FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE ACADEMIC BOARD

TO: Arts & Science Council

SPONSOR: Sandy Welsh, Vice-Dean, Graduate Education & Program Reviews

CONTACT INFO: officeofthedean.artsci@utoronto.ca

DATE: February 26, 2015 for March 9, 2015

AGENDA ITEM: 5

ITEM OF BUSINESS: Change in name of the Department of Art to the “Department of the History of Art”

JURISDICTIONAL INFORMATION:
Name changes of academic units are recommended from Council to the Academic Board for approval that is confirmed by the Executive Committee. (5.2.7)

GOVERNANCE PATH:

HIGHLIGHTS:
The Department of Art proposes to change its name to the “Department of the History of Art” in order to better reflect the research and teaching conducted within the unit. The Department currently offers an undergraduate History of Art BA (Specialist, Major, and Minor). No changes are proposed for the names of the programs. The tri-campus “Graduate Department of Art” offers an MA and PhD in the History of Art. The graduate department that will retain the name “Graduate Department of Art”.

The change in name is highly supported by the Department on the grounds that the studio contingent, Visual Studies, has been transferred to the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design. The present name, “Art,” signals to a great many people the making of art rather than the history of art and has caused numerous misunderstandings. The Department regularly receives requests from potential graduate students and interested faculty who assume that they are corresponding with a studio program. Departmental members consider that the name change would increase the ability of the Department to recruit students and faculty.

The Department of Art was founded in 1938 as the Department of Fine Arts. During this period, the Department has changed its name only once; in 2006 it was decided to rechristen the department as the Department of Art, reflecting its two divisions at that time: History of Art and Visual Studies (studio practice). The departure of the studio program, however, makes this further name change a high priority.

Faculty members cover a wide range of western and non-western fields; the Department is now particularly strong in the history of Asian art and in the art of early modern Europe. The name “History
of Art” better describes the research that is undertaken in the Department and agrees with the names of similar departments in the leading universities of Canada and the United States.

Members of the Department discussed the proposed name change at length in a faculty meeting held on October 8, 2013. All faculty members of the Department were in favor of changing our name from the “Department of Art” for the reasons mentioned above. There was some debate as to whether the new name should be “Department of the History of Art” or “Department of Art History.” The St. George faculty voted nine to four in favor of “History of Art” as opposed to “Art History” for a number of reasons: It was felt by the majority that “history” needed to be emphasized. This emphasis reflected both the need to effectively distance the Department from the current name of “Art” with its strong studio connotations and the fact that the great majority of the faculty are engaged in various sorts of historical inquiry. All faculty members of the St. George Department of Art were polled, and all responded. There was not a great deal of commitment to the proposal ‘Art History’ by the four who so voted; all were content with the majority choice of ‘History of Art’. No one wished to keep the present name ‘Art’.

Undergraduate students were consulted as part of the process. The co-presidents of the undergraduate art history association (HASA) reported that the undergraduates unanimously supported the name. They noted that the name of the department would then be the same as the name of the undergraduate program, ‘History of Art’, and likewise cause much less confusion.

The Department held a meeting to discuss October 14, 2014 the proposed name change with colleagues at UTM and UTSC—including the chair of the UTM Department of Visual Studies and the UTSC Department of Arts, Culture, and Media. The Deans of at UTM and UTSC are also in agreement with the proposal. While there was near universal support for the change to the name of the department on the St. George campus, student and faculty opinions regarding the name of the tri-campus graduate department varied, reflecting the nature of tri-campus graduate activities. As a result it was agreed that no changes would be made to the name of the tri-campus Graduate Department of Art at this time.

Any financial resources required to implement the name change will be absorbed within the Department. The name change will be incorporated in external communications in the normal course of updating such materials. The name changed is proposed to be effective pending university governance approval.

RECOMMENDATION:

Notice of Motion
THAT the change in name from the Faculty of Arts & Science Department of Art to the Department of the History of Art be approved effective immediately pending approval of University governance.