

Programs: Some want queer studies program; others doubt its value

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"We're in a time of budget cuts, and 'Do we find the money to make that happen?' is always a question," she said. "You have students who want lots of different programs, and some classes are being cut that students really like because we just don't have the money to offer them."

She said an immediate goal is to provide a "clearinghouse" for information about classes with LGBT content, where students could find out the classes that discuss the subject and see whether it's a side topic or major focus.

The University has a clearly defined plan to add new instructional programs on the academic affairs Web site, but Martin said it seems that working queer studies into the diversity plan would be effective.

"People thought that this could be a natural part of the diversity plan. I think we were really waiting to see where the diversity plan

would go because if that moved forward, then that moves into it," she said. "Let's put this as part of our commitment to diversity."

Johnny Correa, a member of the LGBTQA, said he is one of many who would be interested in minoring in queer studies.

"I'd be very excited ... I think stuff on queer theory would be really interesting, looking at some of the cultural things that arise out of queer community, looking at race and class in the queer community."

While it may seem that the women and gender studies department would encompass the content of a queer studies minor, Correa said that because the two subjects are very different it doesn't make sense to lump them together.

He said examining an overarching view of queer life, including literature and experiences, would fit in well with the University's curriculum and although some classes are

available, there's no comprehensive program.

"My minor now is women and gender studies, and that's the closest I thing can get to queer theory ... but still, that's a certain perspective," Correa said.

He added that many students could appreciate and benefit from a sexualities minor.

"People really want it, and we actually made a list on the wall of the classes we wanted to see," he said. "We filled four or five giant parchments of paper."

Currently, there are six universities in the United States that offer queer studies majors and 26 that offer queer studies minors or certificates, including UCLA, Stanford, Berkeley, UC Riverside and Arizona State. ASU's program consists of 15 credit hours — two required classes and a selection of electives such as queer filmmaking, sexuality of men and Victorian sexualities.

University student Aaron Reyna said queer studies should be respected as a valid academic program.

"They're another group of people, so just like we have ethnic studies, we have different historical courses on different cultures, queer studies is just like the study of another culture."

But Tom Albright, a political science major and vice chairman of the College Republicans, said he feels queer studies isn't necessarily an academic pursuit.

"For general curriculum in the mainstream, this sounds like it's ludicrous," he said. "Things that make sense — business, literature, education — I think those are the things that a university should have, and this university has them. I think those are the worthwhile type of curriculum, not these gender studies and all that sort of thing. There's absolutely no way to get a grasp on them."

Others said that queer studies is an

important subject, but other new programs would be in greater demand.

"I think that it would be a very good program to add," said Travis Smith, a member of the College Democrats.

"But I think I'd add Arabic right now — OSU and PSU have 101 through 203 in Arabic. ... There's not enough Arabic speakers, and there's a very big interest in the self-study program."

But Martin remains hopeful about the prospects for the queer studies minor. She said she thinks it could be created by next year if it is adequately supported.

"I think there's fundamental things that have to be addressed — like financial and administrative support ... but I still think it very well could happen, and then we could work on making it nationally known and supported," she said.

Contact the higher education reporter at kbrown@dailyemerald.com

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