

Proposition: 08-21/22

Proposal Type: Bill Resolution Memorial Joint Proposition

(If Joint proposition, also select type)

Title: Proposal for name change of the Department of Geography to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Date Submitted: 17 February 2022

Sponsor(s): Buenemann (A&S), Brown (A&S), Faruk Arslan (CoB), Tauna Cole-Dorn (A&S), Ahmed Elaksher (CoE), Chris Erickson (CoB), Iñigo García-Bryce (A&S), Brian Hampton (A&S), Steve Hanson (ACES), Karen Kopera-Frye (HEST), Dulcinea Lara (A&S), Azadeh Osanloo (HEST), Lori Saiki (HEST), Elba Serrano (A&S), Bill Walker (A&S)

Proposed Committee: Curriculum and Planning

Prior Approvals: Department Faculty, Department Head, and Dean of Arts and Sciences (see attached memo)

Proposal:

This resolution is a formal proposal for the name of the NMSU Department of Geography to be changed to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Below, we outline the justification for this name change, the benefits this name change will bring to NMSU, and how this name change will support NMSU's LEADS 2025 strategic plan and NMSU's efforts to achieve Carnegie R01 status. We also speak to potential conflicts with other programs.

Justification of Proposed Name Change

Intellectual Rationale

The discipline of geography has long been situated at the intersection of the social sciences, the natural sciences, and the humanities. Mona Domosh, a recent American Association of Geographers (AAG) president, has deemed this as the "intradisciplinarity" of geography, highlighting geography's **multiple integrative approaches to studying and understanding human-environment interactions**. Changing our department's name from the "Department of Geography" to the "Department of Geography and Environmental Studies" will acknowledge our long-standing focus on these human-environment interactions in both our research and curriculum. In addition, it will align us with geography departments across the country that have recently changed their names ([Frazier and Wikle 2016](#)); for example, the University of New Mexico, with which we jointly offer a doctoral program in geography, now has a department named "Department of Geography and Environmental Studies" (see attached list of additional programs named Geography and Environmental Studies or similar). The name change will also allow us to match the designation used by federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security, which recently added "Geography and Environmental Studies" to its STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Designated Degree Program List ([Federal Register 2022](#)).

Support of LEADS 2025 and Efforts to Achieve R01

This proposed name change supports LEADS 2025 and efforts to achieve R01 in several ways:

- Most directly, this name change will help us to attract a larger number and greater diversity of students into our department by better describing who we are and what we do. This will

support efforts to increase student enrollment and success at NMSU (LEADS 2025, Goal 1, Objective 1).

- As graduates from our program often go on to work for public or private organizations and institutions addressing environmental issues, the name change will also be consistent with the NMSU LEAD 2025 goal of strengthening career pathways and increasing social mobility for our students (LEADS 2025, Goal 1, Objective 4). Evidence of this connection to organizations and institutions addressing environmental issues is the fact that more than half of our graduate and undergraduate students are working in these organizations and institutions.
- This name change request is also consistent with the LEADS 2025 goal of elevating research and creativity, because it will help us recruit students interested in the humanities, social sciences, and creative art aspects of geography (LEADS 2025, Goal 2, Objective 2). At the same time, the name change will support the LEADS 2025 goal of amplifying research and outreach, because DHS' recognition of our field as a STEM discipline will allow us to recruit students interested in STEM and engage in more PK-20 STEM education activities (LEADS 2025, Goal 3, Objective 3)
- The proposed name change will also strengthen our linkages to UNM, with whom we are partnering on the New Mexico Doctoral Program in Geography (NMDPG). As noted earlier, UNM's department is the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, and the proposed name change will highlight the parity of the NMSU department with UNM's. This parity will help the NMDPG be successful, sustaining our doctoral program and thereby meeting the LEADS 2025 objective of enhancing graduate education (Goal 1, Objective 5), which will naturally also facilitate the LEADS 2025 goals of elevating research and creativity (Goal 2) and amplifying outreach and extension (Goal 3). The success of the NMDPG will also directly aid NMSU in its effort to achieve R01 by helping advance research in the social sciences at the PhD level, a need frequently noted by NMSU's Vice President of Research.

