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# Memo

TO Patrick Deane, Chair, Senate Committee on Academic  
Development  
FROM Georgina Moore, Secretary of the Senate  
DATE October 9, 2009  
SUBJECT Proposed name change for the Department of Women's  
Studies to Gender Studies

The Faculty of Arts and Science Faculty Board approved the proposed change at its September 25, 2009 Faculty Board Meeting.

The attached motion and the background rationale have been provided by Dr. L. Ratcliffe, Associate Dean, Arts and Science. Should SCAD require any additional information, please contact Dr. Ratcliffe x 32448 [ratcliff@queensu.ca](mailto:ratcliff@queensu.ca) or Prof. B. Baines x 36318, [bainesb@queensu.ca](mailto:bainesb@queensu.ca)

Please review the proposal and report back to the Senate with your committee's recommendation.

This item will appear as a Matter Referred to Standing Committees on the October 22, 2009, Senate Agenda.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Georgina Moore  
Secretary of the Senate

c.c. L. Ratcliffe, Assoc. Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science  
B. Baines, Head, Women's Studies  
M. Watkin, Secretary, SCAD + copy of submission

**Name Change: Department of Women's Studies to the Department of Gender Studies**

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.”

Dr. L. Ratcliffe  
October 5, 2009

***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).