

Board Meeting
September 19, 2019

RENAME THE DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES,
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES, CHICAGO

Action: Rename the Department of African American Studies, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Funding: No New Funding Required

The Chancellor, University of Illinois at Chicago, and Vice President, University of Illinois with the advice of the Chicago Senate and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences recommends the renaming of the Department of African American Studies as the Department of Black Studies.

Black Studies as a field emphasizes the range of experiences, structures, and institutions of individuals and communities that are identified as “black” both in and outside the United States. Since 1983 the department has been named African American Studies in recognition of the U.S.-centric focus of the curriculum. In the last decade, however, the larger field has shifted toward a more global and transnational emphasis and this is reflected in faculty research and courses taught among UIC peer and peer aspirational institutions. In 2017, the department revised the curriculum to more explicitly incorporate non-U.S. histories and perspectives. The idea of African American Studies is not being erased, rather, it will be viewed as a subfield under the larger rubric of Black Studies.

Faculty, within the department and at the college level, support renaming the unit to best reflect their expertise, the curriculum, and their aspirations for the field. All faculty will have an appointment in Black Studies. Existing academic programs in the department, an undergraduate major and minor, will also be renamed. Although student feedback does not have a formal role in the academic approval process, outreach by department faculty resulted in unanimous student support. The department name change will be effective Fall 2020.

The Board action recommended in this item complies in all material respects with applicable State and federal laws, University of Illinois *Statutes*, *The General Rules Concerning University Organization and Procedure*, and Board of Trustees policies and directives.

The Executive Vice President and Vice President for Academic Affairs concurs with this recommendation. The University Senates Conference has indicated that no further Senate jurisdiction is involved.

The President of the University recommends approval. This action is subject to further review and approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education.