, a merger into the Department of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies, and revision of curriculum and organization for that new unit intervened. In other words, this change for the BA has been planned for quite some time.

This year, and working with the WGSS Advisory Committee, I have sought informal input from current students, consulted officially with the WGSS Affiliate Faculty, many of whom teach cross-listed courses for the degree, and gained support of the Chair of English, Donna Potts, for the name change. As noted in the attached rename degree form, WGSS Affiliate Faculty from the WSUV campus, including the Vice Chancellor of WSUV and the CAS Academic Director at WSUV, were consulted as part of this process. In addition, participating Affiliate Faculty from the College of Agriculture, Human, and Natural Resource Sciences were consulted. The response was unanimous support with no negative or ambivalent/unsure input. Indeed, there is overwhelming support from WGSS constituents for what is generally acknowledged to be a positive change. I have also tracked discussion on the National Women's Studies Association's Program Administrators and Directors listerv of name change initiatives at other

institutions since spring 2018, as this leadership discussion evidences continuing revision of the degree and field, with the most recent discussion occurring in early March 2021. Finally, I also sought the input of former leadership, now retired, who led the unit in earlier periods, and they agree that this is an appropriate change. The penultimate step, according to instructions received from the registrar and the Provost's office, is to gain Dean support and an endorsing signature on the rename degree form.

Thank you, and if you have any questions or concerns about this proposed degree name change, please contact me at pthoma@wsu.edu. I am happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pamela Thoma". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pamela Thoma, PhD
Associate Professor, English
Director, Program in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
pthoma@wsu.edu