

Approved by the Regents
July 19, 2012

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
REGENTS COMMUNICATION

SUBJECT: Program in American Culture

ACTION REQUESTED: Rename as the Department of American Culture

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 1, 2012

The dean and the executive committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts request approval to rename the Program in American Culture as the Department of American Culture, effective September 1, 2012.

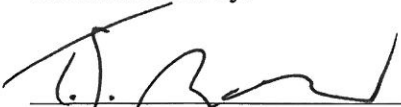
The Program in American Culture was founded in 1952 and is one of the earliest American studies programs in the nation. It has grown into a unit that is home to and helps provide funding for several ethnic studies programs. The Asian/Pacific Islander American Studies program, the Latina/o Studies program, the Native American Studies program, and the developing Arab American Studies program are all housed within, hosted by, and in many ways the creations of the Program in American Culture. It is not always clear to others that there is a difference between the Program in American Culture director and the directors of these various ethnic studies programs. As a department, the structural relationship of dean, chair, and director will be clarified.

The Program in American Culture is very highly ranked among national American studies programs. The most recent NCR ranking (2005-2006) placed it within the top five. Since then the unit has significantly strengthened and can now claim two former presidents of the American Studies Association, a MacArthur Award winner, five collegiate professors, a Thurnau professor, and a majority of the tenured faculty bristling with book prizes and other forms of national recognition. Among the universities that are members of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation where American studies units exist, they do so generally as departments. In fact, the majority of American Culture's peers are departments.

Within the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts, American Culture is the last of the enhanced programs. Women's Studies became a department in 2007 and Afroamerican and African Studies in 2010. These former programs resemble American Culture in that they are interdisciplinary and have a large percentage of jointly-appointed faculty. Thus, structurally it makes sense for American Culture to rest on the same level.


The executive committee of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts has approved the recommendation to rename the Program in American Culture as the Department of American Culture, effective September 1, 2012.

Recommended by:



Terrence J. McDonald
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor
Professor of History and Dean
College of Literature, Science, and the Arts

Recommendation endorsed by:



Philip J. Hanlon, Provost and
Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

July 2012