

The Women's & Gender Studies (WGS) Department is proposing a name change to Women's, Gender & Queer Studies (WGQS) Department. Per the procedure outlined on the [Academic Programs & Planning policy page](#) (informed by AS-328-89), please see the attached pdf which contains the following:

1. Original proposal, page 1
2. Letters of support from campus constituents, pages 2-4
3. Email recommendation/endorsement from the Academic Senate College Caucus, page 6
4. Email recommendation/endorsement from the College Council (Philip Williams is the chair), page 7
5. Email recommendation/endorsement from the CLA dean, page 8



MEMORANDUM

1/25/21

TO: Philip J. Williams, Dean, College of Liberal Arts

FROM: Elizabeth Adan, Chair, Women's & Gender Studies Department

COPIES: Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Penny K. Bennett, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts
Josh Machamer, Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts

SUBJECT: WGS Department official name change request

This memo serves as an official request by the Women's & Gender Studies (WGS) Department to **change our name to the Women's, Gender & Queer Studies (WGQS) Department.**

We are requesting this name change for the following reasons:

- Since 2017, the department has administered two undergraduate minor programs, in Queer Studies (QS) and in Women's & Gender Studies, and the proposed name change thus incorporates both programs into the department's institutional title and more accurately represents the full scope of the teaching, scholarship, creative work, and activism in which our students, staff, and faculty engage;
- The proposed name change provides important visibility and inclusion for LGBTQ+ communities, who have long histories of marginalization both in WGQS as a discipline and at Cal Poly as an institution; and
- The proposed name change more closely aligns with recent developments and ongoing commitments in the discipline to address the closely interrelated forces of genders and sexualities, considered via intersectional frameworks both within and across local, regional, national, and transnational contexts.

Note also that the proposed name change aligns with suggestions made by former students who have completed the QS and/or WGS minors as part of their undergraduate degree studies at Cal Poly. In particular, based on anecdotal information, the addition of the term "Queer" to the department's existing name more closely reflects the ways that many recent and current students describe the academic and activist interests they pursue via these programs.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.



CAL POLY
Student Affairs

Office of the Vice President
Student Affairs
Office: 805-756-1521
vpsa@calpoly.edu
studentaffairs.calpoly.edu

February 4, 2021

Elizabeth Adan
Chair, Women's & Gender Studies Department
Cal Poly

Dear Elizabeth,

Please accept this letter of support for your proposed name change of the Women's & Gender Studies Department to the Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department.

While the naming of academic departments is not within the scope of responsibilities of my role, I offer this letter of support as I believe it is an important step forward in the university's progress towards a more diverse and inclusive university. Visibility and naming matters and this change will send a signal about the importance of LGBTQ+ individuals in our community. Additionally, students, faculty and staff who heavily factor diversity and inclusion as a decision-making factor in their choice to enroll or work at Cal Poly will view this change positively and it can influence their decision.

As a gay man who regularly experiences marginalization in San Luis Obispo and in my personal and professional interactions at Cal Poly, this proposed name change can be a positive step forward towards ending the identity-based differential treatment that I and so many that hold LGBTQ+ identity experience.

I thank you and the faculty for advancing this name change and wish you the best as you navigate the process to complete this change.

Sincerely,

Keith B. Humphrey, Ph. D.
Vice President for Student Affairs

To Whom It May Concern,

Student Diversity and Belonging is in full support of the WGS department name change to **Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department**. This change more adequately reflects the intersectional histories of the field. Since at least the mid-20th century, queer people have been at the heart of the major social movements and civil rights organizations in the United States. Queer education is crucial in elevating a queer history that is often unacknowledged and cultivates a more robust and comprehensive educational experience. This change also further strengthens the curricular and co-curricular partnerships with Student Diversity & Belonging, that are critical to advancing holistic learning and leadership opportunities.

Sincerely,

Student Diversity & Belonging



Pride Faculty Staff Association
California Polytechnic State University
pridefsa@calpoly.edu
pridefsa.calpoly.edu

February 8, 2021

To Whom it May Concern,

We write on behalf of the Pride Faculty Staff Association in support of the WGS Department's request for an official name change to the **Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department**.

As an organization that is dedicated to empowering and enhancing the voices, visibility, presence, and community of Cal Poly faculty, staff, and graduate students of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions, the Pride FSA sees this proposed departmental name change as contributing to these efforts across campus and throughout the San Luis Obispo community. In particular, the Pride FSA and WGS Department share ongoing commitments to create a safe and inclusive campus climate and advocate for justice, safety, wellbeing, and equity for all, and we see institutional naming as one important strategy (among many) that contributes to this work, with the proposed name change expanding urgently needed institutional visibility for the LGBTQ+ community at Cal Poly and in San Luis Obispo County.

In addition, we recognize that the proposed name change will more accurately represent the two different minor programs administered in the department, as well as the teaching, research, activism, and creative activity of the faculty, staff, and students in the department on campus and in the field of WGQS more generally.

Sincerely,

Pride FSA Cabinet Members

Brittany Blunk
Jess Jensen
Kendall Scott Perez
Rebecca Richards



February 10, 2021

Gregg Fiegel, Director
University Honors Program
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Philip Williams, Dean
College of Liberal Arts
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407

Dear Dean Williams,

I write to you and the campus community on behalf of the staff of the Cal Poly University Honors Program. We support the WGS Department's request for an official name change to the following: **Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department**.

The Honors Program brings together students, staff, faculty, and friends of the University to seek challenges, participate in experiential and interdisciplinary learning, and grow as individuals. Our curriculum focuses on topics related to sustainability, equity, and justice. Further, we rely on campus partners like the WGS Department to serve our stakeholders and work toward enacting positive change. Our partnership with the WGS Department is a strong one, especially in terms of our curriculum. The Honors Program is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts both at Cal Poly and more generally.

