Dear UUCT members,

Thank you for taking the time to review the gender studies minor proposal last week. I am pleased that you were comfortable with the general framework of the revision and thank you for the opportunity to address the questions and concerns you have with specific elements of the proposal. I am sorry I cannot attend your next meeting – I will be out of town, presenting at a research seminar in the U.K., so I hope you will accept my responses in writing rather than in person.

Re. the concerns you raised:

1. Courses that do not include gender in the course description.

I recognize and share your concern that we should standardize course content, and not rely on the interests of individual faculty members to determine the centrality of gender to a given course. This goal is one of the major motivating factors for the curriculum revision proposal.

There were four courses included in the original proposal that do not currently include the term “gender” in either the course title or the official course description. These were

LIT 3301 Cultural Studies and Popular Arts (3)

LIT 4493 Politics and Literature (3)

LIT 4853 Topics in Cultural Critique (3)

INR 4075 International Human Rights (3)

The three LIT courses are all popular electives in the minor, and are taught in such a way that they always include gender in the course content. I have been in conversation with the Chair of the Department of Language and Literature, Kimberly Jackson, and she has agreed to submit revisions to the course descriptions so that this gender content can be captured in the official description of the course. (See attached email.) While I recognize that the edits to the literature course descriptions would have to wait until next fall given the timelines as we approach the end of the semester, I hope that you will feel more comfortable approving their continued inclusion in the minor knowing that there is confirmation from the relevant department chair that gender is an important part of the course content and that she is committed to revising the course descriptions to reflect this component.

With regards to INR 4075, I have been in touch with the department chair for Public Affairs Roger Green, and although women’s rights are covered within the course, he does not feel that gender is so central to the content of the course that it would warrant an edit to the course description of the course. I have therefore deleted the course from the proposed revisions, and it will no longer be part of the minor.

1. Discussion of revision with faculty associated with the gender studies minor.

The curriculum revision stemmed directly from discussion among GS faculty during September and October 2013. Since updates to all minors were required by the CAS Dean’s office as part of preparation for SACS to ensure that obsolete courses were deleted etc, my major goal for the fall was to work with Gender Studies faculty to proceed through the revision process in a collaborative and inclusive manner. The process for including GS faculty in the revision of the minor was as follows.

On September 27, I emailed all 28 faculty who participate in the GS minor by offering courses or leading gender-related service opportunities for students, asking for volunteers to serve as part of a GS curriculum committee to determine the revisions that should be made to the minor. Most faculty either did not reply or expressed their regrets that they could not participate, but five faculty members responded by agreeing to serve on the committee. These were Frances Davey, Kris De Welde, Melodie Eichbauer, Michelle Hayford and Sandra Pavelka.

The meeting of the gender studies curriculum sub-committee took place on Monday October 21 from 3.30-5.00 in Merwin Hall, 203A. Also present at the meeting was GS faculty member and SoBe Department Chair Joan Manley who had previously met with Cathy Duff and Peggy Raynor to discuss revisions of the minor as part of her chair responsibilities. I brought copies of a draft revision of the minor based heavily on a proposal created by previous Coordinator of the GS Minor, Kris De Welde, which had been circulated through the GS faculty via email in spring and early summer 2013 and which had met with wide approval. At this meeting Joan Manley suggested additional revisions she thought would make sense given the conversations she had had with the Dean’s Office and OCI, and these additional revisions were accepted by all members of the curriculum sub-committee present at the meeting. I then drafted the proposal and on Nov 16 I sent a draft of the curriculum revisions to the GS faculty, asking them to send me their feedback on the proposals. One faculty member responded saying I had left her course off, which I rectified; two other faculty members said all looked good; one raised questions about the issue of special topics, which I addressed in a separate email and follow-up phone call; the other members did not respond at all. No-one raised any concern about the substance of the revision. I then submitted the final version of the proposal to Associate Dean Mary Ann Zager on November 26.

In short, all GS faculty had multiple opportunities to participate in the discussion of the revision, both through a formal meeting to which all GS faculty were invited, and through email conversation.

1. General Sloppiness of Proposal

I am the world’s worst proof-reader, and so I apologize for the errors with replication of courses and lapses in alphabetization in the original catalog copy. These issues are corrected in the version before you now.

I hope that this information makes you feel more comfortable with the revision of the minor, and thank you again for reviewing this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Nicola Foote

Associate Professor of History

Coordinator, Gender Studies Minor