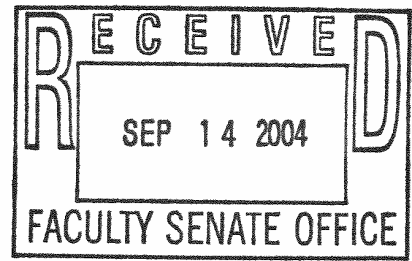




OUT KL RH (F) C



MEMORANDUM

To: Donna E. Shalala, President

From: Mary Coombs MC
Chair, Faculty Senate

Date: September 8, 2004

Subject: Faculty Senate Legislation #2004-01(B) Name change for the African American Studies Program

The Faculty Senate, at its August 25, 2004 meeting, voted unanimously to approve the request for a name change from African American Studies Program and any other associated names such as Caribbean, African and Afro-American Studies; Afro-American Studies; and African-American Studies, to a single name for all these entities of "Africana Studies." The proposal is enclosed for your reference.

This legislation is now forwarded to you for your action.

MC/kl

cc: Luis Glaser, Executive Vice President and Provost
Jane Connolly, Vice Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences
Edmund Abaka, Interim Director, Caribbean, African and Afro-American Studies



Faculty Senate
1252 Memorial Drive, 325 Ashe Admin. Bldg.
Coral Gables, Florida 33124
Phone: (305) 284-3721 • Fax: (305) 284-5515
http://www.miami.edu/FacultySenate
email: facsen@miami.edu

CAPSULE: Faculty Senate Legislation #2004-01(B) Name change for the African Studies Program

PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE

APPROVED:  DATE: 9/18/09
(President's Signature)

OFFICE OR INDIVIDUAL TO IMPLEMENT: J Connolly

EFFECTIVE DATE OF LEGISLATION: _____
(if other than June 1 next following)

NOT APPROVED AND REFERRED TO: _____

REMARKS (IF NOT APPROVED): _____

Afro-American Studies to Africana Studies

Edmund Abaka

Interim Director, Caribbean, African and Afro-American Studies

The study of the African Diaspora, known variously as Africana Studies, African-New World Studies etc., is experiencing growth exponentially and globally. This has to do with the close to 100 million people of African descent scattered across the globe and their increasing visibility at all levels of social organization. Today, the number of people of African descent in Europe has grown exponentially. As such the African diaspora in Europe has become a rich area of research. Similarly, scholars have begun to increasingly focus on the African diaspora in Asia (especially India), the Middle East (Israel), The Arabian peninsula, Central and Latin America and other places while still maintaining African-America as the core of their programs.

Africana Studies is an interdisciplinary field focusing on the cultures, patterns of social organizing, political economies, life conditions etc. of various African-based societies and communities in Africa, North America, Europe, Latin America and other areas of the world. In actuality, we are already doing most of that in the current program as indicated by the spread of our courses.

The African-American Studies program currently offers courses in African history, African-American History, Caribbean Studies, African-American literature, African-American studies, among others. Consequently, the program is already covering the African Diaspora. Changing the name to Africana Studies, therefore, adequately captures what we do, that is, while African-America is the core, the larger African diaspora as a new frontier of scholarship and research is our focus as we continue to build and expand the program. We are not doing anything different other than recognizing the fact that our work is in actual fact already cast in the context of the African diaspora. Additionally, the broader field is rife with cutting-edge research by scholars as exemplified by numerous symposia, conferences and papers over the last few years.

Opportunities for scholarship and research abound as scholars begin to look at Caribbean, Afro-Brazilian, "Afro-Latino," Afro-Asian, other similar communities using new paradigms and approaches. In effect, the African diaspora, writ large, is the ambit under which African Americans and people of African descent are aggregated. As an important area of student and faculty research and recruitment, albeit in the future, the program will be the winner. Miami's location as an important destination for migrant communities of the African diaspora (second only to New York) is another incentive for a broader analysis that encapsulates the African diaspora as we look to the future.

A sub-committee of the African-American program Advisory Board (made up of three Faculty members) recommended the name change to the Board, which subsequently adopted it.

As the program grows, an Africana-Studies Program can offer different tracks within the program: students who major in Africana studies can focus on different tracks such as an Africa studies core, an African-American studies core, and Afro-Latino or Afro-Brazilian core and the like. This flexibility will help in the recruitment of students as well as, hopefully, new faculty in the future.

On a minor note, the program is known variously as Caribbean, African and Afro-American Studies (on some of our letterheads), Afro-American Studies (UM Directory and newer letter heads) and African-American Studies (program web site). Courses were designated CAAS and

AAS on students' transcripts until a couple of months ago when Rita Deutsch was alerted to this discrepancy. Africana Studies eliminates this administrative confusion as well (it will retain the AAS designation).

Cornell, Rutgers, Brown, SUNY - Stonybrook, SUNY – Albany, University of Pennsylvania, Arizona, Pittsburg, Binghamton, Western Michigan, UMASS (Boston), Michigan, North Carolina State, San Diego State, University of Michigan (Flint), Wayne State University, and many other institutions have Africana Studies Departments or Programs.

The **Stonybrook** Africana Studies homepage describes Africana Studies as “interdisciplinary in scope and addresses itself to the experiences of persons of African descent throughout the world ...”

The **University of Pittsburg** program description states that: “Africana Studies is the study, research, interpretation, and the dissemination of knowledge concerning African-American, African, and Caribbean affairs and culture. Using the tools of the social sciences and humanities, Africana Studies examines the structure, organization, problems, and perspectives of Blacks in Africa and the African Diaspora.”

The **Rutgers University** page describes Africana Studies as “the study of the history, culture and art of black people from ancient to the present time. The major seeks to provide students with a thorough and accurate understanding of the African Diaspora in the Americas and the Caribbean.”

A National Council of Black Studies (the national professional organization of scholars of Black studies) task force report notes that “The variety of labels under which Africana Studies is conducted generally reflects different areas of concentration.” The terms Africana, Black Studies, Afro-American, African-American Studies etc have all been used respectively to describe the field.

For us in Miami, the Africana rubric better serves us since we deal with the African diaspora. In Miami alone, one can identify a large community of people of African descent - from the earliest settlers (free Black, slave, and children of Indians and slaves or free Blacks), to Bahamians who settled in Coconut Grove, Haitians in Little Haiti, or to recent immigrants from Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa and other places. Africana Studies will enable us to execute programming that will attract a broad array of students.