



Department of Art Stanford University

April 3, 1998

Dean David Holloway
School of Humanities and Sciences
Building 1

Dear Dean Holloway:

At our departmental retreat earlier this year, the faculty of the Department of Art voted to request a departmental name change to "Department of Art and Art History." Although this may seem a minor modification, we felt as a group that it offered enough significant advantages to warrant the procedural efforts that it will require.

Although we value highly the present configuration that links our studio art and history of art programs, and, as you know, have made deliberate efforts to make those connections more meaningful in recent years, the fact remains that this configuration is very much in the minority at American research universities. This has caused some confusion, to our detriment, over the years. For example, it seems to have been the case that the most recent NRC rankings of our art history program included our studio faculty in the FTE count, skewing the statistics and, perhaps, the ordinal rankings based on those numbers. Furthermore, in writing letters of recommendation, most of us have already adopted the practice of including a clarifying title, such as "Professor of American Art History," in order to make those letters more meaningful and persuasive to potential readers, and to avoid the ambiguities of a simpler association with a "department of art."

Thus our chief reason for pursuing this change is simply to make who we are and what we do more legible to the broader academic community and to the world at large. Beyond revising our letterhead and our published departmental materials, we don't anticipate any changes in our conduct of business or departmental mission, and we will continue to be open to new initiatives such as our developing film studies program.

We understand that this change will require several levels of approval, and we are eager to expedite the process. Please let me know if there is anything further I might provide to assist you in your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Richard Vinograd
Chair, Department of Art