We recognize the importance of this proposed name change. It refers to both minor programs currently offered by the WGS Department. Additionally, it reflects the current state of the field of WGQS as well as the inter- and cross-disciplinary professional commitments of the WGS Department's faculty, staff, and students.

Finally, we recognize that institutional naming represents an important opportunity to provide visibility, especially for communities whose histories and experiences have been and continue to be marginalized. This proposed name change provides an urgently needed opportunity to expand visibility for the LGBTQ+ community, especially at Cal Poly and in San Luis Obispo County, which the Honors Program supports unreservedly.

Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for all that you do to serve Cal Poly students, staff, and faculty.

Sincerely,



Gregg L. Fiegel, PhD, PE, GE
Professor and Director of the University Honors Program

From: Jose Navarro <jnavar17@calpoly.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 8:09 PM
To: Philip J. Williams
Subject: Re: WGS Department name change request documents

Dear Philip,

The entire CLA caucus unanimously supports the WGQS name change! Please let me know if you need a more formal letter from me as caucus chair. Otherwise, please accept this as our formal feedback.

Warmly,
José

José Navarro
Associate Professor
Department of Ethnic Studies
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

On Apr 6, 2021, at 5:47 PM, Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu> wrote:

Great – thx!

Philip J. Williams
Dean
College of Liberal Arts
Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, CA
Pronouns: he/him/his

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www.calpoly.edu
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Twitter: @pjwilliams59
<image001.png>

From: Jose Navarro
Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 5:17 PM
To: Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu>
Subject: Re: WGS Department name change request documents

Hi Philip,

I'll send this out to the CLA senators for discussion today and report back as soon as I hear from them. Personally, I fully support this name change!

Warmly,
José

José Navarro
Associate Professor
Ethnic Studies Department
1 Grand Avenue
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(805) 756-6268 office

Cal Poly is located on the unceded ancestral homelands of yak titʻu titʻu yak tilhini (ytt)--a tribe of Indigenous Northern Chumash people from the San Luis Obispo County and region.

From: Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, April 6, 2021 3:23 PM
To: Jose Navarro <jnavar17@calpoly.edu>
Subject: FW: WGS Department name change request documents

Hi Jose,
It's come to my attention that as part of the process to request the name change of the WGS Department to Women's, Gender & Queer Studies, I need to reach out to the Academic Senate CLA College Caucus for its recommendation (the CLA College Council has already endorsed the request). I'm writing to you as chair of the college caucus to consult other CLA senators to provide a college caucus recommendation so as to move the process forward. Let me know if you have any questions. Best, Philip

From: Elizabeth Adan
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 5:13 PM
To: Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu>; Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore <cje@calpoly.edu>
Subject: Re: WGS Department name change request documents

Dear Philip and Cynthia,

My thanks to Philip for forwarding the proposal and support statements regarding our request for an official name change in the WGS Department to Women's, Gender & Queer Studies.

I'm pleased to report that I received the remaining two statements of support I was expecting earlier today, and I have compiled them, with the existing documents, into a new single file (pdf attached).

If you need additional information and/or materials from WGS, please do not hesitate to let me know!

Best,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Adan, Ph.D. (she, her, hers)
Chair, Women's & Gender Studies Department
Professor, Interdisciplinary Studies in Liberal Arts Department
California Polytechnic State University
San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
(805) 756-1564
eadan@calpoly.edu

From: Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 10, 2021 4:05 PM
To: Cynthia Jackson-Elmoore <cje@calpoly.edu>
Cc: Elizabeth Adan <eadan@calpoly.edu>
Subject: FW: WGS Department name change request documents

Dear Cynthia,

As per our discussion this morning, please find attached the proposal and letters of support to change the name of WGS to the Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department. I fully endorse the proposed name change for the reasons cited in the memo, as does the CLA College Council that met to discuss on Tuesday, February 9. My understanding of the process is that you would bring it the Academic Senate for consideration and recommendation before your final approval. Here's a link to the process:

<https://academicprograms.calpoly.edu/policies/department-name-change>

Let me know if you have any questions or require additional information.

Best, Philip

Philip J. Williams
Dean
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<image001.png>

From: Elizabeth Adan
Sent: Monday, February 8, 2021 1:11 PM
To: clachairs (clachairs@calpoly.edu) <clachairs@calpoly.edu>
Cc: Philip J. Williams <pjw@calpoly.edu>; Jennifer Teramoto Pedrotti <jpedrott@calpoly.edu>; Penny K. Bennett <pkbennet@calpoly.edu>; Josh Machamer <jmachame@calpoly.edu>; Lynne Ricard <lriscard@calpoly.edu>
Subject: WGS Department name change request documents

Dear CLA Chairs,

In advance of the College Council meeting tomorrow, please see the attached file that includes the original memo I sent to Philip initiating the WGS Department's official name change request.

As you will see (and as some of you already know), we are proposing a change to the **Women's, Gender & Queer Studies Department**, which more accurately reflects our teaching, research, and activism both within the department and in the field more generally.

In addition, the attachment includes two statements of support we have received thus far, one from Keith Humphrey and one from Student Diversity & Belonging. We also have commitments of two more such statements, one from the Honors Program (with which the department has key partnerships) and another from the Pride Faculty-Staff Association, though these have not yet arrived.

I look forward to our discussion tomorrow; if you have any questions before then, or any problems with the attachment, please let me know.

E.

=====
Elizabeth Adan, Ph.D. (she, her, hers)
Chair, Women's & Gender Studies Department
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