Proposal for a Consortium of Units in Critical Analysis and Social Change

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List of Consortium Member Units:
Department of History
Department of Geography
The Department of English
The Poetry Center
Graduate Program in Second Language Acquisition and Teaching
Program in Religious Studies
Department of Latin American Studies
Center for Middle East Studies
Department of German Studies
Department of Spanish and Portuguese
Department of Russian and Slavic Languages
Department of Language, Reading, and Culture
Faculty of the Arizona State Museum
Department of Women’s Studies
Program in American Indian Studies
Program in Africana Studies
Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW)
McClelland Institute for Children, Youth, and Families
UA Center of Excellence in Women’s Health
1. Explain how the reorganization or consolidation will strengthen the unit's teaching, service, and research, or creative activities, and thereby advance The University of Arizona in accordance with the UA Strategic Plan 2009 - 2013

We propose a consortium, Critical Analysis and Social Change, to produce synergies and cost-savings in curriculum, research, scholarship, outreach, hiring, and graduate training through interdisciplinary collaboration. Extending the existing efficiencies of the model already deployed by Women’s Studies and American Indian Studies that organizes “core” and “affiliate” faculty, this proposal builds on existing strengths to create intellectually exciting and mission-enhancing returns. The core units—Africana Studies, SIROW, American Indian Studies, and Women’s Studies—excel in outreach, scholarship, and graduate education. We were created through community and student demand, and have strong community boards, have or are poised to develop excellent fundraising programs, and have deep ties to political leaders throughout the state that strengthen the university. Our APRs speak to the strength of scholarship and research that has developed on the cutting edge, between and beyond disciplines, creating intellectual ferment, agile response to changing trends, and lively graduate programs. We were created through community and student demand, and have strong community boards, have or are poised to develop excellent fundraising programs, and have deep ties to political leaders throughout the state that strengthen the university. At the same time, the traditional disciplines contribute vital and well-established strengths to the broad project of critical analysis of culture and society in the interest of social justice in which we are engaged. Our ideas, methodologies, research, scholarship, and students challenge and strengthen each other. Following the GIDP model for interdisciplinary excellence, this proposal is neutral with respect to college boundaries; it can function under and across them.

Our core academic programs are deeply rooted and intellectually expansive. We each encompass an intellectual tradition that stresses an irreducible, particular history and experience that connect irrevocably to central American questions of social justice, equity, and identity. Women’s Studies works to fundamentally change the university and society -- what counts as knowledge, methodology, epistemology -- not as “gender studies” but an analytic, a system of meaning and power that is entwined with critical social, political, and economic questions. Africana Studies’ global perspective illuminates U.S. cultural and social distinctiveness; here, slavery and African-diaspora peoples were inside, not outside the nation, and no literature, no health disparity, no labor system, no social policies exist outside of or unmarked by that legacy. American Indian Studies centers indigenous lands, peoples, cultures, literatures, languages in an unfolding colonial encounter that has profoundly shaped American national identity, popular culture, and political systems, and that generates profound questions about sovereignty in the modern world.

We are not proposing mergers. Core units generating this proposal embody the university’s land grant mission through their extensive relationships with communities. We are “brands” for the purposes of outreach and development. Compromising the autonomy and integrity of these units would compromise our scholarship, possibly destroy our relationships with our constituencies, and lose money for the university. Women’s Studies, for example, has a 21-year old relationship with donors through the Women’s Studies Advisory Council (WOSAC), which has raised more than $1.5 million through the Women’s Plaza of Honor and brings in more than $30,000 annually for operating costs. American Indian Studies has launched an endowment campaign for the Vine Deloria Jr. Distinguished Indigenous Visiting Scholar Series. However, increased and improved collaboration among our units and with traditional disciplinary units has the potential to generate cost savings, as evidenced in the attached budget.

Arenas for Potential Development/Synergies:

- General Education: expand existing strong model of interdisciplinary curriculum from Tier I to Tier II and above;
• Units with relatively small undergraduate majors coordinate teaching to reduce “backlog” of student enrollment/time to degree for heavily enrolled majors;
• Increase undergraduate and graduate enrollments (as per strategic plan) by cross-listing, co-teach and/or consolidate courses related to critical analysis and social change, creating curricular economies that enable us to enroll new students without additional cost;
• Increase student diversity, and improve retention rates of students from historically underrepresented group by increasing the profile in traditional disciplines of Women’s Studies, American Indian Studies, and Africana Studies;
• Expand teaching in languages other than English (a consortium strength) and prepare students for life in an increasingly globalized world; be a leader nationally in southwest, Native American, borderlands, and Latin American Studies, as called for in the UA strategic plan, by enhancing teaching of these topics outside their particular units;
• Strengthen Title VI and Title VIA funded programs like the Center for Middle East Studies and Latin American Studies through collaboration with related units;
• Consolidate/cross-list/co-teach foundational theory and methods courses at graduate level;
• Create a structured thematic graduate minor in Critical Social Analysis, or Critical Analysis and Social Change;
• Host joint lecture series, colloquia, visiting professor appointments, conferences;
• Share faculty appointments, cluster hires;
• On Executive Education model, develop revenue-generating evening/extension courses, such as “managing for diversity”;
• Build on existing excellence in nationally recognized Ph.D. programs to leverage development of graduate minors in all units;
• Build on the international research portfolio and “team science” approach of SIROW, the McClelland Institute, and other units like Lang Observation Laboratory to increase NIH, foundation, industry and other research funding (e.g. health care/disparities/, educational competencies) and sharing resources;
• Intensify SIROWand WCoE mentorship of junior faculty and researchers in winning grants related to women, gender, youth and develop Ph.D and post-doc research funding proposals across units.

