

THE *Current*

September 22, 2008

[Andrea Estrada](#)

UCSB Establishes Graduate Program in Feminist Studies

The University of California has approved a proposal by UC Santa Barbara to establish a graduate program in feminist studies that offers Master of Arts and doctoral degrees. The women's studies program now has become the Department of Feminist Studies.

"We offer a critical lens into understanding the social, economic, and political life of women and men, and apply a feminist perspective," said Eileen Boris, Hull Professor and chair of feminist studies. "It's a broadening of women's studies. We don't want to argue over which bodies are included in our field of study, we want to generate new ways of analyzing the world through diverse feminist perspectives."

With more than 50 core and affiliate faculty members, UCSB's feminist studies department is one of only two within the UC system and one of only 15 or so at public universities across the country. "UCSB is definitely at the forefront of this area of study," Boris said.

"The inauguration of the feminist studies Ph.D. reflects not only the strength of our faculty in this area of scholarship, but also the massive investments we have made in feminist studies throughout the social sciences and humanities at UCSB," said Melvin Oliver, the SAGE Sara Miller McCune dean of social sciences.

The feminist studies graduate program has three areas of emphasis, including race and nation, genders and sexualities, and productive and reproductive labors. All are approached from intersectional and transnational perspectives, with a focus on social justice and public policy. "This is where we're strong as a faculty," Boris said.

"Feminist studies professors Leila Rupp, Ellie Hernandez, and Mireille Miller-Young, for example, explore diverse sexualities," she continued. "Barbara Herr Harthorn, Barbara Tomlinson, and Laury Oaks provide cultural perspectives on science and reproduction, and Jacqueline Bobo, Grace Chang, and I foreground the labors of women of color, whether as cultural producers, grass roots activists, or trade unionists."

A truly interdisciplinary effort, the feminist studies program has faculty associations across the social sciences and humanities, including sociology, counseling psychology, anthropology, Chicana and Chicano studies, black studies, political science, linguistics, history, English, film and media studies, history of art and architecture, music, Asian-American studies, religious studies, East Asian languages and cultures, French and Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, and Germanic, Slavic, and Semitic studies.

The addition of graduate classes will bolster an already strong program that currently serves about 100 undergraduate majors and hundreds more who enroll in our general education and upper division classes. The Department of Feminist Studies currently has nine full-time faculty members.

The program's first graduate students are expected to enroll for fall quarter 2009.

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.