



Western Connecticut State University

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Office of the Dean
School of Professional Studies

TO: Mr. Jerry Bannister
FROM: Dr. Walter B. Bernstein
DATE: May 3, 1989
RE: The Non-Western Culture Debate

SOC SCI & HIST
FACULTY
FYI

While the issue of abandoning the use of "NWC" has been around the campus for some time, I think the Social Science Department had an excellent opportunity to change the label after some recent meetings with campus groups that were again voicing concern. Please note that I did read the memo which Dr. Linabury distributed recently, presenting all of the arguments to support continued use of the "NWC" nomenclature.

Sometimes, as I have painfully learned, it is important to suspend all of the "rationale reasons" for taking a position on a given issue. In many ways, the arguments that you and your colleagues identify as reasons for not changing the designation are reasonable, if not logical. Unfortunately, while you consider your argument logical and reasonable a huge part of the population does not. What surprises me is your insensitivity to this point, particularly as social scientists.

The use of such possible descriptors as area studies, global studies, world cultures would more than adequately describe this particular set of courses. More importantly, you would be making a statement about your sensitivity to and concern for those among us who feel that even in the very use of our language we may be implicitly condescending or maintaining stereotypes. I think this is what Dr. Dozier was referring to in his letter.

What I fear most is that your department is "digging in" on this issue when you could, with a very small but significant gesture, change the NWC designation to a more suitable title.

Sincerely yours,

Walter B. Bernstein, Ed.D.
Dean, School of Professional Studies

cc: President Feldman
Dr. P. Steinkrauss
Dr. C. Hawkes
Dr. A. Stewart
Dr. R. Dozier
Mr. D. Dennis



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