Potential Conflicts with Other Programs at NMSU

Environmental "studies" is distinct from environmental "science". Environmental studies focus on human-environment relationships by taking a broad view and integrating the natural and social sciences. For example, in environmental studies, we seek to understand human perceptions of the environment or how environmental challenges intersect with political, cultural, and legal considerations as well as public policy. In contrast, environmental science focuses more on the natural sciences, integrating aspects of biology, physics, chemistry, atmospheric science, or math, for example, to study the environment. Accordingly, no conflict exists with the College of Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences; the Department of Plant and Environmental Sciences; or the undergraduate programs of Earth and Environmental Systems and Earth Science Education in the Department of Geological Sciences. In fact, the opposite is true: our approaches to the environment are complementary, thus enhancing the potential of us collectively attracting more students to NMSU who are interested in the environment – students who may wish to take courses across departments and colleges at NMSU.



Department of Geography

(Breland Hall, Room 137)

MSC MAP

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Approved, Dean of Arts & Sciences

Date: February 16, 2022

To: Enrico Pontelli, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences

CLC

From: Carol Campbell, Associate Professor and Department Head, Department of Geography

Regarding: Name Change to Department of Geography and Environmental Studies.

The department of Geography is preparing a formal proposal for the name of the NMSU Department of Geography to be changed to the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies. Below, we outline the justification for this name change, the benefits this name change will bring to NMSU, and how this name change will support NMSU's LEADS 2025 strategic plan and NMSU's efforts to achieve Carnegie R01 status. We also speak to potential conflicts with other programs.

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The first list below includes programs named exactly “Geography and Environmental Studies”. The second list includes Geography and various other renditions of “Environment” or “Environmental”. Schools in bold and italics are among NMSU’s peer institutions. Universities marked with * also offer Environmental Science or similar degrees or programs outside Geography.

Departments of Geography and Environmental Studies

- Aquinas College - Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
- California State University, Northridge - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- California State University, San Bernardino - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- Carleton University* - Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
- Central Michigan University* - Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
- Northeastern Illinois University* - Department of Geography & Environmental Studies
- Ryerson University - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- Saint Mary's University* - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- Texas State University - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- Thompson Rivers University* - Geography & Environmental Studies
- Tufts University* - Environmental Studies & Applied Environmental Studies
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies
- ***University of New Mexico* - Department of Geography and Environmental Studies***
- University of St Thomas* - Geography and Environmental Studies
- University of West Florida* - Department of Environmental Studies, Geography Track
- Wilfrid Laurier University* - Geography and Environmental Studies

Departments of Geography and Environment/al Other

- Arapahoe Community College- Department of Geography and Environmental Science
- Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania - Environmental, Geographical and Geological Sciences
- California State University, East Bay* - Department of Anthropology, Geography & Environmental Studies
- Calvin University* - Department of Geology, Geography, and Environmental Studies
- College of Charleston* - Geography and Environmental Planning
- Concordia University - Geography, Planning & Environment
- East Carolina University* - Geography, Planning, and Environment
- Emory & Henry College - Geography Department and Earth and Environmental Sciences Department
- Northern Michigan University* - Department of Earth, Environmental and Geographical Sciences
- Northwest Florida State College - Environmental Science Geography/Environmental Management
- Northwest Vista College - Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability
- Okanagan College - Geography, Earth and Environmental Sciences
- San Francisco State University - Geography and Environment
- Southern Illinois University, Carbondale - Department of Geography and Environmental Resources
- SUNY Oneonta - Department of Geography & Environmental Sustainability
- United States Military Academy - Department of Geography & Environmental Engineering
- ***University of Arizona* - School of Geography, Development, & Environment***
- University of Colorado, Denver* - Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences
- University of Denver* - Geography and the Environment
- University of Hawaii, Hilo* - Department of Geography and Environmental Sciences
- University of Louisville - Department of Geographic and Environmental Sciences
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County* - Department of Geography & Environmental Systems

- University of Maine, Farmington* - Department of Geography and Environmental Planning
- University of Manitoba - Environment and Geography
- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities* - Geography, Environment, and Society
- University of Oklahoma* - Department of Geography and Environmental Sustainability
- University of Texas, Austin* - Geography and the Environment
- University of Waterloo* - Department of Geography and Environmental Management
- University of Wisconsin, Whitewater - Department of Geography, Geology, and Environmental Science
- Western Washington University* - Geography and Environmental Social Sciences