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**MEMORANDUM**

**ATTENTION** Senate **DATE** November 16, 2009  
**FROM** Jon Driver, Vice-President, Academic and Provost, and Chair, SCUP **PAGES** 1/1  
**RE:** Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences: Department of Women's Studies Name Change to Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies (SCUP 09-54)

At its November 4, 2009 meeting SCUP reviewed and approved the name change of Department of Women's Studies to Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

**Motion**

That Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors the name change of Department of Women's Studies to Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies.

encl.

c: C. Murray

**SFU**

Department of  
Women's Studies  
MEMORANDUM



Department of Women's Studies

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ATTENTION Dean Lesley Cormack, FASS  
FROM Catherine Murray, Chair, WS  
RE Department of Women's Studies Name Change to  
Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies  
DATE September 25, 2009

In 2002, the Department of Women's Studies received Senate approval for a minor in Gender Studies, the first of its kind in BC. The minor was designed to offer students opportunities to integrate their understanding of gender relations in society and culture. Under this umbrella, the Department introduced four new courses and grew total enrollments by 30% from 684 in 2002-2003 to 896 in 2008-2009.

Consistent with the recommendation from the External Reviewers, the Department agreed to facilitate better integration of the two programs (WS and GDST), since the minor was located in a different area of the calendar, and considerable student confusion arose. Indeed, the counting of total enrollments in WS was understated.

Accordingly, the Department agreed to a three-stage process to determine the best way to integrate the programs and to revise the Department's name. On June 23, 2009, the Chair issued an open call for comments, nominations for names and briefs to all eligible voters (including faculty, associate faculty, graduate student representatives, undergraduate student, library representatives and staff). The full file was again circulated July 14, with an identification of the three main options. These were Women's and Gender Studies, Gender and Women's Studies and Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies. An electronic ballot was held to narrow the list to the front-runner. Wednesday, July 22, a four-week notice of a referendum was circulated consistent with the Department's constitution, to allow for electronic ballots to be submitted in time. There were two advance ballots.

On August 19, 2009, the Department voted in a secret ballot overwhelmingly 15 yea and 1 nay in favour of a motion "Are you in favour of changing the department name to Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies"; more than meeting the two-thirds majority requirement under the articles of our constitution (Section 1). The decision was thus nearly unanimous.

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Rationale

In so doing, the Department once again becomes the first in Canada to include Gender and Sexuality within Women's Studies, feminist pedagogy, and including recent scholarship on masculinity. With sexuality recognized as an area of concentration, we highlight the growing focus of research and teaching for a number of our senior associates (including E. Chénier (History), A. Travers (Sociology and Anthropology), J. Spear (History), M. Morrow (Health Sciences) and D. Reder (English) already well-established in the field. We signal our intent to continue to build on the growing appeal of at least three international conferences on sexuality we co-sponsored which were held at SFU in the past five years, including the popular **TransSomatechnics and Regulating Bodies Colloquia**. By differentiating sexuality from gender studies, we broaden our appeal, especially at the graduate level where a number of our doctoral students are already working in the field and we show good potential for growth in undergraduate enrollments. We also continue the interdisciplinary intersections of history, social science, cultural studies, health and science already identified as our considerable strengths. Over the past year as a part of the self-study and curriculum review processes, the Department has conducted a rigorous comparison against other departments in North America. Similar integration of gender and sexuality as fundamental categories of feminist theory was found in the US at Yale, Harvard and Cornell. By contrast, our competitors at UBC and U of T have asserted separate programs. We note that UBC was successful in attracting a \$1.7 million endowment for sexuality research. No other Department in Canada (among the 9 chosen reference institutions<sup>1</sup>) integrates the three as they intersect with race, ethnicity, class, dis/ability, age and other categories of difference in the negotiation of power. The amalgamation is also reflective of a very strong repository of adjacent SFU library holdings under the Library of Congress system<sup>2</sup> and available 2007 circulation figures show the highest annual circulation per item<sup>3</sup> Finally, no other new college/university program in BC would appear yet to be growing in these areas, suggesting this is a significant area of innovation, distinctiveness and comparative advantage in recruitment for SFU/FASS to offer.

<sup>1</sup> These are: UBC, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Acadia, St. Mary's, University of Toronto, Saskatchewan, Brandon and Dalhousie.

<sup>2</sup> The ranges are : HQ 1 - 2044 -- The family. Marriage. Women ;HV 1442 - HV1448 - Women; HV 1449 - Gay men. Lesbians; with sub-ranges including the sexual life (HQ 12-449); family, marriage, home (HQ503 - 1064); sex roles (HQ 1075-1075.5) and women; and feminism (HQ1101-2030.7).

<sup>3</sup> Each item circulates 10.18 times compared with English 3.08, or general social sciences at 2.49 time per book.

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To consolidate and build on these and other undertakings, our department has already applied for a full time position in sexuality (now on hold in the current budget climate) and undertaken a significant restructuring of curriculum consistent with the recent three-year plan (See appendix X). We believe, then, the name change is fully consistent with the Academic Vision at SFU which supports a full commitment to interdisciplinarity, and to capturing emergent trends. We are committed to enabling students to become ethical, responsible and informed citizens and providing valuable training in areas from social to health policy, from cultural studies to political economy, and careers in government, international development, business or community activism. Most importantly, in the dialogue that shaped this initiative, the commitment to a radical, inclusive women's studies continues to be affirmed at the heart of debates between feminism and post-feminism concepts and underpins the new name change. The Department's members thus request the Dean of FASS to forward our ratification of a change of name to SCUP and Senate for consideration and approval in the package together with the Response to the Academic review, and Three year plan. Additional documentation is available upon request.