

FACULTY SENATE PROPOSAL

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Proposed Committee

Assignment: University Affairs

Actual Committee

Assignment: University Affairs 4/16/09

Approvals: ADAC (March 2009)
ADC approval being pursued concurrently with Senate Action

**Title: Reorganization of Academic Units Within the College of Arts and Sciences:
Separation of the Department of Sociology & Anthropology and Integration of the
Women's Studies Program**

Proposal:

Reorganize academic units within the College of Arts and Sciences, whereby the Department of Sociology & Anthropology is divided into separate Departments of Sociology and Anthropology and the Women's Studies Program is merged into the new Department of Sociology

Rationale:

The reorganization proposed herein is composed of two parts. The first effort is to realign the Department of Sociology and Anthropology into two separate Departments of Sociology and of Anthropology. The second effort is to move the Women's Studies Program into the new Department of Sociology. The reorganization will allow the professional identity of each of the three entities as Anthropology, Sociology, and Women's Studies to realize their full potential by concentrating on their fundamental academic programs while pursuing the Land Grant mission of the university through service, scholarship, and outreach. Few Research One universities around the country still retain joint sociology/anthropology departments. Separating the two departments may signal to the larger academic world that both are a high priority at New Mexico State University. In addition, the program in Women's Studies is growing rapidly. Placing the program within a departmental structure will allow it to maintain tenure-track faculty, expand its scholarship, and better serve the students.

Following a brief overview of the justification of the separation of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology are justifications prepared by each of the three programs that reflect collective discussion by all faculty members involved. Letters of support for the change signed by all the faculty members also are included.

Separation of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Separation of Sociology and Anthropology into two autonomous departments represents a natural evolution and growth of the two programs. After World War II when universities began a rapid expansion in response to the influx of students sponsored by the GI Bill, many universities established joint departments that housed several behavioral sciences. As these programs grew during the second half of the 20th century, it was common for new departments to hive off the original program and establish independent departments with specific identities. In universities today, it is not uncommon to find joint departments of sociology and anthropology, or criminal justice and political science, but in almost all cases these are found in small universities, and typically those that offer instruction and degrees only at the undergraduate level. For example, data on the first dozen joint Sociology and Anthropology departments gleaned from the American Anthropological Association Directory illustrates the typical profile:

Name of University	# Sociologists	# Anthropologists	MA Degree
Amherst College	4	4	no
Auburn University	6	4	no
Augustana College	2 (?)	2	no
Bowdoin College	7	8	no
Bucknell University	7	3	no
Carleton College	4	3	no
Clarion University	4	2	no
Colgate University	2	6	no
College of Charleston	12	7	no
College of the Holy Cross	10 (?)	3	no
College of Wooster	5	4	no
Cornell College	2	2	no

(? Indicates data from AAA Guide and web sites is unclear about disciplinary affiliation)

Historically, as programs grew in numbers of students or faculty, and/or as graduate degree programs were established, departments have separated into disciplinary specific units, in order to have a more coherent and clear identity. In addition, many perceive independent departments as reflecting greater prominence or significance within a university than what might characterize joint programs.

It is realistic to ask whether the current Department of Sociology and Anthropology at NMSU reflects the characteristics typical for joint programs that exist at other institutions, and clearly the answer is no. Specifically, the ways in which the current department is more characteristic of two independent programs includes the following variables:

- Sociology and Anthropology are two distinct disciplines with separate intellectual traditions, professional organizations, journals, and peer reference groups. Further, the needs of the both are often quite distinct in terms of physical resources and equipment.
- The typical combined department that houses both Sociology and Anthropology has a combined faculty head count of less than 10 and often one discipline is represented by only one or two faculty lines. The distribution of faculty in the current NMSU department of Sociology and Anthropology are 7 positions held by sociologists and 11 by anthropologists which is quite different than the typical combined department. With the realignment and addition of the Women's Studies faculty to sociology, this new program will have 11 total faculty members.
- Both currently offer their own M.A. degrees with graduate assistantships split between the two programs, and therefore are unique administrative structures in this regard.
- Both programs have separate undergraduate majors, with only a few classes that are cross listed. Indeed it is as likely for courses to cross list between the two disciplines as to cross list with disciplines such as government or history.
- Recent hires were largely selected by the members of the particular discipline with only minimal input from the other discipline represented in the department.
- Each disciplinary group meets autonomously to discuss issues such as curriculum development and recruiting students.
- The level of productivity of faculty in publications, scholarship, and external funding is consistent with the profile of a research university, not a small liberal arts college.
- In many respects, the two programs have been operating independently for a long time, with some shared resources (secretarial lines, office proximity, and operations budget) the only meaningful tie that binds.

Greater administrative efficiency can be achieved through separate departmental status (i.e. effort expended on only one discipline by departmental leadership and staff). This reorganization will enhance the ability of the two programs to contribute to the research mission of the University and utilize their respective strengths in pursuit of the scholarship of engagement and outreach consistent with the goals of a land grant institution. Further, the streamlining of the administrative structure will enhance the ability of the two programs to plan for the future as well as provide greater flexibility to capitalize upon arising opportunities in order to better serve our students and the community.

