Notice of Intent to Move the Program in Women's Studies

Name of unit
Program in Women’s Studies

Current location of unit
Department of Critical Cultures, Gender, and Race Studies, College of Arts and Sciences

Proposed new location for the unit
Department of English, College of Arts and Sciences

Justification for the move
In 2011 the Women’s Studies and American Studies programs merged with the Department of Comparative Ethnic Studies to form the Department of Critical Culture, Gender, and Race Studies (CCGRS). A goal of the new unit was to facilitate cross-disciplinary collaboration among faculty with similar emphases. However, the faculty in Women’s Studies, as well as the remaining faculty in CCGRS, have concluded that the program is ultimately better served by aligning with the English faculty, who agree with this conclusion.

The faculty and chair of the Department of English believe that realignment of the Program in Women’s Studies with English will be a positive change and lead to improved scholarly and educational opportunities. Nationwide programs and faculty in Women’s Studies readily collaborate with those in English at both the undergraduate and graduate level. At WSU, the Women’s Studies curriculum includes several courses that are cross-listed with English and some are taught by Department of English faculty. The Pullman, Vancouver, and Tri-Cities campuses include English faculty that have training and/or ongoing research interests in the area of gender and sexuality studies. Such interdisciplinary interests are regularly expressed by both current and prospective graduate applicants, and the closer relationship facilitated by this proposal will strengthen both the Program in Women’s Studies and Department of English. At the same time, English, with supervisory authority over curricula and courses in English, Digital Technology and Culture, and Humanities, has both the organizational structure and practical experience to oversee simultaneously the Program in Women’s Studies and to support its intellectual integrity and future growth.

Description of the effect of this move on other administrative units
The transfer of core Women’s Studies faculty from CCGRS to the departments of English and History should help to strengthen those units. The tenured faculty who have requested transfers to English (Shahani and Thoma) have degrees and scholarly research related to the interests of English; likewise, tenured faculty requesting transfers to History (Gordillo and Heidenreich) have degrees and scholarly research in History.

The subcommittee recommends that the Program in Women’s Studies be renamed Program in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies with acceptance of this proposal to reflect better the
concerns and intellectual domain of coursework and scholarship associated with the program as well as advances in the field nationally and internationally in the past twenty years. We believe this new name, along with the revised vision for the program and new approach to faculty affiliation proposed in the accompanying proposal will result in more engagement of the Program in Women’s Studies with units across the university, leading to broader participation and better opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate education in areas of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies.

Description of the effect of this move on the faculty in the unit
All five core faculty members in Women’s Studies submitted to Dean DeWald on November 28, 2016, a unanimously agreed upon proposal to separate the Program in Women’s Studies from CCGRS and to realign it under the umbrella of the Department of English. These faculty continue to see the realignment of the program and transfer of their appointments out of CCGRS as critical to their future success.

Description of the process used to consult the affected faculty and other affected administrative units
After the five core faculty members in Women’s Studies submitted to Dean DeWald in November 2016 a proposal to realign the Program in Women’s Studies with the Department of English, Larry Hufford was asked to facilitate a conversation among the Women’s Studies faculty and chairs Todd Butler (Department of English) and Stephen Kale (Department of History) in February 2017. The chairs of these two departments were invited because core faculty in Women’s Studies had requested to move their appointments from CCGRS to these two departments. After this meeting, some faculty from the Program in Women’s Studies began to meet more widely with faculty in the Department of English about the possibility of moving the administrative home of the program and also the appointments of core Women’s Studies faculty to English. Other faculty from the Program in Women’s Studies began to explore the possibility of moving their appointments to the Department of History. The meeting helped to identify critical issues for faculty in Women’s Studies and also for the departments of English and History in regard to possibly moving faculty appointments and the Program home.

On March 1, 2017, at the request of Dean Daryll DeWald, Larry Hufford moderated for the College of Arts and Sciences a visioning session on academic realignments that included the administrative home for Women’s Studies to which all faculty in the college were invited. Prior to this visioning session the College of Arts and Sciences created an online comment board for submission of questions, comments, and concerns about this academic realignment. Questions and comments received before the March 1 session were introduced into the discussion at the meeting. Comments and concerns received after the March 1 session were used to guide considerations for the planning committee formed in April by Provost Bernardo.

Provost Bernardo, on April 27, 2017, formed a planning committee to develop a comprehensive proposal for a new school focused on language, culture, and race that would result from the merger of faculty from Comparative Ethnic Studies in CCGRS with the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures and also a subcommittee to develop a proposal for the academic realignment of the Program in Women’s Studies. The planning committee
and subcommittee met in May 2017 to plan work ahead and discuss consulting with faculty, staff, and students. The Women’s Studies subcommittee picked up its plans at the beginning of fall semester 2017 and worked earnestly to develop the attached proposal.

Part of the committee’s work has been to seek input from faculty, staff, and students in the effected units. We held on October 11, an open forum with faculty and staff from both CCGRS and DFLC to solicit their input on early drafts of the proposal for the new school focused on language, culture, and race and the proposal to realign the Program in Women’s Studies with the Department of English. Input received at that forum and afterward was used to revise the proposals for the new school and the realignment of Women’s Studies. Undergraduate majors and minors in Women’s Studies were surveyed to obtain their perspectives. A preliminary version of the proposal to transition the administrative home for the Program in Women’s Studies to the Department of English was also shared with faculty in English and History, and they were given the opportunity to comment and to provide advisory ballots on the move of faculty appointments (by their respective departments) and move of the program (only by English).

**Do the faculty and other units approve? If not, please explain why the unit should be moved over these objections.**

In an advisory ballot in CCGRS, all five of the core faculty in Women’s Studies voted in support of the transfer of the program to an administrative home in the Department of English. Among the other faculty in CCGRS, six voted in support of the transfer of the program to an administrative home in the Department of English, none voted in opposition to the move, and two abstained. Thus, there was strong support in CCGRS for the disarticulation of the department and move of the Program in Women’s Studies to a new unit.

Faculty in the Department of English were unanimous in their support to transition the Program in Women’s Studies to an administrative home in English. Faculty in the Department of English and the Department of History were unanimous in their support to accept core faculty from Women’s Studies into their units (Sciachitano, Shahani, and Thoma in English; Gordillo and Heidenreich in History).

**Description of the efforts that will be made to reduce any deleterious effects on the faculty or other administrative units**

We have attempted to work with the departments of English and History as the new home units for core faculty in Women’s Studies to ascertain that current teaching duties will follow the faculty into their first year in their new units. After the first year, we anticipate that teaching roles may shift toward needs in the new home department, while also including a selection of Women’s Studies courses. Our proposal also addresses promotion and mentoring for these faculty in their new units.

We have proposed to transition budget for the operations of Women’s Studies from CCGRS to the Department of English as the administrative home. Likewise, we have proposed to transition a small amount funding to the departments of English and History to support faculty development. Thus, neither English nor History should face new financial burdens because of the realignment of the program and the move of faculty appointments.
Timeline
We request review of the proposal for the Women’s Studies transition by CAS, Provost’s Office, and Faculty Senate beginning fall semester 2017.

We request an official start date of July 1, 2018, for the program transfer to English.

Name and contact information of the person filing this notice
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31 October 2017