**UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**

**University Curriculum Committee**

**Contact: Nevil Speer**

DATE: March 1, 2011

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| Type of Item | Description of Item |
| Information | Proposal to Change Course Prefix  Item: Women’s Studies Courses (WOMN)  Contact: Jane Olmsted  Jane.olmsted@wku.edu  Phone: 745-5787 |

**Proposal date: January 28, 2011**

**Memorandum**

**Proposal to Change Course Prefix (Women’s & Gender Studies)**

**(Information Item)**

**TO:** Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

**FROM:** Sponsoring Unit: University College

Department: Women’s & Gender Studies

Contact Person’s Name: Jane Olmsted

Contact Person’s Email: jane.olmsted@wku.edu

Contact Person’s Phone: 5-6477

**CHANGE:** Current Course Prefix: WOMN

Proposed Course Prefix: WGS

**COURSE NUMBERS TO BE INCLUDED UNDER THE NEW COURSE**

**PREFIX (SUBJECT AREA):**

200, 321, 375, 400, 421, 470, 491, 499

**RATIONALE:** The proposed prefix change coincides with our name change to Women’s & Gender Studies, which reflects a growing trend among women’s studies programs in the United States to include the categories of gender and/or sexuality in the titles of their programs. Over its forty years history as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, women’s studies scholarship has established gender and sexuality as fundamental categories of social and cultural analysis. Increasingly, feminist scholarship embraces the study of how ideas about gender and sexuality shape roles, identities, and social norms in a broad range of geopolitical and historical contexts. Consequently, the name “women’s studies” is too narrow to describe the contemporary field. A changing theoretical landscape requires a broader naming of the field to include queer theory and critical theorizing on masculinity.

At WKU, the Women’s Studies Program has incorporated the growing scholarship on gender and sexuality studies in its curricular offerings. Many of the distribution requirements for the minor in women’s studies reference “gender” or “sexuality” in the title of the course: ANTH 343 “Anthropology of Gender,” ENG 360 “Gay and Lesbian Literature,” PHIL 212 “Philosophy and Gender Theory,” and SOCL 355 “Sociology of Gender.” In addition, the Women’s Studies Program now offers WOMN 375 “American Masculinities” every spring semester. Changing the program name to Women’s & Gender Studies and the course prefix to WGS conveys the important connotation that identities are not fixed and that marginal identities that do not fit neatly into majority categories are worthy of exploration and research. This name and prefix change will follow the trend in Kentucky as women’s studies programs at University of Kentucky and at Berea College have recently made a similar change.

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION:** Fall 2011

**Attachment: Course Inventory Form**