2. Explain how the reorganization will raise the unit’s and the university’s ranking or reputation

Following the lead of world-class universities and aspirational peers such as Duke University, University of Michigan, and the University of Virginia in increasing faculty diversity through cluster and joint hiring, we propose to use this consortium to increase our ability to recruit and retain diverse world-class scholars, attracted by the unusual potential for interdisciplinary collaboration this consortium enables (as well as by the distinguished faculty already featured in our units). Through cluster and joint hiring we will further dismantle the “silos” that currently are barriers to collaboration and deploy proven techniques for not only recruiting but also retaining diverse faculty. It is worth noting that WS/SIROW, AIS and Africana Studies are frequent stops for faculty being interviewed and recruited by traditional disciplines. This consortium would enhance our contribution to building “academic excellence,” one of the three priorities identified in the Strategic Plan.

This reorganization proposal will also raise the university’s reputation by increasing linkages between externally funded research and academic units. It will promote a “team science approach” to increase research funding opportunities particularly in relation to NIH, private foundations, and shared private donors. It will create a more cohesive collective for writing Ph.D. and post-doc support proposals (e.g., NIH F Awards; BIRCH proposals).
This proposal seeks to strengthen and enhance our work by keeping existing staff with their units, especially those that been historically understaffed; Women’s Studies and SIROW, for example, share a business manager and have, between them four state-funded staff positions supporting more than 65 researchers, faculty. This operation cannot get any leaner, and in fact its efficiency and productivity in research, teaching, and scholarship would be enhanced by more staff. We propose to act more like our aspirational peers—University of Michigan, for example—and not like smaller and weaker universities like Oregon State, and rather than consolidate staff into business centers across diverse units, respect and enhance the essential work done by staff within units.

We strongly advocate for the ability to continue to do what we do well, and for key changes in University structure and process that could enable us to excel further in a rhizomic consortium association that builds on local autonomy to build truly effective linkages and collaborations. These key issues include:

- Eliminating or moderating current barriers to effective faculty joint/shared hires;
- Restructuring the way student FTE and teaching credit are calculated and applied so that cross-listing, co-teaching, and similar strategies can flourish;
- Ensuring that commitment to diversity in faculty, staff, and student recruitment and retention is conserved and enhanced with strong avenues of oversight and accountability. The responsibility for diversity at UA CANNOT be ghetto-ized within gender and ethnic studies programs programs;
- Linking long-term planning for personnel restructuring (as retirements, resignations, moves unfold) to include faculty and staff so that short-term fiscal gains do not disproportionately target staff.
- Removing barriers to funded research across colleges, i.e., the complexity of negotiating agreements related to sharing IDC.

3. Describe the processes of consultation with deans, heads, faculty, staff, appointed personnel, and students and the extent to which this proposal has the support of those affected (with the understanding that it may not have been possible to conduct full consultation with all parties at this point in the process).

This proposal has been discussed with Deans Andrew Comrie, Ed Donnerstein, and Mary Wildner-Basset. The team making the proposal has met and consulted extensively over email. Faculty in all involved units have discussed this proposal at both regular faculty meetings and special, emergency meetings. Members of the Africana Studies Program staff have discussed this proposal at a staff lunch meeting. The Department of Women’s Studies held a town hall meeting with affiliate faculty, graduate students, undergraduates, community board members, and staff on Friday 9/26. American Indian Studies held a town hall with students on Monday, Oct. 6 and has discussed at regular staff meetings. Proposal was discussed with 22 department heads at the School of International Studies meeting on 9/29.
Enhanced Revenue from Research Collaborations

Even a modest goal of two additional grants a year--$600,000

Cost-savings from Curriculum Consolidation

Additional revenue if this enables us to accelerate graduation rates sufficient to enroll even an additional 30 students: $162,000/ year

Cost-savings from Increased Coordination in Graduate Education and Intellectual Development Activities

Even the most modest colloquium/lectureship/intellectual development series costs $10,000/year for outside scholars travel, honoraria, and accommodations.

If four departments held joint intellectual development activities one semester out of four, the cost over two years would go from $80,000 to $65,000, saving an average of $7,500.

Costs
$30,000 for one 30-hr/week academic program coordinator and events coordinator to pull this together

Total value of this proposal: $739,500