Justification for a Department of Anthropology

While the sociologists and cultural anthropologists share some common interests and will likely continue some collaboration, the sociologists have little identification with work in human origins, archaeology of the prehistoric and historic southwest and Mesoamerica, primates and evolutionary psychology – topics that have been the research foci of the archaeologists and biological anthropologists in the department. Additionally, anthropologists who identify

themselves as cultural anthropologists still strongly cling to the “four field tradition” of the discipline, and most would advocate strongly that the holism inherent in the discipline requires grounding in linguistics, cultural anthropology, archaeology and biological anthropology. Simply put, the two disciplines are heading in different directions, and to foster their identity and integrity it is timely to separate the two into autonomous departments.

If an independent Department of Anthropology is formed, growth is anticipated in both undergraduate and graduate student enrollment (especially the former as they may not know where anthropology can be found in a joint department), and in the vitality of the programs. Faculty may be more competitive in securing external funding, as being part of an independent department is associated with higher profiles in research and visibility for the program.

Justification for a Department of Sociology with the inclusion of Women’s Studies

Separate departmental status will enhance the prestige and professional identity of the Department of Sociology within the larger discipline and signal to the academic world the centrality of the program to the mission of New Mexico State University. The increased disciplinary prestige will facilitate the recruitment of graduate students and contribute to the faculty obtainment of external funding. Students receiving their undergraduate and/or graduate degrees from the new department also will benefit. The improved disciplinary prestige will enhance the employment prospects of the students and be advantageous for those students who endeavor to progress to another institution wherein they can earn a Ph.D. within the discipline.

The relocation of the Women’s Studies Program into the new department holds the unique potential to build mutually beneficial ties between the Department of Sociology and the Women’s Studies Program in terms of course offerings and collaboration among their respective faculty. Both have many intellectual traditions in common and are concerned with congruent broader intellectual and social issues that can serve as a foundation for interdisciplinary linkages among the faculty members. The Department of Sociology can serve and mentor the Women’s Studies Program and provide a platform from which the Women’s Studies Program can continue to grow and move towards eventual consolidation as an independent academic program.

The Sociology program has been a leader in promoting the distance education initiative of New Mexico State University. Both the Sociology B.A. and M.A. degrees, for example, are now offered online as well as on campus. Overall, 80 percent of the upper-division student credit hours generated by the Sociology program are due to online instruction. Growth in the online program, in fact, has increased 30 percent annually. Therefore, reorganization into separate departmental status will enhance the ability of the Sociology program to further maximize its potential in delivering distance education as well as contribute to the unique goals of a land grant institution.

Impact of Proposed Reorganization on Women’s Studies Program

The relocation into a departmental structure moves the Women’s Studies Program (and its degree program) away from the margins of the University academic structure bringing increased legitimacy, potential resources, and new opportunities for faculty governance according to University Policy and Procedure. Departmental structure (with faculty governance and

promotion and tenure mechanisms) allows for the transformation of Women's Studies college track faculty lines to tenure track faculty positions. Tenure track faculty will contribute to the research mission of the University and serve the land grant mission of NMSU through the scholarship of engagement and outreach. Students will have the benefit of instruction from faculty engaged in scholarship in their discipline/area of study. This will make it possible to expand the mission of the program beyond instruction to include scholarship and funded research. Departmental affiliation supports the movement already in motion in Women's Studies toward establishing a complete and fully academic program (as opposed to its prior identity as a student and campus service unit).

Official partnership with faculty in the Department of Sociology provides increased opportunities for curricular and research collaboration in new interdisciplinary directions. Increased cross-curricular partnerships with Sociology will make it easier for students interested in both Women's Studies and Sociology to minor and double major. The additional administrative support and administrative presence afforded through the relocation to the Department of Sociology (with a full time Departmental Secretary) will benefit all stakeholders served by the Women's Studies program office.

Resource Allocation, Courses, Programs, Faculty Rank, and Tenure

The separation of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology into two independent entities, the Department of Sociology and the Department of Anthropology, and the organizational move of the Program in Women's Studies into the new Department of Sociology will not cause undue hardship for other units. The only units affected are the current Department of Sociology and Anthropology and the program in Women's Studies.

Undergraduate and graduate degree programs in both Sociology and Anthropology will be maintained. Course offerings in the two disciplines will not be affected. Courses within the Department of Sociology and Anthropology are identified by two prefixes: SOC and ANTH, which will remain the case after the separation. Student credit hour production will be calculated for the two new departments using the two prefixes. The Women's Studies program also will retain its prefix and its own undergraduate curriculum, minor, and major.

The faculty rank, years to tenure, and tenure of the members of the two new departments will remain the same. In the case of Women's Studies, two College faculty positions will be converted to tenure-track positions. Funds to change these positions were committed by the Provost. The two new departments will modify the personnel documents of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology to reflect their new status. The Department of Sociology will incorporate promotion and tenure criteria in its document that are inclusive of the new tenure-track positions in Women's Studies. The new personnel documents of the two new departments will conform to the personnel documents of the College of Arts and Sciences.

Divisions of budgets, financial resources, and other support will be made to ensure that neither program is disadvantaged as an outcome of the reorganization.